Life in Letters of
Richard T. Fisher
Richard Thornton Fisher (r) in the West with his friend and colleague, Frazier Curtis (l)
Life in Letters of Richard T. Fisher (1876 - 1934)

edited by

David Tatlock

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PREFACE

The re-creation of RTF's world turned into more than two years of inspired and sometimes delirious effort. What started the journey in the solitudes ended in a painstaking collaboration. There was a real mystery to the discovery of RTF's letters, an element of surprise, joy, and destiny. It was on a freezing cold February afternoon in Petersham when I was wandering the old family house, director of a childhood theatre full in the glory of goodness and wishes to be granted. In the attic vertebrae of dusty beam and stale air I came across an informal array of beautiful wooden boxes filled with ancient forestry journals. In the unheated storage room outside the kitchen a travel trunk had landed rather informally amidst some buckets and a small icebox. Opening the lid I found the entire tray laden with neatly grouped packets of letters, judiciously stored and identifiable by Gaga's (grandmother's) arced authoritative script - "RTF letters to William James", "Out West, Summer of '01".

Why were they here? Whereas a family seance might have been advisable a less complicated task I divined. And my feet were already headed downhill for the Harvard Forest. When warm weather rolled around Forest secretaries were deciphering, transcribing, and typing letters selected as to be of interest to the Harvard Forest. David Foster, Director, generously and judiciously directed this effort. A spiral-bound book, printed and funded by the Harvard Forest, came of this inspired effort; and, so I believe, helped give notice and an incontrovertible notion that these were important letters, of an important man. One day, thought I, the letters might transcend the limits of Family and Forest for their historical importance. My role as I conceived of it, everything I was about, and meant in life, seemed to lead up to this challenge, in a restoration of fabled letters, and perhaps writing a biography of sorts.

Many more letters now arrived. Seances then took place to try to give utterance to what had never been said, to form a policy, grant a wish, give permission, and get started on a rich part of the family history. One of the questions asked in the meanwhile was why no one had stretched a hand through the veil to retrieve the letters during all this time. I thought of inviolate memory; the possibility that letters such as these had been left as a kind of surprise for us to sort out amongst ourselves. The past and present were coming together.

Repairing to Uncle Jack's "old" room upstairs to sift and ponder, I began the long task of opening letters and boxes, trundling around the house, aware somehow of the eye of scrutiny here beneath the bemused eye of Tom Selleck and the enigmatic stare of Joan Crawford. The letters seemed charmed, of ilk unaustere and a rising in reverse, a descending from silken firmament and given perfect treatment by summer textures of lordly maples and of the living shadows playing on twilight walls. The endeavor went ahead slowly, without a grant, without an
office, and of its own design.

Over the ensuing months, the task grew and grew. It was in August that my mother first became involved. The project begged for the inclusion of others to ease the sheer volume, and deciphering problems thereupon entered; my mother, being closer to the era in question and being well versed in family scrawl, was the most reliable authority. And from that time on the phone began to ring.

Summer lengthened; my beets came up; I strode about in running shorts in the summer empire of my heart. However, there was increasing need for advice, for handling the complexities, and getting hold of the family drama. Explanations became necessary. By early September, seemingly ready for the printers, more letters and photographs were found. Emotionally, I was ready for it to be finished. By then my mother and I were on the phone most every day, and it was her role, from interpreting arcane RT-ism’s, to handling increased numbers of family ideas that rightfully slowed the show. My sprint had turned into a dog trot.

In the partial void, there were the usual dilemmas of communication that seemed to capitalize on crucial issues before getting to a sense of harmony. The going was not always smooth, with interpretations of meaning, deciphering of German words, footnotes, book design options, printing options, etc. Mainly I was to have accepted that this project in fact was vast, and that I needed all the help that I could get. Throughout, the process defied description.

Enter cousin Deborah Crowell. It was she who arrived to subdue hundreds of pages by desktop publishing methods. She and her husband, Micha, came up to Petersham during the summer. Debbie’s calmness helped in other ways, too, and we gathered from transcriber-typists, Anne Marie Picard, Deidre Maccio, and Rosemary Day, the farmed-out computer discs, and I thank all three. By October, Debbie and I were test-printing the Letters with an increased awareness of their importance. It was nice hearing Debbie’s loopy southern accent, reminding me of North Carolina days. By early December we had moved to the weed-whacking of repetitions and unending typo’s in her New York City apartment. A thorough proofreading remained. I was premature again, for there were more decisions to be made, better letter placement to be done, surprisingly difficult photograph placement adventures. I lugged my “laserjet” printer back to Petersham and seemed to run out of gas. I gave the reins, and the brains, over to my mother for the final tinkering. Her skills as an expert editor, let it be known, fully match her skills as a horsewoman.

A word about mysteries and inherited wistfulness. Objects long left in a half-forgotten state of repose sometimes take on a form of defiant logic as though the honoring of them, too long unarticulated, were something of an incongruity, or a puzzle, something perhaps also best left alone. But objects by themselves of course do not have independent volition. An object without arms can become too wrapped up in itself, absorbed in its own context and dimensions. Sometimes, loyalties run so deep that the ability to talk is stifled. New articulation is sometimes needed. The printing of these letters are a convincing form of the true family will, a finished and fitting masterpiece.

The ability to find the right words - words that honor and extoll - is in acknowledgement of a challenge to be inventive and pure. The best of letters tell us of truth, of the myriad forms of loveliness in the world. These letters are also in the form of a sun; the shining of our grandfather, father, and they spread our relationship and kinship to him to the parts of him that are eternal. I’d like to consider that family mysteries are part of the greater mysteries of the power and glory of human love. Words are eyes. Expressive letters are life itself, life meant to be cherished and enjoyed, even after it is through, for the positive in life is the act of creation, love in life, life as one thing, one meaning. Good Letters are all these things, I believe, for they are acts of love. This book has become an inseparable part of my life, and my own dedication is to my muse.

We should all give thanks to RTF for showing us himself before most of us knew him, and for the style and inspired feelings that move us all. My mother, Anne Fisher Tatlock, co-editor at least, did the end papers, the genealogy, the wonderful map of “Out West”. And God Bless her for putting up with my gloom, and putting up fences for some of my stampeding commentary. The book would still be a heap if it were not for her. Thank you also, again, to the original Harvard transcriber-typists, Fran Phillips and Dottie Smith. And perhaps our greatest debt is to Donald Fenn, RTF’s nephew, for his lifelong pursuit in the interest in Fisher genealogy.

A few notes on the text: Chapters often overlap. Some of the letters are undated so the chronology may not always be correct. (?) means an editor’s question, __________ indicates undecipherable handwriting, ... are found in the writer’s text, ........ indicates editor’s omission.
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INTRODUCTION

Richard Thornton Fisher's family were learned, middle-class Unitarians. They moved from Brooklyn, New York in the mid-1880's to western Massachusetts to be with their relatives, the quiet Whitings who gave them land and built their house, and later the noisy Thayers. They settled in the small village of Berkshire. Richard's father, Edward Thornton Fisher, had been a school master. He was Class Poet of the Harvard Class of 1856. His mother, Ellen Bowditch Thayer, was a talented painter of flowers and sister of the celebrated painter, Abbott Handerson Thayer. Both were part of a progressive breed absorbing much out of intellectual rebellions of the 1820's, and from before, and believed heartily in making religion useful. What young Richard might have gathered as unique in the formation of his habits may have been an unweighable recombination; styles and influences mixing everyday experiences, new causes, old ideals. While the elder Fisher was part of a group of twelve who founded the First Unitarian Church of Pittsfield, the younger Fisher instinctively rebelled against going to church alone once leaving home. Of all influences, it was his uncle Abbott Thayer's soaring personality that made the world of the out-of-doors seem vital and left the fullest impression on young "Diccon".

Let it be also said, in this far day, that elements of transcendentalism were still in the air in the 1880's. An individual's absorbing of native influences meant stimulating the imagination; this spontaneous relationship to the learning process was transmitted specifically within the psychology of inquisitiveness, not in those seeds of inheritance that we can more easily convey acceptably as Fisher's "natural ability". The Fishers may have believed their cultural endearments and expressions were a vague chosen residue, but they were more likely to be open to the practicum of life than manipulating the soul in quest for Truth. The physician and educator in Fisher's background took care of the interstellar region, the hunting and pecking for evidence; and in the long meanwhile managed a nice dissemination of values, expressions, and deeds. It is the significant artistic curve of the Fisher family that blurs old spiritual missions and transmutes them into precious artistic variations, while putting the subjectivity that life so richly offered into a loose speculative container of the personality.

The art of conversation was part of this pervasive bounding forward, and the dragging back of loose pebbles not yet fitting in the undertow of progress. Richard, like his elders, could live for conversation and had a yen to quietly project himself and thereby ingeniously persuade. He worked with a spectrum sometimes ambivalent between the poles of a thoughtful temperament. Of an old individualistic escapist philosophy, Transcendentalism, the moral went with a twist of lemon: get the best education possible; to RT, the final resolution of an imaginative life.
The letter writer therefore was essentially an artist with an instinct for clarification, and a compulsive need for self-discovery. Beneath dour professor, Barrett Wendell, at Harvard, something appeared to be choked off that he could not allow himself, which was to occupy a literary test tube for the sake of introspective forms. He had had enough of that. Wendell was fond of writing "slight" on his essays. Fisher wanted to be outside; to a calling that used his hands, his mind, get oxygen, where like Uncle Abbott he could silently review the allegorical possibilities.

The rolling environs of Fisher's country home were graced by high meadows and duck ponds, and over the rise where the Thayer summer house lay adjacent to the Fisher's was the sprawling Whiting farm on the knoll, the most perfect "Berkshire" setting imaginable for a future forester. Within a typical morning of home learning and an afternoon exploring, activities replaced notebooks and whatever might have been associable of chalky ramblings of the past. Roughly from the 1860's there had been interest in reviving the life of the pioneer, hunting, keeping collections, honing the axe. Throughout, in the midst of broad discovery patterns characterizing this century, Fishers and their relatives the Thayers were of this flexible explorer type, tinkerers of the intellect, testing new theories on each other, at the forefront of discovery of their transitional era. Importantly, other people liked to be around them. As he grew older and Fisher came into a more demanding climate, he seemed to have authentic aids about his physical person that were required. As for those higher trace levels of spirituality, those little snails in the air, those fine cultural mists of the New England for-bears, walks in the woods with him become means to achieve these ilusive harmonies, to revel in the artistic and contemplative bombardment.

Richard, born in 1876, was gentler in disposition than his zealous uncle, born in 1849, more driven by vague notions of 'perfectibility'. Young Fisher could also sustain more contradiction in his mids within a future of forestry, academata and the social demands. The need to be consistent and presentable had sobering effects on him, no doubt. The dictum of correctness - a means to measure the steady influence of his long inheritance - can close a stern. It seemed a part of the Fisher principle to be "correct" on most issues. "The principles" as in "Thayer's laws" of camouflage, led Fisher away on his flight like an arrow towards opening acceptance, while it closed down on Thayer's inspired dynamic world. The problem, the snag, was the morality of insistence. There was something anomalous in a new intellectual system, open to conjecture and long wait. It was acceptable to Fisher; unacceptable to his impassioned artist uncle. Visual artist and early forester both carried forth the bond that began as expressions of family love and the ethics of learning that is not in the role of the media image: if you can somehow share in the ambiguity and frailties of human nature, you will be more likely to achieve the success you need than if you wrap yourself in the cloak of rectitude. What was ultimately right was potentially confusing in the plethora of sensory data. We readers can follow this bewildering chart, see traditional men wrestling with topics and ideas; the unwieldy demand for commitment, the stretch from limitations of literary English or the world of Art. We can see straight laces unloosening. The Letters show us a creaking adjustment to new conditions, psychological more than social, even while they show us personal vulnerability and a need for reassurance.

Fisher, to be further noted, will show an intrinsic ambivalence: seduced by the fastidious garden-forests of Germany while repelled by the beer-garden sloth. His nominal condemnation of inexplicable behavior habits of the Old World might seem too automatic, especially when his father questions his possible over-indulgence. Perhaps his morals are being poisoned. Fisher will therefore seem torn at times. He and those in his midst will use part of their Harvard educations as a mask for projecting whimsy about a half-understood world. It is the family tapestry that promotes options in the best atmosphere to learn; to be creative, to not overly worry, to intellectually excite; and, before results, stay good and puzzled a while before the web of understanding finally stretches across the meadow.

The artistic visual perspective is also an historical perspective. If Fisher can adapt his vision to a sobering, critical reality he has a good chance to fit the nascent U.S. Forest Service. Once adapting himself to a world of policy, Fisher must separate from the aging Thayer, who had lashed himself and his family to an expensive and under-appreciated publication of his camouflage theories. The poles of art and science split around these two men. Let the reader decide what half of the mind is occupied as Fisher was paid to roam the country, to go into the woods with a tape measure and write about trees. To do this, he ultimately had to change and conform more than old Abbott, whose 'a priori' methods were a pleasant buggy ride to positive conclusions, helped by the very first horsewhip of these letters is an unclassifiable marvel. The heart of the letters beats to one belief development of the early forester, it can be seen, must deal with tethers of geography snapping free, while the demonstration of affection stays constant.

R. T. Fisher, as he was known, may not have thought of his life in grand terms although "The Little Stranger" referred to several times in his correspondence with "best man" William James Jr. indicate he had more than subconscious plans for publishing his letters - otherwise sent home to be informally read around the fireplace. Phantom kitchen conversations were first sources. It may have been considered bad form to let material too immediate or hot into letters. We the readers can possibly tell when RTF wants someone reading over his shoulder.
In his day, Fisher and other bright Harvard graduates were in the middle of what is known as the Progressive era of the 1910’s. Theirs were the policies and programs that were the final severing of the Crusader mentality— the hope of miracles with dire penalties stitched to a doomed race of wrong-doers. The long medieval wand that had helped tap the world for mental images instead of for naturally occurring phenomena had discarded the disorderly wildernesses. But Fisher had to wrestle with the same old devils and heavenly images that were conceived as part of the Protestant backbone. Problems of existence still entered the head by way of the shoulder blades. Fisher underwent a personal divergence towards objectivity, controlling within an academic setting what a generation earlier had spawned in pantheistic fashion by the positive, earlier combustible relationships with the wilds. This had been undergone by preservationist, the Swede John Malt, and feelings profound had then forced their way towards thought and system, and came with a suitable new pair of shoes for trekking actual turf. An early forester could get out of the writer’s crouch, and into a new reducible language and still be only a throw away from the “esthetic emotion” of an uncle. Yet all these subliminal transfigurations were also rituals of another mode, and new set of behavior codes.

Partly because Fisher died quite young, at age fifty seven, his memory seems another cauterizing of 19th century influences, of a time before the Hurricane of 1938 when various gaps regarding forestry or family meant new beginnings. Fisher’s time of bridging thought and style was also a time of sadness and personal shock; and it is perhaps when one person becomes a symbol for something lost that he himself becomes that native treasure. It is the reader’s pleasure to see Richard Thornton Fisher come alive again, share his loves, his pangs, his crowning success in being first in the forester’s Civil Service exam and eventually becoming the first director of the Harvard Forest.

The forest of life is like the forest of trees. Organic carnage turns to soil, generates more carnage. New saplings appear, then new forests, new life. How very much like old trees are old families. Pieces fit together, and New England roots are thick and deep. A feel of recognition comes from inventive vocabulary, family words that particularize and endear, the old-fashioned turned phrase, the liberal use of the archaic subjunctive verb “be,” the preference for aphorizing in guise of “a man’s” problem, spellings that were transitional to today’s and often idiosyncratic, the haphazard apostrophe in contractions, the incessant dashes that turn sentences into long runiations. Within the old-fashioned syntax and word choice we can feel the life within Fisher’s bubbling mind. And suddenly he seems remarkably close. We can almost touch him, or it is he who is touching us.

It is interesting that Fisher’s commitment to forestry gave his writing-power, a focus for his sensitivity and his creativity. Trying to fit his dreamy connotative consciousness of a twilight New England he knew and remembered to a formal literary quest which he entertained was in the end fated, for the focus of his college essays was to a time of awe and bewilderment, his early childhood; once successfully superseded, his bent could not help but be part of the further institutionalizing of a sensibility long after his struggle to be on the staff of ‘The Harvard Advocate’ became an early triumph, and his euphoria within the Hasty Pudding Club experience led to an ambitious and sometimes clubby way of life.

When Professor Barrett Wendell was making him feel good about his chances of becoming an assistant and somehow making him feel bad about himself at the same time, we can hear the brittle old bones of the System cracking. RT writes home, “I’m just another muddled academic.” The English language will soon break apart under James Joyce’s “Ulysses”. A long long study of form and values is part of Fisher’s mental grinding the gears of choice. Fisher wishes to step along. And Forestry is a good way to postpone other commitments of possible universal ramification. He may have realized he simply had not lived enough to be put under the stern confines of the English department where he had to give tute­lage to Radcliffe girls in the fall of ‘98, and he wanted to get back out West. The maturing of R.T. Fisher was as fast as a burning candle. Part of the poignancy that can be shared in these letters is that tethers to “Berkshire” will drop once his parents die, and his younger sister, Eleanor, also moves out on her own domestic path. This makes a significant jog to Petersham, site of the Harvard Forest, where “Dick and Nina” will introduce her to her husband, Lawrence (Larry) Grose, an instant match. Spiritual paths are then interchanged, and what once meant “Berkshire” now mean “Petersham”. The late narrative letters show that “Berkshire” to his children will only be a dreamy phrase to be evoked in the many places that reminded RTF of his childhood home.

Any personal group of letters is a form of oral history for they come closest to the sound of a forgotten voice. Outside the analytical power of language is the emotional experience of reading. Evidence of this, and its hopeful positive effect, has already begun from the incredulity expressed by his family who have read some of the letters in the year and a half of their preparation for printing—how alive RTF seems!

The values and angles are therefore many and rich. That Fisher’s romantic Victorian & Edwardian era was neat, tidy, and lazy, is an illusion. “RT”, “Rapid Transit” to his father, was as hurried and harassed as the rest of us although his beliefs may have been more intact than ours. His was a quick pace of life, with the screech and rumble of trains, with the need to impress, to complete tasks correctly; and, fatedly, he saw, as demonstrated in the dioramas in the museum at the Harvard Forest designed by, named after, and unseen by him, the scars of abandonment move over his own wild farm. His reality was in seeing firsthand the awful hurried change that took the pastoral concepts out of rural America.
If there is a vague anomaly about the simplicities to be seen of a forest of trees or a forest of humans, it is that the complexities of change are foremost. It is here, in this pondering realm, that these letters symbolically speak. Whether of system or personality, the relinquishing of the past is most difficult as new knowledge pours in. Great are the shifts; cherished are those who hold together the de-personalization of their beliefs. And it was Dick Fisher's fate, his choice of fate, to weather the ongoing fermentation that gradually removed him from being outdoors as much as he would have liked.

Fisher did not know that President of Harvard, Charles W. Eliot, was letting the money and board meetings come together the only way they could - slowly - while he agonized about whether there would be a Forest at all. Meanwhile we find Fisher at home, Fisher with Pinchot, Fisher hearing the tick of the clock, Fisher wanting something to hang on the wall, Fisher enduring uncertainty, Fisher being coy, Fisher having to be in Worcener, Southbridge, Bridgton, Maine, and Fisher be back again, enduring musty red Cambridge in August. Family letters whistle through Housatonic Tunnel to and from Berkshire, to and from Cambridge, Boston, Washington, Dublin, New Hampshire (the Thayer home); New England's mountain symbols, Mt. Greylock and Mt. Monadnock, are also close in our shared background.

Fisher's frequently mentioned hope was that happiness be part of the outdoor heraldry. Restored, this was a form of wish for self-expression. His kind had been taught to sublimate, then elevate. It became his special talent to solve this metaphysical puzzle as a psychological endeavor. What R.T. Fisher himself conveyed, what he could not get in the English department, was that creativity, the power to perceive and artistically convey the new visual matters his famed uncle would not stop talking about, meant more than attaining expressiveness. It meant enjoying the struggle with terms, the synthesis of views. It meant giving a personality to a school of neutral trees, a particular restrained enjoyment of what one was doing. And Fisher did convey a wonderful and recognizable mix of soul and intellect, oft commented upon during his life and after his death.

These letters tell a family story. Fabulous "Uncle Abbott" gets his due, rescuing young Fisher from his Harvard Stadium ushering duties to go fishing in Dorchester Bay, and thus saving him from a side of his personality, a bit dutiful and honoring of those long tedious hours that the boy in every man must endure. One may derive a chuckle or two from the fleeting pleasures, the endurance of "The Bitter Cambridge Sabbath".

The Fisher letters also show us a matrilineal tie, strong intelligent women whose will to sustain cultural environments in rooms too often empty show one clear reason why some families stay connected and others disperse. RTF's mother is the one who sets up the Boston Sunday visits, keeps the hearth, does the receiving, keeps track of who is who, who is where. She has all brother Abbott's talents and the self-restraint he lacked. She is a mate and a wife, and mornings she spent drawing flower compositions for Prang & Company lithographers. Her work was seen in card shops around the country. She is the balance beam for a species inclined to puff things up into ideals, and her kitchen brings out the warm blood of those who would strain mightily up to their ideas before collapsing in need for affectionate response. Family continuity and educational ethic move over the landscape imbued with meanings, and generations and the century are tied together. The women reined in the men whose tendencies were to try for a bit much of the "manly" theory business and take the women for granted. Within the inevitable segmentation of the outer world, the women succeed in preventing the segmentation of their families. This is the era of letter-writing, and these letters go back to the camaraderie of Ralph Waldo Emerson's father and Gideon Thayer, founder of the old private school, Chauny Hall, in the 1810's. If these letters were arrows, the first archers would be educated New England pioneers whose eighteenth century hands were those of everyday writers, readers, and families. RTF is therefore our rustic, our sophisticate dreamer, pursuing his favorite pastime in his favorite setting: a walk in the woods.

As editor I had early thought of "post-transcendentalism" as an appropriate term. And it is worthwhile to stress grandfathers like Fisher's grandfather, William Henry Thayer, inwardly dismayed with the Industrial Age and the squalor of the city. The woods and mountains meant choices. In the background is the world of categorization, of flora and fauna, of the specialty world of botanist Louis Agassiz, of the belated humanizing of higher education. The RTF letters seem worlds - "straight, swift, sure" - and give to us a New England we want; a renewal of family association. If God is in such a world of nature, indeed there sings the terrestrial nobility. Anyone about to delve into these letters may read what Fisher read, in the trees, in the world around him and in what he hoped was there.

Fisher, it is my hope as an editor and grandson, will be seen beyond the intelligently bemused portrait in the Harvard Forestry School; here is a man who transformed his identity struggles and achieved the best passion of all, that which unifies opposites into the magnanimity of his race, assuming that the best part of life is the bravery to undergo doubt and to pass beneath Absolutes to the other side, to new individuality (and a greater challenge) for traditional expressive fervor. This makes him very much an individual, very much an admirable American.

These letters are therefore sources for ourselves; and, if I get my thesis right, they help explain the falling leaves, why a world broken into parts must come together again. Fisher's letters bring scattered boundaries together, of geography, heart, and the loving inclinations we must deal with. They include Germany, Washington, The West, Naushon Island, Massachusetts towns, Harvard University, Petersham, Crane's Beach, first encounters, and all the other essential New England experiences; a galaxy for living, not a graveyard for life. RTF needed to write, so let us listen.
Top: Ellen Bowdich Thayer Fisher as a young woman

Bottom: Ellen as an older woman, drawing on the piazza
Dear papa:
I arrived safely in Boston and Mrs. Brown met us.
This morning I had to forgo one of my souvenirs, but I'll buy one tomorrow.
Yours affectionately,
R. T. F.

April 21st

Dear Mama:
I am having a lovely time; I have been to the Agassiz and Peabody Museums and seen John. You didn't understand about the necktie; it was merely a silly cheat.
Yours affectionately,
R. T. F.

Sunday, April 28th

Dear Mama:
Today I am going with Percy and Charlie Stellings to visit the Harvard Yard in the early morning. I have seen Dr. Chase's ditch and the chemical history room. Where was Uncle John? There is a Burglar crystal 3 feet in diameter.
Yours affectionately,
R. T. F.

Top Left: Dr. Wm. Henry Thayer holding baby Richard, 1876
Top Right: Richard, age seven
Bottom: Richard, age fourteen
At the elementary level, young Richard was schooled at home under his father in his "Crestalbon Home School for Boys" in Berkshire, few letters existing from this time. The following letters are from the time he is sent to live in Chicago with his older sister Faith and her husband, Rev. William Wallace Fenn. Here he attends the Harvard School, and from this point on, he would only be a seasonal visitor where he grew up, thus explaining his perennial desire to return there. From these letters we can surmise that RTF is a normal boy, apt in most ways, unafraid of rhetoric or Latin. He saw the Chicago World's Fair of 1892, played football. He was good to baby Dorothy, and got in a dance or two with the World Fair organizer's daughter.

I. SCHOOLBOY, 1883 - 1893

June 17th 1890

Dear Gramp,

I write to send you a happy new year, and to wish you my happy returns of the day.

You will be glad to know that Ted and I intend to go to Dublin, right after the fourth of July. I must stop here, as Ted is waiting for me to go with him after turtles.

Yours affectionately.

Richard T. Fisher

First Unitarian Society of Chicago
S.E. Cor. 23d St, and Michigan Ave.

Mar. 11th

Dear Mother,

Here has come another Sunday and a fine one too. I have been without a coat for three or four days and it is really warm.

I have just forgone a great pleasure for your wishes. Yesterday the school team played football in the great building where they have military
tournaments, "Tattersalls". They needed me to play and I refused to, but sat and explained the game to a crowd of girls. Only one (I mean player) was hurt and he only strained his back a little. I have just finished the Algebra book and have no more compulsory work to do now. But I am going back over the book alone and do all the examples which I have failed to do or not understood when I went over it. Schobby has gone east for a week or two to visit the colleges and we miss him a good deal. In Physics we had one Friday an interesting experiment. Treating a Mercury this moment. I learned for the first time how they find altitudes by finding the temperature at which water boils. I went to a charity German with Faith on Friday where I had only a moderately good time as the majority were wretched dancers and you must know I am really quite a dancer now and am wed to dancing with girls on whose head a glass of water could almost be sat and not spill. I could not help but learn with girls who had been to such a dancing school as Bournique's all their lives. lovingly Dick.

Dear Father and Mother,

This is a great place and I am already feeling "waked up".

On Sunday Uncle Frank came to see us and we walked out to Washington Park, which is way ahead of Prospect. We could see the world's fair building about half a mile off, one of which Uncle Frank said covered 35 acres.

I am just getting used to school, though I am not quite settled yet. Prof. Schobinger had a lot of trouble getting me arranged and as I would have to study more than any boy in the school to be ready in June, he thinks I better take two years. He is going to write to you soon.

I like the teachers very much, especially Mr. Schobinger. I have already made a good deal of a fool of myself in Algebra. Mr. Ford the teacher is very quick, and when he rattles an example and affixes the name of the boy so closely that it startles you, it rattles me so that I make foolish mistakes.

It is taking me quite a while to learn how to study while a recitation is going on, but I suppose I shall in time. Your affectionate son, Richard.

Dear Father and Mother,

Faith wants me to ask you, Mama, to measure Aunt Sue's sofa pillow for her, so that she can make a cover for it.

I got my report on Tuesday, and you will see by it that I just passed with a little to spare.

Yesterday we went out to Lake Forest University to play the L.F. Academys. When we got there we found we had to play men and not boys, for they had run in six great fellows from the University eleven and the five were huge. In fact their team averaged 155, while we averaged 140. But there was no getting around it so we played, while the spectators shouted "look at the pygmies". I daresay we felt a little nervous before the game, I did at least. But when we began they found it was not all fine, for we repeatedly held them back for four downs and got the ball, only to lose it in the same way, so that it was 15 minutes before they got a touchdown. At last they got the ball within 30 yards of our goal and we held them on downs thus getting the ball. Then they met their Waterloo for finding that we could not get around the ends, our captain had us "buck" the center every time. Their line was as fall of holes as a seive, for every time the ball was snapped, our halfbacks would strike the line like a pile driver and falling in behind we would rush them through for big gains. By this time they were getting scared, and their captain kept yelling "don't let them score boys, go into them hard!" I tell you it was exciting rushing those big fellows nearer and nearer within 3 feet of the line! Then our captain fooled them with a neat trick, for when the ball was snapped we all massed as if for another center buck, while our halfback rushed around the end and over the line scoring a touchdown for us. Although they beat us 12-4, we got lots of praise and everyone said we played a stiff game and at any rate we had a fine time going out there in the cars. Only one accident happened. Our quarterback strained his knee so that he could not walk and the doctor said he would have to be still a few days or he might get water on it.

Lake Forest is quite a pretty place being literally a large forest on the lake, with the college buildings scattered through it and here and there a fine dwelling house. It made me quite homesick to be out there the place looked so much like real woods. I am sure this letter won't be very satisfactory but nothing at all has happened here this week. Nevertheless I love you all just as much and would give a small fortune to see old Rex. With lots of love to all, tell Gramp I will write to him soon. Dick.

Remember me to Nelly and tell her I would like to hear from her.
Feb 4th

Dear Mother,

I am sorry to hear that those trousers are only 37 1/2 inches long for mine are 44 on the outside seam. So I suppose they are out of the question. But if I can wear the coats I can get any odd pair of trousers to go with them in Spring. Perhaps those trousers would do if they can be let down a good deal. As to the dress suit, I can wear the coat and vest and I can get another pair of trousers next year.

Faith wishes me to expatiate on the fact that Wallace is a great deal better and slept all night so that she feels like a new person. Friday night I went to the dramatics at the church, Leeds Mitchell and I and Lannie. We each took a girl and had a fine time. Leeds and I didn't lose anything by it for Florence Partridge, whom I took, made the stipulation that she should pay for herself and for Fannie Wormer whom Leeds took or she wouldn't go. The play was fine and I have a good mind to go again Monday night. If Percy is still there tell him that I have sent what he asked for, and that I shall write him to-day. Lovingly, Dick.

June 13th

Dear Papa,

Your letter has just come and I want to answer you right away. You may be assured that I am putting all my energy on Algebra. Mr. S. says that partly owing to incompetent teaching in the early winter, and partly to the fact that I have been trying to catch his class till lately, my preparation is very hurried and my chances only fair. That week I got a D was owing to a misunderstanding. He gave us some sample papers that week and most of us thought we couldn't look in the book whereas he wanted us to. History and Algebra I am almost sure to be conditioning on, but I feel pretty sure, perhaps too sure for safety, and Mr. S. said I had as good chances as any other boy, barring accidents. I am in school from 9 to 4:30 and I don't think I could stand many weeks, for my head every afternoon at the recitation is so hot, and yesterday I went to sleep in my chair.

Mr. Leland told me to-day that what studying I could do in the last 2 weeks on Greek and Latin would not make much difference and so I can put all my time on Greek history. We have finished Roman, and have begun to review Greek which the other boys studied early in the winter, and which you will remember I have not seen for 2 years, so it is hard for me. Lovingly, Dick.

Dear Uncle Abbott and Gra, May 8th

I am just bubbling over with birdiness for I have had two days of real fun in my year out here. I rode 43 on horseback north along the lake shore to the Wisconsin line. The country up there for a good ways back from the lake is a succession of little ridges, ideal snipe marshes in which I scared up a dozen English snipe in walking a 100 yards. On my way up there I saw some passenger pigeons but couldn't shoot as the horse wasn't used to a gun and there was a buggy going by. After I got up there I started across these ridges towards the lakes. Almost the first marsh I came to I saw a sora running in the trees. I shot him and skinned him with an old rusty knife and sand but nevertheless he came out fine except for a stretched neck. I did not shoot any snipe as it was against the law and I knew we had one. After a mile of these ridges, I got to the beautiful hard beach of Lake Michigan, which (the lake) is as blue and clear here as the ocean. Such a surf was coming in as I have never seen on the ocean, and as I was watching it two sandpipers came whirling by. I shot and one fell and when I picked him up I saw the most exquisite creature I think I have ever seen, a sanderling. I did not skin him then but brought him home. He is very fat and may not come out well but you shall have him soon. Twice up there I saw an almost unmistakable black throated bunting but could not get him. Imagine to yourself a woodchuck in size between a red and grey squirrel with stripes on his back like a chipmunk, and you have the queer little gophers that were everywhere scrambling for their holes. Purple martins were everywhere, towhees imitating Ben* so that when I shut my eyes I almost thought I was in Dublin.

Now comes what you will best like to hear. On the next day I went down to the same place from the house where I was staying and in the first marsh which I came to I saw two birds running which I took to be Sandpipers. I followed and shot one on the ground and then the other as he was going away. Much to my delight and “gloats” I saw the beautiful cuckoo-like backs of two killdeers! I skinned the best one with the same tool and he came out fairly well, though I had to salt him after I got home and I have fixed him in an unusual way so as to show his wings. The sand which you will see in the killdeer is from the shores of the “Mighty inland water”. I got Gra and Galla’s letters to-day and they are worth a lot of woodsiness. I am sure Galla you will be interested in this letter too, but I will write you one for yourself as soon as I can get time from study.
I will send those birds very soon with that long delayed broad-bill for which I have just found a box. What gloats we will have when I get to Dublin and how beautiful the birds must be now! Goodbye with lots of love from Dick.

I saw to-day a fine red-headed W. in the middle of the city flying from telegraph pole to telegraph pole and apparently happy.

* Dick’s pet crow back in Berkshire

Dec. 3rd

Dear Mother and Father,

It is Sat. night and I am sitting down to write to you so that I shall not forget what I want to say. The football season is practically over, so I went downtown today and got my hair cut and cleaned. It was as long as an ancient Greek’s and full of a very complete collection of sand and gravel collected in different parts of the city and out at Lake Forest. The man who cut my hair was born in Cheshire and brought up in North Adams and I had a nice talk with him.

When we played out at Lake Forest there was a reporter on the Lake Forest University paper around, who got the names of everyone of our team from one of our fellows. And this morning I heard that paper said that a feature of the game was the playing of Fisher and Fargo, our captain. It must have been a mistake for several played better than I did.

As to the boys at school, I don’t think I ever met nicer boys in my life, except Percy. In particular I like Lee Fargo and John Walsh. They are both splendid fellows, Walsh in particular, and if he likes me half as much as I like him we are sure to be everlasting friends. I spent every afternoon last week in or around Walsh’s house. He had been a mighty good friend to me in my first weeks of homesickness also.

I just found out that another nice fellow at the school, one Walter Smith, is a cousin to the Crane’s in Dalton and has visited there. He knows of several of our friends in Pittsfield too.

About a week ago, when I went into recitation, Clifford Buckingham’s bulky form pushed itself into my line of vision. He used to live in the house next to the school. I am going now to hunt for my 1st weeks report to send to you. I don’t think this week’s has come yet.

With love to Rex and everybody. Lovingly, Dick

Dec 31st ’93

Dear Papa,

I got your last check day before yesterday and thank you all for both muchly. I am not sure that I shall use any of it for a racquet but rather keep it for more necessary things.

I am getting heartily tired of vacation, for loafing is a laborious job. I went down to school day before yesterday and got some books in order to kill time in a profitable way. I shall go back to school on Wednesday with a good deal of pleasure.

I wish you could see Dorothy now. She is more fun than forty clowns. There is positively no word she does not attempt. She came in here with an old cap on which I used to wear when I played football. When she got where I could see her, she began to bob up and down and said, “Dick football”. It sounds flat on paper, I know, but it was far from flat as she said it. I just now asked her what she wanted to say to you, she made one of her inimitable little bows and said with a rising inflection, “How-do”.

I have two reports to send you, but I have lost one down at church, nonetheless, as they are both alike it doesn’t much. Lovingly, Dick.

Jan 7th 1894

Dear Mother,

I got your letter yesterday and was very sorry to hear of Aunt Ester’s death. I always thought that she was more healthy than any of them. Dorothy was trying to balance her china doll Topsy on my knee just now while I was writing and she (the doll) fell and broke her head. Dorothy is standing pointing at the place where she fell and blubbering “Boke top, ownself.”

I have been to a very swell and most delightful dance this week, carpet to the curbstone and a man to yell for carriages. I danced every one of 21 dances and am really quite an expert now under the tuition at odd times previously of Sidney Mitchell and Blanche Barrett. I met a lot of new girls. I had two dances with Alice Higinbotham and one with Arline Peck both very pretty and jolly, whose fathers are Pres. and vice-president of the Fair. Ginevra Fuller, who gave the party, know the Bartlett twins, having met them at Beach Bluff. On Tuesday, I went to Grace Greene’s reception where the chief occupation was getting dances for the evening at the Fuller’s. I haven’t been able to find that report but I will try to have a
duplicate made out if you will tell me what week is lacking. Those neckties were fine, that is, those wide ones. I don't know whether I can use the others as I am not an old man and haven't got any collars to tie them on. Papa's kind of collar would take them.

Lovingly, Dick

Jan. 19 '94

Dear Mother,

I hope you got my letter telling you that those ties not only would do but they were excellent. I read in Faith's letter that you had some clothes from Keene. I say of course keep that overcoat for Papa for I can make this go till next winter. But if there is any undercoat, I mean an ordinary one like the one to my new suit, I should like it, for that new one will not last till Spring. If there are any other articles of apparel that would fit me I say send 'em on. I hope you notice an improvement in my writing for I am trying to improve if for Schobby's sake, if not for my own.

I certainly hope that miserable little Wallace will get better soon, for I never saw such a looking head in all my life. It is one baked, caked and bleedy red expanse of seething sores. I don't wonder that he yelps all night. But Gumpy continues to grow in all directions. There is nothing that she does not attempt to say or do.

Tonight I have been down to see the Nicholses, but they were not at home so I came back and put in some studying. I am somewhat consoled for getting another C in Physics by the fact that the rest of the class got E and that I got A in Latin and English. Papers marked by the University examiner, you understand.

Faith says she wrote to Gramp and didn't have time to write to both. She presumes Will mailed the letter this AM. But they are both decidedly hazy on the subject. Lovingly, Dick

Feb 11 '94

Dear Mother,

I got your letter yesterday and enjoyed it muchly. Percy must have been having a regular vacation up there. How I wish I had been there too!

You needn't all be glad that little Eczema is better for he is broken out again worse than ever and has got a bad cold besides. Dorothy also has got one. Now Augusta has just shown me another tremendous boil on the top of Wallace's head and he is a very wheezy and forlorn object.

We had our midwinter exams on Friday and as usual I didn't distinguish myself particularly. I have really got to learn to think clearly on an exam if I expect to get through well on my finals. The dean of Harvard is staying with the Furnaces and if J. blacks his foot well he may get a good room at college.

Wallace is just now coughing fiercely and very much as if he had whooping cough. I hope he hasn't for I am afraid I would get it then. I am stingy again for I am off to church.

Lovingly, Dick.

(from Chicago)

That was the butcher who knew his business! In his shop you would not need a calendar to tell you it was Christmas Eve. The very minute you stepped in the door, and saw the fat old proprietor talking and laughing with his customers, and the white aproned clerks bustling cheerfully about among the crates and the boxes and plucked fowls, you knew you were going to get more than your mere purchase. In that bright store, they played a regular game of kindness; and what with the lights, and the festoons of colored paper all about the walls, and the garlands in the ceiling, and all the rows and pyramids of fragrant fruits, meats, and cheese, for a delicious background, you felt you had found skillful players.
Richard Thornton Fisher, Harvard University, Class of 1898
Beneath the space of time let us imagine a burst of a puff of smoke and a train whistle on the old Fitchburg-Albany Line. Getting to Cambridge in 1894, RTF briefly keeps a diary, a solemn little tome full of useless global information, fleshed out with mini-atlas and almanac, pretty in the graphics. In 1895, Grover Cleveland is president. The cost of mailing a letter is two cents, as it will be into the 1920's.

A young Harvard man bored with Lab could check up on the Great Lakes, get the moon phases, the latitude, the penumbras, and alarmingly, some critical antidotes too, like: “Never make contracts on a Sunday, with a minor, or with a lunatic, or with a drunk”. Another page includes “tests of death (hold mirror to mouth; push pin into flesh)”. “For Cinders in the Eye, rub the other eye.” Clothing on fire? “Don’t run; don’t get excited.”

A diary opens on a new world order while offering tiny pages for critical daily reminders. In the midst of RTF’s academic orbit, New England is still gaining weight - from 1880 to 1890 New Bedford’s population has jumped from 21,915 to 35,637. The diary he will abandon after only a month and a half.

RTF, a nineteen year-old freshman, makes his first entry on “Friday 4th” of January of 1895. In crabbed and hurried scrawl he writes: “Went up to Helen’s in the evening to see Beatrice Key. Met Miss Lambert who proposed a seminar in Hist. I think it will be a stimulation to show her I know something of the Popes and feudalism. The next day “Harvard” goes skating on Fresh Pond and on Sunday he “stayed at home and tryed to study”. More: “Vacation has made it hard to begin” and “Did not go to church or to chapel”. The pages are blank until Fri 18th when he records visits to Helen Lambert; then it is off to tea, library, home to 46 Perkins Hall. Finally, on Tues 22nd, RTF ponders the unanswerable, “I wonder if a fellow ought to enjoy girls in a general & impersonal way or to let his intercourse with them be little rehearsals of future proposals or courtings?”

The diary notes the drudgery of “grinding”, the perplexity of Greek. “To kill” an exam means “acing it”, exams in English and Chemistry. RTF hoofs over to dinner with good old Beatrice, then “mixing study, music, and conversations” with the likes of old friend H. I. Bowditch, George Pierpont, and John Carpenter,
a musician. Harriet Wheeler sends our man “a pretty and pathetic note that acknowledged the flowers I sent her”. Then it is into Boston with a friend to watch “a man try to come out of a turnstile meant for people going in”. The glee club does not pan out; however, the next year he joins the masthead of the literary “The Advocate”. Then, on Tuesday Feb 5th, another little gem about women, “I went in and forgot my identity with H.W. (Harriet Wheeler) for two hours. She is a perfectly innocent creature of nature and it is a pleasure not to have to make an effort to be intellectual and have some openness but first to talk as one animal to another, what he or she thinks & feels.” He spies “Aunt Kate” on Beacon Street during his “systematic loafing”. He signs on for the freshman baseball team, a “squad of misfits”, notes Bill Hoyt “does almost 11 feet in the pole vault”.

The last February entry, RTF waxes about an English essay of a storm in Chicago, then the little leather book peters out with a fitful mention of “playing ball”, “sported tail in the evening”, a “Miss Emerson” (a transcendental niece?). RTF edges closer to the fairer sex. “The lass is made rather nervous by hitching my chair up nearer and nearer and whispering now and then”.

II. HARVARD LETTERS, 1895 - 1899

from a Harvard Freshman, 1895
(“The Bitter Cambridge Sabbath”)

Jan 6th ‘95

Dear Mother and Father,

It already seems as if I had been back a week so much has been crowded into these three days.

Uncle Abbott and I had a fine healthy time. We took long walks every afternoon and went once down to Rockaway beach where we shot some gulls. Every night I went to bed by nine o’clock and came back here feeling quite stocked up. Uncle George was away but I stayed over night with Aunt Kate and to dinner with Aunt Lizzie. All the three daughters happened to be there, and one of their husbands. I don’t know which Dr. Matherson had gone to Florida. Must I go to an oculist in B.?
Life in Letters of Richard T. Fisher

is for me to learn and how much more God there is in a fellow like that than in a hundred one-sided charity missionaries.
Lovingly Dick

Jan. 27th

Dear Mother and Father,

The laundry and your letters came and both were welcome. I shall have to say "especially the laundry". It is so long since I have had clean clothes on hand.

My first exam comes to-morrow and I am not any too confident over it. It is Greek and half the legal phrases of Lysias and half the comparatively easy poetry of Homer. I cannot remember that Lysias and even the speeches I have read I can hardly read now.

This morning Fales and I went over to hear Stoppard Brooke who preached in Mr. Crothers' church. He preached of the advantage of feeling and the necessity of living so that you can rise above your habits. I don't quite now see the connection between what he said and a chapter in James's book or Prof. Palmer's saying that we must make our life a habit, begin by getting in the habit of being thoughtful and unselfish and it will be natural. I supposed he means if you live with thoughtful and unselfish people you will get in that habit unconsciously and that it all depends on the circumstances in which you are.

I am going to knock off studying for the rest of to-day and trust to a good night's rest to pull me through the examination to-morrow. Doll is coming out this afternoon and I am going to take him up to the Hinckley's. He met them last summer at Magnolia. Helen Hinckley is a girl that wears. She has treated me first as if I were one of the family and I feel just as if it were home up there. Almost! I TELL you all these people who, each in their own way, have been so kind to me, as they would be to any one, make me feel very small indeed wish I could profit by the example of each one. I must get ready for Dell and the Hinckleys so good bye. Lovingly Dick

Feb. 24th '95

Dear Mother & Father,

Your letter came and the laundry, and I have asked Dr. Vaughan about going to Dr. Williams and he says I can go if I wish but that Dr. W. has not the practice he used to have. I don't like the idea of begging a man to take me for nothing but if you want me to I will go to Dr. W.

I have been doing nothing for a week but loaf around, run, pull weights and talk heresy at the supper table. There are two or three fellows at our table who are

“head leaders” of the St. Pauls society here and think they have got religion in its bed rock form. The other night, the conversation got around to churchman and one of them asked me if I believe in the Bible. I told him “no”. And how they did lay it in to me! I always feel as if it were rather vulgar to air your opinions in public, especially when you don't know how to prove them, and so I felt a little ashamed afterwards to have said so much. I told them I didn't believe in miracles and that Christ wouldn't have done one if he could. Finally they all consigned me to hell I am sure. I have great fun with them though. You know Barrett Huntington is head and ears in that society and they are always getting different God-descended droolers to talk to them in the evening.

Did I tell you I am singing on the freshman glee club? I don't know whether I shall stay on or not but I have been to 4 or 5 rehearsals and have learned a lot. I am singing 2nd tenor and I can see that I am not any worse than several others of the 2nd tenors. It's rather a good thing for me for I have given up two dances already to rehearsals which last only till 8:30, and haven't been to a dance since just after Xmas.

This evening I am going in to tea at the Nichol's (Uncle A's friends you know) and Mrs. Smyth (Daisy Pumpey) is going to be there too. Last Sat. (a week ago) I was at the Hinckley's to supper and on Sunday afternoon refused another bid to supper. I must send you the note Mrs. H. wrote. I haven't heard from Faith yet and I wrote to her as much as Will. Dick

Cambridge
March 13, 1895

Dear Mother & Father,

Will arrived and I was glad to see him. He got back from Portland all worn out and did not seem himself. Your note in the bag was my first knowledge of the 25 dollars, for Will departed to Boston on Sat. without saying anything about it. I am going in to dine with him tonight - I shall mention it. I guess by the time I get my clothes, some new books and pay for coal I shall have very little left for that picture which I fully intend to get soon.

Uncle A. rushed out for a minute or two last week and I had a half an hour with him. He was his usual dear self, with brown paper parcel containing an eider duck under one arm, and a silk handkerchief tied around the place whence, as he said, "his occipital fruiga had been trimmed". The day after he came, Howard Dwight came up, the one I used to know in Dublin, and asked me out to his house in Brookline over Sun. I went & enjoyed Mr. and Mrs. Dwight's homey ways very much. I met there a Miss Wright or White, who knew you, Mama, in Keene. Howard & I took a long walk into some unexpectedly long & quite country-like "real" woods and I could quite smell the Spring. I also met Mrs. Gage the other
Dear Mother,

The check came and was glad to get it as the Ulster, the game and books etc. had used up all I had before.

No, I haven't presented my letters of introduction for I haven't had a minute's time. You don't know how the time flies.

The Whitings want me to go to them for Thanksgiving. It costs about 60 cents in all but I guess I ought to go.

Fritter and I went to Jerry Smith's to dinner, (perhaps I told you?) and I enjoyed hearing more about Papa in college than I ever did before.

You tell Papa that I got into Greek D, the advanced section of C & B on the basis of a B+ in the hour exam. So good night, lovingly Dick

Dear Mother and Father,

I have at last been to have my eyes examined. I went to Dr. Williams and found him very pleasant and glad to see me. He made me look at all sorts of print and I could read the smallest print he had in his collection even with the bad eye. So he said that glasses were not for me but that my eyes were a little more unplaned than they ought to be. Therefore he gave me two prescriptions, one for the outer lids and a cocaine mixture to drop into the eyes. So you see there is nothing to be scared about yet.

The reason I don't tell you my other marks was not because they were bad, but because I didn't know them. I have heard through a friend common to me and Prof. Shaler is another interesting and witty lecturer and my seat in that wretched Fogg Art Museum is so far back that I can scarcely hear half of what he says. I think I shall become more and more interested in Geology however. In English 22 I had a pleasant little surprise last Tuesday, for Gates read my theme in the lecture and except for some small points in technique he said it was a "surprisingly vivid description with very vigorous movement." He rather sat on the last page though, which I had written in what he called "red ink" metrical (?) prose.

Where has my bag of clean clothes gone to? I haven't seen it for nearly two weeks. I am beginning to fear that it has been lost. I haven't heard a word of or from Faith this fall. I think I shall write to her soon. Will sent me a clipping a few days ago to illustrate "English as she is spoken in Chicago." lovingly Dick

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Sunday
Nov. 3, 1895

Here is come a day that makes me verily homesick. A still, cold day that makes me smell the woods and hate the church bells and electric cars. I seem to be rather discontented just now in a way. I guess I must work harder and find out what I want to do, to get over my restlessness.

Did I tell you I went up and called on Prof. Greenough the other night? He's as genial as ever but I really can't agree with him disliking Prof. Norton*, at least in my present state of PERSONAL ignorance of Prof. Norton. I do thoroughly enjoy hearing him talk. As he stands there behind his desk with his knees slightly bent, his hands in his pockets, and his shoulders stooping you would take him for an awkward schoolboy if you covered his face. But somehow his kindly face with its deep lines and his thin white hair change that whole impression. There's a look about him when he stands and his dignity when he walks that make you feel he really is a great and beautiful character. And then when he diverges as he often does, to the moral side of his descriptions, or when he describes some great man, as he did President Quincy yesterday, there is an appreciative, sensitive tone in his voice that makes you thoroughly share his feelings and tingle over them. Yet all this he says without the slightest gesture and without raising his voice above a steady monotone. My Geology lectures are as exasperating as they are interesting, for Prof. Shaler is another interesting and witty lecturer and my seat in that wretched Fogg Art Museum is so far back that I can scarcely hear half of what he says. I think I shall become more and more interested in Geology however. In English 22 I had a pleasant little surprise last Tuesday, for Gates read my theme in the lecture and except for some small points in technique he said it was a "surprisingly vivid description with very vigorous movement." He rather sat on the last page though, which I had written in what he called "red ink" metrical (?) prose.

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* Charles Eliot Norton, Professor of the History of Art, 1875-08, man of letters, had stimulating influence on his times.
the legs so that no soft goods have a show with me. I have still money enough for
the picture. I have about 15 dollars. But if you think I better have some more
outer covering I shall need some more.

lovingly Dick

(no date)

This being Saturday and therefore less busy than Sunday, I am going to begin
my letter. Tomorrow I shall have to grind most of the morning on Philosophy, in
which there is to be an exam on Monday. And when I get that job done, or at least
when I leave it, I am going out to Lexington with Chauncey Stillman.

Of the week which has just gone you may get some idea (unusual idea) when
I tell you that I have not yet been able to go in town for that coat and vest which I
left to be fixed the week before I came home. But my written work is about over; I
finished my rewritten forensic to-day, and my Benedict then is long since passed in;
so that dailies will be all that is left henceforth. Now it behooves me to toll at
the lives of the statesmen and the constitutional histories. Otherwise I shall actu­
ally fail in that accursed History 13. With all my efforts, which, unless I am
growing imbecile, are strenuous, I continue to get low marks on weekly papers.
The course is a nightmare to me. I am letting everything go to devote my whole
time to it.

The two philosophies I can work up in a day or two; but for the exam on
Monday, being still bereft of my valuable notebook, I shall have to scramble to
learn anything. Never let me take a law course again. It is enough for me to learn
all around the blasted subject, and so find out what place it holds, in human
thought and conduct.

Last night I was invited by the Radcliffe English Club to hear Prof. Norton
read Kipling. I sat among many females in a little octagonal room, and heard
him talk and read for more than an hour. With the same beaming kindness that I
knew so well in Fine Arts 3, he spoke of the enlarging, vivifying effect of a love
of poetry, and then, after reading some Tennyson & Browning read us the song of
the _zanzo_, McAndrew’s hymns, and the King. You must get Uncle Ed’s Seven
Seas and read it. It’s charming. R.T.F.

This place is more than ever suggestive of the very heart of things. The thor­
ough epic aims of life. I turn my back on myself and simply listen and watch,
finding keen happy affairs taking place in my brain in swift procession. It is all
the subtleness of congenial, inspiring Uncle A. We two daily happily about the
woods half the day, talking uncontrollably, and ever returning to adoring discus­sion
of Stevenson. I am learning more of the mighty chords he struck than ever
ever occurred to me. His art is wonderfully pure and ringing compared to the
men of schools. He is the longest, clearest vista through which the world has seen
God, that has opened to human view since Shakespeare. And even this vibration
to his thought may change with my maturing judge to a wave which rolls the
Scotchman to an equal height with the eternal William. We really must all have
and know those perfect poems of his, which live in a volume called
“Underwoods”. I never heard what critics said of them, but as Uncle A. says,
“they’re awful good moralizing”. There’s no padding anywhere in them. They
seem built everywhere of stuff carved right out of a worshipping soul.

Of a person who has been here several times, it would be great fun to talk.
She is a wise young Mrs. Cabot, whose almost complete deafness is only the vehi­
acle which carries her cheerful gentleness and pretty patience most swiftly to your
recognition. Her face too, which soon impressed me with its subtile (subtle)
attractive charme of calm eyes and curling mouth, pronounced by Uncle A. to have
all the elements of real classic beauty. It’s cracking up time now, not only because
of the approach of lunch, but of the hour ripe for the end of my talk.
Love to Faith & Eleanor!

I have been having a delightfully busy time since I got here and an unexpect­edly expensive one. I have had to buy a good many books and in addition to sev­eral required articles for the room, I find that my feet and head need coverings of a
more substantial nature. These and several other items will use up most of the
money I have now so that I shall need some to keep going on as soon as you can
send it conveniently.

Since I got here I have taken upon myself the responsibility of making one
change in my course. As Prof. Norton only has the first half of Fine Arts 3, I have decided to take it as a half course and substitute for the other half a course called English 9. This course meets once a week all through the year and takes up Prose Writers of the nineteenth century. The omission of the second half of Fine Arts was a suggestion of Will's and English 9 I am sure is going to be interesting and good for me.

I am going in to see Dr. Greenleaf tomorrow, for my eyes have already begun to bother me in the lamplight and even when I don't use them.

My clothes bag will not be very full this time, you, Mama, can send the yellow cushion you were going to give me and anything else which will brighten up a wall, anything you can spare.

Tell Faith I was to see those teacups. I will write again before Sunday and tell more.

Lovingly, Dick

Sun
Nov. 1st '96

Your Wednesday letter was neglected this week through sheer breathless absorption in an unprecedented rush of events. These were so many and varied, that I am afraid I can not give a coherent account of them in this letter. However, I shall not often omit my mid-week letter.

Chief among the affairs of the last few days, I recall an interview with the dean and B. Wendell; the meeting of the Ornithological society where I chimed in Uncle A's law; the Indian football game yesterday; an invitation from the H.U.F.A. to usher at the Princeton game; and a note from Mrs. Cabot asking me to come over there and take tea to-day. My visit to the dean was a sort of appeal to the court of last resort. I had petitioned, after a conference with my zoology instructors to drop Zoology and take English 10; but Mr. Cram, the reader, informed me that my petition would probably not be granted. Therefore I went to the dean and received his advice to go straight to the committee on exchanges and of courses. Their consent to my proposal instantly given when they heard my reason.

This change of work seems rather unwarranted after my decision to go on with Zoology, but I fully believe I have acted for the best. Dr. Davenport of Zoology 1, to whom I went for an account of the future work in the course, urgently advised me to avoid such minute scrutiny if my eyes were at all feeble. And the strain of the work would not have lessened as I went on. My substitute for Zoo. is English 10; elocution, under Prof Hayes. One has to speak for many and varied, from a high platform.

B. Wendell's work is grievously discouraging. His demands are so exacting, so coldly mechanical that all my pleasure and so ability is withered like a leaf. I cannot say what I want to, I cannot even decide what I want to say but must struggle and grope, ridden by his commands, to determine exactly what is to be said and say it in precisely the right words.

* Carlisle Indians, Carlisle college for Indians

Dear People,

I have just finished writing a long theme for English and I have completely exhausted my literary fervor and fever. I told them about a place up on Greylock that I have been to and I am only afraid that in my effort to do it appreciatively as we were directed in such subjects to do, I may have overdone the feeling. That English course is going to be great fun and I shall enjoy it. I am also looking forward to the assignment of Prof. Norton in Fine Arts. His thoughts and ideas are beautiful but I wish he wouldn't talk into his closed hand.

Last night I went to dine at the Stearns's really beautiful rural home in Longwood and enjoyed seeing Mrs. Stearns again very much. In the evening Marshall and I went to ride with Miss Hobbs a while. I remember what you said about the Langs and asked her if she knew them. She said she went there quite often on Sundays and asked me to go with her sometime.

I have a chance to do a seemingly quite noble act on Bloody Monday night. I had stopped in Marshall Stearn's room on my way to bed, having just left a large gang of fellows who sit at our table and other of '98 whom I knew, over in the Yard. Sudderily there was a bang on Marshall's door and as someone opened the letter slide I saw the crowd I had just left. Having found nothing exciting in the Yard they had hunted up a freshman and were going to have some fun with him. Seeing me there they called loudly for me to let them in. Of course, being on the other side of the door I had no right to let them in and they saw the sense in this and went away. Later they found some freshmen who were not so fortunate.

No bag has arrived yet, to come down to domestic matters, and of a variety I shall soon need to expend a little cash on clothes. The rooms look pretty well, but you don't happen to have a curtain do you, to go in our bedroom door? You see we still look bare in spots and need color of some kind to warm the room.

Lovingly, ol' Dick
Nov. 24, '96

With the development of weekly reading in Logic and Zoology, the preparation of forensics, I shall be effectively buried. In English 12, Barrett W. has laid out a masterly scheme of work. On Monday we hand in a theme suggested by reading our daily pabulum; on Tuesday, a long theme connected with the particular branch of rhetoric we happen that week to be studying; on Wednesday, a summary in a page, of the Tuesday's lecture; on Thursday, a paper written in class on some question touching the chap. in Barrett's Eng. Composition which we are supposed to have prepared; and on Saturday, a theme based on actual observation of life. This curriculum will last to the mid-years; but the second half year will be devoted to the creation of a finished piece of writing, a short novel, treatise, or argumentation work. This arrangement with lectures and personal conferences with the instructors, constitutes a fairly thorough training in English composition.

The zoology I guess can stay in my list of studies. I think I can arrange to stand a weekly squint, if I take pains to regulate the light. I perceive that I have already said this bit of news.

Why am I such a variable cuss? I have just been striving for the last half hour to write my tomorrow's theme for Barrett. I long to put down what I wish; I can feel just what sort of atmosphere I want, and exactly the rhythm I grope for; but the words slip haltingly along, the sentences all go lame, and I seem to be striving to burst some horrid bond upon my expression.

One who was going to argue about Realism, that is, against it, might ask a pretty cogent question at the very outset. He might say to the realist: "What is the use of your sort of writing anyway? If, as you tell us, your purpose is to imitate actual life on paper, to show us actuality in every aspect, you seem to be entering an unequal competition. Every reader has life inimitably presented to him at every turn. He does not care to read a book which does not tell him more than he can see himself. Books would seem, by very nature, to be the place where men go to find out that life really is worth living, even when it looks least agreeable."

Look at this sentence, for instance, from the Vicar of Wakefield: "The place of our retreat was in a little neighborhood, consisting of farmers, who tilled their own grounds, and were equal strangers to opulence and poverty". The nerve structure of this sentence, so pleasantly loose, and yet so significantly massed, is sufficient to make it pass for a master's work. But what I look at, is the gentle rhythm of the words, and the pretty sympathy of the phrasing, which show the writer to be a loving artist. What a pretty use of "neighborhood"! How much it means! And the delicate way in which he explains the moderate means of the farmers: these are the traits that make Goldsmith's style poetic as well as workmanlike.

I couldn't go to Dr. Jack last week but I am surely going this week. I guess I shall have to sign off or cut for Dr. Jack said I shouldn't be able to see much for two days at least. Won't I be an intellectual sight in glasses? But I don't care if only I can study some. Half the time I can't study in the day time lately.

Lovingly, Dick

Richard wrote weekly in his journal - encouraged by English Professor Barrett Wendell.

Friday

This morning came a note from Uncle A. at the Brunswick. It announced his arrival here tomorrow morning for a day with me; but his appearance this afternoon at 2 o'clock was what I half expected. He was on his way to the Brewster's, as he expressed it "to see when he came off": meaning of course his discourse to the ornithologists. Before he left me, we arranged a plan for the morrow. Gave John Edson my privilege to usher at the Princeton game. I am to go down to the Charles St. bridge in Boston, where I shall find Uncle A. angling for gulls with salt pork. If we succeed in getting away from there without incurring the displeasure of the missions of the law, we will go down to Dorchester Bay and hire a boat to look for ducks. From there, we shall go where the turn of the moment leads us, perhaps to the markets, perhaps to the museums.

The underlings of Prof. Royce managed to-day to set us an hour exam of pleasant questions. Not only were the questions themselves interesting, but they were from the student's point of view, well chosen. It was such a dainty little paper that I shall send it in my Sunday letter. You can see the nature of my philosophy work.

My gym work was pleasantly varied this afternoon by a long 9 mile walk. Rob Wilson and I tramped through Belmont to Arlington Hts. and home by Mass. Ave. It was fine, happy weather, fresh with a northwest breeze and a sky full of dark, dry looking clouds. A much better theatre of exercise than the sweaty gym. I break off here to write for Barrett a theme bearing on "observation of life".

Life in Letters of Richard T. Fisher

24 Life in Letters of Richard T. Fisher

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Sunday

Ted can certainly leave the Xmas tree till I get there. We have from Dec. 23 to Jan. 2nd inclusive. Dec. 23 is on Monday so that you see I shall be able to come home Saturday afternoon at the latest. I have only one recitation on Saturday and may be able to cut it. If so, I can come home Friday afternoon. I guess I shan't have any wish to spend my vacation in this neighborhood. If any one told me now that I must stay here I should tell him that he was mistaken, whereas I remember saying before I left home this fall that I might want to stay in Boston for the holidays. I was more of a fool then than I am now. A home, and such a one as ours, is a pretty fine place to go to and dear one to stay away from as I get further away from it.

Thanksgiving morning was pretty dismal here. It was a beautiful clear day, everyone away, and nothing to do but wish I was out of Cambridge. At 1 o'clock I went up to dine at Percy's. I enjoyed listening to the nasal conversation of acquaintance with all subjects from football to religion. Yet as to food, I rather held myself in for I was to go up to the Hinkley's to eat another dinner at six. I managed to give the impression of a good appetite at both places, but I didn't feel a bit in a Thanksgiving mood. And then after dinner Helen and I went out and walked in the moonlight about 7 times round the Cambridge reservoir. During all the walk I held forth.

I shall be at home soon and can tell you all that I neglect to tell in my letters. Humans always want to know a little more than they do know, especially when they get a ten-page letter with everything except what they want to know in it. I shall try to make this letter shorter and tell you some facts.

In the first place I wish you would tell Grandpa that I will do his errand to Col. Higginson as soon as I can. You all seem to think that time hangs heavy on my hands. As a matter of fact, since Gramp wrote to me I have not had one minute, afternoon or evening, which was not taken up with something. Since I got my glasses I have been studying in the evening. Then I have had constant rehearsals of the French play and three performances this week. But I have seen George Brown and he sent messages of regard to Gramp and all of you. I shall do Gramp's other errand next week.

I am more than glad I am coming home and you can instruct me all you want when I get there. I shan't care when I am in my native hearth.

I missed a whole week of fine skating here, I have been so busy. I have been once. Only yesterday afternoon I went out to Hammond's pond under the guidance of Mille Stearns. That pond is in Chestnut Hill, a little round lake all surrounded by pretty little wooded knolls covered with evergreens and other kinds of trees. I had no idea there were such beautiful suburbs of Boston. Why its as wild and woody out there as Berkshire, almost.

I have got one more hard week with an hour examination at the end of it. Oh, I forgot. Fritter can come with me on Saturday he thinks, I will tell you by what train we shall arrive. Lovingly, Dick.

...another Sunday

It appears that my daily record has again gone by the board; so that I shall have to review the week in my former chaotic way. I shall begin where my postal of Wednesday left off, or no; I think I must go back of that time and tell you some of my fun with Uncle A.

On Saturday one week ago, when I was to have ushered at the game, I pranced away with Uncle A to dawdle delightfully all day in Dorchester Bay. We hired a boat and some fishing tackle and spent the day in desultory smelt fishing, waiting for a shot at a gull. In fact the occupations were supplementary: for the few fish we caught we ostentatiously threw overboard, that the keen eyed gulls might dare approach when thus attractively bribed. But with all our efforts I don't think we would have got a gull, if an old German fisherman who sat near us, had not helped us to keep the water full of dead fish. Every time our fish were snapped up by gulls wary enough to wait till they drifted out of shot, the old German would remark: "I throw and der in they come, got sharp eyes, dem fellers". And sure enough by dint of keeping the bay full of small fish we at last persuaded a great herring gull to come near and be shot.
By April, the red-winged blackbirds have arrived in the high meadows of Berkshire, Massachusetts. In Berkshire, winter has been crisp and cold, "good sleighing" say his father's letters from home. In Cambridge, Richard's health and eyesight may not be of question as much as a mother's attempt to stay kindly in the background. Sister Eleanor needs her letter from him. Brother's letters are breathlessly awaited to be read aloud at night after supper.

By mid-January young Diccon shows cheerful resilience to the hallowed Harvard hallway, engaging school life to his fullest, eyes functioning, despite the drudgery of laboratories and strain from peering into microscopes. He receives B's for his "grindings". One Saturday a box of books arrives C.O.D. 50 cents at North Station from Berkshire via the North Adams & Fitchburg railway. R.T.'s scholarship is $66.67 quarterly, which must be spent judiciously if to last; hence the concern about long underwear and flannel clothes for winter, and a mother's admonishments to ignore about getting enough rest.

The following letter is from cousin Gerald Thayer. Obsessions about skinning birds and resourceful doings will be the steady diet of communication between the outdoors of New Hampshire and the cloisters of Cambridge.

Dear Dick,

Papa lets me go out shooting alone now. He had me promise not to put in the shell until I saw a bird we wanted; and not to shut my gun up until I was just going to shoot; when I was getting through the fence to first lean through pointing away from me, and then go back along the fence and get through and then take the gun up from behind.

We are getting all the birds that are not very good over again, and making them fine.

I shot a fine fox sparrow and we made a fine skin of him. And a fine plover and song sparrow. I went up the lane east of us up near that little house, if you remember it, and saw a male blue bird. I was just going to shoot when I saw what I thought was a goldfinch, a winter-plummed one of course, but I thought we wanted a blue bird more, so I let the goldfinch go and shot the blue bird. The goldfinch flew off and lit on the top of a high tree and when I got under I shot and down he came, but when I looked at it I saw that it was not a goldfinch at all. It was a bird that I had never seen before, but did not know what it was. I went home with him to Papa and when he first looked at it he thought it was a young yellow-throated vireo and was surprised that he was here so early! But I did not think it was. I measured the extent of wings and length. I found that it was much smaller than the yellow throated vireo and Papa did not know what it was. He remembered a picture in an Audubon that he thought looked like it and found it looked exactly like it and we read the description and found that it surely was the small headed flycatcher. Papa had never seen it before to know it and we were awfully glad. That afternoon I skinned them both and we made fine jobs of them.

I got a little note from Will. I found this had not been mailed, but arrived in the same box and the box looks beautiful. We have them looking as nearly as we can as they do when they are first shot. We always make fine ones now.

Goodbye with love from Gra

Dear Mother and Father,

Another week gone and I have scarcely done any of the things I had to do. It's no use. I can only do the absolutely necessary things now. I can't go out to anymore suburbs, it's too near the finals. I have to study most of the days now, though and Norman hasn't much in common with me.

I got a little note from Will. I found this had not been mailed, but arrived in some other pocket the other day in answer to one which I did remember to write to him and Faith. Has Faith told you how she has arranged to feed the kids? It is by Nellie's Food and Banter or a moist nurse! I get to like our room more and more. It is really beautiful on a clear afternoon. Right under the window are 22 tennis courts covered with hurrying white legs. Then across Jarvis St. we look right down into green Holmes field with the willows, the Law School and Hastings in the background, and in the foreground on the same days, nine intent ball players casting long shadows in the setting sun. We really can see the baseball matches very well now that the leaves are not yet out.

Lovingly, Dick
Besides our two visits to Mrs. Cabot’s and the several afternoons spent behind the museum in tinkering his manikins, Uncle A and I had four meals together, two at Memorial, and two at the Thorndike’s. How successful and flattering was the protective coloration proof. I have already told you.

Since Uncle A left I have been hard put to it by accumulating duties in Eng. C for which a week’s work had to be done in half a day, the usual number of themes for Barrett; and all the rest of the time occupied with the creation of my fifth story for the ‘Advocate’, which according to Mr. Utter (and I value his opinion) is the best thing I have done yet. It may be the final jog which crystallizes my still undecided election.

B. Wendell also added yesterday his grain of encouragement. At my conference with him, he informed me of my B record so far, and, though he remarked that I would have to go on improving to hold it, went to the following comforting items: that I had vastly corrected my early failure of poor denotative sense (that is, use of words with the exact sense of what they name); that I had exceptional connotative power (ability to use words with many and affective suggestion); and I had rhythm above most men. However, for all this blarney, he gave enough discouragement to nearly neutralize its stimulating effect: a result which does not help me to write better. Yet one thing he did, which my fancy chooses to construe into the promise of something delightful as vague as it seems pleasant. He asked for my address, which he wrote down in a little book. Afterwards he offered me a cigarette, which I refused, I am afraid, with unnecessary scorn.

Barrett knows wonderful rhetoric, but I do not love him for himself.

One result of Uncle A’s visit a comfort for you to hear, he persuaded me to give up teaching at the P. U. and prune my work to the very lowest. And with Wally Rand to second him, he impressed upon me the necessity of taking exercise, and the marvelous medical power of a little healthy laughter. Wally, who has long been driving to instill these doctrines into me, and recommending the value of an occasional mild debauch, was delighted to find so able an ally. And they two were very sympathetic in many ways.

I am wearing thick underclothes, and even night gowns which are very comforting of a cold night. The Rev. Willy I have seen on Sunday occasions. He is even busier than usual, and teeming with young sermons. He will dine with me this week, during which I shall try to resume my daily diary.

(To ETF)

The check and your dear letters came just now to cheer me mightily. I don’t mean that I need much comforting, but I have made intellectual hash of my first four themes for B. Wendell, and so appreciate a little reminder of mirthful endeavor. If I am at all at odds with myself, words scarcely crawl upon the paper, and then only express chaotic thought. Now, I know that in congenial thought and a spirit of mirth I can say a thing happily and hence fairly well; but these miserable little proscribed themes clog my words and wither my intellect to a chip.

Barrett says I haven’t got my hand in yet, as he can see in my writing. I dare-say, but I need a little fun in saying things I like, to bring forth well molded sentences. And the way to such fluency of thought and writing is to write all the time. Therefore I am going to scribble every day a page or two of ms. which shall describe my inside and outside from such productions, and might well be sent to you twice a week, as letters even more thorough than my previous effusions.

But Barrett’s sort of work is what I must understand if I am ever going to be an English scholar. Therefore I must swallow it compliantly together with three more of the most time consuming courses I have yet taken, Philosophy 1, History 13, and English C.

There is a good field now for my most strenuous endeavor. In English 12 (B’s course), I find myself among the ‘C’s’ in a hundred and fifty men. That sort of work will never secure me an instructorship, much less a “cum laude”. Even the ‘Advocate’ is no certainty for me. There are many good men striving for a place on its board of editors, and my victory is a long way off. So here, you see, is my chance; if I can get shaken out of my disgust at my own mediocrity, into a little cheerful hope. Two articles, my Venetian thing and one you haven’t seen, have been accepted by the ‘Advocate’, but how much they will do for me I don’t know.

Wendell’s work is grievously discouraging. His demands are so exacting, so coldly mechanical that all my pleasure and so ability is withered like a leaf. I cannot say what I want to, I cannot even decide what I want to say, but must struggle and grope, ridden by his commands, to determine exactly what is to be said and say it in precisely the right words.
Sunday
April 4, 1897

It is the usual occurrence, when I sit down to write, that my head feels like a sort of audible kaleidoscope: scraps and tags of the week's events pass in a purring, scintillating review before my mind's eye, and I ponder in vain when to begin the unravelling. I see visions of the library with its many alcoves of books and rows of silent readers; you squabble and struggle, and work and fail, and do your utmost; but after all - Here the narrative breaks abruptly off for reasons which we are at a loss to determine. But the most able commentators, men who have studied the complete works of R.T. Fisher from earliest youth, are of the opinion that this interruption in his discourse was due to his having nothing more to say. Others, whose opinion has little weight with scholars, that he forgot what he was about to say, or decided that his discourse was futile; but whichever learned school has the right of it, certain it is, that, in another portion of his works, Mr. Fisher mentions the fact that even those philosophers who can settle the whole nature of the universe are obliged to chew food and split the kindling. Mr. Socrates put it very cogently when he declared it mattered very little what the cosmos was or how it ran; he for one didn't know; the main point was that it ran and that we ran on it, which was all that concerned us. "Virtue," said he, "is knowledge". How I run to words! lovingly R.T.F.

Sample selections of RTF's writing

Three quarters of the world lives behind a mask, sometimes several masks. When people feel like silence, society never permits them to enjoy it. Some long series of customs, perhaps necessary customs, has made it seem their duty to keep up the social babble. Not even when a sunset or symphony is before them can they either keep silence or speak as their feelings prompt them.

Speaking of Goldsmith reminds one of the times when I was a little boy, and listened to the man inside my mother's watch. It was always my dream that he was a little fellow with a silver hammer, which he never ceased beating upon the watch-case. Winding the watch was supposed to be the means of feeding the little man, though how it accomplished the service I never understood. But the complete mystery about my timekeeper gave my thought of him a zest like a fairy tale, so that it was never difficult for me to believe in fairies. Later, when, one calamitous day, I saw the inside of the watch, I went through a...

I wonder if a fellow ought to enjoy girls in a general & impersonal way or to let his intercourse with them be little rehearsals of future proposals, or rather courtings?

A long, curving beach with the bleak ocean drumming upon the left, and a line of grass-grown dunes upon the right, - such was the path which I was to follow. The wind sucked keenly over the sand, trailing with its streams of the tiny grains, and, as it reached the breakers, tearing their foaming crests into the finest spray. The gulls wheeled and screamed overhead, and as I set out for the lights of the distant town, already glimmering in the dusk, a flock of geese, flying low over the surf, add their wild notes to the wintry tumult.

As the daylight waned, the black clouds heaped up in the West, I left my little nook among the pines, and, passing out upon the pasture slope, climbed to its summit. Then I turned and looked behind me. Our broad, dark expanse of shadowy forest and snow-mottled meadows stretched away westward, till it merged into the hue and shadow of the advancing clouds. The whole scene of distance was bleak and dusky. But just at my feet, in the small dell of the pines, my fire was still burning, still crackling in its magic room of lights and flickering shadows.

From behind, deadened by intervening walls, some plaintive melody reached me from a violin. Below, gleaming in the white arclight and quivering with a network of great shadows, lay the snowy street. Not a soul passed; not a sound was heard but the far-away violin. And yet, as I looked from my window at the great sparkling heavens, midnight did not seem wholly desolate.

The river is dotted with him. At almost any hour, in almost any direction you may see him from the Harvard Bridge, diving or preening or chasing his fellows over the dimpling water. One moment there may be a dozen of him in sight, white-bodied, blackheaded dandies, swimming jauntily about; the next, with a general flirt of tails, the whole raft has disappeared, and the river is flowing smooth as a mirror. The books call him the "Golden Eye Duck," but the gunner and lumbermen, who have seen his flashing companies sweep over them on the marshes, call him "Whistler".
In the morning early, I called about our whole family to witness the exercise of several horses, which had been turned loose in a field adjacent to the house. The beasts rolled, pranced, and tumbled about in the greatest of spirits, till my children laughed aloud at their gambols and when I observed their sympathy with the delight of the horses, I could not avoid expressing my opinion of the value of such merriment.

"My children," I said, "innocent gayety is the grace of all conduct. Let mirth be your companion and your tasks will ever be light."

It seems curious, almost anachronistic, to walk through the college yard with the voice of the wilderness in your ear.

When a man takes it upon himself to declare that a great composer is utterly without merit, that his compositions are devoid of the first principles of harmony, he cuts a ridiculous figure in the eyes of thoughtful people. Such a bald statement is a complete admission of unappreciativeness. It is exactly as if a person were to say that a lily has no beauty, because it fails to conform to the shape of a rose. When the flower of musical genius blooms, it is entitled, no matter what the individual color, to the worship of every lover of music.

"we all sang America, and after that the females bore down upon us and I knew no more"

I think it was in the month of November, on the day after a hard frost, that I came to a certain small town in Vermont. The sun was already near setting as I came among the housed, and the gloom of dusk was heightened by the bleak wind which roamed among the sugar maples over the hamlet. There seemed to be a sort of common where the highways met, and where in an irregular circle, the church, the store, and several comfortable dwellings were grouped. Coming into this open ground, I stood a moment deliberating which house I should approach for the hospitality which I desired. Apparently, it was the hour of the evening meal, for, though there were lights all about me, there was no person stirring upon the street.

As I was thus occupied, a door opened in the nearest house, and the mingled sounds of a horrid quarrel came forth. Presently the door closed with a bang, and I was left alone under the cold sky with the wind still roaring in the trees.

As years go on, David Balfour and others by its author, will be the permanent comparisons of the reading world. The merely picturesque, the merely adventurous book, such as most of Wryman's, will fade like a June bug; the characters are wooden and colorless; and if they ever show why they act, it is sure to be for some static machination. But your David Balfour, besides the vital vividness, and wholly adequate plot, rings with a prophetic note of man's ultimate nobility. Life is worth living after all, when such sturdy, unflinching heroes as David exist, and such brave merry women as Katrina. When these act, we feel and see with them, and all the vicissitudes of these beautiful characters occur before us.

Simplicity, and that of a charming sort, is the first trait I notice in Goldsmith's style. This quality is all bound up with and contributing to, another, which is so distinct, and yet so elusive, that I can only describe it as an alluring individuality. This it is that gives one a pleasant, cozy, and leisurely feeling in reading the Vicar of Wakefield; and yet, through all one's indolent enjoyment, one is conscious of the vigorous nature of the writer, of the energy with which he sets the old Vicar before us. One feels that one is reading an author able at once to please and to instruct.

Letters from a Harvard Junior

Sunday
Jan 24, 1897

There is nothing for me to do but write a Sonnet and prepare for my logic exam. The Sonnet I hope to finish this afternoon (it is on Rex, by the way); and the philosophy grinding will occupy the rest of the time till I go to New York. To avoid expense and save time I think I shall go by the Fall River boat. It will be a decidedly adventurous way of going compared to railway travel, and considering that I travel by night, a much quicker. I leave here at six clock in the evening, and, unless one of those wandering blizzards gets in the way, I arrive in New York about six thirty. You see, by that route, I get nearly a half a day more in New York. Frank Mason has written to ask me to come right to his house and stay as long as I can; so that I think I shall make his house my headquarters from which to visit and dine with my relatives. He lives at 47 Revere St., which is very convenient for my purpose.

Aunt Sue and Alice, and, very unexpectedly, William came out to the room yesterday. William's appearance gave me a little remorse, too. When I reflected, I remembered that I hadn't asked him. He makes so little impression on me that I
really forget sometimes that he exists. It is really a very startling feeling suddenly to realize that you have forgotten a person's existence. I do such things so seldom that I am inclined to believe very disparaging things of William. His soul must be at a sort of dead level: not enough rim to swing over towards the bad or the good. When you look for his soul it lies out of sight like the arm of a druggist's spring valance: down in a slit with neither indicator above the surface. In other words he is harmless as a milk snake. But I shouldn't talk so of him for I had a very filling and comforting meal at his board last night. After seeing Aunt S. on the Framingham train I came back to supper at Alice's request. They were all very hospitable, particularly nice courteous old Mrs. Stone, and genial Alice. William rather spoiled the virtue of his kindness by occasional loud, empty voiced complaints about the injustice of society and the paucity of raisins in the brown bread. After that I went out to Brookline and spent the evening at the Stearns to top off the week before the dismal Sabbath. Lovingly Dick.

Send my old blueish pants before I go.

"To My Collie"

O gentleman of dogs! Methinks I see
The very quiver of thine eager nose.
Upraised with that inimitable pose
Of anxious, though half droll expectancy:
As when from prancing proud ahead of me
Upon the fields, thou camest bounding close,
To query with thine eyes whate'er I chose
By nod or slightest word to order thee.
Oft didst thou put my silly wrath to shame,
With kindness that knew not how to fail;
And whether ill or well thy lot became
Thy salutation brave, thine eager hail
Thou didst in love immutably proclaim
With wagging of that dear, pathetic* tail

* "affecting or exciting emotion" - Webster's Dictionary

Feb. 2, 1897 (?)

Dear Mr. Fisher,

Yesterday, for example, about two of the clock, Ted, Fritter and I set out for Arlington, and wandered in that really beautiful region for the best part of a fun afternoon. It is really mighty worthy country out there; rich green meadows with willows and haystacks, and many surrounding hills, brilliant with autumn foliage, or dotted with the trim cones of the red arbors and as you go further northwest, you come among fine pines groves, and rocky pastures, with here and there a full fledged farm house, set among many rows of prosperous celery. With such a neat gap all about you, a neat farm house and a meadow beyond, and back of all the rolling hills and the red sun, there is very little need of bewailing your separation from the country.

We usually take some such walk of a Sat. afternoon; it will almost remedy a week's idleness. Today, which you observe is a damned Sunday, I am going to accomplish what my mother has planned for me during three years: I am going to dine at the Bowditches with Harry. I didn't make the plan myself this time, so there is no danger of its falling through. Then in the evening, when I shall have got back here, I am going to take Ted around to the Gage's; for which courtesy I demand some commendation, Mrs. Fisher. But this is future; you want the past, I believe. Lemme see if I can recollect some of my week. My memory is really alarmingly weak. I am sure I haven't left Cambridge except yesterday, but honestly, the only thing I have any recollection of, is the Anglo Saxon verb and his villainous phonetic changes. That and Chaucer and Shakespeare seem to have made up my week. About and between I see myself in Robert Utter's or Chauncey's rooms studying, reading, chattering or playing the Aeolian. Well, now you shall have that journal (God help you!) in semi weekly consignments. I will but step out to choose the most portable paper.

But what I need most speedily is that telescopic bag of mine, to send home a few soiled clothes in; also the following articles to be found in the balcony room closet: 1 blue coat, dirty but still whole: 1 pair purplish pants, threadbare in spots, but still serviceable; also dirty sweater and what articles still remain in the bureau drawers. These things I need before next Thursday, for I go to Dublin on Friday. R.T.F.

I have seen & enjoyed a good deal of the Rev. Willy. I called on the Cary's.

Feb. 12, 1897

Here is a letter which contains a momentous question. It has happened during the last ten days, that Miss Mary Greene (who was here, you know), has developed and shaken off a case of mumps. In view of the very infectiousness of that disease, and my firm belief that I have had it on but one side, it seems to Uncle A and me that I have no right to go back to Cambridge, until the disease has had time to abate. Nor could I go to Berkshire among all the unpolluted scholars; many of whom, as I think have never mumped at all. Accordingly, whether I am to have my turn at mumping or not, I must at least keep clear of Cambridge, for
I think, not to send me a copy of the “Advocate” - with something of yours in it - please do.

There are so many more correspondents calling to me that this part of my letter must end for the present. Please answer me soon even if I didn’t you.

Cordially Yours, Elizabeth Snyder. 17 March, ‘97

4054 McPherson Avenue
Saint Louis, Missouri

March 21, 1897

There is an amusing irony of circumstance in my condition. I am like a starving man standing in the middle of a group of cajoling angels, each of whom is holding forth a better sort of fruit than the one before her. Here I am living in the very midst of our great vivid Romance, congenial companionship, absorbing work, tempting friends, and fine fields to play in. Not a human mind-food from the highest ideals of philosophy to the most trivial amusements of sense but is ceaselessly offered to me. And yet, in all this chaos of delights I stand like the starving man in exasperating indecision. I do not know how best to temper my life; how to proportion my occupations.

But one pursuit I do rigidly obey, I never fail to get some sort of exercise every afternoon. Often, or rather generally it is walking, for I cannot bear to exercise in the gym when by a short ride I can path fresh woods at Arlington Heights, where the ground is redolent and the air clean and the view spread out for miles. And really the view is almost the whole virtue of the walk. Even if I have but an hour to waste (?!), in walking, if I go only to the Cambridge water tower and look off at half a dozen suburbs dreaming in their smoke, it is worth a great tonic.

It frightens me to write to an “editor” for my letters are, I know, dreadfully poor - Now, I am not wanting you to say wise things - my family have impressed this fact very forcibly upon my mind, and I have at last come to believe in myself.

Do you know, or rather, do you remember, we used to say that we were to be true platonic friends? I have been thinking a good deal about platonic friendship lately and talking about the subject - with people, and do you know, I don’t believe such an intimacy between man and girl is possible. Do you really believe in it? Lorraine told me that a true platonic friendship meant that each must be to the other, not only a good friend, but the very best he can have. Tell me what you think about it really.

Today I started to go to the Art School regularly again - “prepositing” (Is that the way to spell it) marrying that rich old man who will send me abroad to study while he stays home. Do you remember about him? I have been having an awfully good time this winter, but got rather tired of doing nothing. Perhaps I may come East next year to teach. Would you come to see me? You are very unkind,

I have just read over your last letter and it is such a good one that I am sincerely ashamed of my self for letting so long a time pass without an answer being sent. Will you please forgive me if I will try to be good? It frightens me to write to an “editor” for my letters are, I know, dreadfully poor - Now, I am not wanting you to say wise things - my family have impressed this fact very forcibly upon my mind, and I have at last come to believe in myself.

Do you know, or rather, do you remember, we used to say that we were to be true platonic friends? I have been thinking a good deal about platonic friendship lately and talking about the subject - with people, and do you know, I don’t believe such an intimacy between man and girl is possible. Do you really believe in it? Lorraine told me that a true platonic friendship meant that each must be to the other, not only a good friend, but the very best he can have. Tell me what you think about it really.

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So then I am physically well; superficially, as to my raiment, I am willing to go about plain but I shall stickle for the integrity of my garments. I will get the old coat relined, and, if I can find a tailor who is willing to postpone the day of reckoning, I will get me a serviceable suit at reduced rates.

For my mental state, if you wish to hear the whole range of my organic conditions I am distraught with toil and desire to accomplish it creditably. The difficulty is that I have a great wish to produce Advocate stuff, and, as I am now on the literary committee to secure some worthy articles not my own. Then too, I want soon to write a good suggestive essay on Tourlin's debated topic the which I can present at my initiation to another society to which I have this week been elected - the "Aupasor". This society, though it is stigmatized by the facetious friends of its members as the "abdomen" is one whose membership I shall prize nearly as much as that of the Signet for it comprises men of the highest reputation and intelligence in the two upper classes, most of them already Pudding men. Joe Choate is President, and D. Cheever Secretary; both of them men of note in college. But then it is a small society, entirely literary in its objects, and not necessarily capable of social promotion. We'd like to see me there, wouldn't we Pop?

But don't let us talk this way or that. This much I have learned from observation of very many Pudding men and Pudding ways: that the man of ability, of genuine worth and the skill to show it, is pretty surely a Pudding man; so that the man who is left out generally has only his own mediocrity - self countenance to charge.

But this here wolf, it is not proper for him to be smelling around the door. It looks as if he had noticed the worthlessness of the eldest son or how he is not strong enough to support himself. It does seem as if I ought to be able to earn a little money for myself, and yet what can I do? I use up all the eyes I have and more in partially accomplishing the work I have to do here. I have no time to write even if I could, and I am similarly prevented from tutoring. I do not even know that I shall be able to keep my scholarship; such is the nature and number of my concerns. I am just a helpless mouth agape for all pleasures and advantages, but powerless to do one worthy office for myself or anyone else.

I believe my letters ought to be cleaned like a fish. I have such a zest for exaggerating the minor key of my life that my letters have regular guts of cowardly nonsense that ought really to be scraped out.

For all its rain this has been a pleasant week for me. I hope it has for you. I think I gave you some hint of B. Wendell's opinion of my "Benedict Arnold". To be more specific, he commended my style as pleasant, even, and almost flawless; my characters as vital, in some cases extraordinarily so; my scenery as vivid and fit. But it was not all so commendable, there was a big defect in my analysis of Arnold's motive, which I saw to be out of joint when I handed the theme in. It pleased me to know that I could perceive my own error.

Well, that's what I get from Barrett in words. I myself know what I have got in training: an enormous benefit. It remains to be seen what I shall get in grade. I think a B.

This little bit of notoriety which you will see in the Crimson I send you, is the best that has yet fallen to my lot. As several men have said to me: it comes about as near being worthwhile as any club of its kinds in college. For besides the unquestioned honor of its Election, it has a very pleasant and active life among the very best of men: not all grinds, nor all men of social merit, but men who care for art and letters, and have been willing to show it among their fellows in genial companionship. You may see some familiar names on the list.

But after I have thus bragged (what fun to brag to one's parents!) I come to the consideration that really sets me agog with excitement. (Heh! Is anybody looking? Burn this!) Though this O.K. costs money, (I think ten dollars, which we must have if it has to be borrowed or stolen.) The first eight, if they are pretty well known, are likely to be Pudding men. This is scandalous for me to be saying, and I depend upon you either to burn this letter, or to secret it beyond all observation. Such things don't even to be shown to relatives, for, (innocent people!) they don't know any better than to chatter about their nephew's hopes.

But that is the way of it, and you can see how glad I am to be elected to this club. I do not let myself hope much for the other, for, as you know I have only lately begun to know "the procession" of my class. The point is that the O.K. election is the very best thing that could happen to me.

These are the exhilarations of the week: the only circumstances that make me willing to grind the gritty gravel of American Constitutional history. My whole week has passed in C. We have elected four new editors to the Advocate, and on Wednesday, the Signet elected the first seven from '99. Then on Friday the picture of the Advocate board was taken. And yesterday, Fritter and I walked far out into the country behind Arlington. Tell Gramp I read his words - worth with more and more delight. R.T.F.
All students of Harvard University desiring to enter as competitors in Athletic Contests are required to give evidence of their ability by making the following strength tests, in addition to the regular physical examinations:

Candidates for the University Crew and Football Team and Weight Throwers are expected to make a total strength test of 700 points.

Candidates for the Class Crews and Football Teams and Gymnastic, Wrestling and Sparring Contests, 600 points.

Candidates for the University and Class Ball Nines, Lacrosse Teams, Track and Field Events, 500 points.

These points are reckoned as follows: — The number of kilos lifted with the back and legs straight, and the number of kilos lifted with the legs bent, added to the strength of the grip of the right and left hand, expiratory power as tested by the manometer, and one-tenth of the weight in kilos, multiplied by the number of times that the person can raise his weight by dipping between the parallel bars and pulling his weight up to his chin on the rings. Where the strength test falls below the desired standard the capacity of lungs is taken into account in summing up the condition.

These tests are made and certificates granted on any day, excepting Saturday and Sunday, between 2 and 4 P.M. within two weeks previous to a contest, but no examinations are made or certificates granted on the day of the contest.
It seems a long time to class day, even though as the cant goes, I am enjoying "student life at Harvard." Yet I am beginning to realize how precious is every minute that I spend with these fine men whom I shall see but one year more, and I would not leave for worlds.

I suppose I shall come home on the 26th for I shall need all of the day after class day to tear down the tapestries and pictures from our apartment. Besides I shall need a day to be sure that I pack up everything I want and take home only those things for which I have no use. As for your kids, I guess I shall see them or their parents this week. I dont quite care to go out to Wellesley; it's a rather expensive journey for me; but guess I shall accomplish it.

The ten thirty train will be about our chariot I guess, if it's not too early for my charges. But I will write of my final plans.

I have made quite a few calls this week. Chauncey and I went to Lexington day before yesterday, and the day before I took tea with Mrs. Cabot. And I might mention in passing that she gave me two vols. of Emerson's essays and a sort of a modern reader's edition of the book of Isaiah. Then I have called at the Lord's, whom I have sedulously neglected for student life; and tried to call at the Lang's but found them gone to New Boston. They must have Boston if they have to go to Northern N. Hampshire for it. Another place to which I have taken my vacant train was the Hinckley's, when, on Tuesday night I was asked to see the merry little Beatrice Rey, and not her alone but a greater and a lesser Rey maiden. The one was homely and birdlike the other pretty and enthusiastic. But Beatrice seems to have got most of the jewels in the family escutcheon. She is really quite a cheerful heroine in her way.

The night before Fritter left (you know he left me for Mt. Desert on Friday), he and I went up to call on Jerry Smith, whom we haven't honored in that way since we were freshmen. We had a pleasant time of it. Mr. Smith told us about your old college days, your fame and your exploits "when the foe multitudinous clustered". And speaking of your class reminds me that there is still another descendant there from my class, or rather two of them, the sons of Charles Francis Adams. That makes five '56 men with sons in '98.

One call that I promise myself very soon, perhaps this afternoon, is to be upon Prof. Greenough, who has just returned from Europe. I shall be glad to see him again. Well "Je vais pour aourir ma figure", as Fritter says. After that, "student life", Advocate, and "mother-calls". Also on class day, the all day but honorable job of ushering.

your R.T.F.

P.S. One moment please. You see I have, or shall have when I have thoroughly disbursed, just enough to pay my fare home and about two cents over. That is enough of course, but if you could tuck a dollar into the letter you write before next Friday, I should feel safer.

(no date)

...but the boy would not be contented till I had agreed to let him bring 36 bottles over here to the meeting, about a dozen of which we drank. But I tell you the man is an able child and a longheaded. How easily he came by the layout you may gather when I mention that the "remlings" of the feast, 2/3 thirds of a can of crackers, almost the whole cheese, half the olives, and 21 bottles of beer, I purchased for $1.50! The O.K. is the gather by this I think, for I shall use the whole supply for our meeting next Wednesday, and charge the Club about ten cents apiece.

This momentous (really so) ...election has taken up nearly the whole week. We had such a lot of talking and weighing of evidence to do. But among the details and plans I found time or took it to rest my empty head by a glorious walk along the sea. On Thursday Fritter and I rode to Crescent Beach on the electric cars, and walked from there to Lynn on the sand. It was a windy bright afternoon, warm for February but cold for April, and the sea was all changing blues and greens. Gulls everywhere, wheeling above or sitting...

June 6th 1897

...and, if the employment you offer me is to my taste, that is, if I don't have to impersonate any more distressed orphans or other theatrical misanthropes, I may, provided there is good food, consent to carry in a sponge cake and sit in the Lady's parlor. Aaah! Moral voice close to one's ear:

"Will ye have tea or coffee?"

Neither if you are wise; as for cocoa and when they say they haven't got it, call their attention to the kerosene in the ice cream and the butter which adheres to the cake that has been cut with the bread and butter knife. Then, after you have avoided all the food you were not compelled to swallow, get up and walk smilingly about the room from booth to booth. To do this agreeably, it is well to go blindfolded or to wear blue glasses. Otherwise your aesthetic sense will be forever perverted, and you will have to take a stimulant after you have made your rounds - Oh cork up, silly Richard! Don't malign the dear church! You know they really
Life in Letters of Richard T. Fisher

are honest, well meaning democratic people. Yes, plebeian, I beg your pardon. No, they are, as you say, very admirable persons, from the beautiful daughter of the red-eyed gardener who sings in the choir (not the eye but the daughter of course), to the large waisted sexton with the celluloid collar, one Fred Nelson by name, who stands in the doorway and tries to appear at once as effective and leisurely as possible. I claim part of this honor, I partake in the pride of their great names.

But to resume, dear reader where I left off: the weather is bad and so is the son, the one with a "O", you deserve. He made a most frightful bungle of an exam yesterday, History 13. My probable disgrace in the course will be unfortunate for us perhaps, but I shall not take it to heart. For I realize once and for all that my brain refuses to assimilate legal, lifeless fact. I respect the brain which can, but I cannot help feeling that it would be an ill turn to find fault with the brain which has been given to me. What ever it is good for (and I have a hope that it is good for something) it is not good for History 13. Let us hope for better luck in my other exams. Your R.T.F.

Letters from a Harvard Senior, 1897-1898

(to AHT) August 5, 1897

Dear "Olt Mann",

At last I see Dublin on the horizon. I don't think that I can very well be prevented from coming to you on Wednesday the 11th of August. And I shall come over from Keene on the milk train, too, and walk over from Chesham or wherever the thing stops. That is, if I hear from you or your ______ that I can be allowed to creep in at such an hour. But now that I think of it, there may be some trouble for you in my plan. Whereupon I think of another ___. Why not rise somewhat earlier than my wont, and by catching a 5:49 a.m. train in Pittsfield, arrive at Keene in the region of noon. Let it stand that way, then, unless we either of us find obstacles or improvements to the scheme.

Damnation! (as Amos very properly says) how I do long for the place! Haying is very capital exercise, and not unpleasant in itself, but when it conspires with wet weather to postpone continually the main pleasure of my year I sometimes wish I hadn't engaged myself to the job. But Uncle Edward has said I could go by Wednesday, and, Battered Stars! I come. I hope Mr. Fuertes will still be there: I want to see him very much. Now comes more haying so good-bye, and much love to each and every Thayer, not excepting the Whiting female.

lovingly, Dick

Dublin Sept. 13

It seems best to me to write to my parents, in my present mood; for theirs is the only interest which will not flag, in the face of my fanciful babble. To be sure, an interest in the spirit of such babble, it is no credit to lack; but the run of men lose their breath with too much compulsory soaring. Yet now, I begin to perceive that luck has willed it well in the destination of this letter, and secured me readers who can appreciate my filial nullity. If it is worth while simply to view my handwriting, your appetite shall be drugged; but any coherent or significant thought you must not hope for. I am, as it were, just sparring the wind of expression, peering about the chambers of my brain for a few laggard facts, left ached and alone in the rush of my recent imaginings. It has occurred to me, very much this summer, and especially of late in the company of Miss Balestier, that I have a sister, and eke a headful of things to tell her. If trying circumstances have kept us apart in recent days, and clogged the ways of talk, please let her be assured that the hope of a speedy confidence with her has only grown dearer for its delay. Such talks as our loves do dream of and taste soothingly in memory do not arrive at the behest of a moment's whim. They are the flowers of a season's growth, and only bloom the sweeter for their infrequency. Give her my dear love and hope of her sight.

Here I descend plumb down to earth, (if you will bear the chill), and tell you a few recent facts, recaptured from my memory rather from their connection with the spirit of these days than any intrinsic importance. Yet as I come to the telling, I am face to face with a humorous situation. My facts are really monotone. Behold I spent my week in ferrying Miss Balestier across in the morning, and supping with her hostess Mrs. Cabot on three evenings! The afternoons, as a rule, piled swiftly up, in intercourse with "the King". We have walked, shot, raved; and eaten, in an atmosphere of sublime conversation; now on birds, and art; anon on Stevenson and the best of life. And with the latter clause comes the wish to send you of our daily powers, a ringing epigrammatic flash of the tenor of Stevenson's whole life and books. It shall end my talk, which if it has expressed nothing of value, has at least amused my fancy and sharpened my learning rhetoric. I shall write the poem on the back of this sheet, lovingly, Dick

How sturdily it runs.
The Celestial Surgeon

If I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness;
If I have moved among my race
And shown no glorious morning face;
If beams from happy human eyes
Have moved me not, if morning skies,
Books and my food, and summer rain
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain:
Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take
And stab my spirit broad awake;
Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,
Choose thou, before that spirit die
A piercing pain, a killing sin,
And to my dead heart run them in!

lovingly, Dick

(in the upper margin) "The Cabot children (those bright harried girls) pile ecstatically upon me and gleefully display their painting books. It makes me feel quite sheepishly happy for I realize that only of late have I left off ignoring little people.

Plymouth, Mass.,
August 18th, 1897

Dear Mr. Fisher:

I was glad to get your letter of August 14th. I should be slow to maintain that men always get more from A's and B's than from a more moderate record in study and a taste of some of the other things of which you speak, - though I do believe in making sure of the study first, and though the College cannot help making devotion to study a highly important matter in its award of scholarships. I am much obliged to you for your frank statement of the case. Will you kindly tell the relatives or friends of whom you speak that your scholarship is not "withdrawn" in any ordinary meaning of the word, and that there is no censure in the case. If you were the only descendant of the Class of 1841 in College, we should not recommend you for the Scholarship - but another man has the same claim on the score of descent, is also in need of the money, and has a much higher record in study. Possibly the very fact that you have held the Scholarship two years is, all other things being equal, an argument in his favor; but that is a matter into which the Committee was not obliged to go. We regard the Scholarship as an open competition every year for descendants of the Class of 1841; and, much as we should like to aid you, the other man came in ahead. The decision, by the way, is not mine alone; but, if the responsibility were all mine, I should have to make the same decision.

Sincerely yours,

L.B.R. Briggs

Cambridge, Mass
August 19, 1897

Louis Fuertes is in the foreground of the whole spectacle of Dublin, not only because he is so constant a visitor at the house, but he is so wholesomely entertaining. Besides being interesting to us on the score of his knowledge, he is a perfect mine of mimicry and unruffled spirits. Servant girls, Jews, German humorists, monkeys, birds - all these and many that I have forgotten are daily presented to us in such vivid colors that we are sore from laughing.

This sort of an atmosphere as you may imagine keeps our life pitched in a very easy key. There are no metaphysics or literature in our speech; and we go to the woods or on the lake in very boyish spirits. These are the common employments of our afternoons, but our mornings and several of our evenings have been differently spent. Louis and I have been several mornings to the village, where we have bathed, sung, and chattered with the fine crowd of girls and men that I now know so well: the Lords, the Stearns, the Masons, Frothinghams, etc. Also we went (to) a swell musicale night before last, Thayers being our companions and Miss Greene the munificent hostess, and last night to a Negro song and speech exhibition, with the village crowd. We arrived in time for the nigger show, and planted him in the front row at the town hall; "contagious" to the best girl in the whole assemblage (except a good many others!) He is scratching away next me now. I guess a letter will be the result but the next number on his program and mine is a visit to the Boulderstone to see Aunts Katy & Maria who are to leave tomorrow.

Stop! let me ask you a question. Fritter wants me to let him know when we want him. If it is convenient he wants to come up at such a time that, besides having a few days visit in Monson, after Berkshire, he can bring (us) up to Cambridge on Sept. 25. Now of course we want the boy just as long as we can afford to have him, not only because he is a great boon to us, but because, I think, he likes to come, having as you know, no real home of his own. Perhaps I am unjust to his friends and relatives who may be as good as we for the _ in hand, but
anyway, I know he enjoys it with us. Therefore, when shall we have him?
I can't stop without a word suggested by your letter— you really make me smile. You speak as if my losing the scholarship was a sort of disgraceful disease, that I could have avoided by foresight, and that I have been imbecilely fearing all along. It may give you some idea of the real truth to hear that my so-called calamity has not more effect on my self-respect, honor, or conscience, than a cloud has on the moon. Can't you see that whether by my choice of occupation or the misfortune of my eyes there is neither shame nor escape from the Dean's decision? I didn't feel uneasy about my scholarship under the conditions I believed to be for my best interest. I studied as well as I was able. If I lost my prize to a better scholar, it does not make me any the worse man, nor does it give me any right to whine to the dean when he has done his duty with the purest justice, in God's name let us follow his example. (I really can't help getting a little hot over this; you seem to have such a misconception.) Please let us receive this decision like men and not like politicians. R.T.F.

The following is quoted from author Robert McCracken Peck in "A Celebration of Birds, The Life and Art of Louis Agassiz Fuertes": 'For those who know birds and their ways, Louis Agassiz Fuertes (1874-1927) is acclaimed as America's greatest painter of birds'. The hearty Dublin influence with the youthful Fuertes is another example of Thayer's inspirational effect.

from sister Faith, on Dick's scholarship

5 am. Aug. 97
5817 Madison Avenue
Chicago

Dear Mother,

Ed must have been a much better medium of communication than a letter this week, but perhaps you will want a few lines.

We are awfully sorry about Dick's scholarship but of course it will be managed someway; it must. Will is anxious to know whether Dick did what he strongly urged him to do when he saw him in the winter, i.e., withdraw from Hayes' course. He missed his mid-year exam in that course thro' no fault of his own and on his explaining the matter at the office received a note to Prof. Hayes telling him to give Dick the exam over again. In spite of that note (which was really authoritative) Prof. H. refused to comply, and Will told Dick to withdraw from the course at once as the loss of that important exam would make a great reduction in his marks which he could not afford to lose. Even now this might be urged in mitigation to Dean Briggs unless Dick has done it already? Then Will cannot understand why Dick has not at least obtained one of the smaller scholarships. It can't be that his work does not entitle him to any. I am really getting mournful and homesick about my family. I want to see you and Papa and find out for myself just how you are. Your letters sound tired and worried as of course you must be. Are you both half way sick? And how dreadfully behind are you on money matters?

The peace that passeth understanding has settled on this household. Nina Christiana came into it. She is quick, and willing, and the children have responded at once to her gentle influence and are much easier to take care of, as well as better tempered. I still keep Dan at night because he seldom makes a noise and is much better with me than anyone else, when I begin to go out more in the evening I shall give him to Christiana for part of the time at any rate."

Will goes to Shelbyville for ten days this month to a kind of a Unitarian camp meeting. Tell me more about Eleanor. Very lovingly Faith.

Cambridge
Monday, August 20, 1897

Dear People,

It seems we are still fussing over this scholarship business, and I grow hotter and hotter at what I hear from you. In the first place, it was not Hayes who gave me the "D". That was my record with Bakers in Argumentation. But even as it is, there is no grain of right in complaining of Mr. Hayes. What do Mama and Ed mean by my being too proud? In God's name, aren't we going to allow the Dean the rightful judge of this matter, to do his duty without our disturbance?

I do not believe that Mr. Hayes really gave me any worse mark than I deserved. You, Papa, know that I can scarcely be better than "C". But however that may be, it is time that I got injustice at his hands, as I thought nevertheless it was through ignorance of his rules, and in company with many other victims, so that it is the lowest attitude from me to complain of him. I might have left his course (if it had been convenient), but I surely can't use such a shadowy injury, in voicing unkindly accusation of an instructor, as exequation for a poor record that is far from reaching its lowest terms in that course (Eng. 10).
I will send you the second letter I had from the dean, and if you don’t agree with me that it is manly, kindly, and final, I shall be tremendously surprised. We cannot blink the fact that at the game we are supposed to play, the other man has beaten me, and the umpire has given him the medal. Can I come crying up, and whimper that one of my teachers didn’t do right by me, and that therefore I deserve the prize? It sounds as if you thought a manly attitude too expensive for me: I believe there is none more lucrative, if you come to that.

Well, let me stop this spitting and cavilling. I am afraid you have had enough of my talk. The main point is, I think you have unwittingly written a falsehood about Mr. Hayes: he didn’t give me a “D”.

I am off now for Keene with the Dublin ball team. It seems I am to imperil my life by umpiring the game, since they cannot persuade me to play. I was in Keene yesterday too. Uncle A., Louis, Ted, Gra and I went up river on a beautiful autumn afternoon. Dick

Sunday
Sept. 28, 1897

After three days of discussion and anxious reflection I have got my courses settled, and unless they are too large a mouthful, wisely I think. I talked with Mr. Hurlbut of the Eng. dep. Prof. Palmer and Mr. Greenough, and they all advised the same thing: to specialize in the line of whatever strong interest my college course has aroused. And this not only with an eye to some ultimate employment, but to my best culture. Accordingly I have plunged headlong into the E.D. and courses theoretic, scientific, and rhetorical. These are the studies, with their instructors, which I have elected: English 2 (Shakespeare for his meanings), Prof. Kittredge, a stiff course; Eng. 1 (Chaucer in a similar method), Dr. Garrett, who is also my teacher in a third elective in Anglo-Saxon, Grammar & translation (English 3); English 8; writers of the early nineteenth century under Prof. Wendell; and finally English 5, Prof. Hill’s course in composition which, owing to some accident, has had to turn over to Barrett for the first half year. And this course has given my only doubt as to the wisdom of my decision. Some twenty five of us applied for admission to it (the membership is limited to fifteen) and Barrett called us one by one to his desk to hear our classics and deliver his judgement. It was an anxious ordeal, and more than one man was sent crestfallen from the room. When Barrett had me before him he said: “Do you think this is your job?” meaning I don’t yet know what. I told him I believed it was. But he was far from being satisfied. It was not at all sure, he said, that Eng. 5, especially under him, was the best thing for me; and he even went so far as to predict that I would not keep my grade (I suppose he meant B).

Now if he means that no writing of any sort is my job, all my instincts tell me he is wrong; but if it is simply that course which he thinks fruitless for me to take, why I am again disturbed with doubts. In the first case I shall snap my fingers at him and take the course in his defiance; but in the second, there will be more hesitation and deciding to be done. So it is that I want an interview with the old red beard, to discover just what he thinks in regard to me. He has appointed Monday for the occasion, until which I must be in miserable doubt about my fourth course. You shall hear the result very speedily.

Besides this scholastic business there has been the old joyous renewals of relations with a hundred old friends, old haunts and occupations. I have had not a minute to leave town until yesterday when Fritter and I took the narrow gauge train to Nahant (price twenty cents), and walked on the windy beach in a glorious uproar of plunging breakers. The evening before I was occupied with a long meeting of the Literary Committee of the Advocate, and another of a sort of clandestine association for the Enlightenment and assembling of freshmen. I met “Barky” Donald there: my first sight of him since I got back. The working of the Committee, as far as it is defined, is thusly: Each senior, or other preceptor, is assigned ten freshmen, whom it is his chief duty to make acquainted with each other; his almost equally important duty to befriend and awaken to a sense of their responsibilities to class and college. How to achieve this admirable result is left to each reverend pedagogue to decide for himself.

That is me up to date, which is a bright, still morning, with a miserably potent call in it to the woods. I shall get these this afternoon too, as I have planned a walk with Chauncey.

When my bag comes down (which must be soon) send the old sweater, coat, and trowsers in the balcony room closet; also Schubert’s serenades and Impromptu No. 3 to be found on the piano. R.T.F.

* George Lyman Kittredge - professor of English at Harvard 1898-1936, noted authority on Chaucer, Shakespeare balladry and witchcraft

Hasty Pudding Club
October 23, 1897

Will ye mind that, now? There is the way my week ended. First, last Sunday and Monday all the fun in Dublin, then Monday night our own election of the second eight of the O.K., and finally Tuesday morning, when I was informed by Rob Atter, perhaps rather mischievously that on the evening before my name had passed the election committee of the “Pudding”. Imagine my excitement and anxiety. Even the concert of the Rueisel quartet that I went to that evening in
Saunders couldn’t prevent my reflecting that actually I was almost on the Club; nor that there’s yet four miserable days to wait while the Club balloted on those names which had passed the election committee. I told Chauncey that I knew, and he said I was as good as in. That was Thursday. Then yesterday, on a walk, he informed me that there was an unusual amount of black balling going on. Down I went to misery again. He would give me no hope; and my only grain of comfort was that he was taking such huge delight in my perturbation. At last, “Well anyway, said he, you’ll know tonight. The balloting stops at 7:30 and Robert or I will tell you whether to laugh or cry.”

Well, I went to supper with Chauncey, and began to get some resignation. My anxiety had been so violent it had to burn out. I went up to Robert’s room to an Advocate meeting in a kind of dead calm; really quite stoical. That over, I sat with him and read. Not long. At eight o’clock, Chauncey came significantly in and said: “You’re in the Pudding”.

The news struck only my brain. There were no longer any sensibilities left; and I went with them down to the gloriously cosy club house happy as a lark but cool as a judge. After that I lay awake most of the night. But, whew! it is fun. I am just realizing what it would have meant to miss it.

Cambridge - Mrs. E. T. Fisher

My Sunday Section of Reflections in Having Made the Hasty Pudding Club

Well, Daddy, this pleases you and me, this here election, doesn’t it? When I see the royal, refined, able fellows in that crowd and receive their hearty welcome, I tell you I begin to feel I’m worth my own salt after all. It puts a new face on things to have that fireside to sit around; and the solid company around it. Last Sunday, if you please, I went to call a little on the Little Littles. Miss Little was indisposed, little enough, I was glad to learn; and the maidens Grace, Helen, Louise, assisted at times by Amos, entertained me for almost an hour. And I didn’t go there because I was bored, but because I had promised to call on some rust brown maids in Brookline, the Plummers, whose late parent left a large collection of birds in the house. “From thence” (which turned out to be the Stearns’). I returned home to a sandwich supper and the delightful study of the Early West Saxon. The fiend grab it! Subsequently I attacked the poems and lip of Chaucer, upon my knowledge of whom as well as of Saxon I was examined yesterday. Just now it was the early nineteenth century parts that I was required to write about.

In the midst of all this labor, as the sauce, was the second chamber concert on Tuesday night. The Russell quartet played Death and the Maiden. They played others too, but I don’t remember them. There can be no other sensation in my being on the same evening with the hearing of that quartet. God knows what it is (He really does), that works the magic, but when you hear that great melody, all physical activity awaits you. You swell and rise and float; and afterwards cannot easily move.

Well, so it goes. And Barrett liked my themes the other day. Said it was vital to a charming degree and reminded him of Lamb, especially in the formlessness. Hence it is dinner time.

lovingly R.
Life in Letters of Richard T. Fisher

"all rebuffed into my shell"

(beginning of letter missing)

I am afraid I seemed inhospitable, even rude; and yet I would have liked to see Uncle George longer, and get to know him better. But as for Aunt Kitty (devil take the luck that gave her the title!) though I would hurt no one's feelings, she agitates me like a bad smell. All this of course is only for you, and may constitute, that there comes no unpleasant mess, a valid reason for burning this letter. The bad like the good that impression she made on me. To see her was like beholding a great human bag with a bad smell for a soul. And then in the same glance to see Uncle George, with such a lot of fine rich character in his manner, was enough for a most incongruous revulsion. I sat before them all rebuffed into my shell, talking trivialities and explaining why I must send them off again in the rain in a few minutes. That I perceive, must comes out of me to some one.

And now in a week or two I am off for New York and Scarborough. My trip is even going to be of vast profit to me; for with talk and reading at Uncle A's I hope to fashion my connected theme. I have about decided, after talk with my instructor, to write an essay or Stevenson. My points of view, which are as yet rather vague, I hope to choose in Scarborough or before I reach it.

It was good to see Dot and I think she has had fun. We took her to the gym and Memorial besides the chatter here.

R.T.F.

Sunday ('97)

I am about, as Will says, to go on the War Path. Before sundown to day I hope to have payed many calls. First I am going to see one Mrs. John Meigs of whom I heard many fine things from Aunt Alice last night. I am to take a note from Aunt Alice as a sort of introductory tag, which combines Aunt Alice's business with my pleasure. Then, if I can get away, I am going to hurry in town and go to the Lang's, whence, I shall pass on either to the Lord's or Miss Parker's. These occupations I guess will fill my day unless I am pressed to stay to tea at some of these houses. That happened last night at least a similar trick, for I stayed all night at Lexington, whither I had gone to have some more converse with the muses. That metaphor is really not inapt to the occasion, for the difference between Lexington & Cambridge and their respective atmospheres is not less marked than that between the ancient world and those mythic fields which held its Gods. I foresee that Sundays will often find me at Lexington or on the road thither; for which reason I shall try to keep Sunday sedulously free from work. I dont believe I seem very gracious or grateful to those cordial people; my fun there is like a kind of delicious expensive food that is gradually packed into me while I sit deliciously silent. When I go away and get back to Cambridge it all comes out in refreshed spirits and extravagant eulogies.

I told you, didn't I, that I ran every day by compulsion? Already I notice a marked improvement in energy and digestive competence. O, forgot to ask you what I meant to mention before: do you think we can afford to have me join an educational & social club called the dinner club? From each junior class about a dozen men are elected by the outgoing senior members of the club; they are chosen for their probable congeniality and common desire to gain practice in extemporaneous speaking; to which end (at the expense of ten dollars a year, the payment of which is spread through the year), dinners are held once a month. At these, after the food is put away, the members speak in turn upon some previously chosen subject, or perhaps one not so chosen. This is the organization, and I need scarcely repeat its advantages. The question is ought I to afford it. Answer soon, for they wait my decision. R.T.F.

Saturday, 9 P.M.
Nov. 20, '97

I am just come to the library upstairs here in the Pudding, from a very interesting talk with Lewis, the well beloved Englishman who keeps the club. Our conversation started with the recent fire in London. As I came in Lewis was arranging the newspapers, one of which contained a big picture of the burned section of London. "I see they tried hard to burn my birthplace", said he and when I enquired how, he proceeded to entertain me with the most fascinating particulars of a boyhood spent in oldest London. For, though Lewis is an American in sympathy, and proud of his new allegiance, he is a Briton by birth and devoted to English associations. He has a charming vanity about his acquaintance with many lands, and loves to tell of his travels; but England is his first love, and he can describe her scenes and moves and habits with the most engrossing vividness. He is really a remarkable man. Besides his knowledge and love of the Old Country, and his time honored connection with the Pudding, he has many very laudable and decided opinions. Conduct, for instance particularly in a club house, he can govern for keeps. Dogs, next to travel, are his main passion, and their breeds and training are his abc. He has one here in the club, a bull terrier called "Zig" whose hospitality and tricks are matters of Pudding history. One of the best of his
accomplishments is an adaptation of Rex’s “dead boy”. You ask Zig what he
would rather do than go to Yale; whereas he groans miserably and sinks in a
trance. But Zig and his master both are very proud of the Pudding and they pre-
serve its order and reputation with the most scrupulous care. Here endeth your
unexpected sketch of Lewis and his brindle dog Zig. Now for your pains you
shall have some “sordid facts”. I will string a few along before I take up another
drool. When the boy came I extracted the package therefrom, which, in company
with Ted, I purpose to deliver to Miss Howes tomorrow. Afterward we go to the
Little’s for a Sunday call. Previous gayeties are there none fit to mention, for as
you may know, I work fit to kill this half year; but hurrah for two courses less the
second! Aunt Katie has offered me Arthur’s bicycle which I accepted right spe-
cially. God grant I can propel it without a derrick. No, I didn’t mean any bad reflec-
tion. She says it is a good wheel and I am jolly grateful for it. I wouldn’t have her
see my sarcasm which was pointless to any one but a Fisher. I will send the
Advocates soon, with back numbers (2) if possible. In no. 1 I want you to read
my editorial, the first one in the issue. It is the only thing I ever wrote that
brought me any substantial response from its intended victims. To be sure the
people who responded, were not freshmen, but they were seniors of good judge-
ment who had read it and they liked “me sentiments”. My taste in golf stockings
remains unaltered. A footless hose is a mere squirt. I will have continuity if noth-
ing else. Weave on some feet, or forever hold thy peace Mrs. Fisher. Yes, the
Rev. Willy came, and I enjoyed his stay, quite unusually much in fact. Whether it
was his mood or mine don’t know. He took his usual hack at pricking what he
calls my bubbles of self conceit. He means so well that I rather enjoy the process.
I am almost tempted to acknowledge that I have such bubbles. Today, a dull one
with fallen snow and dripping trees, I walked with Fritter and Ted to Longwood
and back. Ted is inscrutable. He’s happy I think, successfully industrious I know,
but whether he’s really this or that I can’t say. He said about four words in the
walk. But I imagine, me, that he’s going the way of his nature and will. He
chooses his path from a varied set, and I guess rightly. R.T.F.

Sunday, Nov. 28, 1897

I am at my wit’s ends, called upon to be funny, not only to act funny in an ini-
tiation show here (at the Pudding) next week, but to evolve the dialogue for a
whole company myself. O for the pristine inspiration of my glorious ancestor!
Those sparkling “follies of burlesque with which he formerly ravished a delighted
audience! It is a prize fight which is to be enacted even to it’s utmost reality; and
I as the backer of one of the principals, and general manager of the “heelers and
thugs” must fill up with jibes and conversation the preside and the inter-round
intervals. Pray for me. Something must occur to me before next Friday. Now that
I take a look back over my week I begin to see a few facts worth discussing. The
whole spectacle however, is like the view from the rear of a whizzing train; only
the landscape just passed is very definite. So now, in the near past, I recoil at
a glorious walk on windy pastures yesterday afternoon, a day’s recuperation on
Friday, and back of the whole, as far back as I can go at the moment, my visit to
Framingham. That was in many ways an instruction as well as a delightful experi-
ence. In the first place I got to know the Whiting’s better, Ted particularly; and
they are truly hospitable. In the second place I saw Ted for the first time in the
role of squire of dames. The last was a grand sight. His devotion to certain ladies
of the dance on Wednesday night gave me a queer sheepish sense of beholding
my own past reconstructed. It really quite astonished me to find how agedly indif-
erent I had grown to feminine charms. I did think that I could go among girls
and have a fairly exhilarating time of it, but when I saw Ted I was reminded of the old
days when “girls was Winners” and I used always to advise his course.

I make all this fuss over Ted because we had a good deal of fun over his affair
ducer at the Whiting’s, chiefly out of an unselfish desire to advise his course.

But if I thought my account would in anyway bring embarrassment to him I should
have held my tongue. You needn’t post this letter on a tree beside the Berkshire
road. Well anyway we had our dance on Wednesday as I said (and a good jolly
rollick of it too), our football games in the morning and consequent walk home
with damsel’s, our dinner with the usual accessories and an unusual moderation on
my part, and finally, in the afternoon, a drive to the old Wayside Inn, at Sudbury,
an ancient hostel modernly restored to antiquity of aspect. We danced there a
while, and returned to Framingham about 8 P.M.; I took the nine something train
for Cambridge. It was a pleasant experience altogether, more so than ever before
but how far and dim it seems now that I am back in the hurry and responsibility of
this place. Eyes me to stopping. R.T.F.

I too bad th’t of the N.Y. trip. I’ll discuss it again with you.

(to family)
Sunday Dec. 5, ’97

What a life is sweeping me along! When I stop to think I wonder that I know
anything anymore. But I just saw a heering gull wheeling high up in the bluest of
skies, and my long expressed desire for a chatter to you, fashioned by an un-
expected opportunity, broke forth. The golden background of our tramps is always
very real, — oh stuff with all these big words and things! I’ve just got one of my
old familiar fits. The sky, and the wind, and the march of the clouds — who knows
what besides? has shoved my present lip to the wall, and I long to run and jump
on the leaves and turf. Unhappy I am not, he would be a stockish clod who could mope in my shoes. But, say, when can we get together again, you and the dear old Midge, and Louis, and make a fire to sit around and toast by? That's what I look at, for all that the sun never shone on a man with more cause for happiness and thankfulness than me. This old club, for instance, with its beloved company of unseparably near brothers, - can I ever hope for such an hour of priceless friendship? I wish you could come here, if only to see the outside of the men, good and bad, that haunt this Hasty Pudding Club. Well, what do think? I may be able to come to New York at Xmas. Prospecting for a job, I believe, or some such precocious mission; so that I couldn't roam it every day, or even most. But I think I am pretty sure to come. I think if I hadn't been elected to this club the very night after I got back from Dublin, I should have been pretty thoroughly cut up over the Neusch episode. As it was I found leisure of thought for some sensible regret over the fact of my dream, especially when a fellow here, who had spent the summer in Norway and Russia, sailed with — called on Nansen, gave us detailed accounts of the great man and his home. It occurs to me also, as it has several times before, that I seem to have embezzled some "Neusch money", about three dollars, I think. If you clamor I will send it to you now; otherwise I shall bring and deliver it to you (I hope) at Xmas. I hear my man, my appointee downstairs. Hence I subserve to your loving sore eyed son and collegian and much love to all you dear people. Sunday

Saturday Night
Dec. 11 '97

Yes, as far as I know now, I can come home on Wednesday afternoon, that being the beginning of the recess.

This has been a busy week with me as you know. At the French play, where I ushered, you remember, I saw Mary Greene, - suddenly found her shaking hands with me where I should be at the swinging doors dispensing programs and directions. Almost before the howdydo she said she had messages for me from Berkshire. I was quite touched with her dutifulness.

O thank God I stumbled on the Rev. Willy in my penning over my vacant pan. He mendeth. At least I suppose he does, having heard nothing to the contrary. I haven't seen him since Wednesdy when he was hourly expecting his recovery. I gave him your particulars of Wallace; whereat he seemed much gratified and made some little fatherly epigram or other. The last advice from the Man of God I may tuck in to-morrow before I send this letter. I shall likely see him in the morning.

The library is an inhospitable place just now. Two greasy looking minions are cataloguing the books which they have piled high on long tables in the middle of the room. Hence the shelves are bare and the place desolate. The gay, bedecking playbills hang upon the wall in dramatic profusion, and I feel just like the man who is playing hymns downstairs. He is the only man here, be it understood, except myself, or he would be supressed, as it is he sits alone in the theatre whither the piano has been removed for the Xmas show, and exaggerates the Saturday night loneliness with the Swanee river and others. He is a good man though, Norton Shaw the football guard.

Tomorrow, by your leave, I intend to make a short, unwilling excursion among the "pimpled aristocracy". Just where or among whom I shall land I have not quite decided. It may be the Lang's, it may by the Howe's or the D——'s. We shall see, as Mrs. Fisher says. Meanwhile I shall go to bed and sleep off the affects of a spree last night, - the O.K. dinner. lovingly R.T.F.

H.P.C.
Thursday

Whatever news or narrative I can put in this letter will not soften the statement of my condition. Oh, I am not sick. But I am getting raggedy; I really am, actually holey in spots. I have four dollars to my name and owe about five. Can we scrape some cash any where; enough to buy me a pant or two and a pair of shoes? If not I must go to work. That sounds fine doesn't it? I can sound fine anyway, like any other old juice of brass. No, I haven't heard a word from Washington, or any favorable sign. I am not going to get the place I am afraid. My dreams must content me.

How you talk Ma! I am a "Spaniard Woman" in the Pud. Show. I can't stop rehearsing much longer than to get home anyway. You must get used to knowing that I shall probably have only five days at home. Fritter will have to exercise the dog for the last two. Yet, wait. This isn't final. I may get the whole yet. Cheer up. Your R.T.F.

The following letter will show subtle value changes that can happen within common family belief. Fisher's less cautious approach engaging future possibilities will continue to cut across traditional banks, as the Fenn branch reaffirms central avenues of education.
Sunday, hot as May
and wet as sop

The Rev. Willy and I are good friends as can be. No fear of us. We don't quite understand each other, I can see; but I think we each have considerable use for the other, which counts for a good deal. I haven't seen a great deal of him only every other day perhaps; I haven't had time. We have had our good talk, however, that has given me quite a turn, will for some time I guess.

He was asking me about my New York plan, what it was likely to be worth, in development as well as pocket, and wondering whether it really was the thing for me. I was defending, rather anxiously, when he suddenly, and with the slyest art, not arguing you know, only suggesting, said the life of a country parson had some fitness for me. He spoke of what the ministry needed, what it furnished, and implied in many ways, that such a life might be just my chance. It demanded my sort of nature and gave the best conditions for its development.

Now all this seemed so plausible, so apt to my disposition that I was staggered for a moment; tho no more so than this, as always my very stomach revolted from the possibility of such a life. A minister! Why, if there were anything on earth that I could have taken oath never to become, it was he. And yet then came the arguments. I am a kind of born preacher in many ways; that was what caught me. But I am pretty sure the more I ponder the proposal, that it won't take. I may be all Will says, and fairly well endowed with minister's necessities. I don't grow to love the prospect of being one. I should if I ought to be. The more I think the more I see (at least I am tending so now) that I never could look at life from a pulpit. People mean more to me than parishioners, perhaps not anything better than they, but certainly something different. Why, if I was a parson, my whole pleas would be against coming to church. Just think of a minister like that. - But this is only my first instinct. The thing has got to wait and vegetate in me before I thoroughly decide. Here endeth Willy for a time.

I rehearse now three times a week, bellow and scrape with a crowd of forty. Between whiles, very much between, I study, play handball, and write, alas, not so much as I wish I were. Occasionally, every two weeks, come AupaSon or O.K. meetings; they are fine especially the latter. We are writing a story, a grand collaborate production, by which we enliven our meetings. These, with hours at the Pudding, occasional shows etc. are my pursuits for the week, and I rarely leave Cambridge. Sunday usually gets me across the Charles. Today as far as Brookline, on other Sabbaths to Brimmer St. or, as you have already heard, to Readville. It is good wheeling now, and having cleared up my vehicular inheritance, I may get there oftener.

Now about my prospects and capabilities, I wish you, Papa, would think about them, and either write or be prepared to tell at Easter, just what you think of my New York plan or other of its kind. Besides this, I have still other cards up my sleeve which I should like you to examine. Love to Eleanor and Rex and all the family. Dick

(beginning of letter missing)

Among late finds was a small bundle of condolence letters dated late December of 1897 that were sent to RTP's mother following the death of her father, Dr. William Henry Thayer. To Richard, he was "Gramp". To readers of RTP's grandchildren he is "great-great-grandpapa".

One note comes from Mary Greene, a benefactor of the doctor's son, building Abbott Thayer's Dublin house. Another shows the kind, insightful intellect of those who in time of need referred their sensory powers to extolling belief in God, as traditional God-fearing folk.
Dr. Thayer, in his strong whimsical visage, figures as the patriarch in young Fisher's midst. He passes on the will to adapt to the new, perhaps also a bit of the rickety New England mind. An urbane and daring gentleman, he filled positions in the first medical schools, helped found libraries and lyceums, and a need to stay in New England. Fisher and Whiting met in Brooklyn mid-century because of him; his was the first move to Pittsfield. His handwritten journal was printed in 1972 by Dorothy Fisher Fenn Duncan, grand-daughter. It shows distant connections whereby professional focus and personal drive are those of his father, Gideon Thayer, founder of Boston's Chauncy Hall School in the 1810's.

St. Denis Hotel
Broadway & Eleventh St.
New York
European Plan
Dec. 26th 1897

My Dear Mrs. Fisher,

You & your sister & brother have my deepest sympathy in the sudden parting from your beloved Father, for I know what it must be to you - nevertheless I believe beside your own pain, you have great thankfulness that his brave & beautiful soul has gone to join his beloved wife & others - & to live the new life, whose joys & fulness I believe are far beyond our dreams - & well worth all our trying experiences here.-

Does it not seem to you as if we get an overwhelming conviction of the unbroken continuity of the lives of those we love, & of the joys & beauties they must have gone to whenever the door opens for them? Oh, how poor & empty are our words to express the feelings & deepest impressions at such times.

I know how thankful you must all be that your dear Father went as he wished to - especially that he was spared all (except those few hours) of suffering or any illness or loss of his faculties before he went.

How grateful I am for the privilege of having known your noble Father, & that I had the pleasure of that visit to him a month ago, & that he cared for me a little.

Abbott wrote me a beautiful letter full of exaltation in all that this change means of joy to your Father - I was much touched that you, and Abbott should each write to me on the 22nd. I hope the children's Xmas was not saddened. I am here in N.Y. with my Aunt Mrs. Upham for a few days more. Please ask Mrs. Whiting to share this with you - with love & tenderest sympathy to her & to you. Affec. yrs. Mary Greene. I am sorry I can't write a longer letter today.

Dear Mrs. Fisher & Mrs. Whiting,

The paragraph we saw in yesterday's "Republican", made us all think of you and the little colony of Unitarians at Berkshire, upon which the shadow of this severe affliction has fallen.

Within a few months you have been called upon to part with two, very near & dear to you. Two - a mother and father - whose places can never be filled by any others in this world.

On these sad occasions I do not think I ought to bid you, in brotherly sympathy, to sorrow not. I do not think we value our dear friend too highly, or think of them too much or recall the happy times we have spent with them too often.

When we truly appreciate them & really love them we miss them, & mourn after they are taken away; but none too much. They are worthy of all the love & affection & kindly remembrance we can give them in this world of excitement & care, - & more than we can give them.

But there is one aspect of our liberal faith which wonderfully helps & consoles us at these times,- that is the assurance that they are in good hands, that they are all right,- so we can "commit them into the keeping of a faithful Creator, believing He will do all things well."

I think too at these times,- "under the shadow of a great affliction", we strengthen our faith & brighten our hope of immortality. Because we feel what a loss it would be to have so precious a personality, so noble a character - blotted from our of existence.

Surely, if in a thousand years not a drop of water or a grain of sand is destroyed - the human soul, with its great power & noble faculties & aspirations after God & eternal life, cannot be less worthy of an endless existence, or be the only thing in nature destroyed or annihilated! The few words I would say then are - Keep unsevered the bond that nature gives. Day by day & year by year think of them, - thank God that you have precious memories of them to cherish, and bright anticipation of meeting them again. Think of them, - not as dead,- but only as gone before. And when you are called to follow them, heaven will seem more blessed & homelike to think that Father & Mother are there,- and the family will be again complete.

You have our deepest sympathy with you, and we sincerely trust God may grant you his consolation & blessing.

Yours sincerely,

R.E. Birkey
My dear dear girls,

How I wish I could fly to you, for a good hug of sympathy! It is hard to be so far away when the great events of life come. I am thinking more of what this loss will be to you, than of anything else, the dear father was so much to you--so much closer I think than fathers often come to their children. It makes me feel very lonely to realize that when I once had five brothers I have not one now--not one of whom I can see again with mortal vision, I mean. I feel that I have all who have gone on as certainly as if they were on earth, and I love to believe as you know, that they are often near me, to be felt, though not seen. There is but one life, you know, there or here--all is the Source--the “God” or Good--And since I am so interested in trying to learn how to develop my soul--(my God-Consciousness) here, it makes me feel very near to my dear ones to feel sure that that is just what they are doing too. Sometimes I feel that we are helping each other in the beautiful development. I know you feel thankful the dear life ended so suddenly and without pain (I conclude) it was what he desired, and expected, as he had told me many times. I long to know more about it. Who went to Keene--and who was at Gramp’s Lodge that day. Write to me, both of you precious nieces when you see Gramp’s Lodge that day. Write to me, both of you precious nieces when you feel able to. And know that my heart is full of love for you, and for all. What a change this will make in the lives of the children who had hardly yet become accustomed to life without the dearly loved grandma!--But the experience is just one of the lessons of life for them, and they will keep a store of helpful memories, greater than they can now understand all their lives.

Abbott may be with you now, and if so, I would include him in my sympathy, with dearest love. God bless us all! And let us love each other more truly and deeply for every such experience.

Always your devoted
Aunt Mary

This is the fourth time this Xmas week has been marked by a like event. Yr. grandmother went on the 29th. Yr. Aunt Harriet and Aunt Ester. It seems to me each one went on the 29th--but I may be wrong--it was close to Christmas at all events.
was governed by a bell, which every ten minutes, gave the signal for the gentlemen to take their napkins and glasses and move on a place. On this way, the ice cream found us all in our original places.

Today, in a few minutes now, I am going in to the Lord's (not the "Lord's Supper") to supper, with Victor and company. No more Chaucer for me: I am going to pat one's head, as Barrett says.

Yes, I did have fun at the Twitchell's, really enlivening fun. We had a merry talkative meal, and a fine "sit-around". lovingly, R.T.F.

Sunday Feb. 27 '98

This week has been mainly occupied with what is technically known as "agitation" here. The election of officers for the Advocate, which came off last night, was a matter very difficult to decide. There was one man who seemed to deserve the presiding on the ground of faithful and long service. But although he had worked so well, he was personally less agreeable, and much less respected and experienced than the other. However, for the influence we hoped for on future candidates we elected the obscure tailor, and gave the other man (only recently elected to the paper) the office of secretary.

The affair took place in my room last night, and lasted about three minutes. That is, the election did. Other things, such as music, travel, food and drink we discussed for two hours. Our new business manager, the genius that I think I have told you of, provided in his innocence a whole tin of crackers, a round of cheese, a half a gallon of olives, and ten dozen bottles of beer! All this for a dozen men. Luckily I learned of his intentions in time and prevented the whole consignment of beer from being put in my room. The bulk of it was stored in the manager's cellar for future gatherings...

March 22, 1898

"Dear Parents"

Choose the best or the least objectionable of these chromos instanter, and return the whole, bad and good, by the next mail. They must be used immediately for the class album. I like best the one which you will find on the top of the heap as you open the envelope.

Another thing you might like to see - I find it rather exhilarating - is this letter from Hart Merriam. I'm not certainly all he wants, but I have talked with little hard headed "Cowboy Fayor", who knows men and the west like the back of his hand, and we reckon I can get the job.

"Christ, - man," says Hal, "you can get that job, and the best thing in this good world for you".

So I think; and though I'm not an expert trapper, I can surely skin, and could soon learn to Trap. Behold me, then, negotiating with the great man, and soon, perhaps, (dream of dreams!) to visit the northern Rockies! Please send me back all these enclosures directly.

If it would only clear off I should go to the world's end on my wheel - badness to it! I am "feeling far from strong", as the phrase goes, so that I am choric of going out in a sunless wind. Yesterday I did the business by staying in from the only real cold I have had this winter. But why I curse the wheel is because I'm used to it. The thing has caused more blasphemy since it came than our room has known in months. Not that it's a very bad wheel, just the contrary. But it has more of the clumsiest, most patience-trying devices on it. That I care to juggle with.

Yes, it is the Lord's where I go to Brimmer St. You speak as if I spent -

Here I was interrupted by Stillman's whistle. He was below with a Yale friend of his, and old schoolmate of mine at Harvard School*. I dashed down, and we went together for the rest of the day; lunched together, walked at Arlington Hts in afternoon & played the Aeolian ** in the evening. It is now Monday morning and I'm "feeling far from weak". Dick

* Name of school attended in Chicago
** an upright piano

H.P.C

As to expenses on class day I can give you a fairly accurate estimate, I think, from what I have learn't by talking with a '97 man, whose means were not much greater than mine. Setting aside any formal spreading, which, of course, unless I suddenly inherit a present, is beyond us, the actual price of tree, yard and memorial tickets, photographs, subscription to the class fund and some other items which I have forgotten, will not exceed $30.00 I suppose we could get off for less if I actually disappeared from affairs on class day and denied myself every repentation to friends, but there are a few people here to whom, if it's in any way possible I must show some kindness; to say nothing of my family, some of whom must surely turn up on class day. 30 dollars, then, is roughly near what I ought to spend if I can.

I am getting great fun and profit out of my wheel. Besides using it every day to go from my rural residence to the academic world, which you may know is no nothing for distance, I have been several times into the near country once this
Life in Letters of Richard T. Fisher

week with Ted far out through Chestnut Hill toward Dedham, and by myself sever-
several times in the Arlington Heights region. Some day I may get to Readville on
the thing, if the proper day comes.

I went there yesterday by the way, for the first time in four weeks; the delay
not being my fault I wish to state, but that of the young lady's extreme industry
and lack of holidays. We rode on wheels through winding, beautiful wild roads
nearly to Canton, where the Milton people have a golf club. The house and links
lie in the rich hollow of knolls and meadow land, dotted with old apple trees and
clumps of old pines and set all about with wooded hedges. I tell you it was a
sweet spot yesterday afternoon, with the east wind cut off, the sun beating warm
on the turf, and black birds warbling in chorus. And not the least of the fun was
being in such good company. The lady stops short of masculine activity and pro-
ciciency just at the right point, so that although you completely forget she is femi-
ninely frail, you never believe her a tomboy. I wish I could of time forget my
weary self and be a child again. Still the rehearsing goes on faster and more
lengthily. These evenings we stand up and sing and march and dance and gesticu-
late. Last time it was eleven o'clock before we stopped. But it's fun and going to
be funner which is short for more fun, which is long for more fun after all. Give
my dear love to all the Thayers & believe me your devoted son!

(in same envelope)
Saturday Night,
as good or and as Sunday
for most purposes.

Well, here is Mr. Merriam's reply to my letter, apparently accepting my state-
ments as satisfactory, and asking me when, if I go with the expedition, I would be
ready to start. The chief cook of the gang sets out on April 20 for Nevada, which
of course is too early for me on every account. A further matter to be considered
that is I suppose it must - is pay. "Funds are low," says Merriam, in effect, but as
Mr. Thayer says "you would be willing to go for your expenses" - I infer the rest,
namely, that I am wanted at the price. Now I guess there are people, brother
Willy probably, who would think my embarking such an offer a waster of time.
But even at the risk of losing my too certain New York job, such a trip seems to
me completely worth while; and I think you will agree with me. At least I am
then self supporting; perhaps, even, if I develop into, or hear of anything, perma-
nently so. Things lead you never know where.

The only matter to be arranged is the day of departure. If I stay through
the whole miserable ordeal of graduation, I can get away till July 1. Query: will He
want me then? On 'other hand it would not be unbearable hardship to cut away

by June the middle. I don't relish the last two weeks of student life: impressive &
memorable, of course, but mighty harrowing.

Well, I must correspond a bit with Washington D.C.

"Now, Faky, to business," as the general says in "Boscabillo" I got the check
to day, and I shall hasten to buy a clean collar and a shave. I really need renovat-
ing. But how I do rehearse. I am not merely a chorus you understand a member of
evolutionary marches and joint hurrh girlies-es-es, but also a Spanish danseuse,
your leave. More cow than sylph perhaps; but then I whirl and kick and beat
the tamborine. I go through the motions. Pray Heaven I attract no attention. If
so, success will be mine.

Seems to me I used to write connected letters, didn't I? Long drolls all about
one thing? Nowadays I've lost the art if you can call it so. Things come too fast
and many for me. I just stick a claw in my memory (brutal figure!) and scratch

Every night or a last rehearsal in the evening. That keeps me here, you see, until nearly
midnight so that unless I take a night train, I shall have to wait till Sunday morning.
How I shall eat & sleep and talk! There is nothing to tell of news. Study has
long since gone from sight. Except for meals & exercise and my few recitations,
my whole interest and time goes to that play. Even when I'm not actually rehearsing
I have to sit around and see the others, just to be sure again how good they are
going to be.

I tell you there are some grand songs and marches in the show! With drums,
as we tried them Friday night, they carry you off your feet.
The latest change for me is from a Spanish woman to an ape. In the second act, with another fellow, I become a furry monstrosity with a suit that buttons up behind. I steal a hat from the orchestra and tear it to bits... 

H.P.C. Apr. 13, 1898

I have a whim to surprise you with a mid week letter. There is an hour left before 3:30 and a full rehearsal of "Boscaillio", cast and chorus, and I may as well, be writing to you, even better, be writing to you, as vainly trying to study. One thing I am a little peevish over is your headlong haste to get Wil’s opinion about my possible trip. I have no understanding or agreement with him which makes it necessary to communicate my plans to him. He didn't find time to study theology this summer, or anything else of the sort. Of course I should be happy to tell him when my plan is assured of coming to pass, but I am rather tired of hurrying to ask opinion and proclaim intrusions too soon. It's by no means sure that I shall go to the Rockies, and I wish you wouldn't talk about the business till it is. Probably I am too finnicky, but I am getting mighty disgusted with telling everything.

What a pity all this peevishness occurred to me. I started out to write something at least cheerful, and here I have whined a couple of pages. I am far from feeling like it. This show of ours which is taking all our time is a tremendous and exhilarating experience to me, - ought to be, I should think, to any one. You never get two chances to make one of such a prestigious company, and really produce, for your own hands, a swagger piece. But not everybody seems to feel so, which hurts me considerably. There are men here of such varied types and interests that the Pudding does not mean to every one the same thing. Some skip rehearsals and forget their cues, neglect their instruction and so conduct themselves that I burn to murder. However the gang is not all indifferent, and then again I learn that I am something too rigorous in my ideas, so that there is still hope and great spirit left.

I wish I could arrange to come home, arrive, I mean, Saturday night. I get through at six, so that, if there was a train then I could get out before midnight. I will run down now and see. Just hold the wine, please! Well, leave the door unlatched and I may turn up in the region of midnight, - my usual hour for home coming nowadays. Your R.T.F. 

The show is over, and I hardly know whether to be glad or sorry. It was great fun while it lasted, but undeniably tiring, and killing to every other pursuit you had. Last night at the Bijou theatre we had a perfect debauch of fun and excitement. We played to a packed house of blooming girls and their accompanying shirt fronts, and every one of us was bent on "trouble" (which is the technical term for all manner of lark). The show went fast & well, being engrossing to the last gasp. Those tramps which Pop may remember, being called back seven times - speaking of applause. And at the end, after the curtain had fallen on the final chorus, every man jumped into the arena, the curtain was raised again, and we sang the "Old Hasty Pudding", "Fair Harvard", and "My Country 'tis of Thee". During the last the audience all rose and joined in. I tell you it was a Memorable Experience, and after it was all over, and we had grease off the paint, and got into our own clothes, we all went around to the Adams House, where the Management - of the Pudding Show I mean - out of the goodness of its heart and the richness of the gate money, had provided raw oysters, sweet breads and beer - a toothsome supper. Then we had innumerable songs and toasts and speeches, - sung almost the whole show through in fact, and left for home soon after midnight. What a bond that show will always be among us!

Now begins work. I have a mountain of it to roll away, not to speak of my spring duties as Sec. of the O.K. and Pres., the young man swelling out his chest. Skipper has gone to the war you know, so I may have to preside at the O. K. dinner, when we initiate the first eight pm (?) '99. I'd rather like to do it I think.

I will send you some photos in the bag, some of my class photos I mean - the Pudding ones I can bring with me. Of the former I may need some more, there are so many men with whom I am asked and want to exchange. I shall have to spend considerable money soon I suppose, mostly I am afraid, at the dentist's, whither I am going this week. Besides that there are several articles I still need to cover my nakedness, such as stockings and a shirt or two. How I hate to have to ask for money! It does seem as if I ought to be earning something myself, But if I have luck I shall be soon.

Where is my bag? I have two summer shirts on today instead of my fleece lined which was growing offensive.

I think all the time of the small Fenns, not to speak of their Mama, whom I seem to see at the other end of this letter as much as any Fisher. They tell me, Faith, that, as a Spanish woman I look like you. We shall see when I bring home photos. Your R.T.F.
Hasty Pudding Club Show, "Boscadillo", Spring of 1898, Richard T. Fisher (l), Sam Robinson (r)

A "Berkshire" postcard; photo taken from Fisher playground, high pastures of the Whiting Farm (photographer, Mimi Mc Donald)
Here I am really happy again, and all because I finished a very vexatious day with a very healthy frenzy of composition. In the first place I had been feeling discontented all the week, rather tired after the play, and not hoping for more work, besides being unusually hankerous for the country. Then it was worse when I couldn't get a new crank for my wheel. But yesterday the thing came, and I says, says I, I'll ride away and work in the woods. So I goes & has my crank put on, or leaves to be so treated, and forepowers me for to desert the college. After getting my implement and paper, I borrows Ted's wheel which was at the door, to take me down to the shop. Just as I pulls up at the store, I punctures Ted's tire. That was unfortunate, but I cheers up when I mounts my own Berekapholous, and easily pacifies Ted. So I gets off for the fields. Ill-starred departure! I was not two blocks off when I runs into a yaller dog and trips over it severly. However I discover no brakes anywhere, being pretty mad, and starts off again. At the first push, crack goes my new crank, immediately followed by my temper. I then observes that my saddle was stove in, my front axle minus a nut, and my brakes smudged. Home I goes acursing.

June/98

To Prof, & Mrs. F. with the compliments of the author

Yes, I admit I didn't show proper appreciation of that check, to say nothing of mere acknowledgement. Be it known, however, that it came and is now doing well. We expect it to be out in a few days. No that's not strictly true. As a fact it will not be gone for some time. For all I can see now class day is to cost me merely the paltry sum necessary for ceremony tickets, which is to say that over ten dollars at the most. I can get invitations to the Pudding Spread, have in fact, for all my friends of old Stillman, who could not possibly fill up his allotted number of invitations from his own gang. And speaking of that, dont tell, Mama, at least until the time comes, but if any "bids" should come to the farm, see to it they are all accepted; and when the tickets come send 'em to me.

I can use them. No, I have not heard a word from Merriam, devil take his slowness.

I wait in constant impatience. Neither have I mailed the garters, but called for them, and now send the same in my bag, where you will find this note, together with some other tokens which may be of interest.

Just one more thing before I stop, touching my rash letter of last Sunday. I am rather sorry I set you all agog by proposing to come up then, for it's really more than I could do. I must say there's a kind of a longing for it way back in my vitals, but if I was in misery here, I couldn't allow myself to learn. It's too much like deserting the ship in the bad hour. You see here's the gang of lads I have known, not all beauties or boon companions, but all together for the last time, and all feeling in different degree the same impending separation. I should be a skunk to leave with out some big reason. Your R.T.F.

Speaking of my family and class day (to be paradoxical) I think my silence was more golden than any tears of blood would have been. I should be expected to weep if Fanny Jones couldn't come. Nevertheless I might mention that I feel some regret. a gook

Sunday by daylight

I have an idea. Shall I, or shall I not? I do not know. What do you think? Just see what I might do, and only one "if" about it too. My exams, only two in number, occur, on June 14 & 16. What if I should leave Cambridge on the first, well burdened with books, sojourn ten days or so in Berkshires, see my family, practice skinning again, grind up my courses, and be prepared, if necessary, to hurry straight out West at commencement? The "what if" is just this: I should miss two weeks of my last drink at the fountain of youth, to wit "student life at
Harvard”. Even the expense I would save makes for the plan. But still, - could I do it? I am mighty near it, and mighty far too, in the next breath. Let’s hear what you all think about it.

As it is I worry along very pleasantly here, albeit somewhat exercised over the future: studying a little, sleeping a little, and “heeling” class. This last, my chief business last week, consisted in sending out postals to every living graduate of the O.K. (among them, would you believe it, A.D. Hodges Jr, Benj Frothingham, Teddy Roosevelt, and other great men) for the Spring invitation dinner, and arranging for same; conducting an April meeting; and attending various pudding festivities. Besides these duties, I have swum once in Spy Pond, thought of going to Lexington, actually arranged and decided to go to the dentist’s, and, except for very meagre studying, lived a virtuous week. Behold me clear and shaven, and bound for one of my semianual visits to Readville. Your R.T.F.

Whenever I get off these drools now, I talk to Faith as much as anyone.

P.S. I think I shall send you a couple of my theatrical photos to be preserved like the dainty things they are! Also I think of sending you a picture illustrating “Little Journeys to the homes of good men and great,” or rather woman: se’c. Fisher, wearing his most ninny (Faith will recognize the word) smile, about to greet the Brush Hill nymph. As you will see, purely unavoidable it was.

R.T.F.

Hasty Pudding Club

Boston, Cambridge Station

(addressed to Mr. E. T. Fisher)

Be it known I have this day finished all my work in the University of Harvard, having, as they say, ruined one of Mr. Kittredge’s far farmed exams. For the last glorious fuss to come these next weeks I am greatly glad, but for the end of it all I dont know, really dont. Life is so full and busy now that I have no time to imagine the end. However, as Mr. Hamlet says, "Something too much of this." Let me answer (I guess you will) a few of your questions.

Last Saturday afternoon, C.C.S. and I went most successfully to Lexington, saw the whole family, were fairly loaded with welcome, and after the others had gone to ride, enjoyed a talk with Aunt A. I am going again soon, I hope with Ted.

Of your “little duties done”, accept news of F____’s club duly delivered, the term bill unreceived, but due any day now, no dress suit needed, at least now, nor yet the unknown gray you talk of. I personally shall not wear a dress suit on class-day. Wearing them in the daytime is long out of fashion, and in the evening only optional.

Dr. Merriam* continues to send favorable letters. I have had two within a week; the first saying he now hopes to take me & pay all expenses except that of the horse price fifteen dollars, and it only remained to ask the secretary’s (of interior I suppose) permission. The last merely asked whether, assuming he had my appointment, I wanted to be gone 2 or 3 months. I answered three!!!; and there you have me up to date.

My dentistry comes on, I hope tomorrow; strawberry night here on Saturday; and countless incommunicable things of flesh and spirit are crowding on with every day. Your R.T.F.

P.S. Merriam says start early in July, which looks like a little time in Berkshire.

* Dr. C. Hart Merriam, Chief of U.S. Biological Survey

from older sister Faith at RTF’s graduation
Dear Mother,

The great day is over, and I am afraid - I for one can only say that it was rather a failure in some respects, but then everyone’s inference seems to have been the same. Fr it isn’t so much matter. Dick could only have a sigh of relief when it was over and wonder how many people were provoked at him for not paying them sufficient attention. It was a tremendous crowd, and most people spent their entire time in looking for their friends whom they had lost. We saw Dick & Frank & Ted Thursday evening in their room, and we planned to meet the first time the next day at one o’clock at the Pudding Show.

The day was overcast when we started with a region’s haze so that I wore my green dress and blue hat. The first people we saw were the Whitings from Framingham, Christian, Kate: Fred and Max with Ted sitting at a table eating. Then almost immediately George Brown & his wife came up & got us to sit with them. Then Dick came and I went over to the club house with him and I met Chauncey Stillman and Helen Hinckley. Then we strolled round the yard till the time for the statue exercises - meeting Elsie Stearns there also. I went in to the statue with Mrs. Brown. Will gave us his ticket and went in with the graduates. You probably saw an account of that in the papers. Except for the extreme beauty of the sight of the great banks of exquisite hats and dresses it lacked the enthusiasm of the old tier, but they will probably have to manage it better another year. By this time it was about half-past six bright and hot and I was so desperately tired and hungry and confused with matching the sea of faces that I had a pretty sore headache strangely enough for me. Then we went to the spread at Beck Hall where Will tried for some time to get me something to eat to stop the headache. But as both food and utensils to eat it with had entirely gone I felt as if I could not bear anymore so we went out to a restaurant in the Square and got some food after which I felt better and like going at it again. We cut the Pres. reception and spent the entire evening hunting for Dick, but did not see him again. The yard was surpassingly beautiful with thousands of lanterns. They took in both yards this year and the beauty was much increased. Then we went to Memorial Hall to see the dancing and finally went up to Dick’s room about 10:30 and while we were still there Frank staggered in, exhausted and we had a jolly little time with him and left. Dick is to take lunch with us the next day at the Parker House after he gets done with his dentistry. It was a beautiful successful day & Dick both looked and “done” finely - we enjoyed the Pudding Spread and a great deal besides immensely but I could not help being glad you and Papa were not there. I can’t give you the best idea of the crush and sound with no plan to sit down and if I had not time or ability for another letter so send my love to Grandma Fenn and all.

Sunday, June 19, 1898

This is now the decline of a delightful day. At 6:30 A.M., having been waked by our Billy the porter, I dressed in knickers, and hurried over with my small “clutch” of golf clubs to catch the seven o’clock car from Harvard Sq., my destination being the Lord’s House (not one of them usually so called) on Brimmer St. Then I breakfasted with Mrs. Victor F. Genevieve*, and the genial Freddy, after which, having stolen Dr. Lord’s bicycle for once, we all rode out to that beautiful but woody golf links behind Mrs. Cabot’s house in Chestnut Hill, where I had the fun of turning down the gang in two successive rounds. I was a warm child, fellies, I tell you. Nothing but the woods, the duck pond or the stone walls ever interfered with my drives.

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This is now the decline of a delightful day. At 6:30 A.M., having been waked by our Billy the porter, I dressed in knickers, and hurried over with my small “clutch” of golf clubs to catch the seven o’clock car from Harvard Sq., my destination being the Lord’s House (not one of them usually so called) on Brimmer St. Then I breakfasted with Mrs. Victor F. Genevieve*, and the genial Freddy, after which, having stolen Dr. Lord’s bicycle for once, we all rode out to that beautiful but woody golf links behind Mrs. Cabot’s house in Chestnut Hill, where I had the fun of turning down the gang in two successive rounds. I was a warm child, fellies, I tell you. Nothing but the woods, the duck pond or the stone walls ever interfered with my drives.

* “Caritas”, Abbott Thayer’s monumental canvas of Elise Pumphelly posing as guardian angel over two infants; the first of Thayer’s works purchased for a public collection. Until recently on view in prominent place at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.
From this business, we searched hard for a bath before dinner; after which, the dinner of course, Hattie Lord and I put the last touch to the disruption of the Sabbath by playing billiards; from which vulgar pastime I have even now returned to Perkins, with the full blown intention of beginning to work, perhaps for the 39th or 40th time, since last Sunday:

But such an effort, you'll allow, is rather hard, when you have just had, besides other disturbing thoughts, a renewed fillip to your hope of seeing Mt. Shasta. Hart Merriam gave me a letter yesterday, in which, after ascribing his delay to sickness, he not only answered all my questions, but expressed himself as confident of taking me out west. It only remained he said to ask the permission of the Secretary, which, he thought, was almost sure to be granted. And, in the event of my going, he said he hoped to be able to pay my expenses to & from the field, and my board therein (or at), leaving my horse (price $15.) and feed for him when necessary, as my main items of expense. Of course, though, there are several other articles, such as clothes, a blanket sleeping bag (which I suppose I can get at home) and a sort of auxiliary frame attachment to my gun, which he says I need, that will add somewhat to the total cost. But, on the whole, considering what a glorious trip it may be for me, and what opportunities may grow out of it, I think "double the amount would be cheap at the price".

"Closing now", as somebody said to somebody (very funny I assure you!)
Richard T. Fisher

How about that bag of billets I sent you? Pretty comely, eh, what?

* Genevieve Lord Married Vietor Frothingham.

(a government form)  
Wash. D.C. June 17th, 1898

Mr. Richard T. Fisher, of the State of Massachusetts, is hereby appointed a special Field Naturalist in the Division of Biological Survey in the United States Department of Agriculture at a salary at the rate of seventy five dollars per month, for a period of three months, on the miscellaneous roll of the Division of Biological Survey. This appointment to take effect on July 1, 1898.

James Means, Secretary

...white, and his head and tail which were also brownish.

It was lucky that I was the one to happen upon this unusual bird; a less accomplished observer would have missed the distinguishing features. But, as it is, working upon my admirable data, I have no doubt that we shall be able to set up an entirely new species, which will be a perpetual glory to the science of ornithology.

"There, then, Mr. Scrapman, step aside and let me talk to the boy. You, Sir, are not the only owl on the branch."

Well, Gra, I can hardly wait to get away for Greylock to prove once and for all whether there are tree sparrows there or not (when will it happen that we go up there together?). The more I think of those little companies of young ones that were whining about last summer in the spruces the more I see them acting like tree sparrows. But then, for a person who thought herring gulls were some rare kind of (? water was it?). My opinion has very little weight. You and I don't need much darkness to see a rare bird in.

* Probably a shearwater

Whippoorwills are very plenty here this summer. I heard their tune, surely different? In walking from the "Gulf crossing" down east of us, at our house. They were tamer too, than I ever remember to have seen them. I heard several so near that their voices had all sorts of new notes and croaks in them. This letter, Gra, is to make believe I'm in Dublin. With lots of love to E. Thayer. From Dick

Hasty Pudding Club

Wednesday

I have just received my official appointment and oath of office and my term bill, which I send now. You will see that board has been rather high.

Now that I know a little more of my plans it might be well to explain them: What I don't know is when I'm going and when to start. What's known is that I am to receive $75 per month, payable at the end of each period. This, they tell me, will very nearly cover my expenses; but it appears to do so only in the end: I shall have to lean on ourselves, twould seem. For preparations: don't forget to send or have brought my gun immediately, as I told Faith; and the blanket bag must not be heavy: Merriam particularly said so. You make me sweat when you talk of horseblankets. More soon. Your R.T.F.
"give us males and dirt"

Hasty Pudding Club       June, 1898

Class day was successful chiefly in that it got better toward the end. The morning, that is after the prayer and the Saunders exercises, was one feverish scramble for friends and relatives. I lied my damndest at the Pudding to get everybody introduced to everybody else; and succeeded as much as to have Faith and Will meet Helen H & the Browns & the Whitings. But even this small feat took an amount of dashing around and looking and steering that defeats me to describe. There in the afternoon, at the Yard, I managed to present all the male Whitings to a female Stearns and her friends. But there my dutiful success ended. After the Statue exercises at five saw nothing more either of Whitings or Stearns (for which I was truly sorry), and except for our ridiculous glimpses of the Rev. Willy at Back, had no more talk with my relatives. He tapped me on the shoulder just as I was speaking to a girl I hadn't seen for three years, and the desperate, hunted, out-of-water look on his face almost made me smile. But of course I couldn't leave that instant, and when I looked for him he was gone "and his wife behind him". I soon gave up hunting and solaced myself with such compensations as were left, to wit: Vietor and Genevieve with whom I had words & a bite to eat, and later Miss "Readville", whom the inexplicable classday fate had up to this time concealed. We had arranged to meet at the Pudding, where I hoped to present her to Faith. But Gods and female hundreds were against us, and not till Faith was gone and the evening old did we forgather. I had a reviving half hour, with her on the car, and crawled up to Stillman's room where we sat in the darkness with the lights and music of the spread below us, and reviewed the day. Pretty much of a torture we called it, and mainly admirable when past. Give us males and dirt we said, and left the noise and the crowd for a midnight egg and milk, made with old Herby Foster's own sweaty fingers and reeking with the moisture of his swimming sink.

But there were other and brighter spots in the day than any of these few I have told, and I shall tell you of them more particularly when I get home. Not the least satisfaction was Ted's complete infection. As Will said yesterday during lunch at Parker's, the "microbe was at work". From the Pudding spread to the gym dance with all the gaiety between, Ted drained the whole, and his eyes bulged with delight. To see him dancing and squirming was a sight worth seeing. He had fun I bet. R.T.F.

Thursday I get home, unless a sudden summons comes.
So you see me well. Working too. By now I am about on regular time & amount. Tomorrow, at Barrett's invitation, we four instructors lunch at the Colonial Club with him and Mr. E. E. Hale*, whom he has invited to talk to English 22. We are going to be his body guard I reckon, and escort him across to the lecture hall.

It's fun here. Mr. G. is a boy with a man's brain. I learn & enjoy in his company. Mrs. G. is all made of sunshine and hospitality. Tell me you are all well.

R.T.F.

* Edward Everett Hale 1822 - 1909, author, Unitarian clergyman, influential reformer.

Hotel Thorndike, en passant, Oct. 9, '98. morn
residence Cambridge, H.P.C.

not George Brownes: Ted is tired of letter carrying.

People, I must begin work tomorrow, so there is an end of coming home. It's idle to Commisserate. You know the necessity as well as I. I need work and here is a job, for my purposes, good and timely. For I told you, I think, that I am free to go to any better offer, at any time, that such were my terms of acceptance. Again, I shall have an exercise that no man fails to profit by. Again too, I am pleasantly employed and situated. Truly, I think I have fallen on my feet.

And now Mrs. Fenn, my aged sister, I tell you nothing but what you know already. It seems to me like doubting your love, to make any excuses about leaving soon or not coming back. I am a hairbrained, forgetful cuss, and I know I slight the graces of this life, - say too little at least, but if I have any claim to be your brother, you won't need my words. Let's do as her Garnet, that generous old man I saw this summer: just say "God bless you and go. If you have the brain for go, you must go. It makes no difference if the mother sit at home and cry." And so good bye, and wipe your eye, and forgive I, for pass you by. R.T.F.

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Sunday in the H.P.C.
Oct. 19, 1898

For two - maybe more - minutes I have sat here drawing pictures on the blotter & trying to think where to begin my week's history. Things have been so many, and, withal so alike that the retrospect has a very unpromising look.

And yet I am still hugely happy. the work goes busily profitably, and if I was only sure it went well, I should be perfectly content.

Mornings I lie me over to the office, high up in luxuriosity & get my "dailies" where the clerk has left them in Mrs. Cobb's room. For the rest of the forenoon I read them, slapping comments on each; and if I get through later on, I read one or two of my fortnightlies, or Radcliffe reports, batches of which are always waiting to be tucked in edgewise. Then in the post noon I either read more themes, or hold conferences in the room. From 4 to 6 I exercise, walk, ride, or juggle with Curtis; after which I go up to the Refectory of the Episcopal seminary, where in company with many theologs I now get my food. They're rather stiff & some pray before eating, but they're harmless and I get along, evening brings me more themes & bed at 10:30 - 11.

So goes the bulk of the days. But every little while I take a night off, - this week, for instance, Friday & Saturday. The first time I rode in town to the Lord's and had a glorious walk out Beacon St. with Genevieve. Such a night! A great yellow mist with blue rags of clouds tearing out of it on the wind; and we pressing westward! We romped like children in the buffeting of that progress. Then at Massachusetts Avenue we turned and home again on Commonwealth, following the stream of lives.

On top of that and a homey supper at the house comes Saturday; and relaxation such as I have almost never known. I dined with Harry James & his most lovable parents, and then we two went to the Little Minister, Barrie's play, you know, acted by Maude Adams. Words about it are nothing. One cannot speak. On seeing & hearing you're just one big, self-forgetful, passionate consciousness following in a whisk of feelings the looks & words of that pathetic child. For with all her gayety and roguery and heavenly sunshine, and besides the noble bravery of her decisions, there is even in the moments of her enchantment, a terrifying shadow on her face. Poor child of the gods, her life is shrinking. When, after her hardest scenes, she bows panting & trembling before the applauding hundreds, and you see her pallor and her frailness, and that queer transparent beauty of feature, you sicken with the dread of death. I pray Heaven it may not be so, but men say she has consumption.

Wonderful, wonderful soul, so to charm & fill men's hearts! Her intercourse must be an eloquent sunbeam, her very neighborhood a blessing.
Well, it’s hard for me to stop. I carry the recollection of her face & words, and the pathos of her fate like a slow fire in my heart, not to burn but to stir & chasten.

Well, stop Lavish Fisher; hums a word from me. Dick.

Saturday before the Pennsylvania Game:
Waiting in the Pudding for Frazier

(to father)
All day I have fumed and fidgeted. The hour gone by the board. Everybody is tuning up, all the old friends and heelers’ boys are shouting colors and buttons, speculations, tickets; people everywhere are worrying & discussing. In ten minutes now I shall join the big throng and wend down to soldiers field, once more to see the familiar thousands and hear the same old cheers. For the first time this year, I feel the last year’s thrills, and care as I did before. I shall be calm again.

The work which I have today so boyishly deserted is still a fresh experience. The themes are varied, often conspicuously human, and the conferences are gratifying. In these I go to a small room in Sever; and receive my men for fifteen minute talks; during which I tell them what is what. They believe me, I hear. Rumor says I “am all right” which is pleasing to the Pedagogue.

But the test is at Radcliffe, where I go to an equally small room and advise the Ladies. Their interest is something like: they work, and watch & pay attention, and in their frankness, make more funny and ingenuous remarks, than I have heard before in a lifetime; and I talk & expound like a very prophet, and sometimes they’re good looking! R.T.F.

Mama’s letter, telling of the family immigration to Keene. So, says I to myself, there will be neither turkey nor parents at the home nest, and Richard must gin down his meal of thanks - giving with the "hoi polloi". I was to come grandly home on my earnings, and descend like a modern prodigal, on my unsuspecting family. Alas! I am baffled.

But I would not have it otherwise. Now that you are thus “doing” the country, it would be neither your pleasure nor your profit to forego a trip to Keene. Enjoy yourselves, as the song says, and the son will creep back in the region of Xmas. Meantime: glory be to the old Crimson! The color was not deceptive after all. Your R.T.F.

I will now begin, as my pupils say in their themes, an account of where I am at, if possible why I’m there, and such other particulars as may occur to me. I said, I think, that, or rather how I made a fool of getting to Keene, and how I spent the day of Thanks. Since then I’ve been plying my trade almost continually, with only one or two short relief! On Sunday I made one of my semioccasional trips to Brookline, walked with the lady in untravelled streets, and refused to stay to supper. Thurs., I think I said, demanded my presence for the evening at home. Then, on Monday I dove into my work up to the ears, read dailies, fortnightlies & Radcliffe reports, for three days, or more, and only let up to-day, when I wanted to finish up my report to Dr. Merriam. It’s gone now, thank Heaven, and a letter with it, which I hope will allay the Doctor’s very natural wrath. He needed the data more than I knew.

It is now the hour of five. Curtis is beside me wielding or spattering the red ink of his office; and in another minute or two we shall strip, and take our customary vespertinal punch at the bag in the next room. At this, and some iron dumb bells we always work a while before supper. Bill Greenough our friend and neighbor usually joins us and we get a good sweat. Then to bath and supper, I to the Refectory, where the theologues say Grace, and all make furtive love to the waitress.

Tonight - Curtis has an idea he says - not an unusual thing for him. We will walk in rubber boots instead, and smell the weather by Fresh Pond. After that we shall put on our party jeans for to go to the dinner of the Signet Alumni. Mr. Norton will speak & perhaps Tiddy Rosenfaldt - if he gets through early enough with the football dinner.
Life in Letters of Richard T. Fisher

The dinner was grand, - Professor Norton, White, Kittredge, & others in speeches ideal, loyal, humorous; and lots of genial company. I go to day to dine at the Curtises. R.T.F.

(on envelope) Tell me about Uncle A.

Sunday

Good for Faith & family! I shall surely spend a good slice of June in Berkshire. When did you say Will was coming East? I want to go and meet him. Thank Mary for the raquet. She came for my stoddent life and warm old spring is demoralizing me. Being a school teacher I loaf hours in the Pudding, talking with returning classmates - it's the show, you see - and tingling to be in it again. But this is my last loaf. I am just starting for Lexington to spend the afternoon, after which I shall come back, and use the evening.

I think if I ever meet the Princess in the Pudding wearing the right sex, I shall elope with her. He is a most disconcerting little female.

R.T.F.

I have no cold or other symptom. I have nearly forgot my body.

For Heaven's Sake tell me Miss Von B's address again. I was delighted at the chance to see her again, but after promising myself the fun of looking at her lip, I promptly forgot her body & soul.

I said Dope D & P & Dope, which is one without snap or spirit, soul or such.

R.T.F.

(no date)

Here is a mid week letter which should have been written yesterday. But the progress of my regeneration is so engrossing that I easily forget almost anything so I gather I shall always be a thorough success.

I am not even sure that I should have written today but for the complete delight which came with the reading of that article on Schubert in the Republican. Did Mr. Whiting write that? It certainly has a fine generous tone and speaks full of the soul of Schubert's music. It is fun to see someone who believes and feels how thoroughly his music expresses an entity of emotion; no imitation of sights and sounds and the feelings of the author, but the absolute soul of beautiful sound perceived and worshipped by the great man's genius. When Death speaks to the maiden persuading her of his blessed power, you feel you are hearing the utmost beauty of a really beautiful event. And so it is with all his songs. That emotional quality which ushers in the thought, and sentiment, and which cannot be expressed in words, flows forth in the music, with a new power to create a response in the hearer's soul. It is no juggling with chords too, no usurpation of the provinces of painting and literature. It is the absolute tune of the Universe; the perception of that emotion which only finds an outlet in music. It is wholly perception, never invention.

It occurs to me as I am afraid it will to you, that I have given you very few details of hygiene, medicine, or the progress of such self coddling as you seem to think (Mama) I am practicing. To answer those amusing questions which made the bulk of your last letter, I will say that I am wholly well and without the aid of a tonic. I go home on Sunday night after a call or two in New York.

lovingly Dick

Dec 11, 1998
Sunday after bedtime

A pleasant Sunday, albeit I have undergone a spiritual upheaval. Someone called an "ego" appeared and I believed her. Consequently I arraigned myself on the way home, and spoiled much good paper before I was finally quiet. But I am not seriously disturbed. I'm too hard a worker for that. In so far I suppose I am an "ego", for though I might be many things I wish to be, I sleep, enjoy my friends and relish my victuals, which is at least healthy.

That being so, I am coming home by some hour - probably the 8.30, am. - on Friday December twenty first. I shall bring with me themes, washing, information, - everything I own and putter at, except Chrust on the Wabash, which I know is in Berkshire. I shall find it when I get there. And speaking of your questions, I do not know anything about R. A. Asher, nor have I seen Aunt Alice, though I am intending to next Sunday. I tried to go out there today, but they turned me down by telephone. Company, I believe, was the reason. Furthermore, though you mightn't think it in this connection, our room is heated by a grate and a man to run it. More than that I do not know for I never asked. Nevertheless I am sure he would be willing to tell me if I really wanted to know. For he is a kind man and is said to love his mother and nod and doze and snooze and - "Fisher, you fat bluff, are you coming to bed?" Local color from Curtis. Answer: "I am" if you excuse me, my dear parents, not for long however, and "you may lay to that."

R.T.F.
Jan. 23, 1899

Monday - early

Actually in the midst of my rejoicings, I unthinkingly let slip the Sabbath without a word. Pure selfish healthfulness: which may comfort you but may not excuse me. Ever since Thursday, when the real work let up. I have been happily casting off the relics of my dispepsia - which some tricklings numerous may have told you was my disease - by walks, errands, a dance - such a dance! - and yesterday some of your wishes for calls.

The dance was the beginning of my delusion or perhaps better, my enchantment. It was the gathering I told you of, Radcliffe body and soul, and matroned by Mrs. Greenough and two others of the same jolly sort. It was a frolic. People romped and gambolled, pedagogue and all. Three or four of my "pupils" were there; also our - a fifth we'll say - to dance with whom was a swim on Heaven's clouds, and to talk with whom was a pleasure not to be discredited. Curtis also met his enchantress; and yet when we came back to our room and disrobed after the fire, we agreed almost sadly, that it was a pity we should have to forget these maidens, as in two weeks it is ten to one we do. Maybe so, maybe not: let's wait.

Well, Saturday I mostly slept and recovered; walked in the afternoon, and finished by getting dropped in to Keiths with David Lales. After that I passed a comfortable night, with no pain and a normal temperature.

On the morning came the deus ex machina that was your undoing. Just as I was sitting down to drool thus, in walked the general "Putter" (alias R.P. Utter) and brought me to waste the morn in his company. So we walked many miles in various ways, across the Fresh Pond marshes - proper stiff Mal!- and via railroad back to Spy Pond which we crossed on the ice, and left by way of Massachusetts Ave. Then it was dinner time and I went up to the Greenoughs. After food, I walked to the Square with Mrs G. who was going to Brookline. On the way, with her advice or with her commands, I decided to dedicate the afternoon to calls on Mrs James and my nurturing pupil(!) (the one mentioned on page three of this issue). I went pondering where the lightning that's me - should strike first. To me came Harry the son of William James. The mother was asleep. So, after walking a ways with the son, I went to see the maiden, the which I was rather glad to find out - away I mean. So then I dropped James at the library to walk for a while, and postponed my call on Mrs. till evening. But I went and was absolved and entertained - principally by a very s sprightly little lady - but elderly, who turned out to live with aforesaid pupil. Ten o'clock Barrett calls. I go to N.Y. Thursday.

R.T.F.
Sunday February 19/99

You're right, Ma, of course, but I didn't or don't know Mrs Barron's address, and moreover I felt that the real proposal had not come yet. Somebody ought to have written directly to me. But I can't go at any rate, and since negotiations seem to go per you... add my many acknowledgements.

As for my plans, I thought you had them, all there were. You and the professor were both right: I shall be in both Washington, in the territory during this summer, and the city at many odd times hereafter. For as you may guess if I continue in the service, which it will lie with me to do or not, I shall be mainly round about in an uncertain distance; and my connection with Washington D. C., (for a while at least) will be in the shape of occasional visits. Except that I have been directed to do some reading and join the forestry association that is all I know. As soon as possible after June 1 I shall leave for the Olympics (Wash. Penn. see map) where in a summer of actual practice, I can form an authentic judgement of the profession.

Dr. Merriam, as I learn by an affectionate but rather offended letter, has wanted to have me with him this summer, and though he admits that as Congress is still niggardly, forestry is a better offer, he feels a bit hurt that the bargain was struck before he was consulted. I think he rather thought he had a sort of line on me himself. I should have told him on the spot (I did immediately by letter) if things of my defection had not so hurriedly cut in.

You bet I'll be home at Easter & probably (with your leave) bring Fritter. I will also write to Ethel whose case is similar to the Hutches, only more curable. Recess is April 16-22 inclusive.

your R.T.F.

from Abbott Thayer to RTF's mother

Dear Nellie,

Dear old Dick has gone to Wash. to see Merriam, back to us next Monday.

We all thought he looked at his very best, and all his charms have steadily developed. All he tells me of his anxieties about himself and the consequent revelation of being in so fomentally nervous a state which he gets clean out of in any outdoor life like the Shasta one make me - you know beforehand just what it makes me feel. What on earth is life except when based on health! I said to him that it was plain from his college and college tutor instructor experience that whatever hopes he has of a life in some intellectual walk must patently be based on the nearest way to establish his health. I say go and work on the farm at home if he can get simply his feed and in one year he will perhaps know whether health is all that was lacking to make him a writer, for he will then be healthy. In the mean time you will have him by you, and oh! I know what that means to you both. When it is all nerves as in his case, and when his present life makes them worse then outdoors and early to bed (without any attempt at production) will always cure him; I say be a day laborer, have the courage to disappoint the cheap element in your admiring friends and relatives but you get health. What fools these mortals be.

I warned him not to believe any explorers who said a hot climate would be free from malaria-and-quinine. He must not go except to a really fine climate as to Shasta.

Feb. 12, 1899

Sunday, slow plodding in a snow bound car. - Back again well as a young beast and more and more tired by the forestry business. The more I think & talk the more it seems just the thing: certainly for my health which I am growing to demand like a clear conscience, and most probably for my maintenance. For all I hear declares the need of foresters to be rising - just dawning in fact - and likely to pay for the feeling. (?) And as for the work itself, it appears to offer every chance for just my kind of a plant. Whatever Heaven has intended me to be will surely transpire from health, simple living, and the service of a fine man like Pinchot. Hence I rejoice me, and hunger for the start.

Well I finished up my spree with a bang. After four glorious days in Scarborough, during which I gained flesh and spirits in an incredible degree, I gorged my ears Friday afternoon on the way to the station. But I thawed 'em and dined and spent a pleasant evening at Aunt Kate's; left there at ten, spent an hour in N.Y. with Chauncey, and took the midnight train for Boston. Yesterday I spent in a kind of restless puttering at tag ends of leftover jobs, and finished the day with a wintry season of letter writing. I wrote three would be diplomatic letters to the three chiefs Merriam, Coville and Pinchot*, and added thereto a complete confession and explanation to Mabel; by which I take it I have comforted the heart. To-day I am roaming about telling on myself: a process which needs no explanation. You shall soon have developments from Washington. R.T.F.

Feb. 17, 1899

Dear R.T.,

Next time you come to Washington don't come on a runaway cayuse.

I never dreamed of such a thing as you going that night till you set off grif (?) in hand. I wanted to have a table with you. I had hoped to have you with us again next summer but find Congress has not smiled on us (has not increased our appropriation) I cannot offer you anything so good or permanent as the Forestry Dept. can. I should have taken it as more courteous had they spoken to me about it first - but some folks don't do business that way. Really, I see no reason why you should not try the thing. If you find the job to your liking it ought to be permanent.

My father is still very ill. The rest of us are on our feet again.

As ever,
C. Hart Merriam

Feb. 26, 1899

Monday already, and no word sent to you. The passion of (or for) health (which you may have gathered is my latest and largest ideal) got the better of me. I finished a week of steady work and daily runs into the open, with a day at the sea. Frazier took me and Bill Greenough (our neighbor below) down to his beautiful house at Manchester - a grey and pine clad eyre on a bluff of pines, with the waves and rocks a stone's throw beneath, and the big sea everywhere beyond. Jimmy & Peggy (other Curtises went with us) and all morning we chopped among the windfalls in the pines, with the noise of the sea faint about us. Wasn't that a treat for inland me? I could hardly keep my eyes away: more than my beloved sleeping ears, "the moving waters", and the crawling sails, and the tremendous challenge of the sight, transported me with restlessness. And when we had chopped and eaten on the beach with a great fire to watch and sit around and then came happily to town, I dashed out to the James'es and got more go-fever there was a South Sea traveler there, one with eyes and ears, and a philosopher's interest in nations: and when he had talked of the Fijis and their simple joyful lives, and their country, it seemed as if I must go there and become an islander.

Well, it isn't as if we were going instantly to hold down a high stool. The Olympics are somewhere, and Forestry, if I don't miss my guess, no dullard's trade. But meanwhile rhetoric and the weary drone of sophomores. I can stand 'em; even more, for; such is the ease with which my work slips by that I almost fear neglect. No further news from W, only daily consignments of forestry publications, which heaven knows how I can imbibe before June. R.T.F.

8 March, 1899

Dear Fisher,

I include part of a letter sent me the other day by Carpenter, of Columbia. In some respects, I should think, the place he describes might be worth your consideration; for on the one hand it might offer more chance for professional advancement, and on the other it would bring you into contact with New York, where if you aspire to professional letters - you may most win __, yourself.

Let me know how the suggestion strikes you.

Sincerely Yours,
Barrett Wendell
March 12th'99

You can’t guess why I’m here. A conference with the dandy man Pinchot (no dandy but a prince) duly arranged and agreed upon. Out of my health and labor come I to learn the master’s ways and laws, the auspices of the summer and the month’s thereafter. So I am here, gloating with Stillman, and waiting for 2:30 and the presence of Pinchot, whom I seek at that hour in his home at 2 Grammercy Park. The parley over, I return to Boston either at five or midnight, according to the length of our talk. Ain’t you s’prised? Ain’t the boy independent like? - taking his · and his case and dropping down for a day to the Metropolis on business? I tell you the kid really feels as if he were getting his part and beating up. But softly yet. The end is still vague. Wait till I report - or distort - the interview.

Meanwhile, nothing new but a wonderful addition to my summer. I talked, the Jameses all became possessed, and together, me and the prof. we wrote to Pinchot, and got Harry and Billy engaged also for the Olympic work. There’s no money in it, but a much richer company or so I says.

“No fear o’ me”, Ma; I’ll see your relatives and friends. They’re mine too and I like ‘em. The Bowditches I’ve already seen twice since I got back; lunched there once. The Twitchells I shall surely see as soon as there is wheeling, and eke the Careys. Miss Bullfinch is less likely because she lives so near. But I shall do my best. Nuff said.

R.T.F.

Stillman and I tried to go up and surprise ‘em at Scarborough for half an hour, but the trains were not right so we gave it up.
intelligence of the Atlantic coast for the blessed pleasure of living in sunlight and a stable climate. Oregon, California or the South Seas, I don't know which, but it's high odds I'll bring up with one or the other. And when I do I may lay to for life. Otherwise, other I mean, than this complaint to Pluribus, there is but work. I have not adventured more this week. Except for one old joint with Skipper last night, where we saw Julis Marlowe in Colette. Wonderful maiden! R.T.F.

Harvard Club
27 West 44th Street

Saturday Night

All well as the world goes, and such a round! Since yesterday at this hour I have been in forty heavens. First, after an amusing correspondence with one of my "pets" I called on her last night - time 8 - 9. Then I went to see Mr. Copeland about my work with him in the second half year and from there I hurried in town and took the mid-night train to New York. Found the dead Stillman in his night clothes and there was times. We wrestled and talked and wrestled & talked and finally shaved and breakfasted. After food we went down town where I was to look up a mate to Lobengrin on the two tickets Stillman had for me. (He had two others which he was to use). I got Vietor F. & we went. Ma oh Ma, if you could only have heard those heavenly songsters! Two Dr. De Reszkes, Emma Eames, Bispham, and a wonderful new contralto who sang Ortrude like a sorceress. But those De Rs. and Eames! Nature said "go to": I will give the world its best dream of a voice, and it was done. These two just think a note, and it soars forth. And she: more than her marvelous voice is her exquisite dignity and tenderness and womanliness. King Henry parting from her at the last, and she remorseful, desperate, grieving, laughing on his last looks - it's almost one too many for the tears.

Well, that was the best yet, the most wonderful cast I ever hope to hear.* And since then I've been full up. Stillman and I dined quietly and happily here; he went out to an engagement near by; and I rode up town to see Genevieve Lord who is staying up the island. Where I am waiting for Chauncey. We shall finish the evening, talking and playing the organ. Tomorrow is still vague. It's one of Chauncey's few free days so I shall stay down; but on Monday I shall go up to Scarborough for three days at least. Washington is not yet settled. I daresay I'll wait till next week. My condition is exuberant and symptomless. How be you? R.T.F.

* World famous singers, Metropolitan Opera. Unique opportunity!

Well, Mother Fisher, you and your dear husband have given little Richard quite a start. "Silent days in New York and Berkshire" by Mr. & Mr. F. do not make pleasant reading. I'm powerful glad I know where you are now, and to some extent how you are. It won't be long I rejoice to know, before I shall come and see for myself.

Your intention of writing to Mrs. James* pleases me to the heart. She and her sons and husband, and their constant hospitality, have made a great light in my life this winter; and they will for many winters to come. They are a noble and wholesome family.

I too long to go to Lexington, both for Ted's sake and my own. I shall try, I think, to get us out there next Sunday, Sunday, being mostly days for my recreation. The one before last poured chilling sleet all day; and Mrs. James kept me with them all afternoon and all night. She's a saintly hostess! Last Sabbath, I dined at the Lord's and during the P.M. Gyn (which is Vietor's bride to be) and I walked out to Cambridge (it had cleared up for a while) and hear Professor James lecture on a "Certain Blindness in Human Beings". A stunning poetic talk, regular Whitman and Stevenson plea for living a life of simple pleasures. After that, back again to Brimmer St where I left Gyn to run up Mt. Vernon to the Curtises. After food the girls took Frazier, Jimmy, Charles Jackson & me, off to their high backed cosy pew in King's Chapel where we sat in the dark with many other pews full of dark figures, and listened to Mr. Lang play the organ for an hour. Heap fun.

* Alice, Mrs. William James, wife of the philosopher, professor at Harvard 1872 - 1907, & 1910, parents of Henry ("Harry", "Hank") William Jr. ("Bill") and Alexander ("Aleck")
whenever now that train arrives. Tell me: can we hope for any bare ground by then; or does the snow still hang on? Let me know what to expect under foot so I can bring the proper gear. Let me know any way, if you get to it, some fact & rumor of the farm. Your R.T.F.

P.S. This aint enough after all. I see lunch for which I am hungering, is still twenty minutes off, and I can burble some more. Radcliffe or members of it, nearly clawed my eyes last Saturday. Over confident misses sternly demanded why they got only Cs, when as they implied, such brilliance deserved no less than B. Curtis says I must wear a catcher’s mask next time. Interruptions have spread this over the twenty minutes and I will eat.

Goodbye.

April 16, 1899

Dear People,

All the week I have been chiefly out of doors. In addition to winding up the lectures in our courses, and coaching a couple of students for the civil service exam. Carter and I have visited a large plantation of oak and ash far in at Lincoln, and I have superintended the doctoring of several old trees on the Longfellow place. The first few days of the recess (Monday & Tuesday at least) I must put in with the students, and after that I have to go up to Squam Lake. So there is no getting home for the present. Last night I dined at the Jameses and heard from Peggy that she is planning to come to Berkshire in June. She is to arrange the date with Eleanor, I believe she said. Perhaps I can get up there at the same time. I was to have gone to the Parkers at Lancaster for this Sunday but a child took measles and they put me off. No definite plans yet for the summer. Percy not being back I am just off on my wheel to dine at the Twitchell’s. your, R.T.F.

P.S. As to the Grange, & C., I have no “woodlots” but they can be had by application to the “Bureau of Forestry”. I will talk to the Grange but cannot now say when.

April 16, 1899 (?) Sunday

April 22, 1899

Hasty Pudding Club Sunday

Here I be, Ma, and Pa, basking in a genial sunlight of 70° in the shade! So fear not for my lack of fire. Anyhow, I shall not occupy 44 Brattle till tomorrow morning. As soon as we arrived last night, safe but albeit cramped with a stuffy and unvaried ride, I went right to the James’s, where Mrs. J. insisted on feeding me abundantly, and otherwise providing for my comfort most hospitably. I am neither low in my mind, and “eating” regular. I do work today. Vacation is not yet over and I rebel. I shall drift about in the sunshine, and conserve my health till Monday. I go now, back to the J’s. with Harry for lunch. home soon. R.T.F

P.S. Fritter thought he might be called upon to “cat” a sandwich he ate at Springfield, but we rode outside in the trolley car, and he held his own. He is doing nicely this morning.

April 26, 1899

In front of me who am seated on a platform behind a big desk, are fifty of the student body, friends, strangers, and former companions, all busily recording their concerning this examination. Beyond at the end of the middle aisle, the open door leads directly into a hall into another door, into another aisle, into another room; and at the far end of that, seated exactly as I am, I can see Prof. Taussig, who is lecturing faintly (as it seems to my distant ears) before Barky Donald, Harry Jones, and other “stoodents” whom I know and do not know. It strikes queer, doesn’t it, this sudden half ludicrous half imposing eddy that has caught me and set me for the moment over many fellow youths, and to the eye at least (which in me just now ill quail a little) on a par with a live professor? And yet no one, least of all myself, consents to take me seriously. I seem to remain young, so be it and I’ll not complain. R.T.F.

(Note) Send me my tennis racquet, quickly C.O.D., any old way. I’m lusty and I want to play. Please heaven I’ll never come home a dope again. It’s a “Late”, Horace Partridge maker; comes up in the big one I think.
May 13, 1899

H.P.C.

Sunday

How did you guess it Mama? You hit my situation to a T. I am not overworked but well and active as anything you please, being a careless skunk no less. All the duty in the world - most of which seems knocking at my door - fails to keep me at work. I desert daily for the woods, and suck in the blessed air; and my thoughts are soaring. Three hours each morning of talking with my pets are all I can coax my brain to perform. What other work I do in the day has to be done with my mental leavings, - not the tired leavings, but merely that degraded intellect which consents to be kept after school. O I am a well boy, and spoiling for the free life of summer.

Now I will see how many facts I can put into this page - if I can think of any. One event to Lexington Sunday last; hot heap fun; dear hospitable people. Two I got Mrs. Von. B's address, and am about to telephone her. Three I didn't get asked to the Radcliffe festival - awful slap - too much "D.s" I guess. Four her name is "Goldmark" not "neck" - how could you think so? Five she thrust my week in an uproar. Six she was a simple and just minded person. Seven it's just as well she went away. Eight these are not facts at all.

Now is my blessed old Uncle anywhere around then? And Mudge*, his man? Call 'em in and squeeze 'em for me much hard; and tell them that if they get to Dublin before next Saturday, a new man will - or hopes to - come flying to see them. Oh no: not a new man, but the same small Diccon that once walked their hunting grounds like an enchanted garden, and felt their neighborhood like the blessing of Heaven. Tell me Dear people are you there? R.T.F.

* fictional character of James Fenimore Cooper

Sunday May 21, 1899

The weather o' business is lightening up, and I begin to see some freedom in the distance. This week I finished my last four - will talk to my last child, and there remains only the records to make up, two batches of reports to make and the blue books in English 7, due June 3. The relief has granted me several sprees already. Thursday two Curtises, James and Frazier, one James. Harry and I saw Julia Arthur play Juliet. It was my first sight either of her or the play, and I had a rich time. She is a marvel of great smoldering black eyes, and a startlingly beautiful face. Her Juliet was charming, heroic, fascinating - enough for me anyhow, who was forthwith dumb, and a mark, thereafter for the facetious student. More delight have I known in Winchester woods, one trip-a-journey of reconciliation to Readville, and - if you will believe me - my last night's dinner at the von Bernuth's. I didn't see much of the Miss, A or hear much, but Fritz her brother, a genial garrulous person, I listened to for most of the evening and with real pleasure.

Among the signs for June is an ugly possibility of my having to stay around here till class day, as shield & manslave for "Copey"*, and so miss or almost miss Berkshire. That means a wrench for me in my now state of mind and desire to see Faith, and I will raise the bell itself to get away. The need of my staying seems small and unimportant, and I have a scheme to fill it with Curtis which I shall soon propose to Copey. It's irrationally definite in his little notions, but I think I can budge him. Pinchot wants me anyway for the twentieth, so either, I must fall apart or Copey will have to give way, for Pinchot is the bigger man. Well I'm going to bed.

* Professor C. T. Copeland, compiler of "The Copeland Reader"

Colonial Club stationery

Dear People,

I am afraid it is disgracefully long since I wrote you a line. As usual I have been going far and wide - first busy with exams, and then dashing off to New Haven and other suburbs in search of new instructors. After that came the launching of my graduating students, which was a matter not merely of diplomas, but also of much counsel and assistance, even to the raising of funds. If only somebody in my entourage was not poor! Then came Commencement, and I (almost accidentally) took in the whole show. I didn't get any honorary degree but I got a gratifying cheer from a gang of the Seniors as my class passed their corner in the yard. Also it was good to hear of the big fund that has been raised for us poor teachers. I have high hopes of getting a slice of it added to my salary.

Cambridge is again empty and asleep, and I am still here and shall be here until late in the month. I have work to do from Mr. Parker and I must also get established in my office. It's not bad here when the weather is average. Better address me at the Club for the rest of the summer.

R.T.F.
Left to Right: Kathleen Whiting, Gerald "Gra" Thayer, Louis Agassiz Fuertes, Anne Whiting, Mary Thayer, Ruth Whiting, Harry Whiting, a 'deBrush' boy, Margery Whiting. Scene is south side of the Whiting house.

Rex in his prime.
An ancestor in-law of Fisher's future wife, Oliver Wendell Holmes, "The Autocrat", once made mention that the freed bird had much to owe the nest from whence the ability to fly was nurtured. In like manner, the following letter group is an inheritance of influences and themes while RTF pulls up and away - but not mentally - from matters of his Berkshire home. The inclusion of letters of his parents, close friends, the Thayers, are peripheral; comforting and clarifying of Fisher's buoyant mien; and at a time of professional maturation Fisher's private life will at times become an abstraction in which everything left unexpressed by his chosen vocation seems to require what he left behind, a reliance on deep literary expression. From the New Year and the new century, Fisher indeed is flying far from the nest, flying in the real world. In this group of letters, we begin to see the world of women, and future letters to and from son Richard, now the man, will confirm a complex three-dimensionality of life, tender and brave. Final chapters will bring periodic loops to his generative Berkshire home.

III. BERKSHIRE LETTERS, 1896 - 1905

to Ellen Thayer Fisher

Pontoose, Aug 13th '96

Mrs. Fisher my kind and loving lady,

I know you're not at home yet, but I hope Eleanor is well and you are having a good time.

Miss Faith I hope all the children are well. I see Fred passing but he went so fast I could not call him. I know you will all be delighted to know we have a nice girl here and she weighed 13 pounds they tell me. She came at 6 o’clock yesterday morning and they tell me her mother is going well. Good-bye. From your faithful servant. Nellie.
182 Beacon Street
(post Dec. 9, 1898)

My dear "Nelly Fisher",

Not until tonight, have I been able to get at the bureau, where your exquisite Frames were put - when they came home, we have been in such an overturned condition, ever since we landed. What was my surprise, to find Lothe & Lewis Garnett in one of the Frames! How dear & sweet (of) you, to think of putting them in & I cant tell you how touched I was at it, for their Father & Mother have been my dearest & best friends for years. You knew it & so you put them there & you were a dear sweet Little Woman to touch that church of friendship. I wish I could see you occasionally, for your name has been a household word for years. The Keene cousins have always had such a big place in our hearts & you have been so much to them, naturally I have known a good deal about you. Thank you for letting me know this charming side of your nature!

Always with cordial interest. Sincerely & Gratefully RS.Greene.

Boston December eighth

Saturday Night '98 or '99

Don't fear, mama, for a little bit of a moment that I shant turn up in June for a good slice of days. I am as eager to be at home and see Faith as you can be to have me. Only there are difficulties and duties without count and the time may have to come out of my week of blue book reading, Dublin that is. My time you see, before June, when I am due in Washington is parulous short, and summonses to visit, prepare and wind up affairs harass me by the million. But I am weller now, and I have hardly got at (grading) yet. This grading, grading and the dregs of my academic services still get the bulk of my time. The bright spots in my week are the sauce of a very heavy pudding. Witness a few, one par superlatus-simus. On last Thursday I went to Ipswich where Gyn Lord is visiting her married sister. I was there 24 hours, Ma. They live 1 1/2 miles from the sea on one of the many grassy knolls, with a great marsh below, and the dunes notched with blue water beyond; but verily I did go four separate trips to the beach and Genevieve with me. And I disported myself as I have not for the space of years. We two did sit in the sand, which was on a great curved solitary beach, white and hard and backed by grey ranks of grass topped dunes, one light house stood among them: no other house; and we were four hours there without seeing a human creature. Outside a half mile the surf beat endlessly on a long bar, and came on to us in quiet ripples. Plum Island stood two miles to port, if I may be nautical, and everywhere to the casual Ken stretched that blue strange sea - that I have seen so rarely, and that I love so much.

For the time I was there I did forget past and future, themes and forestry, and was spoken to by all the spirits of Heaven. We dug holes to water; made ramparts for the rising tide to scale and poured over the wrigglings of horseshoe crabs. I forgot to be exclamatory, forgot myself, R.T. Fisher, and remembered to be young. The one picture that of all that day comes most insistently back, and seems most richly symbolic, is what I saw, as I lay on my back in the sand and watched the lady paddle in the surf. She has color and grace and lots of beautiful hair, and things natural play upon her like a taut chord; so that you can imagine that the sight of her against the white plumes of the surf, with the blue sparkling water behind her, and a laugh in her eyes, was pretty good to have before you. I never saw a mermaid, but I know now what they ought to look like.

Sunday

All this illegible scrawl I spread out last night on the way to Manchester, where I have been overnight with the Curtises. I'm sorry to see it has turned out to be such ravings, for that Ipswich visit was a precious experience. I would like to have got it more justly told about. Today has passed pleasantly enough but without special charm.

My spirit never soars at the Curtises. I had the best fun over an hour's passing a ball with Peg, the fourteen year old daughter. I don't feel young and inexperienced with her, which I do with her perfectly confident sisters. The rest of the time was good, but as I glanced from time to time at the sea, and the beating surf, which the business of the family would not allow us to visit, I thought it looked reproachful. I don't care for talk and gardening in such places.

This week I am going to try to fill in with some of your family calls - a few. The most is to be work which is still unfinished. For this scrawl O pray you forgive and decipher it with a patient heart. My intentions have been most communicative, but the train has jiggled....

Yours, R.T.F.

Crestalbon Farm
Dec. 5th., 1899

Well my dear, your very welcome letter came this A.M. I shall be contented my dear boy with whatever arrangement of your life seems best to you. I am perfectly sure that steady work and purpose is the one thing needful for you. I already see possibilities of pleasant things in the Washington life for you. I'm glad to hear
of a classmate so soon, especially one with sisters and a home. And as to leaving Aunt Rias' of course I will say something - you must manage your own life, and I must trust, like other mothers.

You did not say when you saw Uncle Fisher. Did you stop in Yonkers and not find Aunt Kate? And then call on Uncle F. in N.Y.? As to Xmas my dear, we simply must cheerfully assume that you are a man, and a home Christmas cannot be the regular thing. Mable & Aunt Ria will be very glad to have you there. And we shall send to you in their care. The simple old habit of brightening others' lives will transform yours, as it has so many others before you. Be just as happy as you can, and you may be sure we shall. The $25 it would cost to come home will be needed you may be sure. Papa has a chance to do something at Mrs. Pomeroy's after Xmas, in the way of lectures of readings, or a class in the growth of languages. Mrs. Pomeroy has written me about it, and I think it will be arranged. Snow came yesterday, just a little. 24 degrees this morning, one first taste of winter. I've sent three or four small studies to Brooklyn (Bessie C.) to sell.

Write when you can. I know you enjoy being with Mr. Pinchot. Yr. loving mother. Tell us who yr. classmate is - the Pudding man you dine with. When you have time to think tell me if you need any of the stockings which you left at home. Also many handkerchiefs. We will send anything you need in the Xmas box. You will soon know whether or not woolen stockings are comfortable in Washington.

Dec 27, 1899

Your questions, Ma, may be answered in our next. It got to be bedtime before I remembered them. Xmas and the celebration thereof has clean upset my calendar; wherefore you had not a letter written you on Sunday; upon which Ethan and I hied us with joy to Rock Creek and the Zoo, where under a wintery sky, we saw shy creatures perform by twilight. Next day we had Xmas here in the morning - a fine one it was for me, as you shall hear - Bill Hodges and Ethan here to dine (Aunt Mary having fallen from a higher thought-plane into indigestion), and all three of us with Mabel made a late trip to Soldiers Home cemetery to see St. Gaudens' beautiful bronze. It was a gorgeous and austere sundown; almost dusk when we got there, and through the screen of evergreen round the seated figure, and the sprawled branches of an old pine above, glowed a giant portal into space: pikes and masses of cold purple cloud surrounding a cold yellow vista. It was grand and solemn with that dim contented statue sitting there in the windy night. I never saw sculpture that moved me more.

Monday was consumed by the three student assistants in a trip up the back of the Potomac to Cabin John's Bridge, where there is a famous hotel, and the bridge (noted for the size of its main arch), and the empty channel and deserted locks of an old canal, meandering up along the river for many picturesque miles. We followed it some two hours and then returned for an incautious gorge at the aforesaid Bobinger's hotel. I say incautious with wisdom born of the result. We had still another Xmas dinner to manage at seven o'clock that evening, and we none of us could produce another appetite. However I fared beautifully on words; being providentially inspired with a passion for the state of the ministry which I discussed with my right hand neighbor, the host, Mr. Graves (the dinner was at Mr. P's house). In the course of talk I forgot to eat, and in my excitement, even developed some appetite for the last few courses. After dinner Mr. G. played the guitar, and we sang, and "enjoyable evening was had".

That brings us to date, I believe, n'est ce pas? Now for some minor oddities.

Catch Eleanor and let me tell her the funny joke. Little Schwesterchen, Santa Claus gave me three watches for Xmas! None of them half so pretty as yours. But what shall I do? Mary Thayer gave me a silver man's watch, and Aunt Marcia a bigger one that winds up like a clock in the back (an alarm clock, I mean), and keeps fine time. So they all do. I have all three running, and their little minute hands move around like one. Anyway, Emma, you had better ask for some other prize on your second six subscribers, and whenever you want your little gold watch back again you shall have it. It is really too pretty for me to carry.

See what a fine Xmas I had. Beside the money that you wrote of, I got: from Chauncey, Maeterlink's "Treasure of the Humble", a beautiful poetic thing, and Emerson's "Letters to a Friend", and (I believe because there is no other donor suspected) the two volumes of Stevenson's letters direct from Scribner's; from Mabel, same; from Will, in belated package arrived from you tonight, Marcus Aurelius in the Temple Classic edition; from Aunt Mary, an unChristian scientific nail cleaner, from Genevieve Lord a wonderful photograph of the Grand Canyon, Colorado, and one of the most warm-hearted notes that ever I received; from my mother a picture which impresses me as remarkably alive, and revives my memories like magic; and from Eleanor a second gift that I use daily on my specs. This I think is all, though, being so outdone I blush to say it, and I have a vague remembrance of a handkerchief from which I lost the label. A bad omen. Let all who read forgive and believe me grateful.

Office life is bearing me kindly in its current; and I have for an immediate prospect of delight the arrival of Frazier from the West, probably to live with me at Aunt Maria's for a month during which he is compiling his report. My own work is of the more varied type - not figuring, at least now for a steady job I delve in old agricultural reports in search of anything written or said about the rates of growth of native trees. They are rich reading. Along with this I am looking up and compiling Canadian forest laws, writing to the so and so, and getting fat
letters marked impressively “ON HER MAJESTY’S SERVICE” - nothing else. Then yesterday Graves had me answer the letter from a man in Florida who wanted to know whether rubber trees would grow at his place and how to get them. I dug up the information, and big with dignity and importance, I wrote him his fate - though I did not say he was “rubbered”. Doesn’t this sound entertaining? R.T.F.

* Augustus St. Gaudens - sculptor of Robert Gould Shaw Memorial in front of the Boston State House

Dec 27 1899

Dear M,

I clean forgot. Aunt Mary’s illness to be suppressed; such was her own command. It seems that if the thought vibrations hear their disciples admitting themselves ever to be ailing, they fly away into space with a loud shriek. Or so I should suppose. Sh!

Your letter was good, but I was sorry to hear of ailing Whitings. Tell Aunt Sue I am writing her soon. As for your suggestion about Genevieve Lord, it is apt. I shall be overjoyed you meet her, one more and surely the best of my girl-friends. I will write to her (20 Brimmer St.) and tell her you are to be at Dr. B’s.

Cambridge Mass
Friday (1897)

Dear People,

I am sending herewith a check for $200.00. Don’t spend it foolishly! There is more left to carry me till next pay day.

All goes well here. My eyes are slowly getting used to the new glasses which I think will turn out to be a considerable improvement on the old. At any rate I have worked harder than usual this week and felt better. So far no distractions - bar lunching one day at the Jameses. This noon I start for Wachusetts with four students to stay over Sunday. We are to be quartered with a nice widow, a slightly decayed, slightly gentle woman, who has built a little cottage for the accommodations of such as us. We expect to mark trees all day tomorrow, and come home Sunday night.

I have definitely decided to live in Aphetorp house next year, which will mean that I shall have to procure more furniture and ornaments. Shall you have any to spare? Your R.T. Fisher

Berkshire Letters, 1896 - 1905

Crestalbon Home School For Boys
Berkshire, Mass. Jan 22, 1900

I directed my last to Dr. Edwards’. This is a beautiful Monday AM & yr two letters (20th & 21st) are both here.

Yes, you must go to the Greeough’s & stay till Tuesday, if necessary. Sat., in the rain & warmth, I cleaned out the sink with my own fair hands, drenched it with slacked lime, & filled it up with ashes. Then I cut out the ventilating pipe & plugged the holes. I was surprised to find the pipe (except a little at either end) quick-clean & dry. Then I disconnected the drain ventilator (w’h also you remember discharged up the same chimney). I’m going to put in a regular earth closet. The cover will be hinged so as to be lifted. Under the “hole”, a galvanized large iron pail will be fixed close up to the seat, so as to catch even spatters! By the side of this pail, will stand, under the seat, another pail of ashes, with a tiny shovel. Every patron of this elegant “temple of ease” will go through the rite of “ashes to ashes, dust to dust”. Then every night, the high priest (that’s I) will lift the pail from under the seat, deposit under the solemn stars & return the pail to its niche for the next day’s devotees.

Sat. night, the weather changed with heavy rain, turning to snow & freezing, with a NW gale. So yesterday we had perfectly smooth sleighing. Sue & Margie drove with me. There was a good audience & I hope more strongly that the society will call him, but I suppose they will hear Mr. Ordway first.

Mr. Seaves has a son just finishing Harvard & two daughters - all with fine dramatic powers. They have raised many dollars for church & charities by amateur theatricals.

The Unity Workers meet at Mr. Merritt’s house. Mr. Sloper was on hand dressed like a bridegroom with a fancy necktie, and Mrs. Sloper is a very attractive woman. Last night was cold. Th. AM at 12, but today warming up, but a most beautiful day. I must close, for the messenger parts.

Y’r loving & faithful Edward T. Fisher

Feb. 9, 1900

Very meaty letter, Ma, for which much thanks. It was nice to hear of the dear old Rex again. Not the least of my privations in this trade of mine is having to desert him in his old age. R.T.F.
Feb. 17th 1900

...Yesterday Gerald & the girls went to Scarboro - So we are quiet - but very busy, and spring seems very near. Rex is well. Yr. father says that his chief occupation now seems to be letting Rex in or out of the house! In the evening we frequently open the door for him six times or more before he makes up his mind whether he will sleep in our out of doors. Eleanor is so soft hearted she cannot bear to hear him bark more than once. I do not think a little discipline would hurt. It may strengthen his mind.

Our hens have not yet begun to lay - not an egg have we had since Feb! I wish we might build a new hen house and start in with a new lot of hens. The hen house is small & cold, and the present hens, full of hen lice... The Glass Works have shut down again - The Union has crowded them out, by putting down the price of glass. It is hard, they started with such good prospects last fall.

Next Wed. papa reads "The Lamentation of Jeremiah Johnson", Kipling’s "The Derelict"...Arthur has just sent him some Dooleys*......

Have you written to Mr. & Mrs. James? And is Billy J. to be with you this summer?

Love from all the family. Yr. loving mother. Eleanor is skating up in the "hollow" with Howard.

* "Dr. Dooley" the famous character created by Chicago journalist and humorist Peter Finlay Dunne 1867-1936.

from Alice James, Mrs. William James Sr.

Chateau de Carequeirance

March 16, 1900

My Dear Dick,

Your beautiful letter came to Rye nearly ten weeks ago and gave us both great pleasure in days that were dark indeed. But it was the darkness before day. Ever since we got here Mr. James had been improving and I feel sure now that the change is radical and that recuperative forces are fairly at work. He has recovered his old courage and hopefulness with prospect of a measure of health and the possibility of work. In another two weeks we shall be moving northwards with the Spring, as far as the Lake of Geneva. I shall be sorry to leave this region for besides being a very beautiful country it is prosperous and interesting. The culture of the olive is passing, alas! Giving way to vineyards and great fields of flowers which are sent by the car-load to Paris and Berlin. This is during the winter. They are succeeded in Spring by early vegetables and strawberries. Why shouldn’t the same sort of thing be done in our country? Foresters ought to discover just the spot and make the fortune of an entire country as the intelligent creature who started the thing here has done for this region. Meanwhile the foresters give signs of life. Billy writes as a postcard to say that Mr. Pinchot is coming to Cambridge and I see that Billy is himself all eagerness to get into the woods again. I trust that it will be, and in your company. We shall feel much easier about the boy if he is with you. And Harry, I suppose, is going to Washington. It looks to his anxious mother like a heavy responsibility but I have entire confidence in Harry’s judgement and if he thinks he can do it, I shall be glad to have him try. It is a splendid chance to step into a wider world and meet new men and new ideas.

I hope that your mother is well. Give her my love and thank her for her good letter which I shall answer. I long to hear just what your surprise plans are. Is Guy Scull to get his summer in the woods, or did he lose it finally? Ah me! How long it looks to us mothers - the weeks of silence when we can only trust that it is well with our boys! May all go well, and ever better with you, dear Dick. With love from us both. Yours Affectionately, Alice H. James.

Hotel Costebelle, April 28

For some strange reason my letter, begun weeks ago, has never been finished, but I send the scrappy thing that you may know I had you on my mind, even before Harry was to join you. I am so very glad that he can be with you and that, in his letters, we shall hear often of you. My husband and I both regard you as a member of the family. You were extraordinarily kind to think of Peggy and her child’s love of baskets. But don’t burden yourself with any extra articles on your long journey - I say the same to Harry and Billy - for she will take the will for the deed and be greatly pleased that you remembered our existence. She recalls fondly her happy weeks at the farm and is becoming a most aggressive patriot, and pro-Boer.

We leave this evening for Geneva. The summer is here having come, not as with us with a jump, but so gradually has it stolen over the land that we rub our eyes with surprise as we recognize the great tide of life about us. The agriculture is a marvel of skill. And some day you and Billy must pass this way to see its wonders. But beautiful as the country is I am fairly eager for the sharp cut of the northern air. I send you a bit of Asphodel which we gathered by the roadside yesterday. I never felt it outside of poetry before and I must confess I should never have recognized it. It is to tell the truth, a rather ragged [end of letter missing]

from Alice James
from William James, Jr.

San Francisco Sept. 13th '00

My dear Mrs. Fisher,

Some time ago Dick gave me your very kind invitation to stop at Berkshire on my way back to Cambridge and I feel very guilty not to have answered it before this. I had expected to leave San Francisco either today or tomorrow, and had hoped to stop at Berkshire in time to return to college with Ted. Sorry as I am to give up such a pleasant plan, I am afraid I shall have to do it, owing to a troublesome water-on-the-knee while I have developed since arriving in San Francisco, I suppose it must have come from sleeping cramped in the stage coming from Dyerville to Ukiah - a very harmless malady, but exasperation in as much as it acts as a kill-joy to Dick as well as to me.

I see such regular letters going to you from Dick, that I feel that it would be useless for me to try to describe our summer for you, except that as far (as) I am concerned it has been a splendid success. Owing to Dick I have made myself partially "solid" with Mr. Price, and he has offered to take me with him next summer into the Lewis and Clarke Reserve, which is indeed a chance to jump at. I feel as if I were the luckiest of the lucky.

My one sorrow is that I must leave Dick out here when I start East. My being with him out here has been what has, more than anything else, made the summer worthwhile, and it seems very hard that we cannot finish it together.

Thank you very much for your kindness. I can only hope that such bad luck for me will not last. Sincerely Yours, William James Jr. Sept. 15th 1900

Sept. 21st 1900

Your good long letter & then Billy's note came early, dear boy. I'm sorry enough that your last days together were such disappointing ones, and sorry for his knees. I trust he was able to leave on Mond. so that he will meet his mother today I suppose. I wrote Harry a thank you note for yr. Big Tree report and sent my "welcome home" to his mother.

Well, Faith went to Keene yesterday, with Dorothy & Wallace - to stay till next Wed. I think. She means to go to Dublin, I told you. We had a little note from Uncle A. yesterday - I'll send it, but I want you to return it. He cannot help feeling that he has more fun than he ought. But we understand it all. I wish, once, he would travel thro' our great country. I'm sure he ought the next time he needs a change after he is saturated with Italy & old art.

This morning came this letter from Chauncey. I've answered it, and left him three letters. I hope he will be here before Faith goes back to C. - she will surely be here till the 10th or 12th of Oct. It seems harder than ever to have Faith & the children go, but something bright will turn up for the winter I've no doubt. It always does. Helen Hinckley came on Wed., and I've seen her only once. Yesterday it rained nearly all day - thereby upsetting the Whiting plans for an all day picnic somewhere - just their family. And they tried to go today, but it rained all night and still looks cloudy so they are not going. I hear Helen will have a week of poor weather. Too bad! tho' we are thankful for the rain the country was so dry. Yr father is picking our hop crop - it was very heavy. I may make a hop pillow or give them to Mrs. Briggs for beer. I've been taking walks nearly every day with Aunt Mary to the top of Cobbler Hill, and Bridges Hill. It was glorious up there on Wed. We lay on the grass in the sun and watched Eleanor & Dorothy Fenn, Kathleen, & Katharine Whiting coast down the steepest side on an old fence board. "Twas really good tobogganning. Bismark ran about and chased them. Old Rex goes to walk once in a while with different members of the family, but he is pretty hairy & stiff. He seems very well though. This a.m. I combed 1/2 a peck of old hair out of his coat, and picked out many burrs which I'm sure must make him much more comfortable. And he did seem grateful tho' he walked away several times when he was tired of the process.

......You know Margery is giving Eleanor music lessons all the time - good ones - and I hope E. will soon really enjoy them. She does fairly well and I shall keep her regularly at it till she gets over the drudgery. I wish I had done the same with you. When shall you know whether or not you will be at Aunt Ria's this winter? Harry James is to be there. Annie Noyes has gone to teach in a University - Settlement Kindergarten in N.Y. for the winter. She is happy to be at work again. You know her uncle Mr. ___ died last spring. She is a good woman. Her boys are queer - "Noah", and Ralph, the youngest. He is determined to go onto the stage tho' he never acted in his life, and the family do not believe he could! But he thinks he is going to devote his life to reclaiming the degenerate stage! Dick, the middle one is very different, a fine wide fellow, Junior at Cornell now. A newspaper man, who turns his head to anything that comes along in the summer. And enthusiastic Bryan man from his studies of politics in college. He wants to come to Bklyn and speak for Bryan. Daddy's eye seems to be at a standstill. Well, it's not perfectly clear. He thinks it never will be. He seems to read perfectly well with his glasses - even that eye alone! Very soon I think he will use it freely.
He is hoeing the celery - has been trimming the grapevine. We have quite a crop. Our plums have been really good & plentiful.

Aunt Mary has just come over from the Whitings - they are all busy sewing on the piazza - Helen too.

Your letters are wonderful comforts - we get them all, and I will write as fully as I can.

Yr. loving mother.

Sept. 25th 1900

I shall only write a short letter today my dear, for Maggie Connelly is sewing for Eleanor and I must help. 'Tis a glorious day. Ted & Helen go down to Cambridge at 4:45 this a.m. - that seems like the end of summer. But twill be summer still in this house, for Chauncey comes! For two days. Faith & the two children come home tomorrow. This noon she will be leaving Dublin. When can you send money to us! You thought you could in July, and I wonder what the hitch is! It would be very good to have it soon.

I'm so sorry for all the James boys & Mrs. Gibbens that Mrs. James has had to give up her trip home.

Oh have I said how much we enjoyed Dr. Miller's letter? And also those from Galla & the Frothinghams C.C.S. sent on to us...Helen took tea with us on Sunday. She told us she had heard thru' a friend of Chauncey Stillman's engagement to a trained nurse in N.Y. Can it be true, and you boys have not told me? He will tell me when he comes if it is, I am sure.

I hope you will know soon how you are going to live this winter - only to gratify my curiosity -! We're all blooming. Will smiles that his hay fever is almost entirely gone. Your letters are constant joys. Keep on writing and coming, your loving mother & father & sisters.

Oct. 3rd 1900

Yr. father is just off for town dear boy, but I will try to send a note.

Mrs. _____ "Duncan's Mills" has just come. I'm glad you were not there long. I wish you would explain about yr. money affairs - We really need money so much. I fear when we get that hundred back we may have to use it, instead of replacing it with the Loan & Trust Co. The Thayers will spend time here in the first week. Ted has tutoring to do already. Dr. Robert Greenough's wedding cards came this morning - he marries Miss Amelia Goodyear on the 16th.

Now I must paint. Percy is to be in the Mass. Gen. Hospital for 18 mos. there he has his living ___ no salary for his services. splendid experience. He says he would give a thousand dollars for your bald head! Yr. loving mother

November 19th (1900)

......I have just been for three days to Chocorua, where the weather and country were glorious, and I wished many times that Dick were along for I knew how keenly he would appreciate it. He has just written me, though, to say that he was enjoying the same thing at Berkshire. I think that we both learned in the last two summers, at least in a measure, the value of New England.

I am awfully glad to be able to send this letter at last - after hoping to so long - and thank you very much indeed for giving me the chance - so poorly taken advantage of - of sending it.

Yours affectionately William James Jr.

to son Richard, in the West

(no date)

Your chambermaid letter has just come, dear Dick - a sprightly episode - I'm not anxious about your heart. ......

I am so busy painting you will have shorter letters, I fear, in future. ......

My three recently painted pictures are in R____'s window in town. They look finely. I love you too much! Yr. devoted mother.
Here I am on my way back, you see, without having been able to get to Berkshire. My time was so short I could not make it, this trip, and you will understand. Last Saturday R.T. and I met at the Harvard Club and arranged how we should spend our evening. He went off to the theater with Jimmy Curtis, while I attended the dinner of bridesmaids and ushers. When we came together again at the Harvard Club we ran into a crowd of 1896 men, whom we knew, who had been having a reunion dinner. It was fun to see them and warmed both our hearts. As he and I slept in the same bed that night, we had a good chance to talk. He told me of his winter which, I must confess, if it had been mine, would leave a very bad taste in my mouth. His chief work - i.e. his report - remains yet unfinished - and, so far as I can find out, though he may have had many pleasant times, he has had few really helpful experiences with either men or women. My advice to him was to get dirty, when he got out this summer, and to put some good work behind him before next winter sets in. Something rises up within me to protest against any young man's spending his time in going to afternoon teas. An occasional dance or dinner is all right. The only place I care to meet girls is in the open air, - at tennis, or walking or boating, or on a horse - not in “society.” - For a man to become a professional wife seeker is all wrong, for a man to get into the condition when he looks at each girl whom he meets, wondering whether she is the one, at last, who is destined to become his wife, is all wrong. Well, well, why should I be writing you all this - when I didn't say one word of it to R.T. It was he who told me all this. He knows that the thing for him to do now is to work. After dinner on Sunday night, we talked some more, and I went over to Jersey City with him where he boarded the 12:30 train. The few moments we saw each other were vastly better than nothing, - but not nearly long enough. As we parted, we both said that if we lived, nothing could keep us apart. That hope will make life happy. We'll gladly endure anything if at the end we can be together. My plans are to spend the next two weeks in taking inventory over a division of the road. Then St. Paul again for one and a half months - after that, out on the road again. I hope Hotel Aberdeen will always reach me. C.C.S.

Dear Eleanor,

After all it's your birthday, when you are wondering perhaps whether you ever had a big brother at all, here is a letter from that very person himself; and it brings you lots and lots of love and Happy New Years. There is no tantalizing little paper bundle coming with it, I am sorry to say, but if there are no present presents, I will remind you of some future presents which are going to be mine as well as yours, and which I want you to put down (if you like them) among the nice things that happened on your thirteenth birthday. We are all going to be in Cambridge at Christmas, where some of the loveliest people in the world are living, and where there are more beautiful things to be seen and heard than anywhere I know; and you and I shall have a taste of everything. This is what we will do. All by our very selves we will go and poke about the college. I will show you the gymnasium, where all the fellows go and get strong, and Memorial Hall where hundreds of men eat in one luminous room with stained glass windows in the walls, and the Museum, where you can see every sort of animal and bird and flower there ever was, and the room where your father used to live - oh no end of delightful places that you will come to love because your father and brother and sister have loved them before you and because they are worth loving. By the time we have done all that we shall have to go back to Faith's for supper, but some other day we will sally forth again and have more foolish amusement in Boston. Have you ever been to _____ Theatre? I think you went once with some one on your way home from Catawmet. But anyway, we will go again, and we will sit way down in front near the piano man, where we can see all the funny Irishman's winks, and just what the juggler is trying to throw up in the air - every curious prank done on the stage. And when you have had enough to that - if it's a fine evening - we'll walk out to the Harvard bridge on the stone wall along the river (it's great fun), and so on till the sunset is over, and we have to catch our car, and hurry out to our family. O we shall have a cosy time I tell you. Your brother Dick
The Harvard Forest benefitted from the Fisher-Stillman relationship in the most significant of ways, the construction of the Petersham academic buildings having been funded by Stillman money. Back in ’84 ‘Uncle Abbott’ had painted Chauncey’s two older sisters - “The Sisters”. Could the family friendship have started then? Chauncey’s friendship with RT is vital and charged. He found a surrogate mother in “Berkshire Mother” and a soulmate in his college friend whose career he championed. Chauncey poured his heart out more than once to “Berkshire Mother”.

Chauncey also found a friend in sister Eleanor. If CCS needed warmth, he also matured on schedule. He learned his trade as a railroad man, and married before Fisher did. Fisher money would find its thankful way back to Great Northern Railway stock.

Letters to and from Chauncey C. Stillman

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Cuisine a special feature. Electric lights, return call bells, porcelain Bath Tubs, Hot and Cold Water in the Rooms, etc. Post Office, Telegraph Office, Express and General Stage Offices in building.

Nevada City, Cal. 6 June 1900

Dear Mrs. Fisher,

I left New York in such a hurry I can't remember whether I wrote you a line or not. I know I meant to tell you I was leaving for California and that I hoped to run across R.T. Well, I left N.Y. on six hours notice, but after traveling these

3,000 miles - Dick is as far away as ever. Your letter, returning R.T.'s to me, followed me out here. It seemed strange, but very nice, to get a letter from you the first thing on reaching Frisco. At Chicago, where I was held over for two days awaiting instructions, I sent two....

We will have done our best to meet, and failed that's all: if we are to be disappointed. We're in close communication now, that's something, & can keep in touch thro' Everett.

I'm sent out here really to be educated & have my eyes opened - ostensibly to look into an electric plant, in which N.W. Harris & Co. are interested, & which makes electricity out of its water and these foothills of the Sierra Nevada.

Yesterday, I went all through the gold mines in this region. It was very interesting. Here's hoping I meet R.T. C.C.S.

New York City
20 Sept. 1900

Dear Mother of R.T.,

Your postal card greeted me this morning. My father is now trying to arrange to have me spend the winter in St. Paul, Minnesota. If I go, which is highly probable, I shall have a few days between leaving Harris & Co. and starting West. In that interim I want very much, if I can arrange it, to spend a day or so with you. Coming then rather than now would enable me, I think, to stay longer with you, and surely would free us from that grinding sense that I had to return to New York to report for duty at a fixed hour.

......Will you spare me one little letter from Fisher? I haven't heard a word from him since that long letter in August, and I can't wait till I reach Berkshire. I hunger for a word about the boy. As ever C.C.S. The thought of Eleanor's cookies makes my mouth water.
27th Oct. 1900

...He had spent the night at the Great Western Hotel in order not to be late at the station... After I had checked my valise and bought my return ticket, we started for the Fenns. On the way we bought a Sunday paper and looked up Harvard's football score of the day before. Talking of Cambridge and then his summer work, we were at 57th Street before we knew it. As the Fenns were at the table, after a hasty wash-up, we sat right down. The youngsters were lined up on one side* and kept making a series of curious sounds to my great delight & their parents consternation.

We dined at two I couldn't help it - because my position was so advantageous I had to keep making faces at the twins. They, I'm sorry to say returned those faces with interest and soon outdid me. Mrs. Fenn caught me at the little game but a smile told me it was all right...

Let me say right here that R.T. was the healthiest child of nature you could possibly wish to see and in fine spirits. The Rev. Mr. F. was obliged to hasten away from the breakfast table to attend to his Sunday duties. We ate so leisurely that when we arose it was time for the others to get ready for church. R.T. & I sat in the front room, while he showed me his summer's photographs and told me about his recent work. You know all that had to come out, before we could go on any further. About eleven we started for the park, - the old World Fair grounds. On the way we had this tin-type taken to give you a little amusement. But if you put any faith in its representation of him you won't get much fun out of it. The picture of him is a lie and an insult to his healthy looking face. In the park, we rambled along the shore of the lakes and underneath the little trees. It hardly seemed possible that man had arranged it all so natural did it look. Then I had the fun of trying to tell him - a vain attempt - of what my Berkshire visit meant to me; of the permanent joy, and great gain in my life, in knowing, even slightly, his sister, Mrs. Fenn; of the good times Eleanor and I had romping together; and of the deep and lasting mother-comfort it was just to be near you. He, in his turn, had the fun of telling about his summer's work; the lads he had under him - comparing those from Berkeley and those from Yale to the disadvantage of the....his meeting with fine characters among the stage drivers, inn keepers, hotel-porters, bar-tenders; his growing fondness and fascination for Frisco, increased largely by an attractive lady herself, and her successor whom he had met on the train. We laughed together over the number of these same fair damsels - and quoted Stevenson, "Do I love?" said the Loveless; and the echo laughed." He appeals to and evokes the highest in each one of them. By gracious, I never knew anything like it. I verily believe that give him a degraded wretch, he'd make her a queen, before he was through with her, and she'd be conscious and recognize herself as such. But it makes little difference, man or woman, they all show him their

noblest side - largely, I do believe, because that is the only side which he can see and which therefore is the only side that exists for him. And, by gracious again, if they didn't have that side he'd create it in them by looking for it and expecting that they had it. He meets so many gods and goddesses, as Emerson tells us, because he already harbors so many in his nature.

...we strolled about the University of Chicago buildings and some more in the park. It may be unkind sometimes, but every little while we find some new reason for being thankful that we went to Harvard. Properly speaking, I suppose, we ought to thank you elders, because you sent us there. At 5:30 we were back at the Fenns to say good-bye...R.T. and I then hurried to catch the train to the city..

C.S.S.

* here a drawn circle indicating a long table with "Rev. Mr. F." and Mrs. F" on the two ends, on one side, C.C.S., Mrs. F. Sessions, R.T., and on the other, Donald, Roger, Wallace, Dorothy, and a high chair, representing Dan)

26 Jan 1901

...My two volumes of R.L.S.'s letters are with me. I took down volume one and read on page 341, as you told me to do. What shall I say? It came as a direct message to me. I need to learn by heart what it has to say. Mr. Norton is always fond of saying "Dont commit it to memory, but learn it by heart"...When you come to the letter to R.L.S. from Rui, given on pages 168 and 169 of Volume II, you may like to know that R.T. read that one night last winter. He showed me, too, all the places where R.L.S. speaks of Walter Ferrier. The letters to Wm. Archer we like especially. If you tell me the ones you like, we can read along together, and it will be fun. R.L.S. has come to me all through R.T.F. & Uncle Abbott. They are all kindred souls; and R.T.'s are very much like Stevenson's....
Faith Huntington Fisher, Dick Fisher's older sister and the future wife of Rev. William Wallace Fenn

L to R (more or less)
Mary Thayer, Gladys & Gerald in similar, darker clothes, Dick Fisher, Faith Fisher, Eleanor Fisher & Ruth Whiting babies Ted, Dorothy & Margery Whiting descending from rear
GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY LINE
Kindred, N.D. 25 Sept. 1901

......Since July 23rd, when I started out “on the road”, besides filling my position of time-keeper of this gang who are raising and ballasting track, I have been around the powerful steam-shovel that dug out the sand for the track; ridden all over this wheat country on top of cabooses, gravel trains; and have been on the engine for miles by night and day; have been to a wreck where five cars were in the ditch; seen the wheat ripen, cut, threshed, stored in the elevators & loaded in the cars - (stood on a threshing machine all one morning; seen the mirage on the prairie; driven for miles over these plains. We are in the valley of the Red River of the North - the heart of the famous North Dakota wheat fields. But most fun of all has been to listen to the men in the gang as they sat & talked after supper. Not topic is too deep for them. The other evening somebody called for the definition of a hobo. Someone offered “A hobo is a man of leisure.” Another remarked: “he is not a tramp, he is a pilgrim”. But the definition finally accepted was: “A hobo is a gentleman of small means.” (If I have told you these jokes before, forgive me). One morning at breakfast I noticed a man having difficulty in cutting his meat. Finally he gave it up and laying down his knife & fork said, “It was a pity to kill that pig, yes, it was, he could have stood the winter so well.”

It is almost one year since I left N.Y. for St. Paul. I wonder often what good all this varied & manifold experience is doing me. (I am living now with a Norwegian private family). I don’t care to be rich - I want only to be high. Not long ago I wrote Mary Thayer in answer to a nice letter from her. Did you see the beautifully illuminated parchment that Eleanor, Catharine, and Alice made and sent me? Unfortunately I opened it on the public street. When I unfolded it fully and held it out to read, one woman fainted, two horses shied and ran away, and one dog had a fit. If I hadn’t started to run away, I’d have been arrested. If I am able I shall spend one whole day with you and him in Cambridge. I cannot promise it, and I do not like to raise any false hope, because it may so turn out that I cannot come.

...,

My plans are now to remain at work in St. Paul till there comes the opening for me that I want in a Superintendent’s Office. That means the beginning of the long hard pull to the top. The preliminary work in the Accounting Dep’t is now over. Unless the unexpected happens, the great north-west will henceforth be my home. C.C.S.

At last there comes time to sit down and write to you quietly, dear Mother Fisher. It seems often as if the headlong rush would never let up - and sometimes I long to run to Berkshire and put my head in your lap.

You know that I reached New Haven one day at 10 a.m. and left at 1:30 p.m. - three and one-half short hours with him. We walked out into the country to be among trees and rocks; returned, luncheoned and said good-bye.

Except to say that he had an abundance of good health, he did not mention his physical condition. He did not say one word to me about his eyes. That was in line with all I have seen of him recently. During the last two years he has been free from any thought of his own physical condition. Come to think of it - he did mention his freedom from such mental worryings - in contrast to what he experienced his first winter in Washington.

I long to spend a long, comfortable day with him - and have a talk that will make us feel all warm together. - (Perhaps I express it that way because the thermometer has stood 18° below zero all day.) - But I need to see him - I owe it to myself. — If I am able I shall spend one whole day with you and him in Cambridge. I cannot promise it, and I do not like to raise any false hope, because it may so turn out that I cannot come.

...,

To my dearly beloved Berkshire Mother

- Your three, good long letters are with me - and, moreover, very near me. - I am about to run over to the Ameses for supper - and expect to get soundly (Catherine is able to make the most sound) berated for not coming earlier. But I must write to you first, for I don’t know when I shall be able to write you again. Next Friday night I leave for my work on the road. I go to the same place that I was in last summer - only this time it is with a gang of men to relay the track with
heavier rails. My days in the Accounting Dept are about over - and I'm eager to
go out, to fail or to succeed. Yes - beginning January 1st, I have read my - our - lit-
tle calendar daily.

R. T. had positive instructions for me neither to mention nor give you one of
our photographs till the time came.

A perfectly wonderful letter came from him today. What he expressed so
beautifully glorifies my life. I not only bow my head before the wonder of our
soul-friendship - but it deepens my utmost reverence for all of life. I marvel at the
beauty which God has created. - Do you realize, I wonder what our friendship is?
It is more beautiful than any I have ever read or heard of. I don't believe that the
friendship between Tennyson & Hallan, or between David and Jonathan, could
compare with ours.

I am young, full of enthusiasm, and thrilled deeply to the majesty of life. Please
don't you try to take me down. Let others have that satisfaction.

Do you know Stephen Phillips' poetry, his "Paolo and Francesca" and his
"Marpessa"? - I like him. Here is a couplet that caught and stuck.

"I live
For ever in a deep deliberate bliss,
A spirit sliding through tranquillity".

I have not grown to know Mr. & Mrs. Ames as well as I should like. The
children have been too distracting.

It is always restful to think of you and my Berkshire home. Whether or not I
avail myself of it, I think of it as a place of refuge.

Now ho for the merry world, and my interesting work.

C.C.S.

Hillyard, Washington
12th April 1903

(addressed to Mrs. E. T. Fisher)

Behold, how famous R. T. is making the name of Fisher, and honorable! We
are proud of him.

And now to write back to you, my Berkshire Mother, all the "kind feelin's"
that your letter of March 26th aroused. Your letters always have a quieting effect
upon me - like a cool hand laid on a hot forehead. Here, there is noise, wrecks,
"grief", as the trainmen call it, - almost constant; where you are it is quiet,

Peaceful, - and full of repose. With the thoughts of you are always associated the
things that are lasting, the thinks most worth while. What I need most now, you
have in the greatest abundance. So I like to let my thoughts rest on you in
Berkshire. I hear no more the engines and the cars - only the peepers down in the
swamp. It is no longer a boss swearing some orders - but your voice as you are
reading one of Dick's letters. - Eleanor has gone to bed - under protest - and Mr.
Fisher, you and I are sitting talking. The next time I come, R. T. must be there.
Then the circle will be complete - we four. - It is fun for me to call to mind such
thoughts, and restful, too, in the midst of such panting energy. While in the strug-
gle, I imagine that I long for the peace of the hills. But it is not so, for I know per-
fectly well that if taken away, I should miss the dear old noise and strife. But
compared with you, it seems to me that I am now working for what perisheth.
You deal with the eternal; you have intercourse with intellectual and refined peo-
ple; your life lets you deal directly with and to think immediately about the things
that are lasting. - Well, I don't know whether or not I have succeeded in convey-
ing to you my meaning. What I want to say is that to think of you is to turn my
thoughts from what is temporal to what is eternal, from what is earthly to what is
of heaven.

So it is good to think of you. Not that I am dissatisfied with my present life,
and work. Far from it. I don't think you'd approve of the lack of all "female sussiety",
but that suits me down to the ground. On that point, Fisher and I have
had, or are having, a discussion. I suggested he might be having too much
"female sussiety" in Washington, and begged him to break away. He came back
at me strong, with proofs and facts. Now I must modify my first statement. On
some points I know I'm right. But I need to feel out which ones they are. Fisher
is differently constituted from me. He needs to see people and talk. I think I shall
become a hermit or a monk. I want to get away from people not get near them.

... ....

You will write soon again, won't you, for I shall be expecting a letter till it
comes. If you're my Berkshire Mother, what am I? - Well, we'll let the name go,
so long as the love is all there. C.C.S.
Not to be read aloud

I think that you, my dear Berkshire Mother, were as excited as I was, and took as much pleasure in going around telling people that I was going to get married as I did myself. Well, it is great fun to make other people happy with our own happiness.

On my way West through Albany I dropped a line to Mary Thayer telling her the good news. Gee whiz! In return I got soaked with thirteen closely-written pages. That wasn't fair play. And I know all her thoughts and feelings about me now, for the past three years. Don't you dare repeat this, for I know she is a noble-minded girl. Thank you for writing to Mary. I know it pleased her.

You may thank Eleanor also for me, please, for the one decent, decorous, dignified letter which she wrote me among the last couple of dozen. I'm sending an important letter to R.T.F. in the same mail to Berkshire. I know that you will see that it reaches him as surely and as swiftly as possible. As I have obtained my job all right, I'm starting East now on a whirlwind trip to get married and rush back to San Francisco. I go via New Orleans and Washington; and on my way I expect to stop over a day to see Professor and Mrs. John at the Hill School, Pottstown. We expect to be married early Saturday morning - 17th October. And on Monday - the 19th - we expect to pass through Pittsfield between 2:44 and 2:49 P.M. That is, if the way I have arranged things works out. Many things may happen to upset these plans. So I'll let you know definitely later.

Please send me the right name of Aunt Alice, and her address. Also Pearl Butler's, and the names and addresses of all those in that little settlement. Can you think of anybody else whom we know whom I ought not to forget? If you do, will you please make out a little list, and send it to me before the 15th of October - to 34 School Street, Augusta, Maine. What are Mr. Whiting's initials?

The finest set of letters has come to me from the Ames family. I'd just like to show them to you. Every one of them rings true.

Well, this is great fun, and I'm having the time of my life. Love to all, Chauncey.

To R.T.,

For at least a month a letter to you has been forming within me. An almost irresistible desire to write was created in me by hearing for the first time, this winter, the notes of the Western Meadow Lark. Their song is wonderfully beautiful to me, and never fails to reach my soul. Each time I hear it, it brings me to my knees. Again, the liquid monosyllables of the red-winged black bird remind me of you. There are flocks of them here. In the outskirts of the city, one day, I watched a large flock now feeding in a field of young barley, now rising in a mass, as an electric car passed, and perching on a high telegraph wire. All of their croakings may not be exactly musical but owing to you and the marshes around Cambridge they do awake welcome associations.

Many birds are doubtless wintering here. I wish I had you to tell me all their names and habits. The more domestic birds, such as robins and house-wrens, make it seem like the East. But, out in the chaparral, the birds seem thickest. I have come suddenly upon beives of the California quail, with their little tufts, or top-knots. The three notes of one bird sounded as if he were giving me the laugh, "Ha-a-ha". Another that I've heard, just sits and lets out a stream of widely-differing beautiful notes. He reminds me of the Cornwall thrushes. Do such birds live here?

The country around Pasadena is, of its kind, beautiful. Among the foothills of the high mountains are many ravines with brooks running through them. Daily I am exploring more and more places on horse-back. For you must know that, in order to reduce my embonpoint and to reestablish the graceful lines of my former contour, I ride horseback every afternoon. But, alas, it is all of no avail! For I can tip a scale to the tune of 233 pounds.

Nevertheless the exercise is fun for me as well as for the country people. The younger generations of native Californians don't know what to make of my style of riding on an English saddle. When I turned yesterday to ascertain the cause of a
shriek of laughter, I saw a little mad-colored, moon-faced Mexican boy simply convulsed at my motions. "Oh, look at him bounce!" I heard one girl say. But the funniest thing of all was when, after passing through a crowd of urchins, the remark reached me - "Naw, dat aint Roosevelt!"

Along the road sides the poppies are beginning to appear. Yesterday I brought home the first spray of almond, or English walnut blossoms. Our sweetpeas are up and growing rapidly.

My mornings I spend in the "Repair Shops" between Pasadena and Los Angeles. At the same time I am studying regularly a course in "Locomotive Engineering" with the Scranton School of Correspondence. So, for the winter, I am an intern in a Locomotive Hospital.

It is sometimes borne in upon me that, as yet, in this world I have accomplished nothing. So far the years that have passed have all been spent in preparation. For what? The future will take care of itself. My father says that a man's most effective work is not generally done until he has entered the home-stretch, after he is fifty. During these years therefore, I may perhaps be laying up stores that in the future will have to be heavily spent. At least, I still hope someday to be of use in this world.

... ...

As for reading, apart from my locomotive studies, I am getting more and more saturated in the history of our own country since 1860. Lincoln led naturally to the Civil War, and the Civil War to the Reconstruction Period, where I am now.

As the honest face of Abraham Lincoln has recently appeared on the large street bill-posters in this vicinity to advertise a new brand of cigars, I took it upon myself today, which happens to be the 96th anniversary of his birth, to write to General Otis's paper, "The Los Angeles Times", a letter of protest. The point I made was the absurdity of taking the face of a man, who never used tobacco in any form, to advertise cigars!

How is Uncle Abbott? As chance offers, give him my best. Remember me, too, to your sister Faith and the Reverend W.W. - Give my love, of course, to your mother and Eleanor.

C.S.S.
"Dad on Badger" - so enscribed by GPFH on a photograph long in the tapestry of his wife's Weston home

RTF in his favored milieu, writing another letter home

Out West, 1898 - 1901
2nd of June, 1900, and the Crescent City stage has broken down five miles out of Granite Pass, Oregon. The weather is hot; the driver is swearing. (RTF)

A mighty grope for symmetry in life makes RTF's letters from out west like those he will write later from abroad. That the young college graduate, Dick Fisher, sees, experiences, and records his impressions of geographies new to him means also an update for the Universal New England Mind. Glad he got there, and there, and there. Where might we be now if RT had chosen to live in California? But he didn't. He chose the responsibility clause, leaving the raw, the beautiful, the untamed, and snapped himself back to New England, to our everlasting thanks.

IV. OUT WEST, 1898 - 1901

comfort - yea luxury - and fine weather have attended us since last we saw you; and here you behold us riding and fating like princes in the finest train any of us ever saw. We leave it - alas - at eight tomorrow in St. Paul. We have parlor bed rooms with sofas and running water in each - plus beds! Above each pillow is an electric light - precious temptation to reading. The dining room is an epicure's vision - flowers, palms, electric fans and light, and a meal which we have partaken of during two hours - hogs that we were -, and which we decided could not be bought in Boston (in such dainty form and service for twice the price), and which you will see described in the souvenir bill of fare. Voila Chicago! The best and don't you forget it! Today we luxuriate: tomorrow we do the other thing, and glad of it.

No Rev. Willy appeared at Chicago, though I wired him yesterday afternoon, and after looking about for a while, we transferred our baggage & exchanged our tickets and sought cleanliness. George Pierpont only we found toiling in the smoke. From him we hurried to the Great Northern Hotel, and plunged, at extravagant prices, in their cool swimming tank. Then in comfortable time we caught our train, which, with that long luscious meal, brings us up to date, to the moment,
while we sit in the buffet car, just emerging from the cool shadow of a thunder shower into a golden hole in the Northwest. I scent cool winds and sunny weather for the morning. At eight we strike St. Paul, and at eight thirty we pull out over The Great Northern. We are riding an easy wave. So good night and expect right speedily the casual postal. R.T.F.

Sisson Tavern

Sept 6, 1898

Once in a while, me parents and others, we do it in style. Voila the present. All the survey scattered and me left in Sisson. Town breeds nought but saloons and cabins, so I live with the only original Mrs. Sisson on good grub and a poor room. Hence the rates I enjoy.

The life is heap much work, and some considerable fun. I move about in a kind of incognito. Those presumably of my own class (of whom there are two at the hotel) sniff at me for a doubtful character, and all others keep company with me. See how they discover me. Mutual interrogations, some big talk by me, display of gun with auxiliary, and several promises. Result: the oath of allegiance. Behold me, then, backed by these faithful henchmen, now respectively as "Sam", "Tom" and the "Kid. In their company I was to learn every "best place" in the valley.

The very next day we were all to have a grand chipmunk hunt. At the round-up all but the Kid turned up, and as before with very respectable breech loaders. Then we hunted up in the big pines and stumps around the head of the Sacramento, where it appears, you know, a full-fledged river. Shooting! You never saw such shots. I kept dark about my powers and said I'd let them have the fun. They'd go along you savvy, neither bigger than his gun, and when a chipmunk ran, or a digger squirrel, they'd swear, pull up, shoot and kill before I could take a breath. Once for instance, we were on the track, the two nimrods, stealing in the van, I behind, a ground squirrel leaped out and scooted - only three feet to cover. "Jesus," yelled those two in unison; and I lack all standards to tell you the speed with which they leveled their cannons and spilled the poor critter. To hear them swear, so serious and valorous, and see them totter under those great barrels was too heap much. I sat down and tried to keep from falling apart. When they brought up the wreck of the squirrel, I told them I was laughing at a joke I heard last summer.

Well, that was the palmy day of my army. The Kid, who staid away from the first, is said to have an exacting mother who raises garden truck and flowers (Hidden point. Think it out children), so that I have seen no more of him. Tom was little better. His family actually lied about him. Said he wasn't home when Sam and I called for him. "Damn lie," said Sam as he came back from the door. I see his hat on the bed. From the looks of Tom's mother, she thinks I'm near kin to a hired murderer, a mercenary at best, and not fit for a small boy's company. But Sam has stuck like a little old times vassal. Me and my things are all right. It's we who trap, we shoot, we skin and measure. The little cuss is the cream of the three, has shown me the topography, lugged the traps, shot the game. School began on Monday, and Sam left me with much cursing at his luck.

But there is a fine list more - how I wish I could tell you particularly of the half! - from Jake the good little gardener, who foregathers with me of an evening, to Indian Charley with his "howmanycatch", and the old miner camped on the hill. Most of 'em have come to watch me skin in the mornings under the Piazza Shed. I tell you I've seen some queer things in conduct here. I chuckle to remember them. I was such a novelty, you know, the emissary of the gov't, that I drew a crowd. The high up two dollar people sniffed, and condescended, but were plainly out of their depth and a little awed. They couldn't quite reconcile my appearance with my office. But the rest - O I could take 'em to my arms. First and best Jake, the kind, the mischievous, the talkative, with a quiet passion for the Swiss army and prospecting. We talk in the evening we do. I'll tell you someday. Then there are the three grandchildren of Mrs. Sisson, who vociferate that Jake is the "man in the world". Of them, it's Isabella the youngest, that takes most to me and her. She's five I think. Sits on a box for half hours at a time when I skin. Other day: "You don't catch any cats, do you?" "No." "You'd need a sharper gun, wouldn't you?" "Yes." Looks on a while. "When I'm big I am going to be a killerman too." Isn't that devotion? Well, there are more but I've been twice today over a six-mile line of traps, and I feel like bed. Goodnight. Your R.T.F.

The Rocky Mountain spring is incredibly beautiful. In the broad valleys among the high peaks, we saw dome after dome of great hills entirely covered like a cowslip meadow with yellow and blue flowers (Arnica-little sunflowers and lupine) inspired everywhere with tall pines. Besides this the winding river with its cottonwoods, the sunset colors on the snows, and at every pause the song of the Western Larks. Arcadia has emigrated...

Yesterday I saw my first rattlesnake - a hideous creature. He crawled out from under my horse's feet on the trail, rattling as he went, and Casey and Fritter got off and slaughtered him. He showed not a sign of fight. This country is alive with
them. You see their belly snakes in the dust all along the road. But fear not. It is part of discipline in my camp that every man would carry strychnine pills in his watch pocket. Heap fine antidote. R.T.F.

Hotel Donnelly
Tacoma, Wash.
June 2, 1899

It seems about time you heard how the expedition has progressed. Leisurely, I'll tell you and yet with a promptness which has affected our chief - I'll tell you how when I see him.

We came through without hindrance, spent a night and half day's shopping in Seattle, and then came on here, where we were to find our man Gaskill who was to give us orders. He was registered at the Tacoma Hotel but just at our arrival he was out on a log train. Meanwhile no orders from Washington; only a foreworried, over papers, oaths, and exasperating orders on the railways for palace passage to the Coast. Yesterday back came Gaskill, a nice man, big and bearded, and behold he had no expectation of our coming till July 4! Neither had he orders or requisitions for outfit from Pinchot. So we sent a hurry up telegram to Washington, and explained our respective conditions. Us and our missing orders he took as a joke, seemed to think it natural; and held out good hopes of our getting back all our headlong gold. Then he departed for Shelton in the Olympics to be gone another two days, pending the arrival of orders; and we were left to see the town, especially the mills. These are marvels. 5 ft by 30, 40, or 70 ft logs are stacked up on incline, endlessly moving chain and trough, and, in one building, or rather room, put through such a system of sliding tables, rollers and voracious saws as works them into stuff as small as laths. As the log gets subdivided, every part seeks - you cannot see any man make the choice - the instrument which its size and quality demands. Even the slabs are used; and, sideways from the main system of board sawing and stick timber, little rivulets of slabs and smaller stuff slide constantly into gangsaws and get made into laths or snipped into firewood, and transported far out on a moving sidewalk to the pile. To look at that mill, where there is no word spoken for hours, you would think its ravenous machines had the power of reason. Well, Gaskill expects to be back Friday and we may pull out Saturday. Til then (at least) good bye and address here till further notice. R.T.F.

The division is still unprepared or overworked, and we are still in Tacoma, eating and living at Uncle Sam's expense - more's the pity -, and seeing the region. Various difficulties seem to have arisen in getting us provided with tents, instruments, etc., and the good Mr. Gaskill, our immediate chief, is unable to put us to work. However he has found and determined upon the sites or our labors, which are probably two. The first is at Orting, 30 miles due east of Tacoma at the foothills of Rainier, and by the same token on the west slope of the Cascades. There the Tacoma and St. Paul Lumber Co. are taking out enormous red fir logs, and these, probably at Camp No. 5 on Voight's Creek, all the student assistants, we and the others, will be assembled for instruction & preliminary work. After a week or two at that, said week to begin, I am afraid not before the 10th our particular gang (I hope) will move over to Shelton at the foot of the Olympics.

But meanwhile I'll tell you its no hardship to be living under old Rainier, that great spreading peak. Constantly pursuing of having fun for the government, we all went with Gaskill to Seattle and thence to Port Blakely to visit the biggest saw mill in the world. At early morning, on the swift little steamer, we slipped down the bay and up the long arm of the Sound which leads to Seattle. Once around the point, and nothing tells you you are not discovering the land, point after point, bluff after bluff, high and darkly fir clad, slip by the thin grey line of beach. The water is sky itself, nothing moves but an occasional Indian emerging from a smokig hut; and over all, stray clouds and trees wheresoever you look towards Rainier.

So it goes Tacomawards and on the Sound. But almost anywhere northwards, a little up the Sound, the prospect is banked and flanked and bulwarkeid with more peaks and giant walls than you can possibly take in. Look westward anywhere on a clear day and over the water and the first you will see are the black and snow capped line of the Olympics. Go north a little more, as we did, looking at it over the eastern horizon, it draws me irresistibly, and if I get a ghost of a chance I'm going up it. We at our orienting camp shall be within a few miles of the so-called & unique "Bailey Willis Trail", which leads (near timberline) to Paradise Valley of the flowers and water falls, and past the foreheads of huge glaciers. We shall see some wonders I reckon, where we go.

But for wonders, if one only starts planning to notice them, see this very city of Tacoma. For privilege of situation is nowhere. You see it spreads its dwellings up the South Shore slope of a beautiful bay of the bluest, cleanest and most infinitely beautiful sound I ever dreamt of. And away to its right, planted squarely on the snow tipped peaks of the Cascade Range, covering twenty miles of them, you
can always see Rainier. What a monster! It stands there glistening and visible wherever you go. You can usually see it from the streets over the housetops. And yet that is only the crown jewel of the wonderful gems which surround this Sound. There in the west to the open stretch in front of Port Blakely, you can see against a soft, balmy sky, all the biggest features of the Washington map. If you could only do something about it or tell somebody about it! The whole eastern horizon over the spreading bluffs and the terraced streets of Seattle is lined with the blue & snowy Cascades (ht 6000 ft.); southward is Rainier as usual; westward the black, white mouthed crags of the Olympics, and northward, smallish only from the magnificence of its company, is Mt. Baker. That is what you see from your swift little steamer, as you cut the cleanest water in the world, and feel the nearness of legions of ancient forest. It is not like the sea, for you get no sea feeling, - hardly the smell, - but it is something strangely magnificent and impressive. God, the forces of no, what you will, something has here exceeded man and his devices by stupendous operations. And yet the busy, mercenary little devils stoke their fires and cut their Lumber on this same Sound, and don't seem to think themselves in luck. R.T.F.

July 8, 1899

Sunday (our first labors for Uncle Sam)

At last we have left Tacoma, and got some taste of what our work is to be. No instruments or other students turned up; neither any tents of Chief Pinchot; but as Mr. Gaskill had formed a suitable place for business, with temporary accommodations attached, he decided to move us into the woods and start us going with what appliances he had himself, to the tune of innumerable firecrackers, parodies, sack races, we left Tacoma __ "chance of a lifetime" celebration, and started out for this camp of the St. Paul & Tacoma lumber Co. at Orting. But the train was held on account of excursionists, it being vacation week for men and log trains we could not go direct to Orting anyway - and we did not reach the little coal mining town of Carbonado till 2 o'clock AM. It was the end of the line, and by the time we got there, we were the only passengers in the train; and we descended onto a perfectly inky platform. Out of the blackness came the wailing blasphemies of two drunken men. One of them, as our bewildered brains came gradually to perceive, was challenging the engine, from a position in the glare of the headlight and between the rails, to single combat, and thereby divesting the attention of the engineer from the conductor, who was signaling frantically with a lantern. The other, who was also eloquent, kept bawling grandly "free bus to the Astor House" or other house that he could remember the name of. And from all this darkness and commotion there resulted meretriciously the fury of the conductor; no hint of any service or entertainment for us. The station agent had gone to bed and taken the key of the baggage room with him; there were no pajamas for us; and, with the conductor’s scant statement that there was a lodging house in town for our only guide, we seemed hardly certain of a bed.

Suddenly, out of Heaven, for I didn't see him approach by any ordinary means - came a man with a lantern, who volunteered to find us a bed. Well, he did, a bed apiece, but God forbid I ever have to sleep in such a rag. It is not like me to cavil at my beds, for I like a casual couch, but when I am compelled to caress and inhale, to embrace the accumulated filth of uncounted miners, the sheetless reeking horrors of an unrenovated mattress, why then I do, or I did resolve with an oath of iron that never again in this unclean land shall I allow my own good bed and blankets to leave my pack. Howsoever we slept, or I did, perfectly, until six, when we were called to the silent ravenous breakfast of the few unfestive miners, those few who had not gone to Tacoma to celebrate. From that strong meal, we departed for Camp 7 Orting; through the raw cabins and engine houses of the settlement, down by a handcar on a cable into the giddy depths of a canyon where the coal fast bored in, and then by a squirming trail up the side, out of it and away to the west - three miles of absolutely virgin, giant forest. Ranks and ranks of firs, is height 250 ft., in diameter 5-8 feet through, and on the ground and everywhere among and over the tangle of fallen logs, swarms a tangle of green lichen long as an old man's beard, and evergreen ferns, like ours only four feet high, and tall shrubs of maple and oak; and, worst skeleton in all this place of beauty, the Devil's Club, which is a tremendous nettle, crooked stemmed and crowned with a canopy of maple looking leaves. Its spires are barbed and poisonous, and lumbermen lose hands and legs thusly.

In such a jungle, or the scarred clearing which adjoins it, stand the rough buildings of camp No. 7 our temporary home, two bunk houses, 30 men to each, a dining room and kitchen behind, and some shops and landings next to the railroad track, and the two-roomed cabin of the super, Macdonald, where by the grace of Himself, we sleep unperturbed by the hateful flea (which is the bane of the bunkhouse). Here we sally out each day to assess the last day's victims, two score held on account of excursionists, it being vacation week for men and log trains we could not go direct to Orting anyway - and we did not reach the little coal mining town of Carbonado till 2 o'clock AM. It was the end of the line, and by the time we got there, we were the only passengers in the train; and we descended onto a perfectly inky platform. Out of the blackness came the wailing blasphemies of two drunken men. One of them, as our bewildered brains came gradually to perceive, was challenging the engine, from a position in the glare of the headlight and between the rails, to single combat, and thereby divesting the attention of the engineer from the conductor, who was signaling frantically with a lantern. The other, who was also eloquent, kept bawling grandly "free bus to the Astor House" or other house that he could remember the name of. And from all this darkness and
accustomed to relax, and to eat a friendly and restful dinner, these men become near brutes, and either leave you in lowly solitude, or force you for the sake of hungry breadbasket, to keep their ravenous pace.

But it's interesting life, fast eating and all, and though I am rather glad to have a camp of our own in a few days, I am not sorry we had a sojourn here. We are well and learning I think, and only lack Billy, and Chief Pinchot to be in full swing. I think you may safely address one of those welcome homemade letters to Orting, Washington c/o A.F. Wilbur's Camp

Orting, Washington  
being no place  
that I know of but  
woods big and endless  

July 21, 1899

Now are we somewhat settled in our minds, likewise our bodies, and the manner of our life is this:  

In camp we are disposed in eight among tents and one hospital (tent) for work; sixteen of us, two to a tent. Bill James shares one with me. Harry and Curtis have the next, and our thresholds are on the brink of a fine broad brook. Right there is a swimming hole, with logs happily arranged for swimming and dressing; and then each day we bathe in sweaty chorus at 5:30. Two hundred feet over us the wind always sounds in the tops of many firs and cedars; and except for occasional intrusive mosquitoes we are a fortunate and comfortable crowd. Our evenings around the fire, with such a varied gang, are hardly intimate but certainly jolly and our Sundays at least the only one we've spent are filled with poor fishing, laughing, reading, and clothes washing, and in a few virtuous cases, letter writing. So you see, we are not without homelife of a kind. Furthermore with two Jameses and old Curtis it's home life of a pretty good kind.

But to our work, verily we do agitate us most parlovs. Of kinds there are two, the one being “stem analysis” so called, the other “valuation Survey”. In performing this rite, on a tap and strips of paper, and pursueth those who back up (sw up) the fallen timber, walking the while list many trees of the fall not dis upon him; and this, clinging, sticking to the bark and pitchy saw cuts, counts painfully the rings and measureth the tree's every dimension. This work is to be sure tedious and of a manner difficult inasmuch as the trees...  

(out of letter misspeg)
Sunday, August 20

camped in an alder swamp close to the foothills of the Olympics

Don't bother me people. I'm distraught with the cares & duties of office. Great Gaskill having gone off for a week - and, or because the rain is steady & chill - I am directing the labors of eight men and a cook, and cutting my usual poor figure. It is not good to have to manage lads who know the cowering secrets of the heart. Familiarity is troublesome. K.E.D. wait for me some more.

R.T.F.

Hammersley's Inlet
Puget Sound

Sunday, Aug. 27 1899

At last we are out of prison, - out of these endless oppressive forests, and ten days of steady drizzle and dripping underbrush. We have filled off our work in the foothills, and, with another signal fiasco in the way of Miss Management (I'll introduce you by word of mouth when I get home), we are finally and most gloriously established on this beautiful channel. Our tents are on a little bluff, grassy and small, our doorstep is the water, and nearby across the inlet a few cozy ranches. Twice a day we dig pails of delicious tender clams; and our life has really turned from dour to something homely and comfortable.

A week more of this, some surveys in the young timbers which are growing up in this long lumbered region, and we shall all go in to Tacoma (that will be Sept. 1) most of us to scatter to our homes. Curtis and I and two others, to continue a sort of travelling service to the Division for another month. That, by the way, is a part of my aforementioned news, which but for my well known carelessness in such matters, you might have heard a good while ago. The other part is still poorly hypothesized, but if you will really see to it that no talking comes of my telling, I will divulge. Mr. P. is talking of getting me to help edit the "Forester", and in my leisure spells work for him. There is no promise yet on either side, nor do I know whether it is a thing to rejoice over or not, so it is a neutral piece of news. Bill James and Hodges summon me to the boat, wherein we are rowing up to Shelton, so (again) let go. R.T.F.

Sept. 3, 1899

Out West, 1898 - 1901

Hotel Donnelly
Tacoma, Washington

Shall I weep or sing? And which will you? Chapter one of U.S. Forestry Investigations 1899, has closed in a gentle season, and chapter two is opening with doubtful weather. From our comfortable week by the Sound we have steamed in here for the final break-up; the uncouth unmentionables have speedily departed; Jameses H. & W. are on the point of leaving for a visit to their Uncle in Yocka and a two week's tour in the South; and the remaining four (or rather three, for the fourth is to be from the other gang, that third of us who have been working about Rainier), are soon to be turned back into the wilds for another and maybe a longer period. I have told you, perhaps, of Allen, the Tacoma reporter who has been so kind to me, and who is such an unselfish and sweet natured lad? I will send you a letter or two of his, at any rate, which tell of our thwarted plans for visiting Rainier together. Well, he is that fourth, and the third is Bill Hodges whose praises you shall always hear me sing - the same breed of boy, a Yale man, who has been near to us all summer - , and the second is Curtis and the first (which is last in order, you will notice) is a lad you know but cannot recognize (this is because he is now disguised thus: (drawing of bearded man) Curtis, poor but important boy, is doomed and committed to a three month's early sojourn in these same old woods, with their mist and their magnitude, for the purpose of describing and at great length all the details, expenses, and operations of the lumber business. Him, poor lad, much poorer we shall leave and journey southward through the Golden Gate even to the town of Frisco, where with a hard man to lead us (of whom I speak not here) we shall take passage north (how I cannot tell) to the Coast Range where grow the Redwoods. Then we shall work till the rain drives us out and then go south to the regions where the same tree grows but the rain is warmer. Three months of this, at least, is what we are booked to enjoy, and here you have the very meat of my concern. Do you see you thrice blessed mortals, behind the dawn of these new adventures the cloud that is soon to dim the round heavens? Do you know that all these summer months from day to day, my heart has looked toward autumn and a fortnight spent at home, planning the manner of my return, and the dear journeys I would make to the old places, with the leaves and the sunshine as I have not seen them for years? Without cessation I have thought of these things, till my longing for one more fall at home has possessed my very dreams, and I have sometimes waked with the sounds of Berkshire still in my ears. Yet as it is, because - God knows because of what - I must stay in a strange country, and let the snow come over another autumn enjoyed. Let it be so, and let me come straggling back in the nakedest month of winter. I will risk the loss of my uncertain job for a pair of days at home.
I see this letter has a desperate and stressful sound, and I have come near destroying it, but reconsidering I have decided to send it, so that you may see even at the risk of some anxiety, that my meager and preoccupied notes conceal some straying affection for the home that bred me. Don’t think me the sorrowing mope I seem. Life, and work, and the men I live with, still keep me buoyant. Rather think this the thought of an empty and inactive moment, when the caravan has stopped for orders and another crew, and, in the silence of its pause, a passing cloud has waked dead echoes.

By Tuesday, when the others from Rainier arrive we shall pull out on the old trail and I shall see my tracks of last summer, and send you only letters of song.

R.T.F.

(letter on Hotel D. stationery and address to Mr. F.C. Baldie & wife)

My Dear Mr. Baldie,

For some eight days, I have been knocking round Grisdale’s and I expect to be there for at least a fortnight more. There is an enormous amount to be found out about all of the operations as I have discovered by working with different gangs. The first day, I started in under Cap who was running a section gang which was tearing up track and then laying it in the afternoon. It was pretty hard work packing great bearded dirty ties, but it was worth the price of admission to watch “Cap” running over with fun, but getting so excited that he could not make himself understood. He would stand at the end of curved rails & squat along, then he would wave back some of the green men who would start to push them one way or the other, yelling “God out of the way” & then crash round & begin shoving himself. One of the men was anxious for some skid grease, God knows what for, - to which Cap’s answer was, "No we aint got no Gid grease, we ain’t god no noddin. God ahead!" Then when he had the whole push shoving trade with peaveys, he would shout, "Dis way! dis way, you mir!" and half of us would troop one way & half, the other with the beautiful precision of a stage army. So far, I have four off skid-road building, except for seeing how they put in sheerskids by the donkeys, this including surveying & grading, railroad construction and tearing up, undercutting and falling. Just on the side, I have helped move a donkey and make a small dam to lead water into the tank. I have found that it is absolutely impossible for me to get all the detail - and some of them are apt to be mighty important, unless I am working myself.

The men are about the best crowd I ever ran into, barring the H.P.C. and make my job as easy as possible. some of them are pretty foul mouthed, but after a while you don’t notice it, and then a great many of them are not at all that way. My particular friend is Billy Frazier, a lively little Californian of about thirty who is quite well-read and very intelligent. He is a prime favorite with Jim, the Chinaman cook, as he can blackguard him more than any of the others in Chinese. Besides, he can call a man a son of a bitch in six different languages, which is more than you can do, Balderino, with all your four years of Hayvard (sic). Have you & Blodge, God bless the quizzical mug on him, - succeeded with Allen’s help, in taming the wild hyena? Try kindness first, and then stick tacks in his bed. P.S. There was an enormous 7 foot 300 pound cowboy in here tonight with a horse whip who wanted to know if I was one of these forestry fellers. I said no, that I was Dr. Kenison the chiropodist. When he asked what the name of the young bearded scoundrel was, that lived on the ranch, I said it was Gaskell and he lived in Philadelphia. They say he is Clara’s brother. Poor little thing! I wonder now where she is hiding, her homeless, but not homely head.

Are you following our friend’s practice & in Biblical fashion doing the opposite from driving devils out of your half-baked cigarette smoking reveling shirtbosomed Californian students? P.S. For key to this joke, consult Blodge unless he is drunk. If so try Allen. How is he and has he bitten a hole in Sherrads ear yet, and if so which ear? Please send all details. Pretty soon I shall begin to travel & then God be good to dear old Uncle Sam. Rum will flow like syrup & so God be with your hairy-chested, bald-headed, two-fisted, no-worship. F.C.

(Frazier Curtis)

Sept. 8, 1899

One year, two months, and two weeks ago, I was on this same train, and dawdling through the same valley of the Rogue River. The California line is some two hours distant, and when you get this letter, it will have a Sisson mark.

There is another letter over the way to you, or I hope there is - which I gave to a tramman in Portland last night. As I remember it, it sounds as if somebody else had written it. It was mine though, even if it did have a strange tone; and in my subsequent state of mind I almost lost my heart to a pretty housemaid in the Donnelly. Curtis feared I would take a Sunday trip to Victoria B.C. and he would have to report a mesalliance. She was really very charming, and Curtis had reason. Once I helped her make our beds, and another time I sat on the bureaus in various rooms while she made beds alone. I couldn’t tell her why I sought her society - at least the main reasons - for she wouldn’t have understood me; and I think she thought I was a curiosity. The lesser reasons, her extraordinary beauty of coloring, the blackest of wayward hair. I do not know where she lives, and I shall not write to her. Calm yourself, therefore.
Anyhow now that I am approaching San Francisco, and in the next few months likely to spend Sundays in its neighborhood, tell me for the hundredth time, if you have any patience left, who is there that I can prey upon or go to see. John gave me the name of a friend of his, whom I really hoped to find, but I shame to say I have let him slip. More soon. R.T.F.

"Pantleg Camp"
(Pacific Lumber Co's Camp)
Humboldt Co., Cal.

Sunday, Sept. 17, 1899

Dear Marm and Daddy,

Between now and the date of my last letter, what a mass of change and adventure! I wish I could give it to you in anything like its proper importance.

On Tuesday last, which was only one empty day ahead of your last news, we put to sea from Frisco in one of the most villainous crafts ever launched. Just at sundown, through one of those streaming Pacific fogs that John can tell you about, we steamed out of the windy bay and through the Golden Gate. As we passed we heard the fog horn blowing strongly from a big white light house; and the waves and the stiff breeze, piling in, all full of smells and noises, were like wine to our impatient selves. I said to myself I was in love with the Pacific. This was at seven o'clock. I had eaten a good supper in the little cabin with the Scandinavian officers, and I was still watching the guillemots that dove and cackled in the white caps. I had no hint of my troubles.

And here let me remark that the San Pedro - which was our vessel's name - was built for God knows what kind of traffic in the shape of one of those paper marrin(?) with a shot in their heads, that stand on end when you set them down. All her superstructure, cabins, wheelhouse and galley, was way aft (do you follow me nautical lingo!) and except for an absurd little foc'tee, rooked over way up in the bows, her main deck was as low as a rowboat's and empty as a cold church. And it was back underneath that miserable deck, that our outfit put up in a cavernous hold. Also, you are to remember that all the ship's engines lay astern under that aforesaid superstructure. Also you are to understand that a stiff northwest was said to be blowing straight into our bows.

At eight o'clock, I took sadly to my berth between decks, and there I stayed, empty and, for the most part sleepless, for thirty six immeasurable hours. Can you picture to yourself that crazy unbalanced steamer teetering and staggering, and rolling and pitching, over these marching mountains of sea water? I tell you in nearest accuracy that for what seemed to me hours on the second night out, I staid in my bunk only by hanging to the bedsheets. But let us draw a veil over these matters.

The ordeal was wonderfully slight in retrospect, and when I waked out of a snatch of sleep, with a vague sense of relief, and venturing to look out the port-hole, saw, not the giddy rollers heaving by, but a procession of green and banks with little white houses, and gardens close at hand, I had the most grateful moment of my life. It was Humboldt Bay, and we had come our 300 miles up the coast. There Eureka was said to be but, a sudden fog rolling in, we lay to land, seemed in no very likely way to find it. Presently as the skipper was impatiently pulling the whistle on the bridge, a man in a boat came out through the fog, and bawled to go right ahead, that this was the way to town. So we did, steaming slowly with a man casting the lead every hundred feet. But just as the boat man became proudest of his direction, we ran aground in the mud and weeds, and, as the fog began almost instantly to lift, discovered blue herons fishing close about us on two foot legs. They were tame enough to be almost sarcastic.

Well, we backed and puffed about till we got clear, and pulled into the wharf of Humboldt Bay. It was a regular seaboard down, clear and quiet, buoys with the sounds of several wharves, and clouds of gulls, and redolent of a wonderful mixture of sea breeze and day. And the town itself so small and cozy, and shut off with its weather and its picturesqueness from the morning sea beyond made a most haunting picture. Maybe I was peculiarly susceptible then; but the morning is strangely beautiful.

By a quick connection we caught a train for Scotia, some two hours ride up the Eel noir - wonderful landscape of farms and hills. There we lounged at a little inn kept by four maidens, and in the early afternoon, took the log train for this camp, seven miles further up, and well into the foothills and gigantic redwood. The fir of Washington is as nothing. I am transported. These mountains grow great legions of them in a forest thick with arching tussocks of ferns, and carpeted with the myriad heads of this oxalis and undergrowth, and their great brown trunks stretch away, up and off, till your sight is lost. The world in their tops, 300 feet above you, is beyond all imagining, and the wind sings through them on the calmest day. Long after sunrise the sunbeams begin to drop in from above, and when they fall between the trunks and over the drooping ferns, they are as jewels, long and orange, purple, sheafs piercing the shadows.

Right in this paradise we live, with the river just below our tents, and long reaches of white sand (end of letter missing)
Two welcome letters from you yesterday. I hope to Heaven you get my Portland letter. The brakeman may find and mail it some day, not that it's much of a letter, but I think it will reassure you about your son's love of his home and parents. It you knew how I long to be there this very autumn, and have the leaves I scuff in call me homeward, you would know that the end of this work will see me flying to Berkshire...that will be the end of November. If I go to Washington at all, I shall stipulate for two weeks furlough beforehand.

More and more I find I shrink from this land of greatness, big trees, enormous distances and seasons that hardly change at all. I have no heart for these extremes of nature, and my craving my own land of prettiness and variety, and the constant changes of a cozy landscape is grown almost too great to bear. Twice lately I have barely escaped ignominious showings. Once an old man on his cabin steps asked me what state I hailed from, and when I told him, shouted so that the hills rang. "Good God, a Massachusetts man." That time I did slop over a little but only the old man saw me. And again a waitress here at the camp who looks like Dorothy Whiting grown up, came near upsetting me with some chance remark. It catches me all the time, at the most unexpected moments. Sometimes when I am eating lunch in the woods with the men of my gang, the merest flutter of a leaf or the squeal of a squirrel in a tree, will make me choke on my food.

You see what my news is. I daresay the incidents and appearance of this life are getting recorded in my mind, but they have little power to move my words; so you must just accept these plaintive nothings and believe forever that you have not lost your Boy.

Dear Daddy,

You and Eleanor I suppose must be alone by now, Mama being in old New Hampshire. But hear my adventures: my best substitute.

Since Frisco and the Sand Pedro there have been some fine acts to my drama: Act 1 the Point Anna and the Gale o' wind. Yes Sir, two nights and nearly two days going from the Golden Gate to Mendocino, distance about 150 miles. When we cleared the harbor it was a fierce dry blow out of the north east only a few wisps of smoky cloud in the sky, and, my what tearing white caps! I tell you the little Point Anna swooped and plunged over their backs. It was glorious until, two hours out I collapsed, and turned in. However, I rallied promptly and slept a fair night, when the boat was slopping the seas till her timbers groaned, and I was often left like a fly on a ceiling in her sickening drops between waves. By morning we had made 50 miles, twenty in the last ten hours, and the gale was increasing. The captain called it a "gal o' wind", and put into a little cove called Dago Bay, where we lay at anchor all day. I was well by this, do you see, and having a great time. I was not even glad of the calm. But we had a varied day in that place. It was fine to see the high seas racing by outside - to me incredible - and all the while grassy hills and farm houses close aboard on the other side. And the birds were thick and tame as usual: shags and gulls and pelicans we fed them from the boat. In the forenoon, too, a pair of whales swam round us within touching distance. Once when a great warty head rose snorting by the stern, I threw an apple core in its mouth!

By six we steamed on again, the captain seeing invisible signs of a let-up, and I had another wonderful evening riding the big seas, watching the windy sunset and after dark, the phosphorescence in the wake. Also I rose at two to witness a wild landing at Point Anna: a slick entry by starlight between rocks and a disembarking under cliffs at a suspension wharf. By ten o'clock we got into Mendocino, a beautiful cluster of white homes - not homes merely - on grassy downs above cliffs. We had to be hauled up from the steamer in a box by derrick. But the town was worth any.... Someday if I am able I shall go there and stay a while. Think of a pleasant plain, with clumps of little pines about it, a few streets
of neat white houses, the sea beating under the cliffs and pouring into a thousand caves and rock coves, and over all the balmiest sun in the world. I tell you that whole coast is the snuggest, brightest region in four counties. And the spickest spannest homiest building in that town is the Occidental Hotel kept by Mrs. Kate Gorman, than whom a more truly wholesome, hospitable, and ladylike hostess I have yet to see. She met us in the little back office - not a parlor but a cozy main room with roundbacked chairs - and asked of our voyage with such delicacy and kindness that I love her heartily. If you ever hear of my forgetting her little German barkeep and her neat garden with the sea always washing below the back fence, and her fragrant dining room, and all the thousand charms of her promises, why Daddy, disinherit me!

Well we staged it up the coast from there to Fort Bragg (12 miles), and saw more enchanting coast; and you find me seeing more of it now, having walked out alone this morning ten miles over foggy hills and canyons, to spend the day near the rocks and surf. All about here it is a kind of Mendocino: no such charm of a sleepy town, distanced in prosperity by a neighbor - which was Fort Bragg in that case - but still the grassy downs, breaking away everywhere into jagged caves and caverns, and monument rocks and pillars, where the most majestic breakers are always chasing in, tossing the heads of kelp, and roaring far up in the caves. Above all this are many thick clusters where you can be out of the wind and still see the waves, and the sea stretching - today at least - I believe almost to China.

If you walked a little up or down the coast you come soon on a deep ravine where a little brook flowing by alders and firs and all the mossy pictures we know at home, finds its bed widening into a cave. There will usually be a beach across this, and you will see the surf, narrowed and confused by the cliffs, pouring up the very bed of the brook itself, so that some hundred yards upstream in the willows and alders, there will be regular miniature tides. Don’t let me forget, when I get home or get voluble, about a brakeman who confided in me. He is a good man. Wished I was small again, so I could “play boats” in a brook that had a real tide.

Well here I am a day in paradise, and the sun like an Indian summer at home; but tomorrow at five I take the log train back to my prison in the hills, where I am confined with our stupid students (the gang being dispersed in different camps) in a canyon that intersects mathematically thus V. They all do here, and a relief map of my neighborhood would look pretty much like this (ed: drawing). Does this give you any relief of perplexity? I’m too fuddled with writing to think out how to make it look right. R.T.F.
And now I have used up my sunlight, and the clouds are hiding us again. Still no sign of the fine October weather we were promised. It has rained all the week.

I am drinking greedily of your frequent news, and I guess I have all your letters. Looking now into my inside I perceive nothing but sentiment and the craven dread of rainy work. There is no element of fact for I have done nothing to acquire them. So I am warned to turn off the gas being your devoted but uncertain son, Richard.

Nov. 17, 1899

Dear Sir:

The telegraph should not be used unless a more expeditious mode of communication than the mails afford is required. Care should be taken to omit all unnecessary words without, however, sacrificing perfect clearness. Conciseness without ambiguity should be sought in the composition of every message....

Very respectfully, Gifford Pinchot, Forester S.M.G

Sunday, Jan. 21, 1900

What a man I am! I tell you darkly and without elucidation that I have but just declined a raise of 6 hundred dollars, and a partial change of business. This latter item was the negative pole which repelled me. I could not bear to desert the great prospects in the distance; so I so serenely, impecuniously remain content with my little 25 per. By this you may judge what a forester I have become - that is, in ambition. Heaven knows I am a long way from my competence as a "member of the classified service". There is to be an examination in the spring and we are to be allowed to take it, but alas for my complex failings, eyes, head and character, I shall not have prepared myself one half. I comfort me however in the knowledge that we probably shall not be allowed to pass, such speedy advance being obviously detrimental to our industry. And though I don't like to say it aloud, I have really a sneaking notion that I shall stagger that examination after all, not pass it perhaps, but leave my marks on its body. Enough of prospects. My excitement and pleasure are this week huge. No less than Mrs. and three Miss Curtises are here for a lark, and Frazier and I wait upon them daily. It's unspackably refreshing to see an animated and friendly female again, - to say nothing of four - beggin their pardons for my inadequate description. Last night we boys took Harriet the youngest to the Mikado, i.e. we furnished the escort. I don't wish to delude you into believing that we -but these are painful matters. Today, this afternoon, the sun having again after many day's absence, possessed the heavens, we are to disport ourselves in blacks. There endeth your share, Daddy.

R.T.F.

Feb. 8, 1900

I live and move these days along lines that might be mapped very much like this: My room My workshop Twice a day I traverse the long line, and once a day I walk around some of the crooked ones, either taking a walk, or doing some errand, or calling on somebody with Frazier. We have scoured pretty much on good clothes and functions, and now frequent low places where they sell beer, and the dens of our male friends. Some day soon we are going "on the bum" with a vulgar and genial clerk, in this office, to whom we owe much of our success in extorting money out of Uncle Sam. He is the man who corrects and regulates our accounts. Our progress includes the "Polite Vaudeville" on Pennsylvania Avenue, and the Drink Emporium of one Reuter, situated on the same busy mart. O me, this sordid life! When shall I see a dawn again? There are always birds here. In the fields outside you can see all our spring harbingers and many southern residents besides. They get nothing but song out of their springbirds in the region. The spring song birds themselves are no strangers at any time.

Sunday, Feb 11, 1900

Albeit I have had one night's restlessness with a toothache, and this morning largely spent in a dentist's chair, behold me jolly and full of hope. Causes three: one, a light ahead in my trade (secret yet), two, some uses discovered for long and tedious labors in the library, three, delightful reunion with one of childhood's friends. The first two causes we will let go; but who do you suppose I met yesterday - and grown to be a beautiful, dark eyed woman? Helen Hull of Pittstown, one of my earliest pigtailed idols. Mrs. Admiral Walker, who is mother of Jack Vaughan's room-mate Hal W., and friend of Mrs. Curtis got wind of L. & me, and asked us to call which we did, and there was Miss H. a visiting Sally W. I knew her on the instant, but we were kept apart for a while by Mrs. W. cornering me. When we did start in it was just exciting. You see the other Dick F. calls there to see Miss H., who had seen neither of us, was puzzled to find out which one she
knew. So it was "you are the one after all", and we revived the past with much delight. I was surprised to find her developed into such a genuinely engaging person, and she referred to my desertion of Pittsfield in such a pretty and complimentary way that I was quite ashamed of myself. I think I shall try to make up for my neglect of the town by a little devotion to her. They invited us to a theatre party for next Thursday, and told us we were to be asked for the next night to the "small and early dance," by Mrs. Archibald Hopkins. And the attractions being such as they are, I shall succumb and transgress for once on my primitive habits. This pretty much fills the tale of my adventures. The week has been pretty monochrome - as you will see from the dull and labored notes which I am allowing myself to send along. In your eyes they have the merit of being written by me, but I don't want to have them published. Mr. Dentist plugged my aching tooth at a reasonable rate, and armed his beneficence by discovering five more cavities. I guess they'll have to be filled. How about my mid week, journalistic, profusely illustrated letter? Didn't you get your money's worth? If you like my face in that shape I'll get you another edition, so you can give one to your friends - or more. Another chunk of fact; Rob arrived last night. Good man, and good company. Aunt Mary came after breakfast - just as I went out. I had to go.

P.S. This journal method of letter writing conduces to repetitions, several of which you will notice. I am not sure it is going to pay, even for you. I think I give better measure when I take the wings of the moment and babble at my own sweet will.

Sunday

Thursday, Feb 19th, 1900

Hereafter I promise nothing - you see my failure. Yesterday no sprightly bulletin as per intention, and no letter put into the mail. This is large paper to make up. But I warn you not to count on any regularity or completeness things being one too many for my poor head. Great doings preoccupy your son. The grand entanglement of education, employment and schemes ahead keep him on the jump hourly. Harry J. is in negotiation with the Chief, and likely to be here over Sunday, -why you will soon know; developments for the summer are in the air - again you must wait; we take the civil service exam May 1 - little hope, for any of us especially me who am blind after dark and so unable to learn out of the necessary books. I go to N.Y. next Tuesday at 4 P.M.; we go to a box party tonight, guests of Mrs. Walker; we punch the bag each day 4:30 to 5:30 or six. Voila there is it. Where am I? I hardly know, but I am busy - praise God - busy, and not without hope for the future. Yes, I am more, I am possessed with enthusiasm to be a forester. Other trades are stripped away; this remains the one chance for my pitiful talents. To work. Ce'st moi.

R.T.F.

Hotel Hoquiam
Hoquiam, Wash.
May 20, 1900

All this on the back sheet may be true, but Hoquiam to the eye is a little clutch of wooden buildings squatting at the edge of vast mud flats; backed by hillocks of charred stumps sucked through by the tides in scores of ditches; and filled with the hum and snort of sawmills. As for the Harbor, it is all mud, and piers run out a mile and a half to the channel. But if you climb the slashed knolls behind, and the unwonted sunshine happens to be in power you see a far sight. You can see the Bay widen between walls of forest for twelve miles to the outer bar and the big swells breaking there in ranks and ranks. The other beautiful feature of the place is the river, which winds inland toward the Olympics through a tall forest of spruces. We went up yesterday afternoon in the launch of the big lumberman here for six miles and then rode a logging engine five more to the camps. We had supper up there and came down the river by starlight. It was a clear sunset, just the evening for a still, narrow river - - - - - - ? Well, this is our first stop at Gray's Harbor, and our first since we left Seattle. There are still a few more mill and logging towns on the Harbor, Aberdeen, Cosmopolis, Ocosta, that we shall visit in the next few days but the last of the month will see me started for California. We are off now by whatever conveyance we can scare up for Cosmopolis. R.T.F.

(no date)

The Rocky Mountain spring is incredibly beautiful. In the broad valleys among the high peaks, we saw dome after dome of great hills entirely covered like a cowslip meadow with yellow and blue flowers (Arnica-little sunflowers and lupine) and spired everywhere with tall pines. Besides this the winding river with its cottonwoods, the sunset colors on the snows, and at every pause the song of the Western Larks. Arcadia has emigrated.

R.T.F.
If you have Gibbon’s address, send it to me. I have his pocket lens.

Weely replied to my accusations of stealing “The Adirondack Spruce” by saying you took it from my room while I was in Virginia. If it is reposing in your boudoir, please have your valet send it to Miss Clark and save my life.

Yours sleepily,

Ethan

June 1, 1900

P.S. I forgot to tell you something. (over) (end of letter missing)

In the train between Albany, Oregon and the Grant’s Pass. Here are snaps that should have gone to you long ago. The pictures are of Mrs. Watson’s Bessie. She gave them to be sent to you. The clipping is from a Seattle paper. We were not the guests of the Hotel Northern but of my beloved Butler House. Similarly we were not touring the Pacific Coast - at least in the usual significance of the phrase. The words amused us, and we often used them afterward in a reference to our life of travel and high living. But the idea was an unintentional echo of the very common notion that a government man is enjoying a pull and that his work is a matter of form. Every where I go I have to swallow with a smile, “don’t have to work much, do you?” - it must be a snap - and so on till I could kill Mark Hanna and all his damnable henchmen with my own bare hands. Every where it’s the same rotten bad service - the forests, the taxpayers, everything and everybody skinned to reward constituents. You should see the vinous old heelers that I have had pointed out to me as forest rangers, men who can barely walk from age and infirmity, yet whose function requires them by its own terms to be constantly travelling over their district making trails, guarding game, watching for fires. Is that a matter for laughing? And not only these rangers, but worse still the superintendents of reserves (certainly in two important cases, I hear so in most others) are town people who hardly know one tree from another. And on top of all this, here comes the high priest himself, head of all public land, Honorable Benn Hermann, and says in the papers, “we are going to have forest protection. Saplings are to be bought her a stateroom, she sat on deck with my arm around her until 3 a.m. and seemed quite satisfied to pillow her head on my manly breast. The end is not yet and I hope the damn students don’t come too soon. No luck yet in finding hemlock camps or even fir enough to keep busy on. Have yet Sushounish, the Black Hills (Bordeaux), and your report to depend on.

Had my first dozen pictures developed and every one was perfect; couldn’t be better.

Enclosed one of a few more interviews I have circulated. Send it back to me with criticisms. I do not know what students I draw, but hear Bill James is to be one.
instantly revealed his motive in giving me the card. He counted on the German
vote! I tell you I do have a vogue with the peoples of North Europe. The German
family that kept the Depot Hotel at Albany couldn't do enough for me, and an old
Swedish lady at Newport last night (get the map Daddy) brought more kinds of
meat than I could possibly eat, and insisted on sending a boy for a big crab. And I
could give you more examples. Aren't you glad, mama, that the west is full of the
Teutonic races? R.T.F.

P.S. Last night I stood on the shore of the Pacific - dusk and surf, a long beach and
headland, and not a house or man or boat in sight.
P.S.S.O, this sweet stuff (I always like my letters to smell of something nice) is
Oxalis. Boys sell it in Portland under the name Wild Vanilla. The stunt is to have
a big bunch of it dry in your house for the scent. I picked this meself.

Hotel Butler
Seattle, Washington
June 8, 1900

Mr. W. F. Baldie and wife.
Sir, -- You may have the honor to observe that one of Boston's wealthy capi-
talists is stopping at the Butler, also a slave of the government entitled Allen. I
left S.F. a couple of days ago as no steamers were going particularly and leave day
after tomorrow for home on the San Juan. Tonight we expect all sorts of a time.
Victorine left for home yesterday to my sorrow, which seems silly when she might
have put it off till the 10th.

There you are sweating blood over Price, the government spotter, who is
coming out to give you a black eye to G.P. Cheet up and neglect no opportunity
to fill him chuck full to rum. Get off your high horse and be human. Don't worry,
ae nom de Dieu and remember that it doesn't make any difference.

If you're very good, I may take you into partnership with me when I come
back, in a company for logging teak in the Phillipines. Ethan is to be forester and
water the trees every Christmas, but we need a strong healthy chaste pedagogue to
talk Romany to the gypsy moths and look after the harem. I'll see if I can get you
the job. Be sure to keep lots of money with you this summer as you are quite like-
ly to receive a telegram any minute suggesting that money is needful for purposes
of transportation. I have letters to several mining nabobs who may need to borr
ow of me. I hear that Lena says she will go up as partner if I say so. I might let her
run a boarding house and look after a wheel myself in company with my friend
from Denver. I think I shall have to drop over and interview both blonde and

brunette before leaving. Affection is rare in this world. Well, address my here or
Cape home. See you in October or sooner. F.C. (Frazier Curtis)
P.S. My chief excuse for being a capitalist is that I took a room with a bath. Such
is fame.

Hotel Butler
Seattle, Washington
June 8, 1900

Why in the name of the Golden headed God---- etc.---- etc.---- etc.---- etc.---- etc.---- etc.---- etc.---- etc.---- etc.---- etc.---- etc.---- etc. ---- don't you tell me what you saw around Portland and the other places
you visited for me? I have not received a word since you struck Portland. I want
to know whether I have to go there myself.

This sporting life is hell. I have been out the straits to Clallam, been seasick,
been put ashore in dinkies (as written) when the waves rolled mountain high,
walked all night in the rain to catch steamers, traveled with a theatrical company,
fallen in love three times, been drunk with cover twice, and, at last, have met the
well known Boston capitalist, F. Curtis, who goes to Nome Monday to put in a
faro bank.

We go to see Alberta tonight. I am on my way to Snohomish, but have far-
loughed myself 24+ hours for the occasion.
1 draw Bill James, who do you draw?
Also, I am going to spend my money without turning a hair. It's easy when
you know how. Don't let Price shake your nerve. Give him knockout drops 3
times a day if necessary.

(Incidentally you're a hell of a man to rush round without telling your superi-
or officer, Mr. Allen of Tacom, about your plans. If you cannot obey yourself,
how can you expect others to obey you? And remember that cleanliness is next to
edueness, also that cheerful obedience to orders is essential to success. Will
you give it????? Let me assure you my dear Fisher that I have heard of your dis-
obedience with some concern as I realize perfectly that it may jeopardize seriously
your chances of success in the profession which your friends have chosen for you
as your life work. Pray do not let it occur again or, I assure you, you will get
yourself into a large stinging nettle some band of trouble. With regards to Mrs. B.---- etc. etc.) insert from F.C. (Frazier Curtis)

Mr. Cover, Mr. Foster. Lena, et. al. telegraphed me daily to know if you have
been heard from. Asssociated Press dispatches from Portland state that a small
man with a large chest and 36 hours growth of yellow chin whiskers was killed when drunk by the explosion of a slot machine in that city May 26th. The only means of identification were a wooden medicine chest full of gold bricks and a card bearing the name Miss Tanno, Dupont St., S.F.

We also hear that the chamber maid at Sisson's, Cal, ran away with a surveyor who wore a blue cap and had a sore ass from riding a mule.

If you do not reply we will consider both stories to be true.

E. Allen

P.S. Excuse our brevity, time is pressing and the government can't wait. If there isn't enough, begin again and read backwards.

Eureka, June 14, 1900

Yesterday turned out to be mail day and one of the happiest of the season. I had two letters from Berkshire (which gladdened me exceedingly and announced the arrival of the Mexican hats), one from Genevieve - I had almost said Lord -, one from Victor, and others from Helen Hinckley, Ethan Allen, Frazier Curtis, the American Ornith. Society, and the Chesapeake and Ohio railway. You see they fell off at the end; but I tell you the body of those letters put me in the seventh heaven. When I got them out of the delivery window I couldn't bear to read them right there; it was so bare and there was no place to sit down; and it was too glaring and noisy on the street, and too far to the hotel; so I posted off to my very favorite loafing place, the lumber piles on the wharves. (Eureka is all on a regular toy scale). But halfway there, I get impatient and plumped down on a horse block and started in.

As I read I became vaguely conscious that I was attracting attention. A couple of loggers on the corner seemed amused, and an Irishman across the street grinned repeatedly. But at first, though I was blushing and snickering and gurgling to myself, it never occurred to me to connect these demonstrations with myself. So I went on chuckling, and presently the Irishman called out, "She must be a droll pusil!" And I hollered back, "You bet your life," and we grinned at each other in absolute sympathy and understanding.

These mail days are the thing I tell you. I wire Everett ahead where I am to be at a certain date, and he has a batch on hand at the appointed place. I got one in Crescent City, June 3, one here in Eureka, June 9, and one yesterday, also here. This last was timely, Eureka being unwontedly dismal and chillsome. The mercury has stood at 68 degrees for the last week; and a high fog has taken the last spark of warmth from the air. This is their season for such visitations. I have stood it very well, though, with my daily trips into the woods on locomotive, steamer or bicycle, except in the evenings. These have positively driven me to drink and the gilded gin palace. It's impossible to sit in your room for the cold; the hotel office is filthy, noisy and ill-lighted; so behold me marching nightly for an after supper chat with my only friends in town (by a curious chance) a fat apothecary and a very professional barkeep. With both I have fallen into quite an intimacy. Usually I sit with the drugstore half an hour or so, as long as seems fair, and he tells me of medicine, and railroads (he's an agent for the Burlington) and fishing and politics, and I tell him of forestry and staging, and we hit it off to a charm. But the bulk of my evening I put in with the barkeeper, who has the prettiest bar in town and the best liquor, and a little dog, and a warm stove with arm chairs to sit around it in and a splendid light glowing overhead. First we pass the news, and I ask after the dog who has a cold, and receive his wheezing caresses, and then I ask for a small and aromatic drink; and the little man in the white coat who looks like a butler sets it out. Then comes the real comfort. I take my drink and my book and draw an armchair to the stove, on which I put my feet, and with my glass besides me, I read and sip in alternate mps. And I cannot tell you which gives me the richer glow; the spicy, fervent liquor, or - after so much deprivation - the warm pages of a good book.

But now little I am telling you. I who have so much to tell. You have heard nothing of my long trip down the coast. Well, I have never been treated with more touching friendliness in my life, I have never seen such nerve testing roads, such splendid sea coast, or such vile food; from which you will gather that my experience has not been all luxury. The balance was on the right side though, and I have almost forgotten that I subsisted for months on baker's bread and cherries.

It was two long pulls from Grant's Pass to the so called "City", first twelve hours over hot dry flats of chapparal and pines, then, beginning at 2:30 A.M., sixteen hours, hanging over the bald spurs of the Siskiyou Mountains and through a long stretch of heavy redwood at their western base. That mountain going was a sensation. The slopes, were incredibly steep and, except for rocks and endless thickets of rhododendrons and azaleas in full bloom, almost bare; and the road was a mere shelf in the side, just wide enough for the vehicle, full of loose rocks, without rail or ditch, and turning so sharply around the ends of spurs and the heads of canyons that it seemed to run straight off into the air or right into the mountain. It happened, too, that the driver had a passion for being each day more ahead of time. So that whenever it was down hill, which was the case after every climb of ten miles or so, he would whirl around those dizzy curves with what seemed to me lunatic speed. I suppose it was fairly safe, only with that rickety backboard (which had broken down the day before), and the hill dropping 1500 feet like a shot, you couldn't help wondering, as you tore along toward one of those disappearing turns, just where the other stage would meet you.

The rest of the trip was smooth compared to that, below Crescent City a pretty even division between wading mud in the thick redwoods, and winding around...
the seaward slopes of great flower covered headlands, where waves broke and whitened against reefs and lone rocks from 200 to a 1000 feet below. That was the sight of all sights. The sun clear you know, the air fragrant with azaleas, and the picture of great rock and water, spruce grove and mountain glen constantly changing.

Yes, Stillman is in Frisco, and I sail for there today on the S.S. Pomona. More soon.

R.T.F.

Dear Fisher,

Today's revelry has been disturbed by a corking street car wreck, one of the worst/best I ever heard of. A car with 53 people on it jumped a bridge and fell 75 feet. Thirty five were killed almost outright and the other seventeen are badly hurt. The gulch was full of arms, legs and heads, and many are so smashed up you can't hardly tell whether they are men or women. It was a Fourth of July crowd, of course, dressed up to kill. From my room in the Donnelly I counted 24 bodies carried into the Morgue inside of 15 minutes. It is a great story. I couldn't let the thing pass so I got in and helped the News get out an extra just to see if my right hand had lost its cunning.

One of my students has arrived and the rest are due today and tomorrow. I have my stuff all packed, a cook engaged and $90 worth of grub purchased. Just at the last minute the logging camps have decided to shut down a month which will drive me into second growth at once. Weely is to be with me for which I thank the gods. (also Mr. Graves)

Last Sunday I had the damnedest time that a field assistant ever had. A St. Paul and Tacoma L. Co crowd including the young Fosters and Hewitts, invited me to a lunch party and clambake and of course I accepted the chance to work a graft with the loggers and millmen.

There were 12 in the gang and we took 2 kegs and a case of beer and a gallon of scotch whiskey, all of which we drank so early in the day that we were physically unable to bake any clams. Poker with $1 limit made some diversion and fighting the rest. Most of the gang were most beautifully jazzed all day, but that didn't hinder us from taking possession of Donnelly's bar on our return and drinking gin steadily from 8 until 12 p.m. One by one dropped out disabled and, to the credit of the D.F., I was one of the two soberest out at the finish. Bill Hewitt was the other. My performance has made me solid for life with the gang and the reputation Barkill lost has been retrieved. Hewitt (Bill) hates A.C. like poison and called him all the kinds of idiot in the logger vocabulary. It seems the mill people regarded that fire episode as very serious. Hewitt says he warned Gaskill about fire and then the first thing he did was to try to burn the camp up, from that he drifted to a description of Gaskill's gang: "A set of young monkeys in silk shirts and gaiters who climbs up the trees to piss on the fire. O Jesus. Jesus." He said further that they counted the rings on cedar stumps for a month to find out what any lumberman could tell them in five minutes.

All this time, as you may guess, Mr. Hewitt was ignorant of my connection with the young monkey and you can gamble I didn't put him wise. His conclusion is that the Division got onto A.C. and gave his job to me because I can drink whiskey and otherwise conduct myself like a man. As he also won one or two of my hard earned dollars in a skin game of blackjack, I think Mr. Bill Hewitt has even a mild regard for me.

I tell you the Gaskill-Sherrard policy don't win in the west, anyway not with the lumbering fraternity.

Yours for crime, as Curtis says,

Ethan

Out West, 1898 - 1901
Dear Man,

Dearest Man,

(A.H.T.)

The old wonder that we should go so long in silence is what springs first to the pen, and it is still as unanswerable as it is unimportant. At last you are home again at any rate, and though I have adroitly managed to keep the continent between us, I am a great deal happier to have you in Dublin and prospectively in Scarborough. The point being, you beloved painter man and family, that I am not only the same old devoted dog-of-the-house as formerly, but an older man besides, and more eager than ever, as the months move on, for a scrap of your companionship and a chance to unload my stories. That I am become so uncommunicative - that is, apparently so - is largely due to my manner of life, which is now unexpectedly arduous and preoccupying. You know I am charged with the examination of two large tracts of forest amounting to some hundreds of square miles apiece, extremely rugged, remote and uninhabited, and separated, each from each, by about 150 linear miles. Hence long days - often 15 hours - in the saddle, cooking, packing and unpacking the horses, and writing notes: leaving, as you will guess, a brainless Diccon to sink back among his blankets under the stars, and ponder, in a few drowsy moments of pleasure, those times and tales that he so longs to enjoy with his own people. Literally, I have only strength and daylight for my work, and hitherto, though the days are long and myself fairly lusty, scarcely enough of both for that. In the last week, we have come, Fitter and I and Casey, with our outfit of five horses, from Shasta to the Hay Fork of the Trinity river - 125 miles, and in two days more we shall be on South Fork Mountain - our first big range: 100 miles from the railroad and 30 from the nearest Post Office. I had no idea before I came out this year that there was so much really primitive, inaccessible country in this state. Lots of it that we have come through (it's all unspeakably steep and rugged) is still in the trail and log cabin stage, and often we travelled 15 miles along the county road without seeing a house. Everyone rides, and, all ask you if you are going prospecting, gold hunting and mining being (with stock raising) the chief industries of these parts. Several times we have met the regular, dime novel prospector, old and long bearded, straddling one burro and leading another. But what of you - you globe walking Thayers? Many a lucky one knows your news, I enviously think, speculating on the strange separation of Fate, - we who care so much for each other to be thus always apart. I had a few words from Gra - God bless him - to this day, but though they went to my heart they did not satisfy my hungers. Don't add me to your duties; merely remember that we are to have a crack in the fall, whatever happens; and if leisure and impulse should so combine as to set you writing, why you might direct to number 4 California Street; San Francisco. Thus your devoted Diccon.

Yet over against these things are my immediate prospects in the business, which, owing to Mr. Pinchot's uncertainty, are in no case to be revealed. First most likely, if it can be arranged, I am to be kept here a month or two after the rest, and probable F. Curtis as well, to go about the State looking up details of the lumber business. Not such bad fun after this monotonous stationary work - if it were not that it seems, with another likelihood, to dish an October visit to Dublin that I have been cherishing among my best hopes. That other is another matter,
and as Mr. Pinchot says, in the way of giving me time and ample ground for testing the attractions of forestry. If it can be arranged and again I think his powers and interest make it likely - I am to help edit the "Forester" this winter; employment which will probably take two weeks out of every month, and allow me occasional jobs from the "Division" (Mr. P.) at least to study and possibly some runs.

Oh joy! to Scarborough.

Now here the thing begins to be narrowed down. Mr. Pinchot, who is a reverent gentleman and a princely man to look at, seems fairly anxious to have me take up forestry; and he urges me to take all the time in the world to decide. In addition, remember the chances he offers. Against this, set my own feeling which you know to be yet lukewarm, and the sort of thing I am likely to have to do, that is, if I study two years and enter the "Division" which is about the best immediate employment one can have for. Unless I passed a very good examination I should have to be mainly occupied with what I call "working plans." I should have to journey to various applicant farmers, lumbermen or such, measure their wood lot and the timber on it, and then, when I had thoroughly comprehended the special needs and habits of each species on the tract, outline a plan of conservative lumbering, by which according to local prices the owner will keep his forest reproducing itself and enjoy a steady income as well. You see in this, besides the pleasant trips, the outdoor study, and the possible "birds," some demons of office work, calculation, and the like; three months of the year at least in overhauling and working out results. So, as nearly as I can make out at this distance, the government comes down to a good deal of travelling and research work in the west, a bad bunch of office work, and the making of these so called "working plans."

Such is the situation and prospect now, and such the materials for my choice. There has yet to come in Mr. Pinchot's own opinion of the matter, based on my summer's work; and there are already in what I do not have to tell you, the pleasures and opportunities, human, spiritual, and picturesque, of such a life. Poor pay is to be expected, high pay unlikely. Now dear man, if you have the brain to follow this muddy exposition, let me have your thoughts. I am not weak enough I hope, to expect you to decide for me, and I should be overjoyed even if you gave me a letter with no forestry in it at all, only birds and Dublin; but I do so value your feeling about my case, that I cannot help longing to hear it.

And now for the pictures in this tedious book, and that which will warm my heart. Heaven has willed it that, though I work long hours and have no gun but a rifle (which by the way I have not yet used at all), I have been able to pick up a few birds. Better still, I am likely to get more. One of the lads here has a shotgun and a few smallish shells that I have several times had a chance to use; and if the cartridges I have sent to Tacoma for, ever get here, I shall be in a fair way to gather quite a bunch of rarities unknown to me. Best of all I have been invited by a man who lives at the base of Rainier to come visit him after the cruel job is over, and get birds to my heart's satisfaction. He is a nice man, and if I go, I shall get Clarks thing crows, Arctic bluebirds, Stellars jays, and rarities beyond mention. So keep your eye on the sour eyed Collegian.

As for those birds I've already got, and which, alas! I have merely been able to skin and salt, they go by tomorrow's mail to you, six in number; one a blue grouse which I got from a fellow who was going to throw it away over at O_ , a male I think, and in fair plumage; two, what I call a McGillvray's warbler shot with aforesaid gun; three and five, a Kingfisher and two Canada jays from where we are now, in a meadow by the woods on the East bank of the East fork, near the foothills of the Olympic mountains. These three, I am afraid, cannot have more than a scientific interest for you, in that I believe they only differ from their Eastern prototypes in the minds of the A. O. Us. The jays are certainly separated from P. Canadensis, and it is possible, if I remember rightly, that they may not be merely a young and old P. Obscurus, but P. Obscurus and the Northern species from B. Columbia, which here reaches the southern limit of its range. In a week or two I should be working down along the blue and tortuous Sound, the still watered and forest bound, where from the steamer I saw strange and tantalizing beauties; little chunky black birds, with a white patch on their wings, that I took to be the Guilemont of that name; some Shearwaters, and a gull, new to me, in size between a Ringbill and a Heron, and very white; also several ducks and shore birds. Anyway they are both pretty full of feathers for the season and I think they will wash well. The Kingfisher is again a bit of a pill, for unless you become very much attached to him or he does not come out well, I am going to ask you to disguise him in apple pie order (surely Gra will be my henchman in this) for the dear Billy James, who shot him and who longs for a model for his very reverent and zealous attempts at skinning. It need not be until I get home or even later.

I cannot tell you how joyfully I have skinned these few birds around the fire and get birds to my heart's satisfaction. He is a nice man, and if I go, I shall get Clarks thing crows, Arctic bluebirds, Stellars jays, and rarities beyond mention. So keep your eye on the sour eyed Collegian.

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I cannot tell you how joyfully I have skinned these few birds around the fire of an evening, or how blissful have been my dreams as I did it; and I wished many many times that they were more, and less qualified gifts. But I cannot yet choose my times or my birds, and I must use what means chance brings. Things are in the mott now and I can hardly get a bird well feathered enough to wash. But you must think of me at the joyful pains of getting new skins and believe, that if I were serving my lady love, I could not go about it with more gladness and devotion. Dearest love to everyone. Your R. T. F.

P.S. Beseech dear Gra to write to me.

P. S. S. There is a band of band tailed pigeons in a clearing hence. I saw them yesterday. Tomorrow we move camp to their neighborhood. I shall hunt them.

P. S. S. S. or P. P. P. S. My address is: c/o Hotel Donnelly Tacoma Washington
This will hardly reach you two weeks before I do! Here begins another running report - when or where it will end I don't know. Another week of this trudging business. I have trapped all the ditches, all the meadows, all the creeks, and even the dry chapparal on the first slopes of the mountain, and, except the familiar California vermin, I got almost nothing. After I had "cleared up" - as we say - the gophers, ground squirrels, and chipmunks it was all I could do to get half a catch. I got a mink every now and then, once a big black dog, and once a cat. And that was all except - ugh two skunks. Of them I think I have got a lasting lesson, ways nervous of skunks to come.

The first one got us - other end to. It was like this. I got a line of small traps in the dense alders and willows along an irrigation ditch, long since widened and undermined into a considerable gully. In one place I found a runway that looked rabbitious and put a steel trap there. That was about four feet from a small mouse trap, and so placed that I had to creep in to set it. Next day I crawled in to the mouse trap, took it up, reset it, when - Pff! Rustle: there was a big skunk in my steel trap, waving his tail, and swinging into line. As Jake says "I go away fast!" Ugh I can't tell you how it is but a kind of nausea, half physical, half mental, gets me when I think of the beasts. It was something in the circumstances I guess. You see the Dr. particularly wanted me to get skunks. And yet I can't get one. This one couldn't be got at. There was nothing but to shoot him and spoil his skull and make a stink. I dasn't skin him cause I live with folks. So there I was, scared and baffled.

Well I caught another yesterday, not in the box trap I hoped he'd fall into and so become desirable, but again in a steel trap, almost the same thing happened. Skunk was in a bad place, and couldn't be shot except close to. My small henchman bored an enormous hole in him - not in the quick death spot and he made a smell. Hale or smell I suppose I've got to skin him tomorrow. But golly, I hate to. I'm almost insaned sensitive about being that kind of a nuisance. Well, again as Jake says in his impressive German way no Yankee can do it - with the skunks.

This town is a shabby rough place, depressing too. Sunday morning I went "up town" in my rags and arms. "Uptown" is our row of little wooden buildings, and verandaeed so that a continuous, covered sidewalk is made. There are quarters of saloons. "Doe's Mint," "The Pine Tree," "Logger's Rest" etc. This time everything was open, and alluring; special two bit meals advertised, and cheap beds. And every mining and lumber camp within a night's ride had sent a delegation. Horses -fine ones- stood by every door, men in all kinds of shirts and overalls roaming, singing, talking on the boards, in the saloons. I went along and heard the fiddles and saw the crowd, and wished I was drunk. I felt lonely as I was. None of the people, male or female, would notice me as I was. So I went over to the post office and sat on a nail keg and chinned with any feller sober enough to want his mail.

And here's another story von Sisson. There's been a man here, working in — - , and a day or two ago he was fined - as I hear he has been several times before. But he didn't seem to take it to heart. Last night, he got the parson, and married a bad girl he knew. About twenty small boys - my henchmen among them - observed or tried to observe the ceremony. Pretty soon the man came out and gave every boy half a dollar. But they knew he had a mine in Colorado and yelled "stingy, give us more". No, he hadn't any more. But they kept on shouting till finally he went in and got silver dollars enough to go around. So they said he was all right and all went off to buy cartridges, which are a Staple article here.

Some more Sisson doings, a week ago a fellow left town for Shasta Valley some miles north. It was getting dusk, and he was alone. Two men followed him from the saloon where he had tanked up, and when he got along by Big Spring - the head of the Sacramento - they tried to hold him up, at least that's the inference. Nobody saw the scuffle, but an hour or two later, the first man rode up to "whiskey row" driving two men ahead of him with his six shooter. But he was so puffed up over his catch, and flourished his gun so much that the sheriff locked the whole three up.

I'll give you another anecdote - this one a little more homely. This Jake I tell you of - such a funny little cuss - was going out to the barn by darkness. There is a swill barrel in the drive between the two corrals, and right near the park, this town is a shabby rough place, depressing too. Sunday morning I went "up town" in my rags and arms. "Uptown" is our row of little wooden buildings, and verandaed so that a continuous, covered sidewalk is made. There are quarters of saloons. "Doe's Mint," "The Pine Tree," "Logger's Rest" etc. This time everything was open, and alluring; special two bit meals advertised, and cheap beds. And every mining and lumber camp within a night's ride had sent a delegation. Horses -fine ones- stood by every door, men in all kinds of shirts and overalls roaming, singing, talking on the boards, in the saloons. I went along and heard the fiddles and saw the crowd, and wished I was drunk. I felt lonely as I
Mr. R.T. Fisher
4 California Street
San Francisco, California

Dear Mr. Fisher:

I have your letter of the 12th instant. In regard to the Student Assistants being dropped, you informed me to have certain men taken from the rolls on September 1st. On receipt of this information I immediately attended to it. Then came a letter in which you notified me to take them off on August 23rd. Of course, this was all right on your part as it would save quite an expense to the Division, but nevertheless the papers had already been asked for from the Secretary, and you can readily see why it is not business-like to change requests of this kind. This is the only point in question.

In regard to storing the camp outfit and supplies, I will ask you to be very careful and make a complete list of such things as you leave there, and also to bring back all the instruments that can be used in the Eastern work. I am going to go over our instrument list this fall very carefully, and equip fully before the next spring’s work. In order to do this properly, it will be necessary for me to inspect almost everything we have on hand. Such things as tents, cooking outfit, and incidental little things used around a camp, you can store with Everett. The way to get them back here is to have them all packed up, notifying me how many packages there are, and giving me an estimate of the weight of the entire thing, marking them in my care of the Division. I will then have a request made to have them sent back here by freight, and Mr., Everett will take care of them from that point. I hope this is perfectly clear to you, and that you will take care of it accordingly.

I am pleased to hear that everything is all right with you. I will thank you to have the resignations of James and Swales as soon as they are to take effect.

In regard to the order for flannel shirts from the Army Department, I have looked into the matter and find it will be impossible for us to secure these things. When you get here this fall we will look up some of our friends in the service here, and in that way secure the shirts. Very sincerely yours, (signed) Accountant.

---

Ethan

P.S. (from another letter) Price says your beard has got onesided through too much affectionate stroking. Tell Bill James I would like to trade about seven of my students for him. Price says he is a pearl without price.
Out West, 1898 - 1901

W.W. Everett 4 California St.
San Francisco

Dear Mr. Pinchot,

I am sorry enough to be the one to add to the misfortunes of this party, but such seems to be my fate. In Scotia I had the ill luck to catch a kind of dysentery which was epidemic there, and which laid me on my back for a week. Since then, what with rain and travelling, I have done little to make up for my inactivity; and now that we have had a week of this microscopic stem analysis, my treacherous eyes have gone back on me. The fact is I cannot - at least for the present - make a valuable analysis of an old Redwood.

You see the difficulty. I am already too conscious of my meager return for your generosity, and I want to avoid any further hindrance to your work and resources. There remains to be done here, I believe, four or five days of valuation Survey. Perhaps a week in young growth (if it turns out useful), and the rest of the time, as now, in old stem analysis. So you will know best whether it is wise for me to stay or not. I can still use an ax or carry calipers, for I am far from decrepit in body, but the chance for such employment is so small that my further usefulness seems doubtful. Will you let me know your feeling in the matter? With regard to the winter work we spoke of, I think I am still able, so far as eyes go, to discharge my duties successfully. It is only this interminable squinting that spoils my vision.

And may I ask a favor? If it is regular and proper, can you arrange my return transportation so that I can stop over in Chicago?

Sincerely Yours, Richard T. Fisher.

I ask your pardon for this scrawl, which I hope will arrive in a legible state. The camp is out of ink.

Sample Rooms for Commercial Travelers Headquarters for all Stages Free Bus to and from all Steamers, i.e., the trip to Point Arena, due once a week.

Occidental Hotel
Mrs. Kate Gorman
Proprietress
Mendocino, California

September 21, 1900

Dear People,

How I skip about! From Frisco and my parting with Bill, I came for a night in Novato, and day before yesterday morning, began my furious trip to the coast. Three hours in the train, miles of vineyards full of grape pickers, and more miles of winding among the bold and craggy hills, along Russian river, brought me to Ukiah and the high noon of a scorching day. A short hour to eat and shift into my woods clothes, and the stage was at the door. My fellow passengers numbered nine the seats were two and a half. Dusty baggage,- duffel sacks, mail bags and telescope baskets buried the vehicle, and as we bowled away up the glaring road, the timid ones speculated on our chances of getting safely over the narrow mountain grades. It was exciting. I have thought up to this that fools, drunken men, and children were the favorites of Providence; compared to stages they are nowhere in her eyes. Twice on those sudden, giddy turns with emptiness below and room not at all, we ran plump into a great four horse barking train. There I saw driving as was the real article. You know there is no rigging on a stage train that is nearly adequate to back with, and a driver must depend wholly on his brake for holding his load. Our man, who was a cool hand, required those who were not already trembling in the road to get out and stand aside; and it sounded as though he said "move that chair." Me he picked, I suppose on account of my overalls

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besides being much travelled in my coast country here. It was a memorable night. And now here I am at home. Do you recognize the place? You have heard of it. Mrs. Gorman is still the lady of the house, and Gus still runs the bar and receives the stages. When I got off, I fell into his arms and he shook my hand nearly off.

"Well, well, how are you, how are you?" and he grabbed my things and hustled me inside and himself behind the bar, and "What'll it be" says he. "Well, here's my regards. Drink hearty" says he. This is the same beautiful cozy corner of a village — breezy, sunny, spick and span, visited by the gentle horses of the sea, cool as October. There is a Sunday coming, and here is where I shall wait till it passes. There shall be one day at least of lying under trees and reading, and beholding the splendid ocean, with maybe a bath in salt water to season it. Along and between naps there shall be also a few savory meals in Mrs. G.'s dining room, gossip with Gus and perhaps some with the lady too. She is not eastern but California born; only her husband was a Gloucester man. Though widowed and the mother of three large children, she is still very girlish, especially in her manner and bearing. This morning I came in and found her playing some very pretty melody on the piano, her sun bonnet hanging from her neck by the strings, her shears on the floor, and the big bunch of roses she had been cutting in her lap.

She talked to me most winningly as is her way, not benevolently, you know, with that nasty, conscious cordiality but like a really unblunted soul, freshly and kindly interested. She told me of her home in Cuffy's Cove and I told her of October in New England, which interested her because her husband was a New Englander. But, you should see her do it, holding her chin in the most complete self forgetfulness, and looking at you wide eyed.

R.T.F.

I will now make a beginning on what will probably be my last letter from Trinity County, for as soon as I can get supplies from Hay Fork, I intend to hit the trail again for Shasta Valley: this time by the western route, down the South Fork to the main Trinity, to the Klamath, and up that and over the Southern Alps to Yreka and Little Shasta, which will likely be our next post office. I shall not address me there. I am mighty glad this particular piece of reconnaissance is about over. It has been altogether the roughest, most hand to mouth work I have ever had. I told you, I think, how hurriedly and unexpectedly we took refuge in this meadow, food being so very scarce. I had seen in a minute that travelling in these mountains was going to be wicked business for horses; so I made a sort of permanent camp here among the "pantherine woods" (as a nice bucaroo hereabouts has called them), and sallied out therefrom in daylong rides along the ridges. Yet even then I could only reach a mere corner of this obstinate wilderness, and it became necessary to do something extreme. The whole southern region between here and the Yolabola Mts. was still nothing more to me than a jumble of steep blue hills. I therefore hies me back to the Friend's little cabin (good, kindly people, the Friends) and persuades Mrs. to bake me 6 loaves, 6 of real live bread, and procures besides a few pounds of dried venison from the boys, who had just killed and cured the meat of nine deer in a four day's hunt. That same day Knowles, my guide man, shot two fat bucks and we were rich in meat. The day after (last Thursday the 31st), he and I packed our beds, the bread, the "jerkey", and a meal or two of steaks, on my small bay, the "Hunter", and with the Buckskin and Knowleses Pinto mare struck off South to cover country, feed or no feed. First we wound eastward about five miles along a high ridge under giant pines, and there we plunged down southward into Rattlesnake basin. The hottest most baleful place of dry canyons, chaparral thickets and bare gravel I ever was to. The sun glared into those holes at a temperature in the neighborhood of 120; the air never stirred a breath; and except for our own scrambling, not a thing sounded but the innumerable scuttling lizards, fleeing before us under the manzanita. By noon, we had gotten down to the Rattlesnake Creek and comparative comfort beside its alder fringed bed, and we had trout and crawfish to watch instead of lizards while we ate. From there we had a long, steep north slope to climb, cooler you see by exposure, and hence heavily timbered with pines and fir. Surmounting this put us on top of another divide running roughly East to West. Its summit we kept with various ups and downs still in fair timber, till about 5:30, when we struck a couple of small springs, and a little surrounding feed too tolerable to risk passing. So we unpacked, hobbled out the horses, and chewing berries all the while, pushed forward on foot for the summit we had been aiming for all day - the Dubikillars so called. At 7:30, after about an hour and a half of climb through sparcer and sparcer trees, and little bushy openings, we came out in sight of three closely clustered peaks, mere rocky points sticking skyward from steep knolls of scrub. A few more scrambles and we saw the whole purple and gold expanse of southern Trinity and eastern Humboldt counties, brilliant ridge succeeding sombre canyon, from the Yolabolas to the Grouse Creek Mountain and the peaks of Stewart's Fork. That was a precious moment for me, for you see, I could get the lay and character of miles of forest at a glance. It was moonlight and nearly two when we got back to camp, and we spent the rest of a short night, as it seemed to me, in waking to listen for the bellmare's bell. It would not have done for the hungry three to strike out for Bear Wallow and leave us. They stayed like camels however, so that we were able to be off the next morning by 6:30. Whew! What a hot day. More bald ridges, and more, and more. Not a sign of a trail, and thickets of oak scrub and manzanita that seemed to be made of cast iron. The first mishap caught us in rounding a steep point among dense oak saplings. The pack caught, unbeknown to me who was leading its bearer, on a branch, and thinking the Hunter was lagging, I spurred the Buckskin. He sprang forward like the good beast he is, the oak gave way all at once, and the Hunter plunged after so quick that he lost his balance and went down the side hill. That brought the Buckskin all
up standing, and nearly yanked me and the saddle off his back (I had the leading rope looped over the horn); and I had just time to throw it loose and let the Hunter roll into a perfectly hopeless mess - his feet uphill, his body on the pack (sorrow to the bread and tin cups!), and his head wedged between two oaks so he couldn't raise it. And even if his head had been free, he could not have got up because he could not have got his feet under him; and we couldn't get the pack off him because he was lying on the cinch rope. So we had to rock him over and down, and then escape his immediate struggles by leaping like squirrels into the brush. Well, he gained his feet, and we took each separate article off his back, - beds, grub sacks, packsaddles, ropes, saddle blankets, - carried them ourselves out into a little opening, and with much sweating repacked the trembling Hunter. Then more bald ridges and more till nearly noon, when we found a small spring, and thereupon tied up the Hunter, who was very shaky, to a tree and ourselves made for the next summit South, which was Red Mountain. About noon we gained it, - a blistering sun-baked patch of red gravel to marzana grass some 6,000 feet above the sea. I could see from there the last basin before the Yolabelas, and as the horses were visibly weakening, we turned back toward the Hunter and the spring. Someday you shall see a picture of Red Mountain Summit, with the Buckskin pony standing meekly by a pile of rocks and emptiness. At the spring we chewed some venison and bread, and immediately struck out for home. By night we had made Rattlesnake Creek, the next day, that was yesterday, the third, saw us wiggle into Bear Wallow, having covered some 80 miles of bad going in less than three days. It pleased me, then, to give the Buckskin a quart or two of grain that we had left, and keep him right in camp to eat it off a gunnysack while I knelt and fed it to him. He is a wild little beast, but a mighty hard working, and I felt an extremely new tenderness for him after his long pull in my service. I hate to think of leaving him out here - in what hands I can never know.

...stopping a part of Sunday at Friend's to pick up stuff we had left here. Tomorrow I go out to Hay Fork for mail, and the next day we start down to the river for Hoopa and the North. Good bye to letters then for many a day. Perhaps though I can send off a couple - if we see a post office, which I doubt. R.T.F.

Dear Ma,

Am I wound up to go forever? Here I am chattering again. If you want to know what I am doing, I'm sitting in the store of this lone and hill surrounded hamlet for the long distance operator at Point Arena to answer my inquiry about student Swales, with whom I would converse, an elderly post mistress is bustling around in my behalf, and the boy who runs the store is writing a love letter cross legged on the counter. Two mill hands are joshing each other about McKinley, and another is stringing a guitar. Outside there is cold twilight, inside there is the flicker of the fitful coal oil and the smell of groceries. It is lonesome; it will be lonesomer, for I must return this evening to the barn-like hotel, built for a patronage that never appeared, and in which I am the sole guest. At six tonight I stepped timidly into the great chill dining room, lighted by two remote bracket lamps, and found myself alone among twelve empty tables, each bristling with a basket of cruets. Not seeing any waitress or anything, I was about to go out, when the sad automaton presented herself. Sadly, she repeated her formula, heard my order, well, he gained his feet, and we took each separate article off his back, - beds, grub sacks, packsaddles, ropes, saddle blankets, - carried them ourselves out into a little opening, and with much sweating repacked the trembling Hunter. Then more bald ridges and more till nearly noon, when we found a small spring, and thereupon tied up the Hunter, who was very shaky, to a tree and ourselves made for the next summit South, which was Red Mountain. About noon we gained it, - a blistering sun-baked patch of red gravel to marzana grass some 6,000 feet above the sea. I could see from there the last basin before the Yolabelas, and as the horses were visibly weakening, we turned back toward the Hunter and the spring. Someday you shall see a picture of Red Mountain Summit, with the Buckskin pony standing meekly by a pile of rocks and emptiness. At the spring we chewed some venison and bread, and immediately struck out for home. By night we had made Rattlesnake Creek, the next day, that was yesterday, the third, saw us wiggle into Bear Wallow, having covered some 80 miles of bad going in less than three days. It pleased me, then, to give the Buckskin a quart or two of grain that we had left, and keep him right in camp to eat it off a gunnysack while I knelt and fed it to him. He is a wild little beast, but a mighty hard working, and I felt an extremely new tenderness for him after his long pull in my service. I hate to think of leaving him out here - in what hands I can never know.

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Duncan Mills Sonoma County, California
September 26, 1900

You didn't expect another so soon, did you? There's no stopping me, you see, once I am started. At Duncan's, whence my last, I struck the narrow gauge railway that tops the coastward side of Sonoma County, and picking up Swales there, went on to Occidental, which is where that fearful forest fire of last Sunday first got its headway. It was one of the few conflagrations of a century, fierce wind and parched forest in ominous conjunction. It was terrible to be right round among the homeless and the stricken. Many a poor rancher lost everything but his family, for the blaze was absolutely living, and ruined fields, fences, railroad ties, everything. Even the high trees were stripped and charred to an unheard of height, and I saw squirrels - O piteous sight -not able to walk for burned feet. One man I heard had hogs roughing in the hills, and after the fire, - a day or so, -he saw them struggling up to the corral, which they had not visited for weeks, stumbling and tottering, hardly moving on their charred hooves. I was glad to get away from there today, and arrive here by sun down, to some smiling and familiar faces. Everybody was cordial as usual, but I got my first and most delightful welcome from the hearty old fellow who drives the hotel hansom. He saw me get off the car at the end of the block, and rushed half way to meet me and grab my luggage. "How are ye Mr. Fisher? I thought you would come on the 6:30. How did you get in so early?" He had remembered all this time my telling him I should come back in about a week on the 6:30 from Ukiah. Of such are the friends of my heart. What do you suppose happened between the time when I write hotel and hansom on the last page? A beautiful and accommodating damsel came all the way down stairs, from the newsstand on the parlor floor to get me a Scribner I wanted out of...
the reading room cupboard. She was closing up her own premises which had failed to furnish the magazine, and knowing there was one down here, came by and got it on her way out. ...a pretty thing to do? I could hardly restrain myself from climbing over the counter to help her put back the periodicals; I managed to refrain — from buying. R.T.F.

Occidental Hotel
San Francisco, California

October 4, 1900

Among other occupations, I am making a few calls upon beautiful and accomplished San Franciscans, Ellery Stowell who has been here a year has been my sponsor. On Sunday afternoon we went to see two daughters of Mrs. Stubbs, vice president of the Southern Pacific railroad, delightful cordial girls; and after these two Miss Colliers, who did not so engage my affections. Then, yesterday in the late afternoon, I was taken to meet a Kentucky Breckemidge, a rather pathetic little cage bird with an austere grandmother. But the big event was last evening when I spent two blissful hours at the feet of a real charmer. Ellery talked to Mama in the next room, and we two stayed at the piano. Her name was Wilson, her age, 20, her eyes gray, her size - medium, her spirit lively, her talk unimpeachable - and how she could beat out music! How can I remember a little thing like going east? I want you to know that God has given me in charge of one of his angels, and that not Milton in his richest dream has touched the Paradise where we walked. Monsieur, Richard, we know your ways. You can't make us believe you are in love. Well I don't want to cuz I ain't. But she's a dandy all the same. R.T.F.

October 7, 1900

On the boat between Oakland and Frisco, 11 p.m. I forgot to say in my last that I leave this week for the East, probably on Wednesday. I forget little things like that easily these days. I have done about all the interacting and authority hunting that will pay and I might as well pull out as not. It's nice here though. We've had a day's rain to freshen the colors and the weather, day after day is something crystalline. I have strawberries for breakfast and ride in the open cars and wear low shoes. Half a dozen households on the hill will cheer my evenings. Why should I hurry away? I shan't be sorry to go for all that, and I have been rushing things to hasten my departure. Wednesday to Stanford to see Professor Dudley; Thursday among the office men and weather bureau people; Friday to Berkeley to settle with my students; Saturday more city business and overnight to Novato. There I met five old Nob Hill residents. This morning I came back to town so as to keep an engagement for chimes with the Swaleses in Oakland, where I am just returning. They are truly good people. Mrs. a widow, a married daughter with a hearty husband, a married son with a doting little wife, a daughter still unwed, my squire Robert, and his affianced, who is a musician. They were all there and I felt thoroughly at home. Back of these events were the calls on city damsels which I began to describe. I send you the scrap anyway, lest you hear nothing, I shall also send you within a day or two a cheque for $125.50 which you ought to have no trouble in cashing. R.T.F.

White City Special
Big Four Route

October 22, 1900

A disgraceful silence having reigned for — dear me, over a week, I am minded to break it by a short summary - of intervening events. Perhaps I had better say "episodes." There was one you remember, going on before I left Frisco, and whether my farewell call of a week ago Sunday night ends it or not, I shouldn't care to say. I can tell you though that it was a very melancholy forester who crossed the brilliant bay next morning and took the Santa Fe train at Point Richmond for Chicago. And for all that day of travel through the Golden wheat and raisin country of the San Joaquin Valley, I wondered how I could exist in the unfriendly east. But even as I grieved, my consolation was entering a train in far off Los Angeles. When morning came and the gray wastes of the desert, the two trains were one; and at Needles all Chicago passengers were put into the same car. I met my consolation soon after on the back platform. She was travelling with her grandmother. For the first day the acquaintance was confined wholly to the back platform, and, though there was no deception and nothing to conceal, I began to see a duty to the grandmother. So, at a favorable moment, the old lady being alone, I went and tried to explain to her that I was having words with her charge — but she was deaf and misunderstood, and I soon found myself bawling the situation to the whole car. However, we all beamed in the end, and things went smoothly forever after. She was small and bright and very well educated and when we were not watching the landscape from the rear platform, we were talking Browning or playing cribbage inside, and at odd moments she taught me beautiful Spanish — So much so that our parting in Chicago was almost tearful. We exchanged cards, regrets, and promises unlimited, and I charged across the city and out to Faith's on the high places. And all that day I burbled and burbled to
my sister, and, but for a few hours business, the next went likewise. That was Saturday, yesterday, Sunday, Chauncey came down from St. Paul, I met him at the depot, and we spent an old times day, talking, a little talking, some talking, and a winding up dinner at a down town restaurant. Then he took the train, and in a little while it was morning and I was saying good bye to Faith at the railway station; and now it is nearly eight o’clock and Indiana is rushing by outside. I have fed, and begin to think fondly of bed, which I shall find at nine in Cincinnati where I change cars. Tomorrow at Four, I shall be in Washington, and the richest six months of my life will be behind me. R.T.F.

1316 S. Street
October 28, 1900

Dear Dad,

I think by now I must have come near spoiling my record as a correspondent. As usual, the reason is not business or a cold but a kind of mental interregnum. The fact is, I am desperately home sick for California, girl or no girl, and ever since I struck this dingy town, I have felt useless and ineffectual, and longed for the glorious elbow room of the Pacific slope. But I shall come round in time, since there are still persons and places on this edge of the map that I care for extremely. Meanwhile, nonetheless, my sails miss fresh trade winds. My winter prospect is certain and pleasant, being the construction of a bulletin out of my summer’s work in the redwoods. It is to be scientific and practical and profusely illustrated with the photographs of and by the author, and if I can pull it off with any eclat, it ought to give me some Kudos. The only drawback is that the money still comes slow. I can’t see any more ahead until I pass that examination. I understand I am expected home for a visit in November while the Thayers are there. I certainly want it hard enough and fully expect to do it, but I have only 10 days of annual leave left to my credit and if I am to have any time at Christmas, I cannot make it long stay. Besides which the extra car fares mount up. Yet I must see the Thayers before they sail, and I cannot see them more profitably to you than at Berkshire. So it looks as if I should stomach the extravagance. Apropos of money, I am pretty lean just now, and none too fat in prospect, but as soon as I can get an account through the disbursing office, I can let you have another hundred. There are a couple of them still due me from the summer’s expenditures. I can’t produce it, though, for several weeks. Nothing runs tonight, so you get only scraps. It is still muggy here, and for the first time since I left last April, I have been uncomfortable with heat. Do you wonder I love California? R.T.F.

Dear Richard,

Contain your surprise, but it is none other who cometh. The spirit has moved me for several days. Perhaps the approach of winter makes some primal migratory instinct, useful when our forebears hunted warmer weather like wild geese; anyway this time of year always makes me think of going back to Washington to write reports, and there it is but a step to reminiscence of report-writing days of old and those who were of those days. And there I am at R.T. Fisher. Since this process wont start you working in your recollections till next spring, I’m too impatient to wait for you to write first.

We don’t like Portland. G.P. made me come here July 1, at great expense and smashing of personal plans, and we’ve been cussing him ever since. It costs far more to live than Tacoma, is less pleasant, and we know no one. Moreover its tempting Providence. We went to California and had an earthquake, to Tacoma and had a baby, and now, unless the financial panic was the result, something else must be about due.

Forestry for me, as for you, has become an office life. Rejoicing in the title of chief inspector, my function is to wrangle three or four inspectors and half a dozen Act of June 11 examiners, which keeps me at a desk till about 6 every night. The compensation for impending physical ruin is being with my family.

Mrs. Heathen has never been well since the kid was born but improves slowly, I think. The tiny one, however, is a prodigiously vigorous infant. She don’t talk or walk yet, but is very animated and playful. Her most conspicuous characteristics are high spirits and cheerfulness. She rarely cries.

We hear occasionally from Weeley and the Mooghlywallah. The burden of their song is the joy of having a bungalow, tennis court, and Japanese menial. The latter seems to be mainly a private bar tender, but doubtless he cooks too when they recover sufficiently to eat. Probably you know they live at Sausalito. We talked of going down there for Christmas but concluded we couldn’t afford it. We do expect to go to Washington in February or March, to a general war talk of inspectors. Better plan to come down yourself for Fritz. Bunny and Riley will be there and perhaps some of the rest of the chosen.

Had a letter from Swales recently, asking where to buy a Mackinaw, so I conclude he is alive and has at least four dollars. Never heard whether the earthquake cracked his marriage bell, have you?

Have a Boston youth named Ames under me who says the crime of showing him into forestry gets on you - at least that you were his first admirer.

What can you tell us about Mabel? What arrangements has she made? Also tell me something about H. James, 2nd.

Mrs. Heathen sends her bestest love. Yours, Heathen. (C.F. Allen - ‘Ethan’)
Sunday January 6, 1901

I present you the battered but joyful remnant of your son, whose experiences during the past four days have scarcely left him time even for going to bed. When I reached New York Stillman met me with a peremptory invitation to ride West with him as far as Albany. Nothing could have suited me better. We went to the Harvard Club to leave my luggage, and while Chaunce went out to do an errand, I went around the corner to a nice doctor and got vaccinated: price five dollars. We lunched with the boy's father and sister; left the city at two; and had three and three quarter hours together in the train. After a cozy, happy supper in Albany, I took the Empire State Express (ten minutes late) at 7:15, and the same whirled me along the moonlit river 144 miles without pause or hindrance to the Grand Central, where we entered at 9:56, four minutes ahead of time. Tidy slipping, eh? As I had had no chance to prepare anyone for my coming I crossed the street and got a bed at the Grand Union Hotel. Next morning (Thursday) I waked up Curtis and arranged to lunch with him, and then dropped in on Genevieve while Frazier was finishing his night's rest. I waked the boy at 12:30, and after we had eaten, he took me down to the Russ office, where I saw him off on his day's assignments. The rest of the afternoon I spent in seeing Victor a few minutes and calling on Bill Greenough's sister, the debutante who was the only one at home. Next I met Uncle Fisher at the depot, dined and passed an hour or so of the evening in Yonkers with him and Aunt Kate; whom I deserted at half past eight to return to the big berg, having been besought by Gyn and Pete for important discussion on their future. Got a few hours sleep in their flat, and left next day Friday at eleven for Washington. There and here I found a note from R.A.F. appointing me his successor in a theater club with five more meetings and suppers to come, ten men and ten girls. I was to call immediately on a Miss Siebert who managed it and signify my acceptance. I went that very evening and found her delightful - a friendly half German giantess in a medieval castle with barred windows and armor on the walls. You may be sure I said yes. R.A. turns out to have played too hard and needed a rest. From Miss Siebert's I toddled down to the Small and Early, where I danced, rather jaded but happy, till one. By dint of sleeping till 9:30 yesterday, I appeared at the first meeting of the theater club, which was last night, feeling tolerably fresh. The play was Hackett in the Pride of Jericho, and I sat between Miss Siebert and a nice Du Maurier looking Miss Rochester. It was very exciting and the girls were no end refreshing, so much at their ease, you know, and grown up, and very appreciative. In some places they were so moved (being very intimate) they had to reach past me and punch each other. When the show was over we all went back to Mrs. Dr. Jenkins' to eat things and converse, where not the least of the pleasures was to see and hear Miss Siebert's brother, also large, and utterly gay and charming. You should have seen him carrying food to people, and making his engaging pleasantries with everything he offered. And he was very nice to me; drank to our better acquaintance and asked me to drop in and eat with them when ever I could. It seems a pity to rejoice over another's misfortune, but I do certainly relish this bequest of R.A.'s. It was very handsome of him. R.T.F.

P.S. I must add a few admiring words of the Hopkinses whom I saved for the end of a calling campaign this afternoon: mother and two daughters, really human and high spirited, and most touchingly hospitable. Big sister - alas - is just off for three months in California, but the younger is one degree less entertaining, and very likely more - something. So, as I am most cordially bidden to come often and get acquainted I console myself for the departing. You don't know how it warms me to feel the atmosphere of a real home. R.T.F.

Thursday, March 16

You see, Dad, it's going to be a great fillip to my summer this having - as now seems likely - the responsibility of one real chunk of work. I shall have the whole management as I understand it. I am to hit the road early and get the outfit together before they next arrive; buy grub, cook-things and a cook; and when the fellows get around, run the work, keep the journals, and write up the accounts - financial as well as descriptive. That seems a big mouthful for me, and Pinchot would seem to be taking chances, but big as it seems, I have a kind of perverse devil in me that says I can chew it. I think I'm used to under rather than over estimating my powers - even to myself, so that when I consider the comparative simplicity of the work required; and my own considerable experience, I don't worry a great deal. On the contrary I chafe at the delaying months, and hunger for June, sleepers and the roaring journey toward the big hills and the unknown lands. Whatever the work may bring, the summer means another go at travel and the golden things beyond. What say you yourself, Pop? Your R.T.F.

April 2

My precious man,
I got your letter - good! But here is a cumulated groan from your old Abbot T. I never endorsed that house life for you, and when I string together all the seedy periods I hear of your having, I get scared and there's the truth - Let us start with the granting that I am maniacally afraid of a cough and that you or any one might cough all of an active 80 year life - all I want to know is: has any doctor assured you lately enough that your frequent colds means nothing bad about your lungs?
They do at least mean that you might be more vigorous if you were working the outdoor forestry life possible to you. Few men who need this outdoor life have such an opportunity to live it. Now my most precious man that gives me sickly chills, when, as once, very lately, I get a vision of ever being in this world without you, don't put me off with words, unless they tell me that you know from a lung shark that all is well. You and I are precious to each other, to a degree that I suspect very rare. I was startled when I realized how it appalled me to think of lacking you - don't be scared I had no cause but my own wandering thoughts. Gerald said you were grippy - I have one really fine figure of Alma and two more that promise much - The book's weight, you see, is off - By the way; can't you ascertain, at once, for us, orally at your lunch with nabobs, Whether hieroglyphics passed at first, i.e., when moderns first exhumed them, for decoration, as I am told. I understand that at first they were not suspected of being writing. Good bye. Give my love to Faith. Yours Truly A.H.T. 

The Pennsylvania railroad going by at break neck pace. I am sent out here to look at the wood lot of a decayed gentleman named Lewis. I left my little bed at six a.m. got here at nine, and have since pursued my man up and down the countryside in the rain. He was not at his dilapidated old mansion in the brush, or at the hotel, but turned out to be hearing testimony at a trial in the dressing room of the opera house. There were about a hundred steaming natives present, and the first one I enquired of told me Mr. Lewis was sitting between Bill Smith and Bampton. I tiptoed in the most likely direction, and finally boarded the right party under the very nose of the cross-examining lawyer, only to be told by this utterly disreputable but thoroughly urbane humbug that "thousands of dollars, Sir, were concerned in this case, and he could not get off but for an hour at noon." So I am waiting for him here in the Harford House, whither the jury and all the court will return for lunch. I and the Lewis man will probably neglect the meal and paddle out into the woods. I begin to feel at home again. The Lewis man having been very late, I lunched without him, and when we started for the wood lot about 12:30, three of us in a buggy, he was the lunchless one. It was great fun, Lewis was a pathetic kindly figure, full of the manners and old world rhetoric, voluble, yet ignorant as a baby, and his man who lead us about the woods, was keen as a steel trap. Lewis would rattle on to me, wholly disregarding in some obvious comment, the really knowing remarks of his man, and then suddenly begin to talk law suits with him as if he was at least a judge. They both seemed to think me something of a gem, so we got on famously and parted about 1:30 with many warm words. Since when I have roamed the hillsides by my lone, no train leaving from here until 11:02. It's beautiful and green here, the woods full of violets and anemones, and every tree in delicate foliage. A warm rain continues to patter down and the birds sing without pause. All is joy, and the great express thunder by every few minutes, and though I am wet through and fairly hungry, and deep in a misunderstanding with the princess, I haven't been so happy for months. Abase the sophisticate world say I. Give me food and clothes and such times as this, and you may have all the gossip of four continents. I have in my hand four of the bluest violets you ever saw, and in their half open corvvalas, blue veined, furred with silken hairs, I can see designs more graceful, a palace more rare, than ever man dreamed. If Autolycus should heave in sight and ask me, I believe I would join him in a minute and "Jog on joy, on thy foot path way and merrily ...." Strange to remember, as I now do that last night, I was fidgeting at the Hay's dinner with titled quality on every side. What a change! R.T.F. 

* Secretary of Interior under McKinley 

Washington D.C. 

April 25, 1901 

Forgive me, dear People, I have been much occupied. As soon as I can get my bulletin done, probably in about two weeks, I start for California to set a party at work on the sugar pine in the McLoud Valley, south of Shasta. Then I myself, with Fritter if I want him says the Chief, pull out on the trail of a new forest reserve. If it holds in prospect as it certainly seems likely to do, it will mean almost incredible joy and good fortune, for aside from the fun of seeing my old hunting ground and having Fritter along, it means exploring a great wilderness into which I used longingly to gaze from the heights of Shasta full three years ago. At last, I enter the blue distance of the Trinity Mountains; also the rough hills north of the Lava Rocks; also the forests of Lassen Peak; and out of my searching will come the boundaries of a new forest reserve. It is the Promised Land. Joy O Joy! More soon about a glorious Sunday and Monday I spent in the Blue Ridge. House party, princess, everything. R.T.F.
April 28, 1901

What with Berkshire and Havre de Grace together, and this anniversary of my last year's break for the west, I feel almost too migratory for comfort. Yesterday Allen and I reminded each other of our start, and went over every single moment of the trip which seemed as vivid as if it were only a week old, and where we got to our awakening in the Sage Plains on the fitful morning, with the dawn just peeping in over their blue and tufted waste, and Rainier glistening in the west, we slammed our desks and went down to the river, where we sat on a big stone and cursed our official morning at the Land office with relish and anity. And now it is Sunday morning, still bright and howy, and blossoming, and again I have escaped from the pavements and hopeless church-goers. A Christ stump supports my prism, a breeze among the trees sounds cheerfully in my ears, and a warm sun is smoking in my back, what more do you want? A little news says you. Well, I dined at the Hay's on Monday and the Hitchcock's on Sunday: that's no news. The household at 1316 seems as usual. Aunt Mary is very thin and worn looking but seems to be gaining slowly. She takes car rides when the weather is fine and today, for the first time since she was taken sick, she came down to breakfast. Yesterday small maggards filched beer and victuals from our ice box, and continuing pilfering in the neighborhood, were robbed by a police man. One of us peaked on the others, and the officer came round to get me to appear against them in court. I am subpoenaed for Monday. No like job. Ants are crawling under my clothes; also its nearly dinner time, so I will bite it off. My love to the Fenn kinder. R.T.F.

Washington D.C. (no date)

They say at 1316, Aunt Maria in particular, that I am burning up my fair young life in riotous living: the facts being that I have been to dinner and a theater party this week already and am still condemned for two dances, a dinner, and a theater party besides. This is a mine more than I care for as a steady thing, and I am nervoursly to decline a dance or two for next week and slack up. I continue fit, however, though today a little sleepy. Monday night, I dined at the Newlands, (Congress-man from Nevada), where I took in a very entertaining grand daughter of Mark Hopkins, cousin of the Archibald Hopkinses, and also a summer resident of Williamstown. Last night I heard Faust (or might have had I listened) with Miss Patterson (clever spinster), her niece Miss Winslow, Miss Van Ruypen, and two males. There was more in the box than appreciation. Afterwards, we went to Harvey's and had oysters and ale. Tonight, my theater club hears Carmen, and there is a dance at the Seiberts to follow. During my call there on Sunday, I helped Miss S. arrange the seatings. I am to have a wonderful person with auburn hair and a pretty wit, Miss M. Other bright prospects are a dinner at Bill Greenough's cousin's (Eleanor Patterson), play, and the "small and early" thereafter. And next, next there shall be rest, deep and unruffled. R.T.F.

From Washington

Sunday May 12

Still they come, the duties, the pleasures, the anticipations. All week I have been working like a slave at my bulletin and suffering from more orders all the time. Yesterday, I spent the whole day writing speeches for the President to use in California. Spick and span ready for delivery, with jokes and prosperity and proper advice for each town. I had Stockton, Sisson, Ashland (O.) and Portland. Bright speaker, Mac. Then the latest addition to my western assignments is a series of lectures on Forestry at Berkeley G.P., called me in and said he had promised my services in that capacity to President Wheeler, and I never quivered. In one hour I handed him the outlines of two talks: (1) Forestry the Science (2) Forestry the Profession. Today in the intervals of bulletins, I am pegging away on a volume of campaigns for the summer's trip which must be handed in tomorrow. Can you hear the hum of gray matter? Well, the Princess has gone, and I must confess took much of me with her. We had a serious three days in Virginia a week ago. Stayed with the Sieberts, you know, John and Sophie, in a cool old colonial house bang up against a foothill of the Blue Ridge, and looking off over 25 miles of green farms to the Bull Run Mountains. Upperville was the town. There were just the four of us there, and the life was idyllic. We never went to bed before midnight, and I was up each morning at four. There was no ennui, no constraint - all was song and rides and walks and wonderful moonlight. I left Tuesday morning, but the Princess stayed till Thursday, and so had only one day in town before her departure on Saturday for Geneva. I saw her now and then on Fridays between six p.m. and eleven, when we shook each other by the hand and parted. No tears, no asseverations. Yet was I moved, for she is my best playmate however, though today a little sleepy. Monday night, I dined at the Newlands, (Congress-man from Nevada), where I took in a very entertaining grand daughter of Mark Hopkins, cousin of the Archibald Hopkinses, and also a summer resident of Williamstown. Last night I heard Faust (or might have had I listened) with Miss Patterson (clever spinster), her niece Miss Winslow, Miss Van Ruypen, and two males. There was more in the box than appreciation. Afterwards, we went to Harvey's and had oysters and ale. Tonight, my theater club hears Carmen, and there is a dance at the Seiberts to follow. During my call there on Sunday, I
May 15, 1901

Mr. R.T. Fisher,
Division of Forestry

Sir:

You are hereby instructed to proceed with Mr. R.D. Swales and
Mr. F.A. Vaughan to San Francisco, which you will reach on or about June 1st.
You will there engage a party of four Student Assistants and have them and their
equipment ready to go into the field at short notice. Then, having completed such
business as your work may require, and put yourself in touch with influential lum­
bermen of northern California, you will go north with Swales and Vaughan and
choose suitable localities for the study of the Sugar Pine, probably in or about the
McCloud Valley. This done, you will wire to San Francisco for your men and
outfit, get the work in running order, and put Swales in charge. With a man to
accompany you, you will then start for an examination of forests in Trinity
County, about Goose Nest Mountain in Siskiyou County, and about Lassen Peak
in Shasta County; your object being to locate study, and describe the timber in
those regions. Your route on this trip, unless later developments should change it,
should take you in by way of Weaverville, Junction City, and Hay Fork to South
Fork Mountain; thence northward to the Hoopa Valley and across to Callahans
and Gazelle; thence across Shasta Valley to Goose Nest Mountain. From there
you will follow the wagon road east of Shasta southward to Lassen Peak and hav­
ing finished your examination, rejoin your field party.

Respectfully,
Gifford Pinchot, Forester

Sunday, May 19, 1901

These be troublous and busy times, Dear People. Dot, as you know, is ill
with measles, not to mention poor Aunt Marge with her tummy and I am cast
forth to join the foresters in their boarding house, for Mabel has to use my room.
Poor D. seems to be having a very disagreeable case. Midst all this I am supposed
to be finishing my bulletin - with illustrations, tables and charts, a tedious task -
and getting ready for a start next Sunday - a week hence. Swales and I leave

Out West, 1898 - 1901

from California and outshines the most extravagant praises I gave her in my letter
of last December. She has imagination. I have just looked for your letter of
queries but in vain. You will have to be content with answers to such of them as I
can remember. Ours is to be a horseback trip, and will be Fritter and I and a packer.
We shall be gone several months and mail will be a hard problem. I suspect
some will have to get lost. My address I suppose will still be care of W.W.
Everett 4 Cal. St. Frisco. My love to Fenns, particularly the kinder. R.T.F.

Wednesday
May 26th, 1901

At last Dear Peeples, you shall have some news of your son. To begin with
he is in the eighth or even ninth, Heaven of happiness. Seated in the long brown
overland, charging across these green farms of Nebraska toward the land my heart
loves, and toward an entirely new acquaintance with it - this alone would put me
in Paradise. But, think of all the rest besides, the prospect of Fritter for a camp
care of W.W. Everett 4 Cal. St. Frisco. My love to Fenns, particularly the kinder. R.T.F.

mate and the duets we shall warble together, in the still evening on our flageolets -
O a thousand things that I can't begin to remember or tell you. Perhaps, though, if
I can manage to stick to earth a moment or two I may be able to inform you of
a few of the more joyful events. My last week in Washington went very merrily
and withal easily, spite of some night work. I slept at Allens boarding house, and
spent my leisure hours chiefly at the Hopkinses or Miss Notts or Mrs. Thorsons'.
My meals I got where I happened to be; and if it had not been for a constant sense
of concern for the bad times at 1316, I should have been free to revel in my
vagabond existence. As it was I am afraid my sympathies were all too fitful. Dot
of course, was soon on her feet again, but poor Aunt Mary seems to be very much
down, and Aunt Maria is naturally fatigued and anxious. I do hope things will
ease up for them. My farewells - callous traveller that I am, were anything but
tearful, and I wished several times that I could have added a dramatic touch. It is
not seemly to leave people who have housed and looked after you and put up
cheerfully with your vagaries, with your eye dancing with delight. Dr. Merriman
and Mr Gannett touched me much by asking me to write them - me the cub cruiser -
and both said they were going to join my outfit for a week or so. I tell you I am
proud of their esteem, and my other friends were great to me also, Mrs T. gave me
cordial words, and Miss Nott, and Miss Siebert, and the Hopkins household gave
me some very precious memories to carry away with me. I have a good friend
there. R.T.F.
My Dear Man,

Your letter has just brought you vividly into my presence, and what you say of joining me in my haunts has given this wonderland a new value. Let me for the moment restrain all other exclamations you excited and tell you the charms of this paradise I so minutely inhabit. It lies around about the Forks of Erl River in Humboldt County California, and the best of it begins right at the Forks. There is a plain there of shining pebbles, which is the place of all places where you can get the thrill of the explorer. It matters nothing if there is a small meadow to one side, and a house in a bunch of fruit trees at the upper side of it: they hardly tell in the great ensemble. On either hand a shallow, crystal river comes winding toward you out of sombre mountains, threading among sand bars, sliding back and forth between walls of Redwoods 350 feet tall, and dwindling in the far background to little rippling reaches of silver which vanish behind dark points of trees. It is absolute wilderness, no signs or sounds human, and neither fire nor axe has altered it since time began: literal, as I have the evidence to prove, for several thousand years.

You know this is the place where grow the tallest and thickest redwoods known, which is to say the greatest amount of wood per acre in the world, and to my feeling the most overwhelmingly impressive forest on this coast. The land here lies either in steep slopes or ridges that come right down to the river, or in what they call benches or flats, which occur between the hills, and maybe anywhere from a few hundred yards to a mile long and half as deep. And between these two kinds of situations the timber is as different as you can possibly imagine. On the slopes the trees stand sparse with brush and ferns under them—mostly Redwoods and red firs and scattering chestnut Oaks and madrona trees—few broad leaves, you see, to vary the tones. That's where this great western grey squirrel basks about (Bill J. is skinning one here beside me now), and the California woodpecker hides acorns. But on the flats there is absolutely not another living tree than Redwood. (There is an Ousel on a bar here not 40 feet from me, and he is singing as he eats, the most glorious, rollicking song, like a brown thrasher with a sweeter, smaller voice.) But about that forest: the trunks rise out of the earth as wheat, and straight as candles, and their color is from gray to red brown. The ground is smooth as a floor—only needles and the ridiculous small cones, occasional tufts of giant ferns, or a prostate trunk to break its level. But if you think the effect is plain and straight and merely immense you are mistaken. You should see the woods now as I see them, sitting on the west bank of the South Fork, with the sun just rising over the wall of trees opposite, and reaching down long golden beams among the trunks. It will never be full light here even at noon, only a kind of dappled twilight will get through; and the really beautiful time is just these present hours. If I could only show you the colors! Alas, you cannot even trust my identifications:* at least I know the sky is blue overhead, and the leaves are green below, changing as your eye travels down from a dark brown green in the tops, to a rich yellow-green in the lower sprays where the sunlight falls; and the boles are often streaked with a sulphur yellow lichen which makes them look sunlit even on a dull day.

Imagine how insignificantly you move about this colossal solitude. At least you know how it felt to be the ant you saw crawling in the grain field. The commonest diameter is eight feet, as we have found by measuring many wind falls. But four hundred is not an unknown height; we came on one yesterday that was three hundred and eighty feet to the place where the truck had been broken off and carried away, and there the diameter was still two feet. So you see how it must be to walk along this sand-barred, limpid-pooled river, perhaps three hundred feet from shore to shore, and find yourself between these lofty walls with the brown columns and the deep shadows showing through. It's not a bad experience I assure you. And then the details! They are still fresh from the Lord. In the first place, there are the river banks, which are rather steep and sandy, and fringed, as it were around the toes of the redwoods, with large alders, willows, occasional cotton woods, that queer big strong smelling laurel they call pepperwood, and a very big leaved maple like our sugar maple which usually leans far out over the water. Now just put in the critters: an Ousel bobbing on the bar; the Sheldrakes passing over head; a Killdeer always crying somewhere around the point; along under the alders, the worn highways of coons and the crawfish they didn't succeed in digesting; or a stretch of mud deer tracks of all dates and sizes, not to mention the occasional footprint of the bears.

It's all surpassingly wild and picturesque, and I cannot bear to think how soon its syndicate owners will have it ravaged. Not for five years at least, if they began to work in right off, and not, I hope, before we can see it together. I am photographing the region madly, and when I get back, I should be able to give you some notion of things.

And now, dear man, though you know it already, let me tell you that your letter was the cause of all this happy communicativeness through which you are to wade. I am not very hopeful of its giving life to the scenes I have tried to describe, but it will surely show you what wine your letter was to the exile, and how eternally I cherish the hope of our sometime travels. Meantime, great hugs of love to you, and some happy forgatherings next winter. R. T. F.

* R.T.F. was colorblind.
Here are my instructions, Dear People, written it amuses me to think, entirely by myself. The chief said: make your plans and write me your instructions to sign; and today the messengers bring me my own handiwork in a long envelope. This will give you my plans and save me time which I now prize highly. I shall be off before June 1. R.T.F. I am returning all the Thayers' letters—I can discover some you have never seen.

May 31, 1901

We have just left Ogden and have stopped for water. Outside is a shack on which a sign reads “Blue Creek”; to San Francisco 791 miles. To Ogden 41 miles. Already we are in the sage brush desert country - blue expanses flanked everywhere with bare, peaked hills. The temperature is perfect. I have sat all day in one wicker chair with my legs hanging over another. A colored gentleman brings me cool drinks and things to read, and writing paper marked “Overland Limited”. I am not bored at all. The third night finds us in the sandhills of western Nebraska. All day we have been in green plains along the Platte. My fellow travellers are the most prosaic yet; not a spark of talk in any of them. I mostly read & write & figure on my plans. I am mailing you a letter to Mary Thayer which I wish you would forward. R.T.F.

Occidental Hotel
San Francisco, California

Early June, 1901

Home at last - unnatural though it be to say so. When I saw the boy from the Oakland pines and the sun setting through the Golden Gate, and better still when I found myself remembered and welcomed by every clerk and porter at the Occidental, I really seemed to come to life in a dear and familiar spot. And it has been a wonderful evening here, cool and clear, and highly moonlit. I dined at the same old restaurant with a delightful stove manufacturer and his son whom I picked up on the train, and heard the same old stringband play real music. By coffee time I was in a Heaven known only to myself. — I will now retire, but I bethink me. Mother, listen and give heed. I want you to pack and mail or otherwise send prepaid (on me) my Stevenson letters to Miss Charlotte Hopkins, Williamstown, Massachusetts. It is only a loan, so don't weep, but do it and oblige. R.T.F.

Out West, 1898 - 1901

June 2, 1901

The Sabbath finds your son in good health and spirits, albeit lonely, the Sidewinder (alias Swales) having gone across the bay to his family, and the other playmates not being handy. In the expectation of receiving applicants for jobs I stayed about this morning and fussed with accounts, but at noon I sickened of a fruitless task and got under way for the Cliff House where I lunched alone in sight and sound of the sea. After settling my roost, I went down onto the big beach among the waders and prosaic forms of basking bourgeois and their “steadies”. It was the regular Frisco daytime breeze, clean air, resounding surf, and I was moved to walk five miles in through the park, and hear the band play on my way, and see many ball games on the great, green play ground. But, as I said, I be a bit lonely, and shall welcome tomorrow when I really sail in and work. Shall have to go to Berkeley and Stanford, besides seeing the end of lumber and sorting out all kinds of outfit. I doubt if I get away from here till the tenth. Fritter arrives on the seventeenth.

R.T.F.

June 6, 1901

Dear People,
Here among other things, are a stray bunch of prints from negatives I made last fall, part on my trip East in the Arizona desert, and part, a small part, in Berkshire. If you get the chance, I wish you would send Louis one of his own presents.
We are almost ready now to take to the brush. Fritter arrives tonight, and he and Swales and I start for Sisson on Saturday. I have been tearing round all week on a vain quest for students who are scarce. My lectures are postponed till the fall, which I rather regret for I was well primed. I had a pleasant evening yesterday at Novato. Found things very cheerful and the valley wonderfully green and beautiful. The twilight over the vineyards and hayfields with the yellow sky glowing above the ridges was very fine. I hope soon to begin sending you real letters. For the present I try to make up in frequency what I lack in substance. R.T.F.
June 9, 1901

Dear People,  
Another Sabbath finds me in Frisco, and again at Golden Gate Park in which I have just climbed Strawberry Hill and from the stone rampart thereon, looked abroad over the singing Pacific and the tossing tree tops close at hand all streaking Eastward under the trade wind; but this is positively my last appearance, for tomorrow we do and shall go North. Once again I am alone, Fritter having deserted me to play with his cousin, and Swales being as before in Oakland. As before I am blooming and content with my solitude, for I am these days marvellous good company for myself. Yesterday I had a fine letter from you, and I will tell you while I think of it that my lectures are postponed till fall, and there is no money in them. How populous and companionable you all sound! And here I am living by myself in a big city. Give my love to the faithful. I wrote to Aunt Maria today.  
It’s cold as fury on this hillside. I’m going in to the festive cafe wherein I dine to music. R.T.F.

Ash Creek,  
Squaw Valley  
Siskiyou County,  
California

June 16, 1901

At last, O uncomplaining Parents, your son’s better nature has laid violent hands on his neglectful person, and dragged him groaning from his depths of indolence and pre-occupation. Behold the creature - overalled, flannel shirted, hirsute - and rejoice that you are actually to hear his story. Appreciate too, that this means something of a task for the aforesaid self, since the brain dullness resulting from big meals, long sleeps, and the strenuous life, has already seized me. We left the city, Fritter, Swales and I, as scheduled last Monday night, and reached Sisson Tuesday noon. There I was overjoyed to be remembered and welcomed by Mrs Sisson and every person in her menage. That night was spent in her tavern, and had thereby a rare chance to see Shasta which is this year very snowy and which was there wonderfully close and clear. Next day we took the logging road around here to McCloud, and thence northward to a camp in lower Ash Creek which brings us to the exact opposite side of the mountain from Sisson. You may remember Ash Creek from my biological trip; it flows here, within a few feet of the tent. Through the tops of the firs and pines we look up to the glimmering cone of Shasta from my very door; and behind us, curse the monster, we hear the humming of a great mill which devours logs night and day. Like all logging neighborhoods the place is surrounded with the desolation wrought in the business, but a wilderness is close at hand and the weather perfect, and the grub is good, so we bear up. Last night was almost the first of the season without frost and they say here that the last of the snow only left week before last. Dogwood is still in blossom and the catkins have not left the pussy willows. From the opens I can look up on Shasta and see all our old haunts and camping ground buried in snow. Summer is just beginning here, but if I went five or six miles up I would run it’s season back into the depths of winter. Funny, ain’t it? Alas, the empty think-tank! Frankly, I can see nothing more in it. I might say all is buried and covered the whole. This is a long ways from the settlements, and letters taste mighty good; yet I am unusually poor in coin to buy them. We have been out a week now, and you have here, the first letter I have managed to produce. I think I shall devise a blank form for correspondence on which you indicate your affairs and condition, like a voter, by crossing out statements not applicable. Even that, though, would require mental effort. I think I will train a fly to track ink over a sheet of paper and then I’ll sign his foot prints. You would profit no less please excuse me. I go to bathe my - er - linen. R.T.F.

June 23, 1901

Dear Little Mother,  
I am sure every letter of yours has reached me, and no less sure the rash has been very wellcome, spite of my scant and seldom answers. No. 2 arrived yesterday, and just four days previous, that which I take to be no.1. I can only place it for you by saying that it contained an edifying, but I am glad to add, unnecessary tract on the evils of smoking. I do not use the weed - have not since I left the city; nor do I feel the least appetite for it. I agree with your tractman in believing a person to be weaker for being a slave to anything, habit or what not. Consequently, I do not approve of vows and pledges in matters like this, but I think it highly unlikely that I shall ever smoke again. To come down to us and our affairs: we are in fine feather here, revelling in the most miraculous of climates and weather, crisp October evenings with a high breeze in the pines and Shasta glistening through their tops, and long, still, crystal days of dry sunshine that is a like a constant caress. Through this we move in an atmosphere of piney odors, and the rare pungent smells of the blossoming chaparral, and I must add, the ever present reek of coal oil. It’s pitchy work, you see, crawling over the stumps and butts of these great sugar and yellow pine logs, and we wash in coal oil before meals, and swab our instruments in it at night; and Swales has even sprinkled his tent with it, being averse to having the ants march over him while he sleeps. And we have other joys besides the weather and the coal oil. We flute at night, Fritter and I, - sit cheek by jowl against a log in full view of Shasta and her magic colors, he with a real flute,
and I with a very tolerable flageolet, and between us we torture forth some highly pleasing duets. Then again, when the fire is lit before the tents, we have close harmony - we play the Side-Winder (alias Swales) - and tell the night air how we found a horseshoe. Another happy time of day is the meal hour (we have three of these!). Fritter and I sit at table with the best and jolliest crowd of loggers I have ever seen. Unlike the usual run of their kind they talk as they eat, and put away the food with something like a moderate speed. Next me is the saw filer, opposite, a teamster, a faller, a swamper and a buck sawyer and Fritter sits on my right. At times there is really wit among us, and always cheerful "Joshing". The saw filer is small and pure, unmodified Scotch, dialect and all. The teamster is tall and has an exeeding humorous eye, and one only, which he calls his "optic", and invariably as he rises form the table (which he always does ahead of the rest of us) he winks at me, and says to the filer: "I'll wait for you outside, Scotchy". The swamper and the buck sawer are old, bald and bearded, the one ponderous as an ox, and dull as a file, but kind, the other lively as a boy. They are known respectively as "Uncle" and "Dad" - and we of them as "Boys" or the "Kids"; and we are forever rallying each other on the pecocity and boyishness of our respective behaviors. The "faller" is only 19, tall and strong, and the best axeman in camp, and his name is Bedford Jones. He has also beautiful - beautiful manners, and his jokes are bright. He and I are nearly always the last to leave the table, in defense of which practice we have become allies against the banter of our neighbors. The waiter girl, though, (who is also known as the biscuit shooter) silently humiliates us by heaping food about us as we sit. Well, so it goes. Dusk is upon me and my dirty, pitchy fingers are cold. Fritter scribbles in the tent, and the Side-Winder is replenishing the underpinning of his bed from a neighboring fir tree. The wind hums in the tree tops. Ash Creek makes watery noises beyond the back brush thicket. I haven't said half I want to, but I must stop and write a few official letters. I hope to get away for Trinity County and some glorious exploring by the middle of next week. Be good to me in correspondence and I will do my prettiest to requite you. I relished your enclosures. Give my love to my sisters and nephews and nieces. I wish some of 'em would write. Dad, let me see the proofs. R.T.F.

June 27, 1901

Supper over, and me seated under the firs at an old table we stole from the mill camp. The preoccupations and activities of my affairs are something unprecedented. Letter writing is getting to be almost a lost art. I am tearing around in a kind of simultaneous frenzy over two pieces of work. The sugar pine investigation which I leave here in charge of Swales, and my own reconnaissance of the Trinity Mtns. Hitherto my daily bustling has been over the first, but all the while I have been mulling over the other in my head, and when I could, preparing for it in its flesh. To begin with Swales and I rambled about this country from the valleys to the foothills; then we saw foremen, and interviewed managers, and sized up logging operations till there was no counting our moves. Meanwhile I was corresponding with student assistants and with Washington; and whenever I could desert Swales, working with Fritter at some board measure tables that we shall need in cruising. Then it came time to corral a cook for Swales and we cast around for forty miles, and only ran one down last night. The Sidewinder got him in Sisson. For my own man I am rejoiced to have secured Casey who was with us on Shasta three years ago.

He is coming down from Oregon as fast as horseflesh can bring him. Other students arrive on July 1, and by the fifth or sixth, things will be in full swing (D.V.) and Fritter, Casey and I ambling down the Sacramento Valley toward Redding. But these are the mere outlines. To realize the details, the locomotive rides, the early risings with the dawn, the long tramps in the fragrant pines, the periodical glimpses of a stretch of valley or a range of mountains, or of Shasta towering in the west, all in the dry, crystal air of this climate; and on the other hand, the interminable fruitless waits for busy men in miserable little offices, and telephonings, and blarneying and toadyings, you must follow us about for a week or so. We cannot begin to tell you the dizzying tale in words. Two facts we are sure of that we are hungry at meal times, and tired at bed times; and I am not magnanimous enough to let you think that sitting up here at a board table and putting thoughts into words is like rolling off a log. The impulse is there, never fear for that, I want to be talking all the time, but the hand and the brain and the person cry out for inaction and soothing melodies of the flageolet. However, any fool can see (as Faith used to say) that I am scribbling with some relish at this moment, and I will let this gallant statement of difficulties do for some other occasion. To illustrate my remarks, past and present, I shall send you a few prints of pictures I have made here and had developed in Frisco. Fritter is to be seen in some. You may stack them with what others you have and we will sort them all out when next I come home. Your letters continue to solace me by their regularity in arriving - no 3 came yesterday - O, I just caught sight of our wonderful hill here - a rounded butte about 6000 feet high and four miles off which catches the sun every night long after we are in dusk. There is a snow bank on top of it. The upper part where the light strikes is the richest rose you can imagine, and with every sunset a deep violet blue shadow crawls up it till the pink is reduced to one small finally vanishing tip on the snow patch. Great! R.T.F.
Sisson Tavern
Mrs. L.M. Sisson, Proprietor
Sisson, Cala., July 5, 1901

Well, we left Ash Creek, Fritter and I, on the third of the month, and proceeded, with many interruptions and long waits in the sun, to McCloud on a carload of timber, leaving the Side-winder in charge of three wild students and a cook. The same day saw us in Sisson and established in familiar quarters. That same evening I gave it out in likely places that I was buying horses and would be pleased to interview parties wishing to sell. After a quiet Fourth, spent largely in working on our volume tables, the busy times began. All day I have been looking at horses and trying, trying to read the characters of their owners. Unnumbered words and much beer have accompanied the process. It is now close to six o'clock and I am the owner of a sorrel mare, a bay mare, a saddle, a bridle and a bunch of gunny sacks, for which equine job I parted with 75 dollars 75. Fritter can show for his day's labor the better part of an excellent pack chest which he has been constructing in the blacksmith shop. As you perceive we are in the midst of outfitting. I expect Casey down from Oregon any day now, and as soon as we combine, we all three strike west into the Trinity where I don't know any more than you. It's not a populous country, and I'm sure I can't tell you how often or where I shall receive mail. My plan is to have it continue to be sent here by Everett, and thus, as often as I know of a post office I am about to reach, to telegraph the postmaster its name and the date of my arrival. Those are all my plans. It seems incredible that people are dying so in New York. It was 98 degrees here all day today and I never turned a hair. The gong. Je vais pour nourir ma figure as Fritter says. R.T.F.

York Harbour, Maine
July 11, 1901

My dear Mr. Fisher,

Do you still remember my telling you of a vague plan for interesting Women's Clubs in Forestry and the changes which your Department wants Congress (or the President?) to make? Well: - I met in Boston a friend who now lives in Colorado. She has not been near a Woman's Club for a year, but she promised to see what could be done. I enclose two letters from her, - I answered the first, but it evidently not reached her. I told her in Boston that I thought an illustrated lecture giving an account of what has been done by the Forestry Department, of what ought to be done, and of the obstacles in its way; (both those created by politicians and by private people;) - would be interesting. What I had in mind was that if a graphic lecture could be written by an expert - and sent form one Woman's Club to another to be read by some women who read well, it might go the rounds of the clubs, and induce the members to help in your work by making a favorable public sentiment, and in yet more direct ways; if the Department wishes. When one remembers how an association of women got that anti-canteen law through Congress in spite of every Army officer and of nearly every intelligent civilian, one realizes how much influence over legislation a well-organized body of over 200,000 women might exert. Mrs. Van Kleeck is influential in Colorado, and puts things graphically and well. She would be a capital person to introduce the subject at the annual meeting of the Colorado Women's Clubs. Can you, and will you furnish Mrs. Van Kleeck with the material for which she asks? The meeting is to be in September. If she succeeds in interesting these Clubs, can you write, or get someone else, with a graphic style, to write a lecture which could go the rounds of the Clubs, and can the Department furnish the slides for stereopticans? - My friend Nip Foster tells me that she can almost surely get such an illustrated lecture read before various Women's Clubs in Massachusetts. New Jersey, Connecticut and Minnesota, if it is what the women in these Clubs would call "talking" - i.e. not too theoretical, and with plenty of nice little anecdotes. Miss Foster thinks that if such a lecture were successful it would result in the Clubs taking up the serious study of forestry winter after next. The lecture, including the illustrations, ought not to take over an hour in delivery, and she says it is very important to have it simple and direct in style. Miss Foster is Secretary of the Civil Service Reform Committee of the Massachusetts Federated Women's Clubs, and tells me that her own private little flock consists of twenty thousand. She has also been very successful in interesting Clubs all over the country in our Civil Service. I hope you will pardon my taking your sympathy and help for granted as I have done. But seldom as I have met you, I do take it for granted, and so send this without an apology. Hoping that you are having a pleasant summer. I am. This very Sincerely, Camelia Aldis.
Out West, 1898 - 1901

July 17, 1901

Dear Bill,

Your letter from the Occidental gladdened our arrival at the curious little mining burg of Weaverville which is the county seat of Trinity. You do not need to be told how welcome it was, certainly not when I tell you that we had packed and ridden 6 days 6 and 110 miles 110 without mail and in the roughest country of my experience. It was fun and we saw some fine sights, but I rather think, as you seem to, that some of these days and nights of ours at Trinity or on the Eel river, will continue to hold a candle to all comers in the way of student life. This last was rather too much like work- still is. We rarely ride less than 7 hours a day- often 10- and that in a bright sun is tolerable stupefying. Then, besides, there are 2 1/2 - 3 hours more of packing, cooking and note-taking each night and morning. Sometimes we are up and toiling from 5-9. But you can imagine the delights for such they certainly are and I am enjoying every minute. The best I think is yet to come, for the big, wild mountain that I am chiefly to cruise, we do not reach for a couple of days yet. Once there it will be more stationary life and I look forward to some evenings in the “Comfortable Cross.”

It occurs to me here that there was much to say apropos of your letter; chiefly that I will stretch the whole fabric of government to meet you in Frisco in September. Only inform me a good way ahead of the date of your arrival and I will boil across the mountains to Scotia, to Eureka, to the wharf, yea- even to the bowels of the S. S. Pomona; for of such is my longing for James, and the next station will be the Louvre. (Your student boy was Goodhue. I saw him and had a pleasant talk with him. As to “but I tank” I will merely remark; “bacon and baking powder biscuit all day in the face.” Further, this is only a beginning. There shall be more news from the “Outfit” (a magazine of hardship and adventure) in the dimdam hereafter. I’m off for Hay Fork to see a surveyor and mail this, leaving my gallant nursing its bowsnails.) R. T. F.

Hay Fork Mountain

July 21, 1901

The Outfit has covered since leaving Sisson some 160 miles of the roughest country hitherto seen by me, and has now arrived at the store-saloon, blacksmith shop, hotel hamlet — the Hay Fork, where it is greatly resting over the Sabbath, and whence, in the early morning, it will take the trail (roadshaving at this point ceased) for the last long day in several weeks - 25 miles of scrambling over to the South Fork of the Trinity river and South Fork Mountain. I tell you it is good to stop and recuperate a bit, and compass a little real food, for our days have been toilsome. We pulled out of Sisson a week ago last Wednesday, three men and five horses, and received a send off from a large crowd of summer boarders, among whom were a nice Unitarian parson named F. Hosmer and some equally nice Joralemons (?) of Belmont. That day we spent on the road to Gazelle and Shasta Valley, chiefly in constant struggles with the packs, which are the devil till you get them boiled down and properly sorted; so we only made about 15 miles and camped in a meadow on the edge of the beautiful ranch country. Next day we only made 8 miles, for I had to get a new packsaddle and eliminate the superfluities still further, and night overtook us about 5 miles out of Gazelle on the road to Callahan’s. A day more took us over a great scalding mountain of chaparral and dirtslides and down into a valley within 5 miles of Callahan’s, which we reached about noon of the 13th. There I bought a few supplies and telegraphed for mail to meet us at Weaverville, for which we struck out that same afternoon. By quitting time we had climbed, and descended into the headwaters of the Trinity, that precipitous, deep gorged ridge known as Scott Mountain. By then we had come into quite well timbered country, very steep and high, but infinitely more...
Out West, 1898 - 1901

Life in Letters of Richard T. Fisher

had been led to expect beyond the mountain top and was any use at all we would camp there a day and take the Sunday which was our due. There was a beautiful camp site just over the summit, - a small bench covered with tall firs and close by a cold spring coming out of a rock; there was also fair feed in the open forest just below, so we unpacked, put Fritter to bed, hobbled out the horses, and got supper. Next day Fritter was convalescent and we spent some much needed hours in washing (clothes and persons) sewing, note taking and further necessary routine. That night I was awakened by another suffering mortal - Casey - whom I suddenly discovered in a violent and successful imitation of Fritter. There were some unpleasant features of this additional collapse, not those immediately visible either, but I must say I was mainly amused. The situation was really funny; and then Casey’s answer to my prompt question about his ailment: “I eat something to where I had left Pat, not a sign or a sound. Another quarter of a mile and I opened out a little bench where there was no brush and the trees were scattering. Most comical, yet fearful sights. Here was Pat tearing about the country like a wild creature, bucking and squealing, crashing through bushes and over logs, and with every jump sending off a new portion of our cook outfit. Behind him, doubting and turning with perfect ease and understanding and with no more excitement than if he had been walking to water, charged the Badger Casey, king the dirt fly on the turns and banging among the rocks was thrilling. The scars on Mother Earth and Casey’s testimony showed that the game had been in progress some time when I arrived, for Pat could just manage to keep the pack between Casey and the coil of rope he was trying to avoid, but long before I had time to be of any assistance, the Badger had run the little monkey right up the steep hillside (about like the face of cobble) and covered him so that Casey got the rope’s end and jerked him up as though he had been shot. Then we set to work collecting our belongings which were scattered over a space of three acres, some in a dense willow thicket through which the flight had often passed, some in the rocks, some in the road. Most of them Casey had marked down as they ably lighted, but the sack of stew pan and the coffee pot never came to light and we had to leave them in the wilderness. Since when Patsy the sorrel has travelled tightly roped to the horn of one saddle, which is cinched fast upon my buckskin pony, who is tough as leather, and there have been no more casualties among the culinary apparatus. We well got to Trinity Center that night; almost to Weaver the next, and by ten of the 17th, rode into that curious camp seat itself, with its one locust covered street, and its enormous China Town. I wrote you somewhat from there, I think, so my next point should be Hay Fork Mountain, which is about 25 miles out to Weaver. We left early on the 18th, and kept pretty steadily on till noon, when we lunched on devilled ham and baking powder bread. Then came a short mountain with an incredibly steep back side to descend, and then another up time with long windings in or out of gulches, this was the East slope of Hay Fork Mountain. It was somewhere there that I turned about in time to catch Fritter in the act of unswallowing, and I there upon decreed just like, that the next day should be Sunday. If the feed we
last that came with yours. Only don't pass it beyond Faith and either destroy it or put it away. She is not quite up to date in information about princesses. There is something very like an interregnum at present. I guess I will send Mrs. Alder's appeal also. She is a very nice, enthusiastic maiden lady whose letter will explain itself. But if you want to know what bliss was ours last night, just imagine our hopeful entry into this village, and our gnawing tummies; for no sooner was we camped under this pine by the river, than I sallied to the store and bought. EGGS! - BUTTER! - and at the hotel a loaf of - BREAD! These we did ere long transform into poached eggs on toast with butter, and having also Indian Mush and cocoa, we did eat with feelings I fear me you will never know. Nor do I wish you to know them, since, though, enjoyable beyond the common, they cost a high price. So tomorrow we start fresh, straight for the land of fish and venison, taking with us another cook, more food, and the vigor of a good day's rest. Sour Fork Mountain will be our range (it is 50 miles long) for at least three weeks, and then we shall fare royally. R.T.F.

Bear Wallow Meadow
Section 23
Trinity Co., Cal.

July 28, 1901

I had just finished the elaborate date and squared myself for a Sunday talk, when my guide man rode into camp with your Number 11, besides several official envelopes and a pack of supplies. I sent him out to Hay Fork yesterday morning for mail, etcetry. Quite a trip, you see, and no very populous place when you get there. In fact this is quite the remotest and most rugged wilderness I have yet visited. In a tract 50 miles long by 25 wide there are just 4 settlers 4, and 3 well marked trails. If you get out your Century map and follow out all the tributaries of the South Fork of the Trinity River from Hyampoint at the mouth of Hay Fork Creek, to the southern line of the county, you will include it all. We struck into it last Monday - climbed one big mountain, slid down into a great gulch and arrived at the ranch of Henry F—— - a log cabin literally covered with deer horns and surrounded by a little meadow. I stopped there over Tuesday to look about from some of the high points above, and then on Wednesday pushed on west across 2 diagonal canyons to the River, where we camped for the night in a glade of big oaks at the foot of South Fork Mountain. The river is beautifully clear, with deep pools and ripples, fringes of alders and cottonwoods, and great forested mountains hanging right over it for as far as you can see. Some of the holes were full of big salmon plainly visible against the pebbles, and the sand bars were covered with the tracks of deer and varmints. I saw fresh bear and panther signs in several places. It was an idyllic region to sit still in, but to travel over simply hellish. We spent all the next day in reaching the top of the mountain -- perhaps 3 miles of tooth and nail scrambling up a steep slope through hazel and dogwood thickets, and windfalls and down timber till the horses were nearly done up. If it had not been for the animals I should have felt repaid for the whole strenuous day by the view I got that evening from the summit, to which I climbed from our camp just after supper. Heavy fir forest ceases just as you reach the steep rocky ridge with its thickets of low oaks. I saw Mt. Shasta (150 miles off) and the Yolabolas to the south, and the vast range, beside the whole nearly tumble of dark mountains; and before long the sun dipped through a kind of slits in the purple haze that was the Pacific Ocean. The next day we followed the summit south some 8 or 10 miles and descended to the river again, where at noon we bathed luxuriously in a big salmon hole. The long hot afternoon we used up in zigzagging endlessly back and forth on the hot, rocky face of the east slopes, until toward five we reached the top and came over eastward into the oasis of a meadow with a spring in it and totally surrounded by the forest -- the only feed for miles. So it goes and so it will go for some weeks yet, until we get this region thoroughly examined and start north again for Shasta Valley. I have no idea when I shall have a chance to mail this for humans come not, neither do they go in these parts, and I cannot afford to send in those 25 miles very often. Anyway I writes me the letter, at all events, and the Sabbath is thereby observed. R.T.F.

Mrs. E. T. Fisher
Bershire, Massachusetts
Little Shasta

August 21, 1901

Congratulate us, Family. Yesterday afternoon at four o'clock we finished our long two weeks journey over the mountains, and arrived at this self same home-like ranch among the lava buttes and the self same pleasant camp among the cottonwoods that so took my fancy three years ago next month. A huge batch of mail was passed out to me last night by a highly relieved old postmaster in side whiskers (R.T.F.'s letters having embarrassed and puzzled him for a fortnight) and I sat down among my minions, and devoured farm produce with a thankful heart. It was indeed a hard and adventurous trip, and so very full of incident, that I can hardly do more now than indicate one incident (which may interest you) and give you the outlines of our story. After I sent you that last scrap from Hay Fork, we struck out from the head of Butler Creek for Hyampon at the mouth of Hay
last, took us up Scott Valley, through the little town to Fort Jones, and to camp with a pleasant family just under the Yreka Mountains. Then on Monday, we got an early start, and made that county seat itself in good season to camp at a ranch close by and cook our dinner before 12 p.m. After that came our triumphal entry into comparative civilization. We picked out our most presentable horses, disencumbered ourselves and saddles of all needless outfit, and pranced up the long straight road which leads into Yreka from the South. I tell you we made a stir, even in that backwoods town, and spite of our efforts to go without our rigging. Our exile had been altogether too long for concealment; and we made our first dash at a barber's shop. Being restored as to the face to our usual appearances, we had beer in a low place called a saloon. A drink distinctly palatable. We then had soda water. We then had fruit. We then went to a grocery store and did lay in what you call the staple articles of diet. We then broke

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Out West, 1898 - 1901

Sisson Tavern
Mrs. L.M. Sisson, Proprietor

Sisson, Cala., September 2, 1901

Just a line, dear Parents, to tell you we are done with camping out, and for a moment, back among the so called comforts. It has been a glorious fortnight, this last - frosty nights, dizzy climbs, superb gallops, great food - but we dropped the outfit just in time, for the bleak winds and snow squalls were upon us and living in the hills threatened to become difficult. There is heaps to tell, so much that I curse the business which still claims my daylight. I will try to snatch some traveling minutes; but now I can only say we are face to face with the last lap - my trip to Lassen Peak which I shall probably make (with Fritter) by stage, and then, from the nearest settlement, by flying excursions on hired horses, my own - alas - being now another's - gone with the Casey boy far into Eastern Oregon. People, I must and will own a horse.

R.T.F.

Susnsville, Lassen Co.
September 15, 1901

As Fritter says, dear people, this country beats Hell. And he speaks like one who knows. Since leaving Red Bluff one week ago today, we have crossed the whole Sierra Nevada Range; from the Sacramento River to the edge of the Sage Brush Valleys, and it is but a short day's journey from here to Reno Nevada, which is on the Overland railway a whole night's ride East of Frisco. In this one week we have seen, Fritter and I, and our faithful steeds, - parbleu: what have we not seen! But you shall hear. First we searched three livery stables for horses that would drive and ride both, and we got 'em, - dandie beasties, a bay and a buck skin, and big and tough, and alert as squirrels, with a buggy and two saddles and a pack saddle besides. Then we cached everything but our beds and notebooks, and struck out for the hills. One day of 38 miles took us over the great lava bed ...and well up into the timber about the Champion Mills, where we stopped over Tuesday to see the logging wood. There we slept under the buggy, grubbed in the cook house, and rescued a child from a large water tank. Wednesday we went on over onto Battle Creek, and down into the narrow canyon of Mill Creek to Morgan's Springs, which is the beginning of the wonderland. Itself is but one white farm house in a meadow with high peaks on either side, but above a mile or so is another meadow, where gather the sick and the palsied from every quarter of the surrounding counties, the earth belches innumerable brews of vile stinking waters, - sulfur, saline, iron, - springs by dozens. We saw hot springs all along the big clear creek, steaming and sputtering away like mad, and steam jets that sounded like a Union depot at midnight; and nearby in the cool groves we saw the remnants of the summer health seekers who come and torture their persons in these fierce waters. That in itself was enough to make us tread fearfully on the ground, but the next day, we saddled our cayses and toiled far out to the sources of things, high among the parti-colored crags and pumice slides below Sasser Summit, we thought we had found the very mouth of Hell. There was a basin of blue mud about ten feet across which was spouting and tumbling as high as your head, and all the while stinking and grumbling and smoking terribly; and a few feet away there was a jet of dry steam pouring out of the hill that the horses wouldn't approach for steel or leather. And then we climbed a dizzy, back bone of a ridge, and saw and heard in the chasm beyond - a ghastly hole with the mere skeletons of mountains towering over it - the parent demon himself, a column of vapor that fairly whistled, and which, though it was half a mile away, filled all the canyon with its roar. It really made me shiver, screeching away in that silent bleak wilderness of cliffs and crags and stunted hemlocks. But if we saw the Hellish we saw also the Heavenly; and that was the next day, Thursday, when we moved on eastward, and followed up another big creek which also heads under Sassen, and discovered the wonderful meadows about Drake's Springs, and the cordial people who have bought the old man's property, his boiling lake and his soda water, and who wants to attract the travelling tourist. They made us welcome at once, and treated us like princes, and showed us all their sights. They have hot and cold water right out of the ground close to the house. Rather a luxury. And the lake was really a wonder. You approach it up a hill through heavy evergreens, and following a dry creek bed full of unaccountably white washed rocks. There all of a sudden, the channel turns, makes through a little cut, and behold, Hell fires - a steaming, rumbling pond of potato soup, with red and yellow skins, and big and tough, and alert as squirrels, with a buggy and two saddles and a pack saddle besides. Then we cached everything but our beds and notebooks, and struck out for the hills. One day of 38 miles took us over the great lava bed ...and well up into the timber about the Champion Mills, where we stopped over Tuesday to see the logging wood. There we slept under the buggy, grubbed in the cook house, and rescued a child from a large water tank. Wednesday we went on over onto Battle Creek, and down into the narrow canyon of Mill Creek to Morgan's Springs, which is the beginning of the wonderland. Itself is but one white farm house in a meadow with high peaks on either side, but above a mile or so is another meadow, where gather the sick and the palsied from every quarter of the surrounding counties, the earth belches innumerable brews of vile stinking waters, - sulfur, saline, iron, - springs by dozens. We saw hot springs all along the
remaining 2,000 feet, and at 1 Pm Sept. 13, 1901, we were squatting on a pinnacle
(so to call it) 10,047 feet above the sea, and beholding more miles of country than I
have ever seen together in my life. I could see the Ashland Mountains in Oregon
- 150 miles -, Shasta - 90 miles - like the next hill, the Sacramento Valley, all the
peaked jumble of outrageous hills we have been surmounting in Trinity County,
and way out to the sage brush lands on the Nevada line. It was unimaginable
luck, and we wrote and mapped there for two hours. For days before and ever
since the smoke has been too thick for even the nearest views. One little shower
on the night of the 12th gave us all our advantage. We were enchanted with the
whole region up at Drake's, with its innumerable springs and waterfalls, and mead­
ows. I shall go there again, D. V. Well, yesterday and the first half of today
brought us here to this most surprising of towns. Smack out of the forest you
round a point, and here, right at your feet, is a broad green and gold valley, all
covered with ranches and stretching away among the gray sage hills far out
toward Nevada. A few turns more, and there is the village itself, its back against
the cliff, and its long narrow street opening out toward the plains. Literally in five
minutes, we drove from a pine solitude into a civilization the like of which we had
not seen since - O, even Frisco. Here we are in a brick hotel, with electric lights
and brass bed steads, and we have bathed in a porcelain bath tub giving hot and
cold water (which act the hotel people can not reconcile with our tending our own
horses in the livery stable across the street), and yet two hours ago, our poverty
and griminess passed all telling. Twill be a brief revel, though, and I am glad of it
too, for I like more and more these wayside nights in corrals or hay mows, with
the horses to feed and groom, and the wonderful dawns and twilights. Tomorrow
we start northeast for Eagle Lake, and a long swing backwards for Red Bluff.
R. T. F.

Occidental Hotel
San Francisco, Cal.

Alfred three days in the city, and all our delightful days of wandering
among the high places seem years ago; so long ago, in fact, that I cannot even
remember whether or not I wrote you from Red Bluff of our successful escape
from an early installment of winter. You know we came a wicked long ways
around from Susanville, (as I dimly recollect telling you somewhere), way out
around Eagle Lake and through Grasshopper Valley, and over miles off desert
hills and cave beds to Dixie, and north to Pit River, and south again across Hat
Creek to last camp, where the heavens snowed us up three days! Actually, for 2
nights it was February. The wind roared and creaked in the big pines, and the
snow and hail rattled on our barn bed room like winter itself. Then one nasty wet
day's ride in snowy woods, mist blowing and slush plumping down from the trees
-March in ever y item and we were back in the valley, passing orange trees in
every door yard. It's annoying to be so brief, but such is my fate. I am still
rushed, with a "missing" and foremost that of getting these lectures off my hands
and scurrying east, to Washington for my belongings and consultation with the
powers, and to Yale for a late beginning in the Forest School. St. Paul being as
you may know some 250 miles north of Chicago, is out of the question. Sorry the
map was so designed. But Berkshire is another matter. If I had a good cayuse I
could ride up from New Haven in a day and a half. Failing that I will take the iron
horse and be with you for a Sunday. R.T.F.
This is the grape country you know, and the wine season, with all the wineries squeezing full blast. You can smell the heady promise in the streets, mingled at night with the pungent odors from the hills.

The dust of a long ride is in my eyes, but this is such a bully pen, and I am so deliciously well fed, that I must indulge in a few lines of letter. I came from the coast, i.e., Mendocino yesterday: a long, rather cold and uneventful journey in the company of a Portuguese priest and Bert Price, the stage driver. The priest sat between us on the box seat (which is the coveted you know) and we two gossiped across him about hunting waiter-girls, and the various Gambling Hells we had seen. Sounds tactful, doesn't it? It was really not as bad as it sounds, for we very properly disapproved of our subjects (except the waiter-girls), and took occasion - at least I did to get off a few opinions of the most Catholic morality. But the fat old fellow in the black hat was impervious to the whole oration, and I soon began to see that he was one of the simplest creatures alive. His thoughts and remarks were most childlike. He would point to the south fork of Big River and say in his broken English: "See the beautiful water," and every time a band of quail scuttled across the road, he would clutch me, and positively moan, over and over again, "O where is your gun. Why do you not shoot dem?" In vain I tried to get out of him any thoughts about his profession. He was the simplest compound imaginable, and the most orthodox. Really ferocious, as you have heard, toward the game birds, he would almost cry and beseech the driver to stop if a hog or hen seemed threatened by the wheels. And he was timid as a little girl. On the narrow grades he held his lips pursed, and his hands clutched and raised in front of him, as if he were preparing to jump. On the turns he leaned anxiously away from the curve, and if he saw a team coming, was in a torment till it had passed. Poor man, he really suffered, and I felt so brave by contrast that I was full of compassion for him. But you should have heard him and seen him when at last we had wound and rattled down that long and narrow grade that follows the canyon of Russian River by a meandering shelf into the Ukiah Valley, and when, hanging over the bridge, we were fairly out upon the level plain. He leaned back with an expression of supreme relief and said: "Now we are at Ukiah." Yet there were still three miles of deadly rough and dirty road between us and the torrid hamlet.

Now you are to understand about the priest that in the essential sense he is a good man, hamble and kind hearted, diligent in his duties, and beloved of children with whom he has a very winning way. This I know for I saw him at Mrs. Gorman's in Mendocino. You are to remember, too, before you finally make up your mind about him, that he endures his almost monthly torture on a stage for the sake of the people he tries to help. But wait till you hear how I made my glorious appearance at the Palace Hotel, Ukiah. Almost the first time I stopped thee, which was late last June, I noticed that the little shrimplike imitation of a head waiter that pervaded the dining room, exercised an undiscerning faculty for classifying the guests, and I, being then in a flannel shirt and very noncommittal garb found myself place at what I afterward learned of stage drivers to call the "hobo table". Well, I didn't mind that a bit, you know, for the hoboes were all good men such as I was daily chumming with, and I took at least two, maybe three, assignments to that ignoble board without a thought one way or another. But one wearies of obscurity in the cud, and coming down the valley last night, I planned to impress that miserable flunky most to death.

There are eight tables in the Palace dining room, with a waiter-girl to each. The hoboes eat off in the left hand corner as you go in. The supposedly distinguished tourists close to the door, and the local unattached in a fully graded and inconspicuous middle ground between the two. Know farther that the prettiest waitress ministers to the tourists and the - I will say plainest - waits on the hoboes. It's rank favoritism all around. Furthermore, I should have told you that one must always sit were the head waiter leads him.

Now you think you know what's coming? Maybe. But wait. I tore open my dusty duffel sack and did select therefrom my finest raincoat, gray suit, nice white collar, and my very latest favorite necktie that I bought in Frisco. And how I did wash and prink, and smooth my hair and beard! And what a time I spent tying that silken bow! Then, already tasting triumph and the admiring gaze I descended to the banquet hall, and pushed open the swinging doors. One moment I stood there in the blaze of coal oil lamps and the clutter of dishes, and, -and, only the head waiter saw me. In a flash he had beckoned me, and running exasperatingly before, had planted me in the last remaining seat at the hobo table.

For a while I was really peevish and looked haughtily around and ignored trying neighbors. I even worked up an altercation with the flunky over a bottle of ale, which I refused on the ground that it was not cold. But, God reward these blessed people, they do not know what it is to take offense or how one goes about to give it. A ranchman next to me began speaking so I could have hugged him to my heart, so interested and cordial, and utterly without self consciousness or embarrassment; answering my statements with that most winningly pronounced "yes?" peculiar to his class. My sulks melted before his talk, and I was heartened to retrieve my position in the house by offering some compliments to the waitress. At this, be it know, I am now not without skill, and I was rewarded by some very savory additions to the bill of fare. Sic semper to foresters. So I went to bed at peace again, and shall now, this minute. Good night. R.T.F.
Dear Mr. Pinchot,

I am ashamed to have to inform you that I also have been added to the inca­pable. In Scotia I caught a kind of dysentery that was epidemic there, and was laid off for ten days. And here, a week of microscopic stem analysis has so dimmed my already defective eyes that I have become useless at such work. As this seems likely to be the most important kind, I am beginning to think I ought to resign and go home; for I do not wish to add to my inactive days and our expendi­tures.

All this is by way or report, for, as Shereard tells me you are out of telegraphic reach, I realize the matter of further work must be settled without you. If I should have to leave immediately, I shall hope to have an early word with you as to the results of the summer, and the matter of the winter work we spoke of. I have still eyes, I think, for that. Sincerely yours, Richard T. Fisher

I ask your pardon for this scrawl: the camp is out of ink.

Friday evening

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Division of Forestry

Fort Bragg, October 23

WILL DETERMINE REDWOODS' FATE

Scientists of the Division of Forestry Are Here on a Great Mission.

The vital interest in the present and future of the redwood tracts, virgin and despoiled, that has gradually developed in this State has at last been brought to the attention of the Government with satisfactory results. Not many years ago the wealth of these vast forests was so great that the prospect of their destruction was so remote that it was given no serious thought. In later years the demand for home consumption and from foreign lands has become so enormous that the rate of depletion has become alarming. It is for the purpose of determining whether or not it is possible to create a permanent supply for this demand that two Government scientists are now on this coast. The gentlemen are O. W. Price and R. T. Fisher of the Division of Forestry of the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Fisher has been for the past month travelling through the redwood districts of the State, inspecting their condition. He was joined yesterday by Mr. Price, and they will begin their investigations at once. In their work the gentlemen will be assisted by twelve men from the various universities of the United States. The majority of whom will be from Berkeley and Stanford, as they are on the field of action and have a certain practical knowledge that will prove of special value. The result of the work will determine whether these magnificent monarchs of the forest, peculiar to California, will become extinct or whether they will continue to contribute to the wealth of the State. The object of this work is therefore not to be confused with that of preserving original forests for parks and other purposes, but is a matter of safeguarding the future and the other the application of science to the ends of commerce.

"We will begin our labors near Crescent City, in Del Norte County," said Mr. Fisher at the Occidental Hotel yesterday afternoon, "and our efforts are to be devoted to the study of the growth of the tress in the sections that have been denuded by the lumbermen and by fire."

The investigation will be inaugurated by Mr. Price, who will then lead its completion in the hands of Mr. Fisher.

Study of Redwoods' Mission

The objects of this investigation of the redwood (Sequoia sempervirens) by the Division of Forestry, United States Department of Agriculture, are as follows:

1. To find the present marketable stand of the redwood, beginning with the counties of Mendocino, Del Norte and Humboldt, to be covered this year, with the hope of further extending the work so as to include the whole redwood belt.

2. To study the rate of growth of the redwood, in order to find its annual production per acre in board feet, thereby determining the amount which these forests are capable of producing. The annual increment of a forest, or the quantity of wood produced in one year, represents nothing more nor less than a surplus upon the capital which is invested in the forest itself. When this percentage is so high as to yield a fair interest, it is known as the value which lumbermen would be able to pay in such a way as to increase the possibilities of a second crop, and still maintain the reproduction of the redwood on cut-over areas. This will entail a thorough study of its sylvicultural characteristics, its resistance to fire and insects, and especially of the possibilities of stool shoots and root suckers, as producers of marketable timber. As the tree reproduces so much more prolifically by suckers than by seed, the study of the former is of the first importance.

3. The work of the division among the redwoods involves not only a scientific study, but is intended above all to hit upon those means by which the redwood forests may be maintained to produce a constant supply of timber. This is by no means intended to preach the doctrine of "Woodman, spare that tree," nor condemn local lumbering methods, but to arrive at a system of management for the redwoods which will bequeath to the lumbermen a steady and great supply of timber to the consumer.

R. T. FISHER.

OVERTON W. PRICE.
"Yale Forestry" may be misleading as a category for it lacks the rhetorical fondness for other terrains. New Haven is another step up the ladder. RTF gets his Masters in Forestry in 1902. The schedule tightens. Letters are directed to priorities while RTF’s ongoing relationships are a chance to plow deeper furrows of descriptive words into Washington, New Haven, Cambridge, Boston, Berkshire, and Dublin. The sophisticated boy, a seasoned college grad., is now increasingly a man of importance.

V. YALE FORESTRY SCHOOL YEARS, 1901 - 1902

Oct. 27, 1901

It seems already an age since I left Berkshire - so much has made the days interesting. When I got to Cambridge on Thursday I went directly to the James's, and finding them all out, came away to fetch Harry from the Law School. On the way I met the Rev. Willy, who seemed surprised to hear I was not going home to lunch with him. But I explained myself at length, and arranged to drop in upon them later on. Then I fell among inumerable familiar faces from the outcoming law students and was soon merrily wending lunchwards with Harry. Bill soon got in and we had a friendly meal - Mr. James his usual delightful self. After food Bill and I rammed about seeing students, instructors etc., called on Faith together, where we saw all the family but Wallace and Dorothy. Saw Mr. Wendell who was most cordial, and returned to dinner and a long, cosy evening of swapping tales. I had intended to take a night train for New Haven but motives of economy delivered me at the last moment, and it was not till nearly two o'clock on Friday, that I found myself in Boston - too late, and doomed to wait till nearly noon for my departure. About this time I met Faith on Tremont Street, and we stood and conversed some very welcome minutes; after which, as it was nearly noon, I hunted up Rob Utter, lunched with him, and had him see me off on my flying express.

It was a breathless kind of a trip but full of precious glimpses, and I can scarcely believe it is over. Nothing has yet occurred here. I unpacked Friday night, and spent Saturday in consulting about courses and finishing up my accounts. Today I have made my polite calls on the Hoopers and Professor Phelps, to whom Mr. Wendell gave me a letter. To tell you the truth all parties were distinctly bored at both places. Mrs. H. did not know who I was till she had excused herself and cudgelled her memory with my card (or so I devined when
she came back) and Mr. Phelps was tortured by a heavy cold. So I came home without undue exhilaration and proceeded to the consideration of domestic matters, in the midst of which I discovered that I left my beautiful and essential scarf pin in Berkshire on the west room bureau - Kindly forward it - and that I stand in immediate need of those trousers you were to patch and send me. Otherwise I am tolerably well provided and for the present settled at 53 Lake Place.

P.S. My love to Eleanor and Aunt Alice

Yale Forestry School

Sunday, November 10, 1901

Your birthday greeting was very precious to me, Dad, and I only wish I heard from you oftener. I have thought many times lately that I should like to know more of your ideas and opinions, now that I am a measure grown up, especially since every word I ever had from you on paper has stirred my thinking deeply. Do write to me when you feel you can; surely you have much to tell your youth. And besides, if you gave me these starting points, I should write you so much the better letters myself.

I am glad you gave me the cue of studies for I have wanted to let you know more intimately what sort of things I am learning for my profession. They are difficult to understand, even for their own practitioners. Our great professor himself was gravelled the other night by what turned to be a thoroughly elementary question that I asked him, and he was forced to ask for a night's rest before giving an answer. It is not all so bad, though. Of course the fundamentals are simple enough, and these botany, mineralogy, the use of forest measuring instruments, the identification of trees - I am for the most part passing over, in as much as they are first year courses, and my previous training and experience admits me to standing in the second and graduating class of the school. So I am theoretically a senior and taking the senior work, but as my education has been uneven, I am neglecting two of the regular senior studies/ which are very feeble expositions of subjects I already know something about/ and putting in instead a first year course in silviculture, on which I never had any direct instruction whatever. This scheme gives me lectures, besides those in silviculture, in Forest Management, the Diseases of Trees, Forest Technology, Forest History, and when I choose to attend them, in Lumbering and Forest Protection, the two aforesaid superfluities.

I will tell you what this work is like. Silviculture is the study and application of all facts concerning the life of trees in forests, and in teaching it Mr. Graves tells us all about the influences governing the world wide distribution and development of trees, their habits and requirements for reproduction, their various responses to differing situations, and from this goes on to describe the systems under which forests are treated in Europe and under which they may be treated elsewhere. This is a very meaty course. Even more so is that on Forest Management, also given by Graves, for in that we are fairly launched among all the intricate tables and formulae by which the European foresters compute their annual cuts, their future yields, and the proper succession or rotation of their blocks of timber. Forest History, a third course of Mr. Graves is merely a resume of the life, merits and effects of the various European systems of forestry, from the first primitive regulations of Charlemagne, down to the elaborately organized administration of modern Prussia. It makes an admirable clincher - for the two previous subjects, on both of which it touches from another standpoint. So far, as mere lectures are concerned, it is on Disease of Trees by Dr. Sturgis and by far the best. Himself a thoroughly educated man and authoritative in his line, he gives us the most absorbing, finished and instructive talks in the school. The remaining lectures are pitifully diffuse and vague compared to these I have mentioned and I can only console myself for the imposition of having to remember so much rubbish for the purpose of examination by the consciousness that they require very little work. On every topic there is much suggestive reading given out, most of it unfortunately in German, so that if I manage to dig through it, I ought to be set right in all directions. There is also in connection with the forest management one day a week devoted to field work, during which we go out to a tract of woodland belonging to the New Haven water company, and collect the measurements for a working plan. The plan will include detailed rules for annual or periodic cuttings based on an exact computation of the stand, the rate of growth, and the necessities of reproduction.

This is about the sum of the curriculum. The rest of it is merely what outside reading one's judgement or advisers may suggest. R.T.F.

New Haven - Mrs. E. T. Fisher

Sunday, February 2, 1902

Forgiveness seems to have been a bit delayed, Mother, but you need only infer from that how superfluous it really was. Indeed, I fail to see how either of us can ever reproach the other, being as we are mutually concerned in the enterprise of my education. Only, if you want me to be agreeable, you must promise not to lay any more troubles to my so called "sensitive nature". This has been a scapegoat for my short-comings till I have come to think it a positive curse. It's bad enough to have the miserable thing playing devil's tricks in my own inwards, flattering me to extravagance, and then surprised (?) and driving me with a beggared intellect, - without having it offered me as an excuse. I am bound to be a
kind of living excuse anyway, and it's no good trying to wink or lament the fact. Whatever I do I must do at the price of humiliating reprisals to do more. Maybe as time goes on I shall be able to cut down the refusals, but now they are inevitable. I have to humor that for this standing at court. As for this "World's Work" article which you speak of so grandly as a "success", let me remind you that I was asked to do that as a member of the Bureau of Forestry, at Dr. Merriam's suggestion, and that it would have been accepted if they had had to rewrite it from start to finish. It gives me a chill to hear you speak so of a paltry chore, a mere piece of hack writing that owed the opportunity solely to my government affiliation, for I cannot help fearing you may miscall the circumstance to some one who knows and bring ridicule behind our backs.

This seems a nasty way to be speaking, Mother, and I hardly know whether I ought to allow it of myself. Forgive me if I hurt your feelings, for it is only my pride for you that makes me speak. I cannot bear to think of my mother receiving even a shade of condescension. It is such a fine thing to keep your own rewards out of sight. Only think how dignified and effective it is to be silent about your family's doings. O I have indeed discovered a weakness in a pride of something that longs for family dignity! Promise me you will never give me a word of gilding outside our family, and I will pay you, with Heaven's help, a dozen fold in efforts to do you honor.

And one other point: be proud as you please and spur me all you can, but when you speak of me to other people don't let your pride extend to my work, else you may put me to shame. You cannot possibly judge of what is credit and what is not for you do not know the situation among my chiefs and coworkers,

(end of letter missing)

The Graduates Club
New Haven, Connecticut

Sunday, February 9, 1902

This is an occasional haunt of mine, whither I am conveyed by my hospitable friend Franklin Carter Jr. Today we have breakfasted around the corner at a dingy but much patronized and cozy alehouse known as Niney's. As my host is constructing a letter himself, I thought I would follow his example.

Life in New Haven is not any lovelier. I have not, could not, step out of the traces for a single evening since last you heard, and it is exasperating little that I accomplish. Twenty-five is a late age to be learning to work. My report is about done but I am having to rewrite it and all the while, my school work has to be slighted. Result much fitfulness and discontented longing for company, and general restlessness. Still, I do very well with my walks and Bill and a little music of an evening and it will not be insupportable to wait till April. Consider that happy month we all depart to northern New Jersey for 3 weeks in the so-called mountains and shall be overjoyed to settle down to one thing - namely the final coordination of knowledge for the examination that comes in May - anywhere almost that we decide to take it.

I was glad of your letter and enclosures, though Bill Nye seems to have lost his charm for me. Rather vulgar after all. Mrs. R. has been quite handsome. I hope she & Faith will take to each other. Your humourous bag of verses I thought a bit hopeless. Too near home.

No use in stopping with so much paper handy. Let's see if I can't think up some domestic items that will interest you. My room, perhaps. It's usually warm nowadays, but the most ugly and dismal apartment of my experience. Its bare walls are here and there disfigured with samples of monstrous homemade landscapes and farmyard scenes. The worst of which is a desert island of green amid which runs an ocean of raspberry juice. There are some crazy symbols for trees and a scaffolding that might as easily be a gallows as a lookout tower. In furniture I have a bed, a washstand, a bureau and a table, the bureau adorned with impossible blue and gilt china jars and scent vases and the table so small with embrasured legs that I cannot put my feet under it. There are also two chairs, and a few books upon the table. These last give the only clue to the lodger's real nature which otherwise must strike the observer as crude. "Alice in Wonderland", "The Modern Evolution of Man", "The Journal of Lewis and Clark", and the "Golden Treasury & Schlick's Manual of Forestry" constitute the only hopeful sign in this otherwise depressing mess of bourgeois belongings. Now and then I grit my teeth and write in this den of ugliness, but when I wish to come to life I go in to Bill's room and play the piano, chat or read. R.T.F.
Harvard Club, met Frazier among some others of well remembered pals, and thence retired we threesome to a jolly dinner at Sherry's. Whence in due time we travelled to Weber & Field's Theatre and were torn with merriment for some three hours. Next day, yesterday, rare turn on downies, Bill and I, at eleven, breakfasted, and strolled up Fifth Avenue to 44th St & back. Surprising spectacle of female taste, beauty and refinement in promenade. Frazier came to lunch at half past one, and in the afternoon we had some music from Edith Greenough who is a perfect greek goddess of heroic proportions and sings divinely. Then I went across to a pleasant half noon with Mrs. Townsend (Frazier and Bill having sallied forth on business of their own) returned at six for farewells and luggage, and joined Frazier at the Cafe Boulevard for dinner. We had a beautiful time together, after so long being apart, and discovered each other's hopes and prospects to be most promising. Later we had some easy talk at the Harvard Club, and finally went to bed in Frazier's quarters around the corner. It's a great town, N.Y. and a precious company of people it contains. So now, "back to the mines", with a light heart and happy memories.

Did Stillman send you photographs of us two in Cambridge? R.T.F.

New Haven, Connecticut
(postmarked March 3, 1902)

Monday

As usual, dear People, the trouble was merely a series of pleasant surprises and duties. The great chief arrived on Saturday morning and lectured to us in the afternoon very movingly, besides taking me aside afterward for a little talk on my California work, so that I was roused to all my old admiration of his heroic personality. Then in the evening I heard him talk at the Graduates Club, and came home quite fired with the privilege of being a forester. Add to these exciting circumstances that the Hon. Lyttleton turned up again toward the end of the week, and you may imagine what or who stole away your Sunday letter.

When I was fairly up yesterday, and able to shake off the Count of Monte Cristo (who is now my irresistible companion in every leisure moment) I found it was time to pay my call upon Mrs. Hooker, if I was to have any moments left for the house on the hill. So I went back about 3:30 & passed a friendly half hour with Mr. & Mrs. H. from whom I hastened to the Emmet's and their pleasant mansion on Mill Rock. There I found Miss Lyttleton, who chatted most delightfully with me for an hour or more, and told me wondrous things about her beautiful home in Herefordshire by the Welsh mountains, where she has royal lawns and parks and woodlands to play among. I was quite possessed of the desire to see it all, with its ancient air of orderliness and finish, and if I ever go across the pond I shall, for she has asked me to be sure and visit them when-ever I come to England.

Well here it is Monday again, and examinations are upon us. Scarce three weeks and I shall be at home. R.T.F

I enjoy your enclosures hugely.

(postmarked New Haven, Connecticut - March 16, 1902)

My career at New Haven seems destined to finish like a good play - with a climax. It has been a stirring week. I got through with my scheme for Mr. Pinchot last Monday, spouted my lecture on Tuesday, and put the final touch of revision to my report the following day. Then, just as I was feeling very happy in my freedom and preparation for examinations came a note from Skipper Scull to tell me of Hal Sayre's death. He was one of the highest spirits in our class. He died in a perfectly heartrending accident. They were together, he and Skip, in a town out west where they had come to take the train home, and Skip left Hal ordering some food at a restaurant to go back to bed at the hotel. The rest is largely guess. Apparently Hal missed his way in the darkness. He approached a house to enquire; a woman screamed that there was a man trying to get in. The husband, who was half deaf, opened the door a little ways, and Hal accosted him. So much was testified at the inquest. Then Hal made a movement as if to draw a weapon, whereupon the man shot him dead. Probably, given Hal was unarmed and the man was hard of hearing, this motion was merely his turning to go away. It was a pitiable death for a soldier returned from two years in the field.

Our exams begin tomorrow and last till a week from Wednesday. If possible Bill and I will come up that afternoon, if not early the next morning. I am going to make Bill bring some music with him so that we may have a little playing. I shall take home all my belongings and leave most of them in storage (if you have room) while I am away in New Jersey.

I am just back from dining at the Hooker's, and am trying to decide whether to pay some calls for the rest of the afternoon or study. I must stop anyway. R.T.F.
I tell you I was a glad boy when your telegram came yesterday. It was handed to me just as I was going in to dinner at the country club out here in the beautiful upland around Lake Whitney. I did not want to go to the dinner which was a gathering of the school, for it was a glorious evening outside and I was very full of trouble inside. But with For. off my mind, I became a new man, and celebrated so hilariously with all the foresters, that I lay awake most of the night watching the awful facts I have boned up for exams whirling and capering in my minds' eye. Well, soon to rest & sleep. Today I pay a few farewell calls finishing up with dinner at the Emmet's. (Miss Lyttleton having relevance) tomorrow two exams, Tuesday one, Wednesday one, and then home. Of course we don't care where you put us. I guess we shall arrive on Wednesday - probably leave our baggage & come out by trolley. But I will send you a postcard later.

R.T.F.

(Mailed April 29, 1902)

Central Valley

Friday Evening

Dear Mother,

Here are your letter and my civil service sheet. Both welcome. What a son I am that must annually be reminded when his mother's birthday comes. There must have been some dim recollection of it in my head, because I have been trying for the last week to send you some of the arbutus that scents all the woods hereabout. Still I have not succeeded, as you see, chiefly by reason of never having a way to bring it home the long miles between the mountain and our hostel. You must make believe you have it already and if none reaches you, here is a love letter for you anyway. For me you are alone in my heart. All the passing idols have passed - every one.

Tomorrow I take a day off and go in town to see Gyn and her baby. I had a jolly letter from her yesterday, and as my ticket on the R.R. expires in a few days, I thought I would save it to pay the happy family a call. One week from next Wednesday (as you will have gathered from my papers) we shall all be freed happy. We are healthy enough now. Your R.T.F.

P.S. I enclose a note from Harry

I thought I had some how missed a letter. Yours of May 14 I just discovered where it was dropped into my bureau drawer before I came. I will proceed to answer all its questions.

1. If I fail to pass this exam I shall not be a full forester.

2. I have no more exams in New Haven.

3. My pay in any case will not be over $1,000 and may be $720.

4. I have had no more word of the Vanderbilt work.

As for Uncle L. & Aunt R. & Mrs. M. I shall try to see them when next I go to town.

Dam this poverty. I suppose I must write for the black cat. R.T.F.
Central Valley House, Central Valley, New York
June 7, 1902

Dear Mother,

Your letter was so long in coming this week that I began to think I had overwhelmed you with bewilderments. So I was correspondingly relieved to hear so much pleasant news at last. I don't wonder I have been "Greek" to you. I am "Greek" to myself, and I can't do better than talk in parables in any case. As for your shrewd suspicion about Charlotte Hopkins, it seems a bit beside the mark - that is if you think she had anything to do with my discouragement. She gave me a hand up, though, I can assure you, when I was down, and a strong one, and t'other day she sent me a letter so beaming that it almost shows through the envelope. There's no mist in my eyes now. I am cheery as you could wish. I had a good letter also from Faith, and one from Mary Thayer, telling of the role of the pictures. Besides this, I have discovered or been put to a most fascinating employment. My part in this working plan has been a chapter on the theory and practice of thinnings, and to illustrate the method I have sketched cross-sections thus: and so Ma, of the forest before and after, thinning, showing the trees you take out and those you leave. I first made sketches in the woods, and then copied and enlarged them on rough drawing paper, and the finished diagrams look like ornamental friezes entitled the "progress of the seasons". I am hugely proud of them and the boss is pleased. I unroll the sheet for another look at least once a day. Your R.T.F.

P. S. It seems I am eligible for a degree after all, and if it is not too late to have my sheepskin made, I shall get one this commencement.

(postmarked Central Valley, New York - June 11, 1902)

(addressed to Mr. E. T. Fisher)

Here is another small cloud dear People, but this time it has a silver lining. Mr. Graves has asked me to stay on here by myself till the first of July or later and mark additional timber for thinnings. This rather knocks my pet schemes for the next fortnight, and offers me the lot of lonely labor for that of sociable days I had been promising myself. Nevertheless I can not hesitate about accepting the offer since it means, in all likelihood, five dollars a day and expenses for the whole time I work. So you will not see me at home so soon after all; and when I do come, as I must before going into the field, it will perhaps be for only a day or so. I shall stay on in Central Valley meanwhile, and you may address me as before. Be good to me, write letters. Tomorrow or next day I bid good bye to every man pack of my side partners.

(End of letter missing)

NEW HOTEL BELLEVUE,
BEACON STREET
HARVEY & WOOD.

(Beantown 1902)

August 9.

Strike out Bellevue and put in Swain's Island, Maine, care W.B. Lindsay, for I depart thither tomorrow evening by a night train to Rockland, there to take some kind of boat or other for the island. I got in here yesterday and put in the afternoon in getting clean as to body and clothes. Fritter dined with me in the evening and I had a grand sleep on the windy 8th floor. Today I have had more errands to do and letters to write, and have just finished the forenoon by packing up a bundle of superfluous shirts & c. which I have sent to you for storage. I find I have too much duff, and you may keep your golf stockings & blue flannel blouse till I get home. This p.m. I go down to Faith's - unannounced - for Sunday, to return in the late afternoon for my Rockland train.
R.T.F.

Westport
August 3

Dear Mother,

Here we are as the school boys and the fresh air finders say, right in the midst of Lake Champlain - not on an island but on a bit of the west shore, with lots of far lands and green mts, visible over the water to the East and raggedy headlands and green forests piling up behind. Also, from certain places a large covey of Adirondacks may be seen still further behind us. It is a blessed relief to be here - to sleep in a little wide open house-bedroom - and scramble about in damp woods, after my week of sweat and cinders and short nights. Mr. Hallis met me yesterday on the Vermont side of the lake at Basin Harbor, whither I had had myself driven...
from, and he and two of his acute blond children towed me across to the house -
Major Higginson's house - which the Stollers have for the summer. It is very
slow here. There appear to be no neighbors nearer than 7 miles and if one hadn't
work, or wasn't sleepy, one (this one, at least) would soon be bored. I reckon I
grow to be an extremist. For me - either the keenest company or a savage soli-
tude: I have exhausted the charms of the greatly over-rated middle class - both of
people, books and places, from which observations Tolstoi would infer that I was
morally a bit off my balance. And right you are, "the fish is a queer animal". Still
I know the air will cure me. The breath of honest effort they call it. There's too
much curry in the rice, nowadays. So let's to Westport for the mail.

Stonehurst
Intervale, N.H.
September 4, 1902
Dear Mother,

It may interest you to hear what has happened to me since I arrived at this
lovely place of Dr. Merriman's. My first glimpse of the village in getting off the
train was tolerably exciting for I learned of a bill poster that in company with Dr.
T.(?) E. Hale and a Prof. Edmonds I was to speak in a public meeting for the
preservation of White Mountain forests. This was interesting but surprising, and I
had difficulty in accepting Dr. Merriman's apologies for announcing it to me with
equanimity. Well, I forgot the speech in a day of labor and sightseeing in this
superb estate. The house stands in the northern brink of a little ridge or moraine,
flanked by the tallest grove of pines I have ever seen, and commanding over a
strip of boulder strewn lawn and small tree top, the whole rich perspective of
Intervale meadowland, rugged foothills and Mt. Washington athwart the back-
ground. Last night my host and I sallied up to Miss Forman's where the other
lines were quartered and settled the order and nature of our speeches. Silent
women sat in the background & we four debated - hotly at times for we had many
points to discuss. And Dr. Hale was great. Then this morning at 10:30 we turned
up at the hall of the hotel and faced an audience of pince nez and knitting needles.
Dr. H. and I sat in a corner & Dr. Merriman introduced us. First came Edmonds
who was punk - mere sentiment. Then came I with a brief & carefully pruned
digest of general considerations - and then came the fun. The audience was
immaterial & I did not give a fig for any of them, but I did care greatly how Dr.
Hale laid on me when I came back to our corner and the word of commendation
that he spoke. After that he was presented and I felt proud to assist him to his feet.
His speech was a dandy - vigorous, racey, and as sound forestry as it was senti-
ment. Parts of it will appear in tomorrow or next day's Boston Herald. In closing
he read some resolutions, and we all sang America, and after that the females bore
down upon us and I knew no more. War is - no not that exactly but this hotel
forestry is a rum thing. R.T.F.

(To Bill James)

Behold me in Intervale - operating on the woods and visiting the family.
Those present. Denman Ross (for a day), and now Roger, Dorothea, her sister and
the parents. So far the sojourn has been a shade dull. The new tennis court is not
done, and it has rained continuous, so that marking trees has been difficult,
and recreation more so. In the absence of definite occupation, I find myself constantly
reminded of our stay here last summer. The reminders come most vividly when I
biry my cigarette stubs in the flower beds, or slip the ash through a crack in the
verandah, or find myself almost unable to eat up (lacking your help) the bountiful
plate of crackers that sit beside the evening ice water in my room. If you were
here we might take refuge in discursive bellyache, but as it is I must needs shine
as a guest and professor of thinnings, which sounds unintentionally ungrateful, for I
sure do feel warmly towards this whole household, which is one of the most hos-
pitable ever; and the young ones are certainly as affectionate as they well could
be. What the hell, then says you? Well James, I have a new and bursting cold. I
am perishing with hunger, still it rains, and I cannot well leave and - I ain't got no
knockerman to scratch my back. Yet there be blessings. (A) Jocko is now car-
rion, and as a topic of conversation, heap tabu. (B) No one throws any cold water,
except God, and he will get over it. (C) I have received an extended order for pro-
fessional services on these perfect premises. So, with a little sunlight and a jolt of
Humjadi Jenuine, we may pull through.

I meant to hand you a few recipes for letting your mind settle for a while, but
I will postpone them until I have a more lucid moment. Dein Diccon. You may
like to see this letter from Weely.

The Graduates Club
New Haven Connecticut
November 23, '02

Dear Willum,

Albeit I am well nigh overwhelmed with the strain of having just seen Yale
pound twenty-three points out of the Harvard team.

I know now how Yale felt last year. We made some costly fumbles but we
were chiefly overwhelmed by speed and the awful powers of the brutal Glass.
P. Bowditch played a superhuman game, and worked so hard that he got _groggy_, and when Mike sent Cl_ in to take his place, Peter struggled and only gave way at Keman’s direct order. It went to my heart to see him wobble to the sidelines. I thought he seemed to be crying. But the Hell with such a painful subject. I hate these damned unoffending Elis with a hatred as fierce as it is unreasoning. Curtis and I walked into New Haven like a pair of somnambulists. Freer, poor boy, is feeling rather worried over some blood poisoning that he got through a cut on his trip, and that refuses to either leave or get worse; and as the doctor has carefully told him the worst as well as the best which might happen, his spirits are somewhat less spontaneous than common. He talks of Texas + Cuba within a few weeks (his half job turning out a “goldbrick”) but still he has to keep quiet as Miaow Cheshire. It galls and worries him not to be in the pink of condition, so I devoted my noble self to the task of cheering him with wholesome abuse. By bedtime I had him quite in form, and he lay in his pajamas cursing and telling smutty jokes, and laughing out of one side of his sore mouth like the original pink hoglet himself. He can’t say any Ps or Bs or Fs and his enunciation is consequently like that of a sponge, as you might say. I tell you all these trivial details of recent doings because you were so constantly concerned in the talks of yesterday and so unmistakably in the line up even when you are not being mentioned, that I feel as if it all belonged to you anyway. I felt it most of all when I met Mac Neil. We clutched each other in the Eli hostel here with obvious joy, and I think we were glad of the meeting on its own intrinsic merits, but it somehow electrified the whole occasion that we each reminded the other so vividly of you, and exchanged your news so eagerly. Mac is a corker isn’t he? I simply basked in his powerful presence and I was damn proud to have some of those piffling Lizzie boy Elis who sniffle around (God, you are bitter, Fisher!) sniffle around this club, clap on a man with two balls and a 0... by God, and the courage and the intelligence to speak it by Jesus Christ! That’s the way I feel, and if there’s any man here who doesn’t like it he can go to Hell. Eh what? “Sentiment echoed by the Holy Ghost,” as an Eli drunk remarked the other night- you being, as you see, the spirit called upon. In the other sense I wish to thunder I could call upon you, and parlez vous over a few beer and pretzels. Quell heure, Monsieur, est il a votre montre d’argent- ou est ‘il donc? Je ne sais pas. Summonez le garcon. “Garcon, ici! Vous etes un Canache. C’est tout. Vraiment, je suis giddy fool.” What do you do Bill, when you want any human or manballed intercourse? Can you get it over there? And does it sound as filling in French as it does in English? Speaking of perfectly ladylike intercourse, I walked this morning in the fine sunshine with my friend Mrs. Townsend, the Greek Goddess who is a connoisseur in the juices of life and a beauty thereto. She is in weeds these days, with the flowing things trailing from her neck and the color mantling- we say mantling- in her cheek she made a pleasing sight for the young man. She also was pleased to exalt the powers of Baldy whose career she seemed to find full of promise. They are always beautiful when they talk this way, even if they are not good looking without it. Can you wonder that with both elements at work I came near desiring the demise of Hubby? Hush Bill, let us suppress this scandal. Write all you can and believe me your devoted Baldy.

Dear People,

Without are slush & rain. Within are busy times. I have my report to talk over with Mr. Pinchot who arrives next Friday, some lectures to give for Mr. Graves on Tuesday - (Pacific forests the topic), or plan to draw up for spring work in California - not my own alas - and preparation meanwhile against all our final exams, which begin a week from Monday. Besides these duties, I have been at work for the past three days in marking pile timber on the water company’s land here - a job which Bill & I undertook, to relieve Mr. Graves of part of the task. Then a few days ago, a party in N.Y. roused my curiosity by writing to know if I would undertake some marking for him on his place up the Hudson. I answered that I would and & await his reply. If I get the contract it will mean quite a stake. Nothing else of interest seems to have occurred, except that I had a pleasant meal at the Emmets (not Rosina by the way but Temple Emmet & his wife) where I bade Miss Lyttleton God speed.

I was glad to hear of the new baby’s safe arrival, but I was somewhat puzzled to understand your talk of measles - inferring this child had perhaps been born with them - until toward the end of your letter you casually implied (merely) that Marjorie had the disease. Give her my love & tell her to get well before I bring Bill Hodges up to see her. R.T.F.

What is Mrs. J. C. Whitney’s address?
Dear Dad,

Here is the surprising and grateful substance of my Sunday's talk with Gifford Pinchot: I am to be given an outfit (so-called) of five men, whom I am to direct, feed, and answer for. Two of these are the James boys, the third will be the cook whom I am to engage beforehand, and the other two I am looking up now. Would that Ted might be one! But I am enjoined to enlist only old heads (or rather no more young ones), and in any case the volunteer has to pay his own way, which means a tidy sum. The gang is to work in the Olympic Mts., whither I am to wend late in June, and buy the outfit, cook & c.

Now wouldn't that "jar you", as they say, Mr. Fisher? Me, the heedless me, given such responsibility and promising opportunity. I nearly faded away with astonishment when he went calmly on telling what he was going to have me do. And yet surprising as it was, I realize that I really can or ought to be able to do the trick. At any rate I am eager to try, and full of hope for the future of the business. It looks like my job, mathematics and all. If I like it & succeed I can join the department after a year's study which looks difficult. But that is far off yet. Meanwhile the summer - hard monotonous work, but hurry it to me or I am no prophet. More soon. R.T.F.

(no envelope)

Yale Forestry School Years, 1901 - 1902

Dear Dad,

Here is the surprising and grateful substance of my Sunday's talk with Gifford Pinchot: I am to be given an outfit (so-called) of five men, whom I am to direct, feed, and answer for. Two of these are the James boys, the third will be the cook whom I am to engage beforehand, and the other two I am looking up now. Would that Ted might be one! But I am enjoined to enlist only old heads (or rather no more young ones), and in any case the volunteer has to pay his own way, which means a tidy sum. The gang is to work in the Olympic Mts., whither I am to wend late in June, and buy the outfit, cook & c.

Now wouldn't that "jar you", as they say, Mr. Fisher? Me, the heedless me, given such responsibility and promising opportunity. I nearly faded away with astonishment when he went calmly on telling what he was going to have me do. And yet surprising as it was, I realize that I really can or ought to be able to do the trick. At any rate I am eager to try, and full of hope for the future of the business. It looks like my job, mathematics and all. If I like it & succeed I can join the department after a year's study which looks difficult. But that is far off yet. Meanwhile the summer - hard monotonous work, but hurry it to me or I am no prophet. More soon. R.T.F.
May 15, 1901,

Mr. R. T. Fisher,
Division of Forestry.

Sir:

You are hereby instructed to proceed with Mr. R. D. Swales and Mr. F. A. Vaughan to San Francisco, which you will reach on or about June 1st. You will there engage a party or four Student-Assistants, and have them and their equipment ready to go into the field at short notice. Then, having completed such business as your work may require, and put yourself in touch with influential lumbermen of northern California, you will go north with Swales and Vaughan and choose suitable localities for the study of the Sugar Pine, probably in or about the McCloud Valley. This done, you will wire to San Francisco for your men and outfit, get the work in running order, and put Swales in charge. With a man to accompany you, you will then start for an examination of forests in Trinity County, about Goose Nest Mountain in Siskiyou County, and about Lassen Peak in Shasta County; your object being to locate, study, and describe the timber in these regions. Your route on this trip, unless later developments should change it, should take you in by way of Weaverville, Junction City, and Hay Fork to South Fork Mountain; thence northward to the Hoopa Valley and across to Callahan and Gazelle; thence across Shasta Valley to Goose Nest Mountain. From there you will follow the wagon road east of Shasta southward to Lassen Peak, and having finished your examination, rejoin your field party.

Respectfully,

Gifford Pinchot,
Forester.
Dear [Name],

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to express my deep gratitude for your kind words of encouragement. It means a lot to me to hear that you are pleased with my work.

I am currently working on a new project, and I am finding it challenging but rewarding. I am looking forward to completing it and sharing my results with you.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. I would be happy to discuss them with you.

Thank you once again for your support.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
These letters are a small group of high glass windows, giving us a glimpse of RTF’s encounters with the Forest establishment of Gifford Pinchot.

Then it will be onwards to Boston where he sets up an office as “consulting forester”. An undated letter is prophetic: “The net is settling round me every day.” (This category is pivotal. Sequencing of chronology opens to let in RTF’s actual correspondents; increasingly official concentration brings in new letter writers, new geographies.)

VI. WASHINGTON LETTERS, 1899 - 1906

Evening Sept. 9th 1899

We forwarded Uncle Abbott’s letter to you my dear boy on Thursday. I think he wanted us to see it, as it went to you with some advice. Your father said he should say essentially the same things. We must all love each other devotedly. I catch myself feeling sometimes as if my brother had stolen my one son. If I did not love him, as you do, I could suffer - but I will not. The affinities in this world are too mysterious to understand at all. I do not mean to allow myself time to think about such things much.

We’ve been enjoying more delightful letters of Stevenson in the Sept. Scribners. They are charming. Grace Hooper - your cousin - and her two fine children spent Fri. night with us, going home to Montclair by the early train yesterday. We had a very good visit. Her husband... His brother (who lives in England) and Frank have gone into the publishing of a new edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica - Frank has charge of the American supplement. They seem to be very prosperous.

...... Did Harry & Billy James go to San Francisco on their way home? Tell us about them. We are all well. John goes to New York this week, and Ada & Walter stay a week or two later. Herbert has been good, but he is a depressing influence.

Yr. loving mother
November 4, 1899

Dear Mr. Pinchot,

I should have made my report for this sudden departure, and answered your letter of the twentieth before this, but that I had news of your being away. Let me thank you to begin with for your offer. I appreciate its value, and heartily wish I could accept it unreservedly at this moment. But I am still in a great puzzle. I realize very clearly that you want a man with his heart in the business, one man, who would be willing to stake his future on forestry. (end of letter missing)

December 10, 1899

The strange and heartless workshop in which I stirred and brooded a week ago is swiftly becoming familiar, homelike, and full of friendly faces. Already I recognize and speak glibly of the main parts of the town; I have plans and prospects to look forward to; and best of all, I am getting interested in the business of being student assistant, and, I think, in forestry.

The first day or two, with the strangeness that was to be expected and the personal insignificance that ought to have been, I found the volumes of very discouraging objects and calculations. But in two days I got back some ease and interest in long division, passed the backache stage, and began to hope a little. Just about then a few pastures came in, and we were granted afternoons (except in times of stress) for study. So now we figure, and write notes, or look up forest laws in the forenoons, and (for the present at least), study botany in the afternoons. This is great fun. We go upstairs into a little garret room that looks out over the grounds towards Pennsylvania Avenue, and sit among portfolios of dried leaves and textbooks, and draw little pictures in our notebooks of birds, and foliage, and such; and Mr. F.H. Sherrard directs our observations with very tolerable spirit. We do this till four, which is the time for quitting always. Then, generally, Mr. Pinchot and Mr. Graves and most of the student assistants, go out and kick a football for half an hour in the field beside the monument. Great but sweaty exercise. After which I walk home, dine, and do not study in the fashion of the others, as I hope I soon shall, but rather read or go out. Twice the going out has been to the Forestry talking club which Mr. P has weekly at his house, once to dinner with Charley Johnston and his hospitable sisters, and this time to see Bill & Ethan. I expect them momentarily to go to walk. The ice is broken. I read your letter & Mrs. Jame’s. Ain’t I proud? No. I’m sorry you told Aunt M. all about my problem. She needn’t have known! R.T.F.
Letter to cousin Mary Thayer

Dec 26, 1899

Dear Mary,

Behold I seize and glorify an empty moment with gratitude to you (and an appropriate slice to the beloved Mudge). Your princely gift has struck me speechless. I had not the remotest thought in my idle remark of calling forth such a beautiful article. I only thought - well, just what I said, one of those very good dollar watches that so many people carry now. It seemed like a good object, in view of my unwatched predicament, for the Thayer pen is a fine mechanism like that, who had taken thought of nobody. Mary, I suspect you of having done me a kindness. If I don't hear of any privation you are undergoing in consequence, I will forgive you, and henceforth take your time about my work.

As for your letter, it was anything but what you feared. I read it avidously (which means, as a bird in an aviary receives the voice of God; extravagant but true: for avis = bird (Latin) deus = God). Hence, avideously or avidiously means what I said. But, joking aside, I did enjoy your philosophizing and narrative, and scented therein a scheme for drawing a bulletin out of an uncommunicative family. You like to write, and, as I take it, have some time to do so. Send me occasional notes on affairs in Scarborough, and I will reciprocate with a glad heart.

This space, left in my first attempt, comes handy for the real joke which I nearly forgot. Santa Claus gave me three watches! Of these yours is far & away the best - To think my overadvertized need should have brought such a downpour of fulfillment? My dear little sister gave me a pretty ladies watch, the prize of six subscriptions to the Youths Companion which she beguiled as many persons into taking; and Aunt Maria gave me one of those delightfully simple nickel Tickers that winds up in the back with a thumb screw, just like a clock: a wonderful timekeeper for its price. But your gift is not to be rivalled. Eleanor was intending to win a gentleman's watch with a second six subscribers, and then exchange with me. Now she can have her watch and something else too. And the TICKER I shall keep for wet weather. It is so solid and invulnerable that I have already quite an affection for it.

Well 'nuff said. Full and particular Happy New Year! Let Gra know I love him, but despise his recent letter to me. Tell Galla I would like to be her knight. Tell the painter he is a precious fraud. Tell Aunt E. I profit by her example. Tell yourself I am your grateful & affectionate cousin. R.T.F.
We saw the Belle of New York, a silly show redeemed by the bewitching acting of one small girl. I almost tried to have words with her afterward, and am rather ashamed of my failure. I don’t know but I shall write to her yet.

This morning Frazier and I went to church - “our church” - with Bella Curtis and Miss Alice Longfellow “Grave Alice” that was, not at all so now. They are here for a few days on their way south. Let me interpolate a sentiment, embossed and shaded:

**DAMN THE FACT!**

What fact? Any fact, all facts, the whole unredeemable desert of stormy little devils called facts. They cheer not neither do they inform, but merely mislead and exasperate. Also they become the means of vice if pursued too diligently. Perhaps that is a hard word considering the example I am going to quote, but you will see what I mean.

Extracts from Mrs. E.F. Fisher’s letter to Aunt Maria:

1. “...and left for Leicester by the 4:45 train. 2.”...At the reading I met Miss Helen Hull.”

I must have another sheet to express my feelings in comment.

Now, my dear little mother, forgive my badgering you, but what do you think you expressed by those two statements? In the first, you tell us the hour and minute at which a person in whom we have almost no interest left town where he had been performing a perfectly trivial duty. In the second you tell us of meeting a person in whom we have a particular and recently redoubled interest and of the human details of that meeting you add not one word. Continue, if you will, to record the hours and minutes of your events, but don’t tantalize us with these alluring fragments of the things we long to know.

In plain English, what she did say, what did you say, what did you think of her how did your opinion compare with mine? In plainer English, what did she seem to think of little Richard?

Ah, now we have the root of the matter. All this complaint is here explained. Perhaps you are right.

Eleanor, do you mind having your letter on the same sheet with Mama’s? You see I want to use up this nice half page of paper, so I am using it to thank you for your note to me. Yes, it was what I like to hear about, and I wish I could find things as good to tell you. But all I do is go every day to a big brick building in a park, and write and read there from 9 to 4. If I am not there I am exercising in the backyard of our house, or sleeping or going to some show. Someday I will write you about the animals at the big zoo here in Washington. There are lots and lots of them. Your brother, Dick
Saturday: a day of prayers and compunctions and recuperation. Curtis went his rounds alone, and I stayed at home, and went early to bed. My social ambitions are not enduring. Washington society has too many silly and bloodless customs for me to learn or put up with. I wants to go home and split wood. But one person I am gong to cultivate, if I get the chance which seems likely, and that is Mrs. Henry Cabot Lodge. She is a way-up person here, and a lady of cultivation and intelligence. Curtis being somewhat of a pet there, I shall in due time be presented. Exit me.

R.T.F.

How is my dog? Let him hear my name occasionally, and tell me how he takes it.

* Sculptor of Adam's memorial in Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington, D.C.
** Charles Francis Adams, railroad expert and historian
*** John Hay, private secretary to President Lincoln - Ambassado to Great Britain during Spanish American War - Secretary of State under Presidents McKinley and Roosevelt.
Thursday, Feb. 19, 1900

Hereafter I promise nothing - you see my failure. Yesterday no sprightly bulletin as per intention, and no letter put into the mail. This is large paper to make up. But I warn you not to count on any regularity or completeness things being one too many for my poor head. Great doings preoccupy your son. The grand entanglement of education, employment and schemes ahead keep him on the jump hourly. Harry J. is in negotiation with the Chief, and likely to be here over Sunday, - why you will soon know; developments for the summer are in the air again you must wait; we take the civil service exam. May 1 - little hope, for any of us especially me who am blind after dark and so unable to learn out of the necessary books, I go to N.Y. next Tuesday at 4 P.M.; we go to a box party tonight, guests of Mrs. Walker; we punch the bag each day 4:30 to 5:30 or six. Volla there is it. Where am I? I hardly know, but I am busy - praise God - busy, and not without hope for the future. Yes, I am more, I am possessed with enthusiasm to be a forester. Other trades are stripped away; this remains the one chance for my fitful talents. To work. C'est moï. R.T.F.

Dear Parents,

I guess these immortal times will have to go down in imperishable pencil, for why it is too cold where the ink is, and I want to (no lie) by the fire. Well the great orgy is over, and so swiftly that it takes me some time to take my mind off forestry - as a matter of fact I did not wholly one-end. But my partial coldness to it was far from troubling me. It fell in with everybody's assurances of my robust and settled appearance to show me that I have at last conceived a purpose, and to it I dedicated a portion of my hitherto vaporous enthusiasm: from which blessed confirmation there flow health and dignity in the sight of God. Do I hear you plead timidly for a fact? In their boldest outlines you will find them in a sheet of my notebook which I send herewith. Rich as they were, each episode, I can not decide which to expand. Everything was so deliciously complete and physical, so unquestioningly enjoyed. It was Heaven to be with Chauncey again. And yet I scarcely began to realize it when we separated. We drop into each other's arms so easily and so entirely on the old terms that it takes us some time to appreciate the blessed novelty of meeting. Well, my spirit relished the whole experience beyond measure. Let me try to be expository for your benefit; you can locate or orient yourselves from the small sheet as you read along. I got from Genevieve, Mama, (whom I had ten minutes with face to face) some real news of your interview, and I tell you, I'm glad you two met, as Pete said, you must have called each other all sorts of names. At any rate, we are all three richer now aren't we? From that we proceeded to the Harvard dinner (behold the ink is warm). I was my own man all through, and yet I cannot describe you the scene or the speeches. Lustiad I will send you a plan of the seating, and, if possible abstracts of the speeches. From the first you can find out just who sat where, even to the locus of little Richard, and you are to understand, besides, that two tiers of boxes on the floor above were filled with ladies, and under pillars to one side, an orchestra discoursed music.

Scarborough gave us a bonnie day of sunlight and hilarity. It was one of the dear old helter skelter times: Uncle A. on the point of taking a tired head to Canada; the general sociability enlivened by Louis Fuertes (one of the best of boys); and the day full of unexpected incidents. Most of the time we lurked about the hillside there, snowballing and talking and frolicking. And the air was full of that old familiar sound of snow water boiling down the gullies. Well, here is the end of my story, for there was not much more to my adventures, but on the back of page one, I am going to speak to Dear Eleanor. I was glad, I tell you, to get such a good letter from you with just the things I wanted to hear about. Wasn't it funny, I really didn't know who it was from till I opened it! You see your writing has grown up so far since I last saw it, that I didn't recognize it at all. You must let me see it oftener so that I shall always be able to tell it as far as I can see. And if you notice whether the English sparrows are all gone or not, there is another thing. But I should like to hear from you about anything.

So Good-bye from Dick

Washington Letters, 1899 - 1906

Sunday March 11, 1900

How the days and the doings pile up! I am sinking deeper and deeper into my trade, and I believe my language and ways are growing stranger and stranger to my friends. Since the Curtises left and the Walker's theater party, I have been nowhere but to the office and to New Haven, and done nothing but labor and scheme on my assignments. The most recent of them, my report on the Big Trees, has held me captive from your last news to this. You know the scare was about the Calvaries Grove, one of the most beautiful and hitherto best protected. It was sold to a lumberman. Well, the protests came, and a bill was prepared, authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to negotiate for its purchase. The most recent of them, my report on the Big Trees, has held me captive from your last news to this. You know the scare was about the Calvaries Grove, one of the most beautiful and hitherto best protected. It was sold to a lumberman. Well, the protests came, and a bill was prepared, authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to negotiate for its purchase. As you may have seen, the bill has passed both houses, and the trees will probably be saved. But the secretary, we hope, will do more than this. He has asked for this report on the Sequoias, and he will find in it a complete history of the trees, their scarcity,
ancestry, size, beauty, everything which goes to show the very urgent propriety of saving to posterity the whole remaining forests. There will be pictures and figures and all sorts of do-funnies, and you may get a copy! So herewith have been my labors for the past week. Yet I do recall interruption. On a call with Aunt Maria, Friday afternoon, on Madame Turner, we sat like dummies. I see she is variously admirable, but I cannot understand how you expected us to warm up. We are miles apart. Consider these things, Ma, before you drive me out again. I am willing to be polite, but I have too little time for social relaxation to want to waste any where I neither please nor enjoy. Ends the sermon. I mean no unkindness.

R.T.F.

April 30, 1900

Southern Missouri is pretty green at this season. Well I will sum us up. The plan is for Allen and me, each loaded up with 500 rounds of cartwheels, to gun around Washington together till about June 1; then to separate he for a summer's work in the regions we shall have looked up, I for a reconnaissance of Northern California. I shall go by train to Grant's Pass, Oregon, and get a pack-outfit, with which are my necessaries. I intend to travel southward all through the Redwood Country to Frisco, perhaps for the latter part of the way by boat, then, if there is time, I may go still further south to Santa Cruz. By the first of July I must have discovered likely places for the work of a gang of ten men whom I shall pick up in Frisco or from Stanford University. That is all I know now. The best address I can give you all; until June 1 or further notice, as above, afterward, care W.W. Everett 4 Calif. Street, Frisco. We got away, as you must have gathered, in a dizzy hurry, but with the great consolation of Curtis for company. Our first daylight found us in Kentucky and sweltering in dust and summer heat. At Cincinnati we changed cars, and spent a three hours wait principally in dining, assisted by a bottle of fizz, the parting gift of a fellow student. This morning at eight we made our final change and parted from Curtis in St. Louis; and we are now in a neat little train of four spick cars which goes through entire to Portland, over the Burlington through Neb. So. Dak. Mont. to Billings, and thence west over the Northern Pacific. The weather has cooled to a delightful moderation, and the country is richly green. For an hour we have been following the Father of Waters and seeing the blunt nosed steamers, and have but just turned west from Hannibal. Not a cloud in sight. This is the first train to follow this route, which ought to become popular, for it gets us to Tacoma with diners all the way and other comforts, by Thursday noon, somewhat less than five days. But as it is we two are the only passengers on the only pullman coach on the train. It is the last car, and there is a dinky little glass walled vestibule at the rear where you can sit in a comfortable chair and see the track spin away, and the green fields of Missouri do the same. Behold I wax eloquent. It may be long before I can write you a sizable spiel again, so I will try to get you well posted. As to your questions. H. James (whom it grieved me deeply to leave) is apparently well suited at 1316, but not certainly with his work. The job is young yet, though. He will stay 6 months anyway. New York and Scarboro were busy times. Stillman and I went to Weber and Fields - parents of Vaudeville - Monday night. Next morning I went to the Thayers, and had a fine outdoors day, - walk in forenoon with children, Louis Fuertes (good man) and lot's of talk with Uncle A in afternoon, went back to Chauncey for the night, to Dr. M's Wednesday at 10 A.M. His diagnosis was right eye much deteriorated since last examination, practically useless; left eye good, however. But both very sensitive to light on the conjunction which I gather is the very outer membrane of the ball. Glasses already the best possible; only thing to do, is take care; wear dark specs in trying places, and use small wash prescribed. Hope strong that my windows will remain as they are. You don't see me worried anyway, so cheer up little mother. R.T.F.

Yes, I wrote Edward T. and got a cordial answer.

Colonial Club

May 5, 1900

Dear People,

Prosperity is stultifying. At least I seem to be more of an uncommunicative idiot and more of a professor of forestry. I do not think I have ever worked so hard as I have the last 3 weeks, but such is the healthfulness of the Cabo (being largely out of doors) that I feel better than ever. Two days both this week and last I spend in the woods. The rest of the time lectures, letters, meetings, and conferences filled my hours. Oh, I did go one night to dine with the_______. Very nice they were. Seemed also full of appreciation for the benefit Phillips was getting at Berkshire. Today I saw Mrs. James just home from California with vivid accounts of the earthquake. They stood it without discomfort. Are you all well? Your R.T.F.
So you felt queer to hear your son called “Mr. Thornton Fisher.” It must have been a bit of a shock. This, thinks you, is what comes of associating with wealth and fashion; the boy’s head is turned. I don’t wonder you had a difficulty in believing it - I had myself, and for the very same reasons I suspect you of sticking at. But the fact is, its true. My paste boards now read “Mr. R. Thornton Fisher” incredible as it may seem, - and there is a sufficient yet deplorable cause for the changes. Some weeks ago a very nasty charge was brought against R. A. Fisher. Though it was probably false, he lacked the courage or the means to disprove it, and he was compelled to resign from the Club and drop all his social engagements. Washington was dumbfounded, for he had been deep in the affections of everybody. To some I am sure it means a permanent weakening of their trust in human nature. My own case, as you may infer, was not pleasant. But a few days before the thing came out, I had taken his place (and on his recommendation) in the Theatre Club. Of course I offered to resign, and of course, the members, particularly the good Sieberts, immediately reinvited me. We had all been (as it were) duped together. Yet for all that, the fact remained that Richard Fisher was a name no longer mentioned in company, or heard anywhere without disgust, and it seemed the merest common sense, considering that I was just appearing among the people who had known him so well, to make myself as distinct as possible. My wise James advised the Thornton, so Thornton I became.

Perhaps it would have been better and would have saved you your recent uneasiness, if I had told you all this before, but the truth was I hardly dared trust myself to speak of it, being until recently exercised with apprehensions (you can understand the awkwardness of my position), and I have constantly postponed the disclosure. I am glad now that you have heard the tale, because you will thus be able (when you feel the need) to suggest an explanation for my change of name, and at all times to comprehend and initiate any avoidance of certain subjects that you may observe. The point is that the whole matter is buried irrevocably deep.

As for my late silence, it was chiefly due to an awful load of calls that I had only Sunday to discharge. Nothing more novel occupied my time. I think it was last Monday week I went to a bad dinner at the Van _____’s, which was very dull, being proverbially resourceless, and the men all sleepy; Wednesday Mrs. Thoron had me fill a place at one of her dinners, thereby capturing me for good; and Friday eight of us, Misses Siebert, Young, Mehanshan, Rochester, and Messrs

Washington, D.C.
July 6

Siebert, Huidekoper, McGraw & Fisher, went to an absurd presentation of Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde at a cheap theatre, finishing the evening with supper and some hilarity at the Mehanshan’s. Voila the events of the week as such. If you throw in a few casual visits, a cup of tea with Miss Nott, a walk with Miss Siebert, a chat with Mrs. Thoron, you have me discovered at my frivolous avocations. So saying, R. Thornton (it sounds awful doesn’t it) made his exit.

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Division of Forestry

Dear Dad,

I think I shall run up to the home acre sometime next week. It will only be for a day or two, as my annual leave is down pretty low and I want to leave a little time for Christmas, but I believe I can atone for the extravagance. If you report all favorable up there. Thayers stacking up a full set, that is, each and every one on the ground, I shall go on to New York next Tuesday the sixth, and sight Berkshire sometime during Wednesday the seventh. Let me hear how it strikes you.

R.T.F.

Division of Forestry, Washington, D.C.

Dear Dad,

I think I shall disobey you, Little Mother. Not only will I come home this month next week, but I will have Christmas in Berkshire too. So be reconciled and don’t discourage anybody from spending the holidays with us. I can’t disappoint Fritter and I won’t give up Bill James, and Chauncey may come for a day, and the extravagance is not what it seems anyway. So again I say, be reconciled and look forward to two home-comings instead of one. They need not both be so very short either. If I can cut off the first with five days, I can prolong the second into January and the New Year. Let me only hear of the Thayer’s complete arrival, and I will be with you on my birthday. R.T.F.
My dear boy,

I got your beautiful photos of those tremendous mountains - and it became a real plan for Gerald & me and perhaps the whole crowd to get out there before very long - How much you are in my mind - I scrawl this scrap in aghastness at the length of time you haven’t heard from me.

I do believe I shall write soon. I love you all well here.

Your AHT

June 29 -

Division of Forestry, Washington, D. C. -

Glory be, Dear People, Bill James is coming to us for Christmas - wrote me so yesterday -, and wrote you if you did but know it. That letter you so promptly forwarded from Berkshire, which was directed to Mr. Richard Something Fisher, was to you, Mama, as you will easily see when I send it back. I can't imagine how he happened to address it as he did. But he's coming anyway, and I am overjoyed.

Tell Uncle A - and his retinue I think of them hourly, and follow them about my old haunts like an unlaid ghost. We are sweltering here, and the bleak north sounds like Elysium. Actually I have been wakeful and restless under a sheet. To work. R.T.F.

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Division of Forestry

November 22, 1900

Dear Man,

Your botanist friend was wrong. Those could not possibly have been the cones of the white spruce, but, as I remember them, must have been those of the black. Having just refreshed my memory from the Lubarium specimens and the drawings in Sargent, I will make you some life size drawings so that you can see for yourself.

(3 pencil drawings of pine cones labeled Black, Red, White with notations: Only black spruce scales are markedly jagged edged. Note: all these three cones open so that the scales stand apart when they get dry.)

I am afraid the sizes & shapes, are the only characteristics I have managed to represent. The black & red cones are very much alike in shape. The distinction being that the black is about 1/2 the size of the red and usually more jagged as to the edges of the scales. The cone of the white is a slim, flimsy thing with very flexible, smoothed edged scales. You couldn't miss it. Voila the chief signs. There are others of leaves and bark, but none briefly describable.

....... Believe me, my beloved ____ , your little dog as was, as is, as is to be.

R.T.F.

(posted Nov. 24, 1900, Washington, D.C.)

Sunday

How is this, Parents? The world rings with Willy Fenn's good luck*, and his relatives shout paeans of joy at the imminent return of his family to the land of their forefathers. But are there still no official returns? Can you not confirm the news? I can't conceive how the man could hesitate. If his sense of duty is going to condemn his wife & children to more purgatory in Chicago, why I think he ought to carry a harp on his person all the time, just so that nobody will commit the error of taking him for a human being. Silly and premature, this irony. Better stow it.

R.T.F. Friday

* appointed professor and subsequently Dean of Harvard Divinity School.

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Division of Forestry

Dec. 8, 1900

....... I cannot say yet just when I shall start home, because I do not know what is going to happen to me in New York, but I think I shall leave here Saturday, and I am fairly sure I shall arrive in Berkshire Sunday or Monday morning. Don't urge Bill too strongly to come before I am there. I should like to welcome him myself. You know Curtis is in New York now, working on the "Press", and Skipper is there, and Bill Greenough, and a lot of lads that I have got to see. Bill has written me to stay a night with him and have a reunion, and I am going to do it. Have to take a night on the road anyway, - unless you use up a day in the trip, which is wasteful.
I return you Faith's letter herewith, and felicitate you on your general good fortune & prospects. But have a care, Mother. I strongly suspect you are at your old tricks again, - storing up weariness and headache for your Christmas calculations. Do allow yourself to take it easy for once, and beseech the relatives in my name to do likewise. What is one damned doyly more or less compared to an unclouded spirit? I tell you flatly I will threaten to deny myself the exquisite pleasure of my family's festive company unless they reform their suicidal habits of philanthropy. This is my ultimatum. R.T.F. Friday Dec. 16, 1900

I hear vague rumors about Christmas, yet I can hardly believe it to be approaching, myself being singly preoccupied with affairs here. Besides my work which is insistent, I have caught the social itch, and devote much time to devising openings and improving them. I think by now that I have, as Curtis would say, about all a shifty man needs, but if you happen to recall any of the quality of this town with whom you have influence, exert the same I pray you. I have a bid to so called Small & Early parties which the buds give each winter to all the men within reach, and this week I blundered into this coming out tea of a bud, where I made myself agreeable to the extent of several invitations to call; and at the dance - if the Muse assists - I shall win a few more. I don't know how long this zeal will last. I suspect not long, as soon as I have found a half dozen families with whom I can be intimate, I suppose I shall relapse into my usual habits of social indolence. Still, these bring unpleasant consequences. My years of unanswered cards in Boston are even now visiting me with a dearth of opportunity. The people I would naturally have approached for a start here, I have not the cheek to ask.

Coming back to history, I had a great pleasure yesterday in the coming of Bill Greenough to Washington, him you know that lived in 44 Brattle with Curtis and me. He turned up early in the morning and I breakfasted with him at this hotel, and again this morning. It was most comforting to see him again, he's such a trump, and so deeply associated with happy times. Incidentally, too, he's one of the handsomest males that you would care to see.

I have written to Bill J. as you suggested and told him when I go to Berkshire and when I would like him to come, that is, on Sunday the twenty third, probably in the afternoon. Fritter remains silent. Apparently his visiting us depends on his leaving his present occupation, of which there seems to be some slight chance. I shall know his decision this week I guess.

Curtis writes happily from New York, and most welcome surprise, big sister Bella favored me with a charming Epistle in her liveliest vein. I will send it to you I think if you will hang onto it, so that I can some day answer it. Dinner time. R.T.F.

On the passing of his dog, Rex

Division of Forestry - Washington, D. C. (postmarked February 8, 1901)

For my sake be good to my dog and tend him to the last. No one knows how his going hurts me, or what his life has meant to me. Don't let his end be unworthy of the love you know I feel for him, I know you won't. And if you can, let him be buried where we can mark the place and keep it memorable. I can't bear to think of his being just thrown away. R.T.F.

Henry and I continue our mad attentions to the local aristocrats, and I as usual am already deep in the chase of souls. Continuing the metaphor would say these be about five in number, two already quite tame and will eat from the hand, two more still wary, and the fifth- Bill, she's a married princess, a daughter of the Gods, clever, spirited, cordial to a marvel, and she adorns the high-ceiled halls of a royal palace with a courtyard, and great staircases, and fireplaces. I drop in upon her several times a week, and she gives me tea, and together we philosophize- to my huge refreshment and satisfaction- upon all things high and holy, and many which are neither, and yet of much account. By now fairly committed to another sheet of this elegant tissue, I will add that at least two of the four other souls before mentioned have also some claims to space in this elegant issue. (Is that a rhyme?) One is the best fencer with words I ever saw; also serves tea in the late afternoon. The other troubles not with thoughts but combines the essentials of good company with a pleasing countenance, on which certain distracting smiles.
and gleams of mischief do dawn out of a demure sobriety and chase each other through the beholder's heartstrings. That's me, you know. But enough, ENOUGH I say. I can no more. So saying R. T. Fisher took to the tall timber.

P. S. Did you see me burst into print on Crescent City? February Forester

Wednesday
Division of Forestry - Washington, D. C. (postmarked March 5, 1901)
(addressed to Mr. E. T. Fisher)

I feel as if it were months, dear People, since I wrote you that dreamful, lazy little letter on Sunday, for so much has happened since, and such adventures, that I seem to be really older, - not older in years exactly, but older and richer in impressive experiences. After writing you my pitiful sentences day before yesterday I pulled myself together and went down to a luncheon at Marjorie Notts, where I met a charming Mrs. Fraser, and her two friends Miss Lois Swan of Utica, and Miss Cornelia Barnes of New York. Therefrom dated an orgy which lasted till midnight last night. Mrs. F. and her friends and I warmed up to each other instantly, and from lunch we all walked up to her big house, and I was presented with a ticket to the downtown office from which they were to watch the parade. A providential invitation for me, inasmuch as I had declined two others to await a third which never came. So yesterday at eleven, when all the crowds of visitors were streaming toward the avenue, I pushed down to the place, and up to the big room where sat my cordial hostess and her guests: those I have named, three other ladies, Mr. Fraser and several gentlemen. There was a long ledge or balcony outside, and a dais inside the three big windows we commanded, and we sat there in small wooden chairs (for it was a mild day) and looked up and down the walls of bunting-covered buildings, over packed masses of people which lined the curbs for as far as you could see. The upward march to the Capitol, consisting of the President and a small escort, was over when I arrived, so we very soon had lunch - salad and chicken, and unnameable dainties served by a man in a tail coat; and after a smoke, and a little moving about, we all took to the windows again.

At two o'clock or soon after, we heard a band in the distance, and by craning out a bit, we saw the carriages coming with the big chiefs, and tailing out behind the bright even ranks of the soldiers, twinkling as they moved, and dotted with the flags of the regiments. And presently the head had arrived, and was passing - an open barouche with four horses and four outriders of police, and McKinley, Hanna, and Roosevelt bowing and grinning from the seat. There was very little cheering, and the President looked unspokenly fat and coarse and commonplace. For the Chief Executive of a great nation he was anything but imposing. But there was music, - stirring, swinging marches, and line after line of many colored militia went striding by, and best of all, here was a tall girl beside me who saw and understood. Not many do, do ye mind, in these dull days. As the minutes passed and grew into hours, the procession faded more and more from my senses, and became gradually a series of mere noiseless glimpses occasionally breaking in on the picture of highbred face and flashing brown eyes, superbly suited with the animation of her talk. For it was talk, and of the richest - in spite of the noise of the parade. You would hardly believe me if I told you all the things we touched on, but you can guess when I tell you that Miss Lois Swan worships the painting of Uncle Abbott. She was such a magnetic and appreciative person that I felt as if I had actually seen again the places and people we talked of. So you can understand that I was pretty thoroughly roused when all of a sudden the show turned out to be over, and the carriages came for the ladies. I walked home through the crowds in seven league boots; dressed and blew down to the Patterson's (who had invited me to go with them to the Inaugural Ball), in a world of my own.

At the dance I only saw her for an instant, my duties lying wholly with my hostesses, but I beheld beside a marvellous spectacle, and enjoyed it from a highly favorable situation. It's a tremendous hall, you know, - the Patent Building, open from end to end of its 400 odd feet of length, and except for some giant pillars across the middle, up to its great stuccoed ceiling. Two narrow galleries surround the walls, the lower one supported by the pillars of a continuous colonnade, the upper one uncovered and bounded by a marble parapet. All this we took in at our first entrance, in its dazzling brilliance of countless mural designs of electric lights, and while we were slowly moving along under the colonnade to the coat rooms in the corner, for the wonderful effects and details, we did not begin to grasp until we had come out again and into the great assemblage. The first thing we did was to climb the wide stairs to the top gallery, whence, having chosen a rendezvous, we separated, and Mrs. Townsend (Bill Greenough's elder sister) and I picked out a good place along the parapet, beside a bunch of palms and long leaf pine, and established our elbows there for a long stay. Something like an hour we stood there, watching the kaleidoscopic shiftings of the gorgeous crowd, and chatting in the best of spirits. All the walls and the side columns were draped and wound in bunting and festoons of smilax, through which, in beautiful sweeping designs were strung lines and lines of incandescent lights. To our right on a projecting balcony at the end of the hall sat the Marine Band discoursing music that sounded faint even in our central neighborhood, and to our left at the other side, was a similar balcony covered with flowers and full of empty chairs, where the presidential party was momentarily expected to appear. The plan was to have him lead his big wigs straight up the room through a lane among the people (the band playing Hail to the Chief meanwhile), turn and ascend to his boxes. The lane was all made, lined with the shirt bosoms of the aides, and packed in between the crushing hundreds, and as we looked and listened, the people near the door struck
up the right time, but no President appeared, and the next minute the crowd swallowed up the pathway, and the murmurs sounded like ___. It was all one to us, up in our eyrie among the palms, for we were having very good fun as it was, and we neither of us expected the spectacle to improve with the addition of Mr. McKinley. As it happened, though, he came after all. Quite unexpectedly at least to us - and with scarcely a sign of recognition either from band or company, he led his wife and his friends and high officials out onto the balcony, and sat down before the assemblage. In time several hundred pushed up underneath and stared up him, and he smiled, and nodded his fat old head and waved his hand a bit; and this was all - all that marked one of the rarest and most pretentious ceremonies that our great republic ever attempts.

That was my best hour at the Ball. Later we went below, and found the rest of our party, and I had my word with Miss Swan, and strolled about awhile with Miss Patterson. But the rest of it was comparatively tame, and about 11:30 we left and drove home for supper. There we were met by the distressing news that the cook had sent all the ice cream & things back to the caterer's to spite him for tardiness. So we had ale and cold chicken and crackers, and soon separated for bed. And it was all wonderful and novel and exciting and jolly but - tomorrow afternoon Miss Lois Swan and I are going to walk out into the country. The next day she leaves for her distant home; & if you have any last words to say to me, now is the time to speak. R.T.F.

I return the sermon you lent me long ago.

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Division of Forestry

Sunday March 17
10:30 P.M.

Don't be startled when I tell you I am writing propped up in bed. It's nothing like broken bones or illness, but only that I find myself wide awake and talkative, and for the first time today, unoccupied. This seems an unfilial motive for a letter, and I shall have to justify myself with an account of the occupation for which you were sacrificed. Will you have facts or philosophy? Either is at your service: so to be accommodating I will give you both - such as they are. First place, instead of going to church (I say this because it sounds proper to have considered the alternative) I celebrated this superb Spring Sunday morning in the Zoo with Julie Hooper, and if you don't think that a worthy and pious employment, I will refer you to Julie Hooper and the bright fragrant sunshine of these parts. Later, I found myself lunching with her and Mr. Henry Adams, where we both listened to him talk about history and world tendencies in Art and Morals for what was to me one of the most instructive hours I have ever spent. After that I went and got Louis Fuertes at the Bailey's (Florence Merriams' that was), made a call with him, and asked up alone about dinner time to the Patterson's. A very little urging kept me to dinner, and very trivial matters indeed kept me fooling with Miss until a few moments ago. Which brings me to the philosophy I promised you, which I declare must wait till I have had a night's rest. Hence, Bon Nuit.

It has come noon of Monday - another summer day - , and I am snatchiing a few minutes for writing from the lunch hour. No philosophy is forthcoming, but I can give you the vague beginnings of my plans. I think now I shall run up to New York for a day or two at Easter, on to Boston for a week; and to Berkshire for a spell on my way back. By that time I shall know definitely where the season's field work is to take me. Tentative assignments now put me in the East, probably Tennessee, which I don't care for, but nothing is certain yet. Then, I have the further scheme of taking next winter at the Yale Forest School. But count on none of these things, for Fortune is no more fickle than government prospects. R.T.F.

(posted from Washington D.C., Division of Forestry)

March 31, 1901

Well, its a fine night, - clear windy, and starlit, - and we are all doing nicely in our several ways, but beyond the usual tale of work and pleasure there is nothing new to tell you. My week you can guess at, or, to be more accurate, compound out of ingredients already known to you. The rule is: take me "bearded child of nature" and divide his waking hours between the agricultural department and a certain number of households whose inmates I need not name. As for this present household at 1316, of which you complain I say so little, there is not much more to say than of myself. Aunt Maria seems reasonably well and happy, Mabel cheerful as usual, Dot the same, Miss Parker -. I don't know any more. The only worry seems to be Aunt Mary, whose absurd vacillations between medicine and mental hygiene both try her relatives and retard her recovery. She is a bit better apparently (I called on her yesterday), but very limp, and mending slowly. Dot is spending tonight with her instead of her companion who is always leaving at inconvenient times.
Buck up and give me some news. No one mentions the Fenns, for example, either to Dot or me. I hope Faith wasn't disturbed by my confessional letter. Times change as the days pass. There are rivals besides. But I am not as young as I was, and the beautiful words of Santayana fall soothingly on mine ear: "Wait for the Spring, dear Heart, there is no knowing." R.T.F.

No plans as yet. Count on nothing - not even Boston.

(another page in same envelope)

You'll grant that I did the handsome thing last week, anyway, - spite of my omission to write yesterday, and when I make you a few informations on my recent career, you will understand and perhaps excuse my lapse. Here is the condensed summary of my unofficial doings since last you heard: leaving out Tuesday, which seems to be a blank in my memory, the tale begins Wednesday afternoon with my punctual arrival at Mrs. Fraser's, where, owing to the tactful assistance of this kind hearted lady, I remained concealed with Miss Swan in the back parlor for the best part of an hour and a half, afternoon tea going forward meanwhile in the next room. That evening the Patterson's gave a theatre party the sensation of which for me was Louis Fuertes, who had come unexpectedly to town the day before and been invited unbeknown to me. If Dr. Fraser had not told me a few hours before what he was about, my delight at seeing the boy drop into the next seat but one might have been uncontrollable. As it was, we nearly trampled upon poor Miss McLanahan, who sat between us. Next morning, at a time not to be recorded, I appeared at the B. & O. Depot, and there, might have been observed in conversation with a tall handsome girl in a neatly fitting blue suit. A considerate couple with less to say to each other might have been seen a few feet away making our saying it a great deal easier. That is to say, said couple kindly stood aside a moment. The train pulled out for Utica, but I think I shall stop in New York a day or so at Easter. To that extent it (the train) will have returned by then. Thereafter, engagements made Jong previous came unpleasantly thick. It seemed I had had fun enough for one week. YET, full as I was, that very afternoon I had to inflict my satiated company on one of those wonderful Hoopers, with whom I had arranged to visit the Zoo, and it vexed me to be dull in her society. In the evening, too, I had to go to Secretary Jim's Wilson's daughter's theatre party, where my meagre gaiety was even more forced. Saturday afternoon, as I dropped in to the Patterson's for tea, and found myself with the Miss and Bill Greenough's big sister, I heaved a great sigh of contentment. In about five minutes (Mrs. Townsend being booked for New York next day with her husband who had come for her) we had decided to see the Roger's Brothers that night in their foolish extravaganza, and Miss P. & I thereupon walked down town for tickets.

When we got back, I dashed home to dress, came back & dined with the family, and we four (Mr. T. being the fourth) drove to a perfectly killing show at the Columbia. It was a delightful happy time, unconstrained and sociable, with ale and crackers and converse for dessert, and pleasant memories for bed time. R.T.F.

Dear Ma,

I feel complex and hurried myself. No wonder you thought so. But don't think there is anything more to be known about me than I told you. I have been rather vacant lately, that is all. The full times will come again, and you shall hear of them as before, never fear. Even now I begin to see better days ahead. My report has taken a fair jump, and the school work is moving. So be comforted. As for the "one girl" I do not know what you mean. I was not aware of any search for her. On the contrary girls have never within my memory been less in my thoughts. I almost think I had better look one up just for a fillip to the imagination. There's no one in sight though now, unless it be Miss Emmet in N.Y. and she is about as remote as the Washington princesses themselves. I had best stick to my hermitage, I guess, which is what I have said to the friendly natives here. Mrs. Hooper, by the way, was very cordial just before I went up to Cambridge and wished me to ask you to come & visit her any time this winter so as to see me. It was nice of her but I am afraid you wouldn't see me at_. I must stay at home hereafter. R.T.F. Love to Aunt Alice

Dear Dad,

You will be pleased and my mother will be relieved to hear that the world's work people have just sent me $35.00 for the Big Tree story. The check was particularly welcome, inasmuch as I have recently discovered that a good part of the assets I had reckoned on for my winter's expenses, has become unavailable. $150. that I loaned a man last June will not be paid back before I am again a wage earner. The security is good, if the favor was ill advised. But meanwhile I shall have to fatten my purse. More writing will hardly suffice, even if I get time for it, and I see nothing for it but to borrow in my turn. Now what or whom would you
advise? My security is that in all human probability I shall be receiving some 80 dollars a month by July 1902. The Fisher assets are tied up are they not? If you had any loose dollars I would give you a note for a couple of hundred at good - even usurious - interest; and in any case I expect to be able to put several hundred into the family pile by next winter. But how would it do to approach Uncle Fisher B., purely as a matter of business? I don't want any more gratuitous help for I believe that henceforth I can stand alone. Between us, you and I, we ought to muster security enough for any money lender. Let me hear your suggestions.

All in working order here, eyes, exercise, report, lectures - only no time to cast an eye beyond the gates of college. R.T.F.

Sunday June 15 '02
Central Valley, (NY)

Please be reassured about me, dear Daddy and Mother. I honestly believe in my heart of hearts that these last few weeks have been among the most profitable of my life. When half Gods go "you know," the Gods arrive. The plain truth is that I have had to part with a lot of delusion and at the same time to face some unpleasant facts. It was not any fun, but I am an abler person for the experience, and I am not at all sorry it happened. Don't waste any sympathy on me. Rather rejoice that I am gradually getting man enough for the fire to be boiling down to substance. Just remember for one thing that so long as I stay in Central Valley each evening sees me chalk up 5 "large and shiny dollars" to my own credit. More than this I do not know. My destination for the summer is narrowed (I think) to Western and Northern New York, but you had better not make any calculations lest they be upset.

I am sorry enough that I shall miss Eleanor and Daddy. Maybe I wont any way. There's no telling when I shall get to Berkshire. Bill left me today. He goes to Maine for the summer. Wish I did. I will write you more details during the week. I lead a very strenuous life. R.T.F.
Dear People,

Here are a couple of pleasing items - pleasing, that is, if true. This letter of Mr. P.'s is probably a sure thing. I guess I am chosen fast enough to tour the woodlots of the middle and New England states. The other item is even more agreeable but slightly less reliable. Grinnel dashed up here today from Washington to consult me on the Sugar Pine work which has been assigned to him this year for a tonic to his rheumatism. He swears by all that's good and genuine that I and my intimates all passed the field assistant examination - says he saw the papers, and our names and marks, and those of the unfortunates who failed. I was overjoyed and bought him live drinks and loved him in spite of his being bound for California, but I don't dare count on his report. Never as long as I live shall I believe any announcement from the Bureau of Forestry till it has come to pass and joined the indubitable has been. Still I find myself distinctly cheerful this evening; and this second letter of Mr. Graves will give you the best of my plans - work here till July 4 or 5, a couple of days at home, and then - ho for the woodlots! I have just told Mr. P. that he can have me on the 7th. R.T.F.

My dear Mr. Fisher,

To write to you is a simple matter and to send you in writing a suggestion of this misty rock bound coast with grey green hills rising abruptly out of the sea with splendid bases of pink granite is also possible - but to address a letter to you is quite another matter. I have tried putting it even though Sec. 15 but it means nothing to me and to accomplish anything one must have firm faith in it and I have no faith that any known postal system could find you thus directed - and as for Squaw Valley - that savors of the romantic and I refuse it credence. I hope you left your address at your department in Washington else I shall have the ignominy of seeing letters to you advertised in the Post someday - for much as it appeals to me to put these wonderful signs and counter signs under a two cent stamp - they are not convincing to my common sense and not having faith in them I know they would fail. The little photograph of the great big glorious mountain came along with your letter and gave me quite a thrill of pleasure. It carried me quite off this continent, the photograph did, over into the great white high Alps where I once spent a summer - I looked out of my window daily at a splendid row of them - I grew familiar with their outline and each shade of colour

(posted Central Valley, N.Y.)

June 16, 1902

North East Harbor, Maine

R. T. Fisher Esq.

Township 41 North Range 2 West Sec. 15 but it means nothing to me and to accomplish anything one must have firm faith in it and I have no faith that any known postal system could find you thus directed - and as for Squaw Valley - that savors of the romantic and I refuse it credence. I hope you left your address at your department in Washington else I shall have the ignominy of seeing letters to you advertised in the Post someday - for much as it appeals to me to put these wonderful signs and counter signs under a two cent stamp - they are not convincing to my common sense and not having faith in them I know they would fail. The little photograph of the great big glorious mountain came along with your letter and gave me quite a thrill of pleasure. It carried me quite off this continent, the photograph did, over into the great white high Alps where I once spent a summer - I looked out of my window daily at a splendid row of them - I grew familiar with their outline and each shade of colour

- only the high Alps I knew were too close to you and you got overpowered by them and oppressed. Your mountain seems to me a thing to be worshiped from afar, a great splendid god standing for eternity, stability and faith and it seems to me if one looked at it long and lovingly and grew to know it one could breath in some of its nobility - absorb some of its stability and so touch eternity. Mon ami.

It would be a tremendous test of any woman's character to take her into the great new country you are in. I am looking at it in a new light. It would be like looking at her mind and soul through a great magnifying glass. How everything that was not fine and true and noble would stand out and hurt one's sense of the fitness of things. The princess would be no real princess if she were not allured by your wandering life in scenes like this - but you might find when you saw her that she wasn't a princess after all - wouldn't it be awful! For in that clear light you could not make believe as you could in the midst of civilization - for that is what civilization is - a great "Make Believe," very well done. I wrote to you last week for friendship's sake and perhaps my writing before getting your letter will prove as well as anything could, that I am really glad to hear from you. I haven't anything splendid to look at every day - but what I see is good to look upon and no air ever sweeter to breathe. My little house is right at the narrowest part of the sound which stretches inland some six miles between the mountains like a Norway fiord and at sundown the gray weatherbeaten sailing crafts come creeping slowly, silently past - all still save for the creaking noise of the mast or the flapping of the sail as it loses the dying breeze. Mysteriously they float out past one - carried largely by the tide - laden with pink and gray granite for the great cities out past the harbor, around the islands and so over the horizon - Where? If my small children were only older I can imagine no more delightful place than this. I mean to bring them here when they are big enough to enjoy exploring expeditions to caves on the coast and overhanging rockslakes up in the hills - wild tangled paths and thickets - and hilltops where the crows circle and caw fiercely at all approach and I pray kind heaven to spare me my taste for revelling in such childish imaginings yet a little longer for now I go alone on my expeditions. If you were in this part of the world I should ask you to drop the ghost of the princess a minute or two and come and play child with me. Sincerely yours, Thoron
Here is a moment snatched while Frazier is bathing in the next room. I came on Friday, spent the night at the Murray Hill, and went up to Hyde Park Saturday. Mr. Barrett & Vanderbilt were most cordial and the former situated his offers of introduction to various likely owners. I foresee good developments. The Bureau has definitely detailed me for this sort of work, and I am going in heavily for new clients - at first officially.

This afternoon I go out to Arden where I hope I can finish my duties in a day. Then to New Haven for a brief moment, after which a flying trip to Boston and perhaps Plymouth. I am due in Washington again on the 28th for Price's wedding; and on the 29th I am to speak in the open meeting of the Society of American Foresters. Also G.P. has shoved off on me a job of speaking at Detroit on the 3rd of February. So you see there is no rest yet awhile. When that is over I hope for a month at least in Washington. I have engaged a room at 921 18th St. with a nice English woman named Mrs. Linkens, and I shall get my meals in a flat next door - such as I don't get elsewhere. The place is handy to the offices and most of my other haunts. Possible, Bill Hodges may go in with me.

I saw Aunt Mary the day before I left. She seemed very thin and white but reasonably cheerful. The 1316 people were in fine spirits - if they weren't pretending. Tell me how you are when you write - physically & financially. R.T.F.

(posted Pittsfield Feb 7, 1903 to Mrs. Alice B. Cary
For/Mr. E.T. Fisher, Lexington, Mass.)

Dear Dad,

(RTF requests "western photographs" marked Trinity Co. California of him and Fritter on horseback)

..."All finely here". I went to a great dance last night, and snowballed with all sorts of beautiful and titled dames. The night before I dined at Mr. Adams's, where I found Secretary Hay casually dropped in. I never had such an entertaining evening, and I am for the Secretary more zealously than ever. His wit and wisdom upon all kinds of life topics held me spellbound; and it was a delight to hear him and Mr. Adams slang each other. There was a young Hooper there also and a nice Mrs. Ray, but I had no ears for any but the scholar and Statesman. That's the house where the pick of Washington are to meet. R.T.F.

Dear Family,

I got back today from a wonderful weekend at Naushon, where there was unbelievable beauty and the charming pastures of the island uplifted me mightily. We had grand rides over the moors and through the woods, swims, and fine music in the evening. Also took some food and pleasant company. Today I have worked in the Cambridge and Boston offices. Same tomorrow, but I expect to spend the night in Ipswich, Wednesday to Squam, returning not before Saturday, and then to Petersham. As for combining with father's visit, I can more likely manage it on his later dates (27th & 28th) than earlier.

When I am rich I am going to ride horseback every day. R.T.F.

Dear Family,

Sorry to slip up again on the letter schedule. My eyes bothered last week & also this was about as much on my mind as I could manage. Now things are easing - eye on the mend and some tangles of the job straightened out. Also the weather is fine, and the student machine running fairly well. A week from Saturday we will close up here, and I must go to Washington for a few days about June 1st. The rest of the month I shall divide between Cambridge and office jobs. Did I tell you or did you learn that the next is my promotion year? For 1910-11 I get $3000 which will help a little. I was in Cambridge Sunday to Tuesday last, saw Jameses and Fenns and had considerable diversion by the way. How is Dorothy?

I am off now for the woods. Your R.T.F.

Richard T. Fisher
Consulting Forester
Congress St.
Boston, MA

Dear Family - also Twins,

The "Fenn Familee" has been successfully moved to the barracks in Petersham, and the outlook is propitious for a happy summer. The new specially imported cook is good natured and skillful, and the house seems quite sufficiently
habitual. All hands are full of enthusiasms over the region and its resources. We should like a visit from our joint father and grandfather. Will he come with the twins? I expect to be back again by next Sunday, and we can show him the sights. Meanwhile I have to be in town for college chores. Nights (if hot) I shall try to spend down the shore. Yours R.T.F.

(endnote marked - Spring 1903)

February 9

Dear Dad,

I take it you are by now alone with Eleanor and the crow and the rest of the live stock. You will therefore be more interested, perhaps, to hear how the world wags with me. I am tolerably settled in the top story front room at 921 18th St, and I get my breakfast and such dinners as I do not bum on my friends, in the cafe of the Marlborough next door. The room is close to the abodes of my favorite firesides, the Thoron's, Mr Adam's, the Hopkins' - and not too far from the office, and I look forward to some pleasantly stationary weeks. The work at the office is in congenial shape, and the prospects for next season's labors are very alluring. The Chief went so far the other day as to hand me some sweet words of praise which are among the first I ever had from him. He says he thinks I have strutted my gait and he has plans for me that I am eager to tell you. As soon as they are ripe you shall hear them.

I wish you would write me more particularly about the plans for alternation on the house. Mother said you were going ahead. Don't you think we could find some friendly architect for nothing? I wish I could be on hand to see the work going on. Tinkering a house appeals to me more and more. R.T.F

Better still address, Berkshire
Feb. 11, 1903 18th St.

Dear Bill,

Have at you on the well known B.W., paper, which has erstwhile proved so inspiring to my pen. I have no fullsome consignment from you to answer, but as my own last effort was but an epistolary abortion, and as I am as usual full of emptiness, I will just cut you off a few lines as it were. Myself is in winter quarters at last, and dividing my time between a quartered oak desk and the drawing rooms of the best society. I shall not tell you what lovely and highly born ladies I have had the honor to play with, because you have proved yourself a scoffer from Sconville, but I will inform you that I have been hugely interested in beholding and to some degree participating in the recent brilliant functions of this town. Usually I can comport myself on these occasions without conspicuous gaucherie (in spite of being restricted in my French to the phrase ("quelle heure est il a votra montre d'argent - ou peutre d'or?") but during the past week I have managed to squirt currant jelly up my sleeve through over strenuous struggle to dismember a snipe, and to spill a demi-tasse into a lady's lap.

Just here a check from E.H. Harriman was handed me by the messenger. The incident has opportunely changed the subject. Can you keep a secret - a mere vague possibility that is so far only in the minds of the Powers? G.P. has handed me a few kind words of praise, and with them the news that Shaler wants some forestry taught in Cambridge, and a man to do it; and would I like the job? The understanding is that I be furloughed to give the course and taken back into the Bureau in Spring for the field seasons. It is all still very uncertain.

At this moment, by a curious coincidence, Shaler and Graves turned up in town. The latter, with G.P. urged me strongly to be a professor. The former I am to see tonight for consultation on Stinkfinger & C. Vat you tink? Pour moi, I am mightily drawn to the plan, but also repelled by the apparent return to an incessant grind, and by the open question whether there is really room for another successful forest school in the U.S.A. If it succeeded it would not hurt my prestige and I could likely pull a side job or two; but if it failed, it might hurt me; and I might meanwhile have lost my grip on the millionaire et al. The personal allurements are many, not the least of which is your self, whom I could pluck out now and then from the med. fac. lab. (or wherever you will be working) for a stroll, a show, or a cigarette. Altogether I am still in a quandary, and I should rejoice to hear how my prospect strikes a simple nature's nobleman like yourself. There is a corollary to my acceptance which would hit you and me right at the spot. I should have to go smack abroad next Spring to "witness the forests of the continent". Graves invites me to go with him and use him as temporary interpreter, but it would be a caution if I could not find you too quick to tell about. I will write you promptly as soon as things take shape. Meanwhile in the words of Monte Christo "Wait and Hope", and keep mum. I shall tell no one as yet but the wise Winkle.

Thine ever R.T. Baldy

Washington D.C. Feb 18 1903

Dear Bill,

Before you get this you will have got my announcement of probable engagement to Harvard College, and the European trip which that relationship will likely imply. I will keep Marburg in mind - also the week of autumn which we are to
consecrate to the discomfiture of The Devil. As for your ingenious North wood scheme - I wonder if we really are a bit of a writer, either of us? I begin to suspect that you have the gift of it. In myself I fancy that it would take driving, or seclusion with a sport like yourself to make me work out anything that would stand inspection. But if we are going to publish our letters we had better begin cutting out the slang and profanity. These little touches are nowadays considered too strong medicine for the Hairy Hanks who read books.

I have seen a good deal lately of the people who compose Society (with the Capital S), and in spite of the fact that the glitter and the go of their life has interested me considerably, I have been puzzled more and more to know why they do it - what there is in it after all. I see brilliant beauties here who have wealth, who entertain all sorts of distinguished people, who travel everywhere, who have their great artists and composers, their politics and religious aspect put as their Lord's Prayer, and yet if it all has any real meaning for them, any significant perspective, they conceal the fact with unnecessary care. After a season with such people, I retire into my comfortable cross with a sense of disenchantment, of disappointment, and I find myself seeking the companionship of the few people I know here whose conversation is not a resolutely continuous performance, and who occasionally allow the spirit of dialogue to drowse and stretch itself, or observe the countryside, or incontinently run amuck. There is a sturdy little party here named Mary (her last name is immaterial) who has the audacity to see things with her own eyes. She speaks wisely but not too well (or much), tramps gladly in boisterous weather, knows the difference between religion and orthodox Christianity, and is actually and credibly without a hint of vanity or self-consciousness. Nor has the fact that she is invited everywhere in any way deadened the freshness of her eye for the truth. I have been on genial terms with her for two years, but I have not realized her value in this commodity until lately. We have fallen in the way (partly through chance, and partly through collusion) of withdrawing ourselves in the eddies of the tide, at a dance, or reception, or betters till drawing ourselves in the eddies of the tide, at a dance, or reception, or betters till...
Pinchot is flatteringly urgent to keep me in the Bureau, his eagerness inexplicable because I found it hard to believe that he considered me so valuable. That realization was to me one of the most gratifying phases of the case. No, I have no doubts as to the inherent advantages of the opening. It is only my own capacity that seems dubious. My training and knowledge seem all at once so superficial and incomplete. I shall have to study, learn German, go abroad (not an unpleasing necessity), and generally become the authority that a Harvard professor has to be. Graves says “don’t you hint for a moment that you doubt yourself - go in and do it: you can”. And on the whole, by this and by that, I guess I will. I am fairly solid now with a lot of the right people, and I fancy I can take the risk. Don’t forget that nothing is yet officially proposed or considered, and keep our proud and communicative mother discretely silent yet a month or so. When Shaler gets back from Cuba early in April, all will be settled in conference with him and Prang.

The blanket came and now conceals and decorates a cot in our bigger room. Bill Hodge has joined me with his piano, so that I begin to feel at home for the first time in years. Cosy feeling, I find. Yours R.T.F

(postmarked March 14, 1903 - Washington, D. C.)

U.S. Bureau of Forestry

Dear Dad,

Thanks for the pictures and - tell Eleanor about the music. I am glad to hear that no architect will be necessary for the addition to the house. You are going to design it yourself; I take it. Have it spacious if you can, and avoid superfluous passageways. I am getting very keen for the arrangement of dwellings nowadays, and if I can ever get settled in any one place I am going to live in a good camp.

Recent developments make me think I am to stay put before long. It seems I am to be a professor after all. Nothing definite is arranged yet, and the negotiations are still confidential, but Shaler has been wanting a forestry department in his scientific school and Pinchot has told him that I was his man. Last week Shaler came down here and had a talk with me. The idea is to start in next fall with a couple of courses and, if all goes well, to work up to a regular full department. This means me pretty quick a professor. Pinchot & Graves both urged me with almost inexplicable eagerness to take the job, and it did seem to me as if I ought not to let it go - you see both parties wish me to retain connections with the Bureau. The field season at least, so as to keep in touch with practical work, and they say and I believe, that the two positions together will give me a valuable standing. I guess I do well to let the deal go on. Don’t you think so? I am half a teacher by nature. I feel that whenever I speak to an audience. Besides it will not be bad for us to have me in Cambridge half the year. The pay? That has not been touched upon - officially. The President is expected soon to open negotiations. Shaler says they will have to start me as instructor, which will mean a little more than I am getting now, that is for the whole year, but if I make the work grow, and organize a department, of course the pay rises. Everything waits for settlement until April 1st when Shaler gets back from Cuba. I shall then go up to Cambridge to confer with him and President Eliot. So far you see the whole thing is not safe to talk about in public, and if you send this letter to my mother, impress it on her that the time for telling has not come. I really couldn’t have this get around now.

There is one more article that I shall have to ask you to send me from home, and that is the new scotch blanket which is on my bed upstairs. Tie it up in stout paper and send it by express C. O. D.

Let me hear your opinions on this recent turn of fate.

Your R.T.F.

RTF - William James, Jr., 1902-1904

COLONIAL CLUB

Uncommonly Beloved Knockerman,

We took our arboreal pen in hand to tell you that we guess that we will make it a go. At the moment our heels are winged, there are rings on our fingers and bells on our toes, and we can’t keep very quiet ourselves. Furthermore, many things fall to be done in this coming month of “Roses.” Nevertheless, as the world- we mean the sun- still rises and sets in your - ah neighborhood (foxed you there!) we rather guess that as soon as we can wind up our affairs and put a little bear’s grease on our loins, say about June 3 or 4, we will thrash the B+M for West Ossipee and the home of “the true the blushful Hippocrene.” But, wait till the hour strikes. Are you game?

Yes, tis true, we got back from Washington only this morning, as you surmised, having been received by the Princess E. with a cordiality most intoxicating. The program included breakfast in the garden, stationary walks in the brush, some
hours with our books, and a steam down the Potomac on General Somebody’s Yacht, during which affair I found myself the envied of Ministers and Ambassadors. But there, we do not like to boast.

May I come, then, at the end of the week or beginning of next bringing a few sheaves with me? I enclose a line of artistry which I take to be the machination of Mac. Keep it til I come and prepare a report on it, not to exceed one word in length.

Thine that I knowest-thine and none other- Baldy

**COLONIAL CLUB**

(no date)

I have just spent five days on Naushon with James Russell, who besides lambasting and cursing a lot of sailing lore into my agricultural form, defeated me 3 sets of tennis daily- and him 40 and potbellied. He is a corker and I am all for going a cruise with him someday. It was great to hear him order me around on our first sail, after we had spent a whole day rigging his sloop. He had me scrambling madly over his decks pursued ever by “slack the main sheet” “haul your jib” “lively now” “make fast” and all the while in terror lest I accidentally cast off the throat halyards or lose a finger under a cleat. It’s a fine thing, this life on the ocean wave, especially when you have a large two-fisted man to keep you moving and fill you up afterwards with kind words and bottled beer.

Yrs in a pair of overalls
R.T. Baldy

Dear Bill,

Another bulletin from you, and fully up to the standard brand. I was just about to burst forth myself, being convulsed with the impulse of communicativeness, for what with the distracting choice of careers recently offered me (as you will know by now), and the excitement of civilization, I have lately been a changed man. Add to this a handful of good plays, and a season of musical - bibulous - bohemian nights in a lodging here at 721 18th St., with a leavening of exceedingly stimulating reading, and you have a rough conception of my contemporaneous insides. This reading, by the by, has leavened the whole mass, and not the least of my purposes in writing was to send you promptly to the same books.

Still at the Capital City
March 4, 1903

If you have access to a library get anything you can by George Beraad Shaw, particularly “Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant”, and “Plays For Puritans”. As he explains in his prefaces (which be sure and read), he is a person of normal vision. That does not prevent his having much imagination, however, and the wreck of delusion and traditions in which he leaves you would be dreadful, if it were not for the redeeming fact, that to the vigorous mind (such as you and I possess!) he supplies in exchange an outlook on life that is both rational and beautiful. Personally, I believe his writings will end by modifying my own attitude toward the so-called realities as much as any books I have ever read.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

I am certain that a half day with him (Shaw, not God) would make me a perfect Socialist. Socialism, it seems, is something rather more sane and impressive than sharing other people’s money, wearing odd clothes, and being a cart tail orator, which are about the substance of what I conceived it to be. In the light of Shaw’s plays, and briefly stated, it seems to consist largely in standing on your own feet, seeing with your own eyes, and doing what you really want to do; and the variations he plays on this simple theme, I heartily commend to your notice. Read and let me hear your opinions. R.T.F.

Lines written March 13, 1903
upon receipt of William James Jr.’s advice to a forester about

to embrace the career of Professor

with apologies to L. Carroll

You are young Brother William, the bald one said,
And you say you’re inclining to frivol,
Yet you hand me the thoughts of an octogonist’s head
Shall I dare to consider them drival?

Are you wild, Brother William, the bald one inquired,
That you doubt your incredible issue?
To the casual critic you seem quite inspired-
Not with wind, but the finest fine tissue.*

You are far, Brother William, the bald one admitted,
From the notions of Shaler and Pinchot,
Yet your words to my case are so daintly fitted-
That my speedy acceptance’s a cinch oh!
The muse showing signs of growing depravity, I will renounce her in favor of plain prose. As you will perhaps have inferred, your letter of the 11th ult. was not too late, and it was so wise and funny, and jumped so exactly with the conclusions that weeks of cogitation have gradually forced upon me, that I gurgled with joy and reassurance, and forthwith sat down, even in office hours, to tell you that you are all right, and that, if Prex agrees to the partial curriculum, I shall e'en be a professor, and smoke many a meaty cigarette with you in the joyous mucous days of next winter. Whether I can go abroad or not will depend upon the developments of the next few weeks. I should have to come back in August in any case. But I will keep you posted. Back to the mines for the present. Thine in the fulness of Hope. R.T.F.

Sorry to hear you have been bored and disappointed. Moi aussi - of late. If there are any forests at Marburg I might substitute for your Swiss.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF FORESTRY
WASHINGTON D.C.

April 2nd

Better send me my mail on here none the less for I shall be detained probably until the 13th. President Eliot is to be here on that date & wishes to confer with me. I will let you know when I am to go North. If possible I will go by way of Berkshire, though my having to be in Cambridge on the 16th makes my doing so doubtful. Life has been very exciting here lately. Writing volumes but thoroughly stirring to the soul. Bill and I have had a bit of music now and then. I have had a meal or two with Mr. Adams, and I have continued to be blessed with the frequent company of the Warders, who are the rarest of people.

I have seen the Hatches several times lately, and also called upon Aunt Mary. It was Mabel who gave me the first news of Frank Faulkner's death. It seems to have been a terribly sudden seizure. Do I hear aright that Faith is to have Gramp's house? R.T.F.

Wednesday

The best news I can give in these strenuous days is that I am very well and keeping most exemplary hours. I have also entered into a compact with Bill by which we are giving up cigarettes altogether. The result of this has been in my case that I smoke about twice a day, for my time is so full - my pockets as well - that carrying around and periodically loading a pipe is too much of a chore. For the rest of my doings they are one interminable anxious but interesting mixture of conference, outfitting and digging away at lectures, over which hang the bugaboos of university poverty and the skepticism of colleagues. Still I dont want to give the impression that I am losing faith in the college as that the President is not backing the project well. I have no fear on either score. Only in getting down into the innards of organizations I am discovering the inevitable friction that was not noticeable when things were all in intention merely. I shall be glad when my lectures arrive and put the cover on my flittings for a time.

Tonight I am going in to dine with the Curtises and go on afterwards with Harriet to the bowling club that she got me into. Tomorrow night I dine at the Hoopers - "quite informally" - which will be my only other excursion from duty this week. Our high piled snow is already wasting away under a drenching rain, and I begin to wonder how I shall ever get in town. Already the streets are running rivers. A letter from Catherine Ames today sends love to you and asks Eleanor to write to her. R.T.F.

April 4, '03

Dear Bill,

Your remarks on Society are edifying, but, as you would be the first to admit, founded chiefly on the inferences of one who has spent his life in avoiding it, scarcely a scientific basis. I grant you that the society offered a collegian by the drawing rooms of the Back Bay would turn the stomach of a constipated ostrich. Nor is the bridge whist - commercialism - horse race, summer resorting article offered in New York less nauseating. As Mr. Henry Adams said to me the other night, "Society is the most unintelligent institution on earth, but it nonetheless contains the most intelligent beings extant, since those who have mastered its good and its evil, have read in the deepest book of human nature." As for the machine made smile, it's a whole lot better than no smile, and quickens (see James's Psychology Course) the sources of smiles, namely kindness. Society, in short, is perhaps a hopeless limitation for the dullard many who harden under the weight of convention, but it is a useful protection and an engine of power for the intelligent few who are unconventional enough to dare to be conventional.
Life in Letters of Richard T. Fisher

Someday I will take you by the hand and show you what I mean - a person or two who have broken every bond and thawed every icicle that have hitherto repelled you, and who yet live right in the midst of the Philistines.

Here is a sonnet I wrote a while back. Tell me what you think of it and if you remember it, take it eternally in your heart.

To ______ _
At last in freshness exquisite and clean,
Thou art revealed upon the brow of day,
To reign and sparkle o'er the yearning clay
Whose stake, whose vision there alone hast been.
In the innumerable years have flowered:
Faint budding tenderness through ages past
Bequeathed in prayer by one race to the last,
Hath made thee - ah, incomparably discovered.
O perfect creature of a whole fulfilled!
Thou art Completions self, with promise dear
Of beauties yet unborn, of songs unsung.
From thee rich echoes of old worlds instilled
And stirring prophecies have blessed mine ear
Till from the mask of self my soul hath sprung.

R.T.F.

from Downeast, 1903

August 13, 1903

Dear People,

This is a beautiful place but uncommon remote, and I shall ask you even now to stop sending mail here and forward it next to Chocorua, in care of the Jameses. I shall spend Sunday in Northeast Harbor and go up to New Hampshire on Monday. My arrival here was rather blindfold, as I came in a dense fog after dark, by stinking steamer from Rockland. But this morning, when I woke up in my parlor bedroom with the crayon portraits of Capt. Herrick's deceased child gazing down at me, I found a vivid landscape beyond the windows - two long spruce covered points with the gray rock showing through here and there and solemn little white houses on their slopes, and in the middle the steel blue cove stretching off past dwindling promontories to the sea itself which faded to a wonderful fuzzy grey skyline. You will have gathered doubtless from my remarks and the spelling on the letter head that this is not a real hotel. The grub is as bad as any I ever saw in a California hostelry. However, as I say, this rock-conifer out-cove landscape with this brilliant weather to garnish it, fills me to the brim, and my client here and his fellow professors are kind, boyish people who are living like Indians and playing like white men, so I do not complain. And so to bed.

P. S. Do not please read my letters to any one except the family.

R.T.F.

Washington Letters, 1899 - 1906

This is the shabbiest yet, dear People, but then it has been the most excusable. You have not heard a direct word I think since I left the Lang's. As you may have opined, Cambridge turned out unexpectedly exacting. I found I had to stay there a solid week, for the programme, as designed & printed in my unfortunate absence was strictly impossible, so I had to revise that and appear before no end of people to get it ratified. Then there was the whole business of lecture rooms, and hours and library to see to, and the final job of receiving and advising all prospective students, who amounted in the end, I believe, to some 15 booked and as many more strong bites and nibbles. The work took it out of me hijjus, but exhilarated me enormous at the same time, for the more I saw of the outlook, lather with Prof. Shaler and Hollis, the more I felt the thing was going to go off with a bang, and, unless I fooled it or signs failed, it was going to shoot me with it - with it to a pleasant, permanent and not unprofitable job. So I have jumped into plans and preparation up to the ears, and by winter I hope to have a forestry course at Harvard in plain sight. I had to come here to Arden for a few days to confer with the supers on new work, but as I find all smooth as could be expected I shall return to my journeying tomorrow night. Friday afternoon and night I shall be in New Haven seeing Graves. Saturday I go to F. A. Kennedy's in Windsor, Vt. to be there until toward the end of the week. After that just where I don't know, but not far from southern N.H. The last week in October I shall probably spend in Stockbridge and Lenox. Possibly we can then arrange to have the Wednesday morning club talk. Don't notify them, though, yet. Program livelier than ever.

Here at Arden all is friendly and serene - family cordial. Mr. H.* unusually genial. No one but the household was here last night and we had a cozy evening reading and sewing and gossiping. You may imagine how the occupations were
shared. Tomorrow I go into the woods for a day of instructing a new man, and in
the evening or early Friday morning I shall move on to New Haven. This is what
is called having a settled life. R.T.F.

* Harriman

Augusta
Cambridge Oct. 18th

Dear Mother,

On Thursday night I was told by the Thayer's that I was in Plymouth. This,
you see, was an error. I shall be in Plymouth, probably tomorrow, where I hope I
shall find some mail; but since telegraphing you that address I have done consid­
erable travelling. After recovering from busy days at Windsor, during which I
saw chiefly Nicholses, St. Gaudenses and the Kennedys who were my hosts, I
headed for Maine & the wedding, stopping a night on the way in Dublin, and a
night & morning in Cambridge, and reaching Augusta Friday evening. There I
found Mr. Stillman Sr., Chauncey's sister, Mrs. Rockefeller, & his younger brother
Earnest at the hotel. As soon as I had had a hurried supper we all four drove to
the Wrights to a sort of family & intimate reception. Chauncey was pervading the
assemblage as calm & unchanged as if he were the master of the house, and he
and his tactful bride mingled the different elements of the occasion perfectly. The
wedding came yesterday at noon, in a very small chapel. No one but the family
and a score of the Wright friends & relatives and the only ushers were Ernest and I
imposingly clad in 15 dollar Augusta frock coats. The principals I thought far
more impressive than the minister, especially Chauncey who said his responses
powerfully and sincerely. Afterward the Stillmans & I came down in the train
together, and picked up the two married ones at Portland, whither they had pre­
ceded. They all stayed the night in Boston and I came out to Faiths. You will
shortly get a letter from Chauncey which I hope you will respond to as requeste d.
What he will propose seems to me the best, in fact, the only way under the cir­
stances. Don't be afraid of hurting anybody's feelings, because no one really
has any right to feel hurt, and whoever is hurt, will profit by it. This riddle you
will easily read when you get his letter.

I am planning myself to come home about the 25th or 26th to do some work
in Lenox and Pittsfield. I will let you know just when so that you may inform the
Wednesday morning club. My coming will depend on what mail you have sent
me to Plymouth. No more for the moment.
R.T.F.
to a man like you who knows my inwards and won't squeal when I say "Refined Grafters".

But a bas the Ego. What do you know or care to know of the student Body? The team is still uncertain; did fairly well in beating Brown, 6-0 but seems handicapped with a poor line. I have not been to Boston yet but hope to see it before Xmas. Wrinkle has promised to give us a Sunday in Berkshire soon. I saw Curtis the other day in N.Y. and pointed out to him the dangers of the greased slide. He seemed impressed but soon relapsed into chaffing, and we decided to cut out prognostications and make merry. He's tolerable worldly these days. Schick has been declared ineligible and Yale Takes the New Haven games. I have found a place in New York where you can get real wheat straw cigarette papers. How do you like swiss cheese? Answer at leisure.

Your R.T.F.

COLONIAL CLUB

December 12th (1903)

Dear People,

What with the loss of your post office and the burning last night of the Yale Forest School, I feel as if misfortune were in the air. Perhaps in time we can get the post office back: Mr. Graves's loss I am afraid will be harder to make good, and I feel it very keenly. I shall try to see him next week on my way to Washington. I went to Dublin, as you surmised on Tuesday, and did Mrs. Kittrick's woodlot on Wednesday. The Thayer household was somewhat strained with worry, but I had a pleasant visit, quite the best of which was a twilight fire round which Galla, the twelve & I sat up in the big woods. On Thursday morning I went over to Keene by appointment with Rob Faulkner. He took me out to his pretty house in west Keene, showed me his woods, and lunched me in the company of his plump southern wife. I am to go up there again later in the winter perhaps with students, to finish his work. Today I spent here writing reports, finishing the day with supper at Faith's. Then, this morning I went out to Canton with Amy Mayo & we went over her woodlot together. It is a very handy & interesting one & I shall turn my students at it. Tomorrow I am going out for dinner to the Donald's, and in the afternoon I am going to pay calls of politeness on the Langs, Coolidges and Hoopers. I think I shall probably not get away for New York and Washington before Tuesday, because I have to speak to the Forestry Club here on Monday, besides finishing up several reports. I shall remember your directions, and try to turn up at Berkshire before New Year's at least. I do hope the eye will soon begin to show signs of improvement. My eyes I have not yet had examined. They have been very well of late - their owner also. Tell me if you have any agitation about the P. O. for me to push. R.T.F.
The Harvard Union

1903
Saturday

The net is settling round me every day. This starting a new department is supposed to be a great opportunity, and it certainly does not lack for variety and excitement, but it leads to more complicated relationships and personal adjustments than I ever dreamed of. The funny part is that one can come to feel so like a groaning Atlas, and yet still be such a small potato after all. All of which means that I am having a great deal of fussing and planning and conferring and worrying beside the actual work of preparing lectures and teaching students which is of course right and natural, and I like it; and in the intervals of respite I realize that I have probably never been happier in my life. The president is a most comforting captain in these troublous times. I go to him with what seem to me rather serious difficulties, and he turns out to be merely amused and urbanely interested,- such, apparently is his Godlike experience that he is not even surprised, and there is something positively benign about the morsel of advice that usually ends the interview. What with him to keep the horizon of politics clear and the Jameses and the Fenns and the Curtises for the personal needs I do not lack for support of any part you please.

My week has been very full. I have had two committee meeting in Boston, a dinner of the Merchants Club where I spoke, a diner at the - no that was last week, and a meal at the Fenns. Otherwise I have staid in Cambridge and peregrinated between my room, the office, the library, the club and the Museum. Tonight I lay off for a spell. R.T.F.

Monday A.M.

Just leaving South Station for Sharon, after Saturday and Sunday at Faith's. I came on from Northport L.I., Thursday morning, spent the night in Boston, and reached Rockport Friday afternoon. I shall be in these parts now for ten days, I reckon, for Sharon will take me nearly a week and Worcester four or five days. Then I shall go to Swan's Island, and so on to Chocorua about August 20. I doubt if I get to Berkshire before September but I may run up over a Sunday sometime before.

The Fenns are in great feather and I really hated to leave those hearty little nephews. We had a great demonstration this morning when I left. They all rushed down stairs about half dressed to kiss me good bye. I had good times, too, with the grown ups, and some stimulating talks with Will. Love to Eleanor

R.T.F.

Dear People,

I have seen Eleanor & her new school, and though it's not a very cheerful looking household that she is to inhabit, I think she will not lack for pleasant & profitable hours. Stopping there to find her Thursday p.m. I had to pursue her to the Ameses, where I found Peggy James as well. Young Ellen Forbes had just been there, so that E. had already fallen among old friends & been introduced to an extremely likely new one. As soon as she gets over her strangeness she will find plenty of rich opportunities, I am sure. Apparently, too, she will be allowed to extend her privilege by going out occasionally with me for an evening, to tea at the Lord’s for instance. Today she is up at Faith’s, so her first Saturday will not be forlorn.

For me, I am in fine health & spirits, only not up with my work yet. Tomorrow I go out for the day to the Sam Cabot's at Canton. R.T.F.

(no date)

Dear Family,

This is the Athol depot at 8:30 Sunday morning, and although I left Petersham yesterday at four, there is still no prospect of my getting to Concord for my day with Henry Bigelow. Hackett and I had put in a couple of hours rabbit hunting after the big storm - it had only just stopped snowing and blowing and the snow was nearly waist deep in the woods - and after shooting three fine white ones (for Faith) we wallowed back to the house, shed our wet clothes, and I started for Athol. When I got to the station I found there had just been a fright wreck four miles back, and there would be no trains either way for hours. So back I went to Hackett's house. He & Mrs. H made me very welcome & comfortable for the night & got me up and fed in time for the 7:33 this morning. No go. Said condemned train is 2 hours late, and whereby I lost my local train at Ayer, whereby I cannot get to Concord at all - unless I wait till late afternoon. Stead of having my Sunday with the Bigelows, I must go by - if I ever go at all - the express and be satisfied with Cambridge. Now wouldn't that get your patience? To spend a heavenly Sunday morning in the Athol depot, and me full of health and eagerness for talk - that is the worst trick ever played me by this evil minded railroad. As it is I can only hope that possibly by a miracle of good luck, I may get to Faith’s in time to flash my rabbits at the dinner table.

How is Emil? And are your spirits improving? Your R.T.F.

Feb. 13
Dear People,

My experiment in telephoning was not a great success, was it? And I don't just see why either, unless my transmitter is bad. I could hear mother's voice perfectly well, yet, though, I was shouting directly into the receiver, apparently I could scarcely be heard. Well, we did the business anyhow, and you learned that the cloud passed without touching us. All the necessary appointments were made, and by next Wednesday when the Overseers meet and confirm the selections, the last possibility of doubt will be gone. That will be a happy day for me, because the uncertainty and frequent consultations with officials have made the last fortnight unduly hard, and I want to get back to a more placid routine. Today I am going down to Ipswich over Sunday, to try to cool my head and warm my heart for next week. It's one glorious still day of sunshine and I shall soon be beyond the reach of the strenuous life.

I am relieved to hear how well you seem to have survived the boarders. Another year, with me richer, why can't we get on without them? Your R.T.F.

I enclose a letter of Uncle Frank's.

after the stint in Washington, setting up forestry practice

Dear People,

Time do pass. I shall be an old man before I know it. Not that I am wearing away at any alarming rate, but merely because it is Spring (or what looks like it) and no winter has come at all. I continue to flow on through my weeks, doing mainly what must be done and staving off the rest. The lectures are going better than ever, and our prospects for next year look bright. I get diversion of a sort in field work and expeditions with the students but little chance for sociability as practiced across the river. I take an occasional meal at the Curtises or Hoopers (where Eleanor has made a visit or two) and often see the Harrimans here on Quincy St, and Bill J. frequently of late afternoons - soust aber niemand. Did I tell you, by the way, of calling with Cary on Judge Smith? He was very cordial, and said I was to tell you that he had seen "Caesar," and that the class was planning a reunion in June, which you, Dad, must positively attend. Do it. I will present you with a mileage book and a lodging.

I am off now to Faith's where I hope to find Eleanor returned from Brookline, and take her to the County Club in the afternoon. Are you both flourishing? Do you need any money? Answer truly for I am considering my annual budget.

Your R.T.F.
Dapper Richard and the genial Miss Hall, somewhere on the Atlantic Ocean, toasting the mysterious 'Grapefruit Club'
Life in Letters of Richard T. Fisher

Summer in Germany, 1903

300

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Postcard from Germany

Picnic in Germany with fellow boarders
It should be added that forestry was among the last of the natural sciences to develop as a bonafide profession and graduate school in our country. Cutting one's teeth intellectually in Germany was the final step towards a credible and successful beginning for the aspiring New World academic.

So it is, twenty-seven year old Richard T. Fisher, dapper and charming, takes all in charge. His reason for sailing to Germany may have been to learn about forestry practice, but these letters will tell another story, for they are letters of discovery, of a Europe untorn by war, full of charming custom and native dress. A strange toothy language must also be contended with, and RT finds he cannot quite conquer it. Brought up in the niceties of moderate appetites, and the denial of excess, he will find, and we may vicariously relive, his experiences as he perceives them in exaggerated form. When in doubt, give a trumpet blast for America.

VII. SUMMER IN GERMANY, 1903

High Seas Drifter

Harvard club
27 West 44th Street
May 5, 1903

Dear People,

This is my last word. All is ready. Graves & I have already loaded our luggage on the steamer and we go off tomorrow at the crack of dawn. No word from Harvard yet. Thanks for the steamer rug, though I can scarcely thank you for the furry trousers which I wanted to leave behind. I have the German books too. My address is care Brown Shipley & Co. 123 Pall Mall, S.W. London. If any government mail comes, particularly the blue moneyed envelopes marked “Disbursing Office”, send it on, not that you aren't to forward private mail as well, of course; and remember, by the way, that official mail will not cross the water without stamps. I shall have to allow you a stipend to pay my postage charges.
I have spent a busy two days with writing and dashing about, but each was pleasantly finished with a meal at the Frothingham's whence I have just returned. You shall have a letter as soon as I land. No more, though, now, for I have got to get off some business notes. Think of me wallowing into the Atlantic. R.T.F.

Dear People,

Here is for the pilots to take. A Dutch band is blaring outside, and the tugs are warping us into the stream. I really feel detached at last. It is a flat sunny calm and I am in fine condition. A bunch of letters, including yours welcome me in my stateroom, so I feel thoroughly bon voyaged, notwithstanding the only person to see me off was an unbidden German baron, whom I met in Cambridge the other day. It was rather funny, being panned by a total stranger. Don't take on about the talking. I was hardly in earnest about it. Good bye and expect news from Rotterdam. Letter writing is just my size on a trip like this. R.T.F.

This is a superb boat, one of the very largest, as it turns out, and though slow, more comfortable and roomy than most of the Greyhounds. Yesterday morning the captain told me the waves were 35 ft. high, yet the motion was so large and gradual that you hardly felt it. Quite to my surprise I like the swooping, and me and Minnie Heck (the nickname of the tireless little Miss Hall) go constantly and hang over the plunging bow, where we regularly get soaked, and then go and dry off in the windy sun up on the boat deck.

One rises about 8:30 or 9 and eats glutonously of fruit and omelets & such in the saloon. Then on deck to smell the weather and greet the few early bird passengers and the timid stomachs who do not dare leave the fresh air. Then one smokes or beats the box or chams with Graves or basks till about eleven, when the band plays on deck and the damsels begin to appear. For me I chiefly play with the 16 year old Hall who is agile as a cat and uncommonly humorous. First we share a grape fruit. Then we either go up on the bow or retire to a warm corner behind the smoke stack to write or read and casually poke fun. At 12 the bugle summons us to a fulsome lunch. After that there is more lounging about until 3 when nice Dutch stewards bring you sandwiches and tea. This has then to be counteracted by exercise, and we run many laps round the deck or play ball or climb forbidden places. Yesterday we shinnied a big hawser port up on the bow and hung on by a cable running to the mast. The officer on the bridge sent down to have us removed but Minnie-Heck told the sailor who came that the captain gave us leave to go where we pleased (which he had, in fact). And we stayed. But presently a large wave broke over the bow, and the wind caught the crest of it and slopped us with it, so that Minnie-Heck laughed with joy. So it goes. At 6 we have a long dinner of many courses with music to accompany, and after it we go again on deck and have more activity and sometimes a bit of song. I never go to bed before 11:30 and usually Minnie Heck stays up too, and we sit under the bridge in the starlight with our chins on our knees and talk about ponies and woods and whether a person who cannot get on well in school and has no polite accomplishments is still worth while, which question seems to trouble the little lady in a pathetically humorous sort of way. Minnie-Heck is a rare person.

Well, as I so often say, you see how it is. I'm running as much as usual. Our plans are to go straight to Munich unless I stop over a day with Bill at Marburg. Rotterdam. R.T.F.
Dear Bill,

I am a lost lamb. These Christly Dutchmen have snarled me up hijjus. First your national hotel bled me 19 mark 10 for a bed and 2 meals, and then just as I was congratulating myself on the ease with which I had run Uehlingen to earth, a beastly ticket man sold me passage on this jerkwater train instead of the Schnellzug I was counting on. So Uehlingen will elude me yet another day. You were right, by the way, in your suspicions of the place. One reaches it via Thiengaen (itself an unknown seaport) with a drive of 16 kilometers. If I ever find Oberforster Jager, I see where I squat with him many days to recoup my finances. Frankfurt being a costly burg albeit decorative. To economize a bit. I got my lunchen today by pushing 10 pf. pieces into slits in a nickel plated wall, which, at the touch of various levers, gave down beer, sandwiches and cakes. For my haircut I was rather wily. I went to the American Bar Hotel and enquired of an English speaking porter for a skilled barber. He directed me to a man who trimmed me to the queen's taste for 10 pf. and who also conversed so simply to me in German that I came away thinking I was a born linguist. But when I got out on the bahnsteig, trying to get into a schnellzug on a Personenzug ticket, I nearly cursed God and died. So be it. I am resigned now to being a temporary goat and I shall endeavor to get what from the part will yield. Perchance I shall pick up an episode or two to swell the Little Stranger *. If I ever get to Uehlingen then I will write you something definite. Meanwhile I can only clutch at the remnants of my wits that have survived the onslaught of the German language. Marburg was a precious consummation, respite - everything you please, but there should have been more of it. Adieu. R.T.F.

* Quite possibly a book RTF & WJ, Jr. were planning.

Dear People,

I am still the plaything of accident and tribulation (which here take the shape of the German language and railway system) but I have at last found a moment of respite in which to begin the account of my adventures. You can imagine how strange and helpless I must feel to be unable to approach any one through my favorite medium of language. It's the queerest experience of my life, naturally. Well, let me give you my facts first.

We left most of our steamer friends at Boulogne Friday night where a little turtle shaped tender came out in the darkness and sidled up to us in the fog. We lonely remnants steamed on yet another night and spent a dreary Saturday anchored off the mouth of the Moss waiting for the tide to rise. Towards evening we started up the river past miles of checkerboard truck farms and little thatched cottages clustered along canals. About dark they unloaded us at Rotterdam and Graves and I drove to a hotel where they spoke English. The funniest thing we saw in Rotterdam was a railway train proceeding proudly along a busy street preceded by a man on foot ringing a great dinner bell. Next morning, by dint of Graves's German to get safely off for Frankfurt, and to enjoy a good slice of Rhine castles between Coln and Mainz. At Frankfurt we separated, for I wanted to run out overnight to see Bill James at Marburg, and Graves had to push to Munich. Besides which we had arranged that I should begin my studies by going for a few weeks to Uehlingen in Baden to work with an oberforster named Jager. So then I lost my interpreter. I got to Marburg all right that night and had a great spree with Bill, who kept me over Monday. Then yesterday I came back to Frankfurt, and spent the entire evening and all my slender German and slenderer patience finding out how to get to Uelingten. This Monday I thought I had the place cornered. So I drew some money, made a few purchases, and took a ticket for Schaffhauser fein Schnelzug (express train). By some carelessness on somebody's part (possibly mine) I got a ticket by the persmenzug (accomodation train) so that I was forced to go to Heidelberg, and miss my connection at Offenburg.

Here I am hung up in a little toy town, God knows where, with barely enough French, German, and English by which hybrid lingo I made out fairly well. But I am surprised to find how soon one learns. I already have the vocabulary of the Eisenbaum down pretty fine. In two weeks I ought to be nearly ready to fly alone.

The things that strike me most about this country are the architecture and the cultivation. The topography of central Germany except for the castled points along the Rhine is disappointingly monotonous - green and rich to be sure, but endlessly flat and varied only by occasional rounded hills in ridges, with vineyards or garden plots far up the sides, beasts on the upper slopes, and often a castle on the summit. Indeed the castle on the hill top with farm and villas scattered over the plain below has been such a common sight today that I have found myself losing interest in the feudal system. But I am all for these towns, with their neat decorative picturesquely clustered buildings, and filled in every nook
and cranny with wonderful walled and hedged gardens, or dark groves of horse chestnut trees. Tonight, in my after dinner walk, I came upon a little strip of park between the old town wall and the river flowing by in the west. It was all laid out in walks and grass plots, and toy ponds, and groups of shrubs and big trees, and the wall itself was full of tufts of wild flowers and grass. I sat there and watched the duck pond for some time, and while I sat a mallard and a wood duck and his wife strolled out of the reeds and came over to my bench. It seemed like a greeting from the Cheshire reservoir. R.T.F.

Stuehlingen, Baden 21 Mai 1903

God, we say, God, Bill. I am a wreck - game do ye mind, and still burbling, but still, in spots, a wreck. I am at last come to this Christly town, which might well be in California, if it weren't for the language and the architecture and I shall be here at least a week, so cheer me with a line. I spent a whole today getting to Offenburg (thanks to falling foul of a persmenzug instead of a schnellzug), and all today getting to Thieningen via Schaffhausen, and here I took a Kaiserliches Post 17 ks. to Stuehlingen. We came through a hell of a gorge on the way and only the boulevard on which we travelled and the uniform of the driver (mark the vulcanized broad brimmed beanpot with the horse hair plume) made the country anything but California. Well, I must write my bankers tonight and ink, trains and light are damn scarce, so adieu pour le moment. My regards to Chessez or Chasset, or Chesser, no offense to a good man. Your R.T.F.

Stuehlingen, Baden May 23 1903

(not my address)

If chagrin and humiliation are good for the soul, I shall soon be fairly well purified. Among them the German language, the German victuals, and the German drinks have reduced me to a state of childishness that gives me much inward mirth. On some accounts I am almost glad I came here green and alone, for otherwise I should have missed so many funny episodes. I seem to have been the butt of evil and ridiculous fortune ever since I left Offenburg, where chief faux pas in Schaffhausen (where one is bewildered at every turn by the confusion of french & german speech and sign boards) was allowing a ticket agent to give me francs and sous for a 10 mark piece. Franzo-sischer Geld gehr nicht in Stuehlingen. At 4 I was landed at Thiengen where I expected to take a stage. It cost me some gesticulation and public humiliation to find out where and how I was to do it, but finally it filtered into my dazed consciousness that I was to go by the post and from the backyard in half an hour. The post turned out to be a yellow farm horse stage, driven by a man in a marvelous blue and red uniform with a plumed hat... shaped like a derby, and a twirly wiggly bugle at his belt. There was not a soul in sight when it was time to start, but M. le Poste got down and hid behind the stage and blew his bugle till he was red in the face. Government regulation, I suppose. I don't know whether the man was afraid of me or ashamed of his performance. Well, we rode till 7, at first through green rolling farm land, then up a superb winding gorge with cliffs and rock slides and timbered gullies and a swift stream in the bottom. It might have been wildest America, save for the absolute boulevard on which we travelled. Stuehlingen turned out to be nestled in a hollow of rolling plateau with blocks of spruce forest just appearing here and there over the rim. I left my luggage at the Gasthaus and hurried to find Herr Oberforster Jager, who was reasonably cordial, but was off on distant duty for the next 2 days, and would have to get permission to teach me from his superior at Karlsruhe. Meanwhile he would turn me over to his young assistant Herr Malsch. (Jager has some English be it known). So back I went to the hotel and grappled with the German tongue in earnest. I found Malsch in the Nebenzimmer (or dining room), sitting with a few fat village cronies, and I became immediately the center of amused question and observation by all the company. After we got through the obvious give and take of who I was and where I came from I stuck pretty fast, and we were reduced to smiles and signs, when Frau Firchen came in to ask me what I wanted to eat. At first, I could not identity one single viand in California. Well, I must write my bankers tonight and ink, trains and light are damn scarce, so adieu pour le moment. My regards to Chessez or Chasset, or Chesser, no offense to a good man. Your R.T.F.
example, at lunch I tried to tell him that I thoroughly enjoyed his amusement at my blunders, and he thought I meant that he was mocking. We wrote that simple thought out in four different languages, and finished with a drink of beer - in friendly but still unenlightened bewilderment. Then in the afternoon he took me to walk in these great Christmas tree forests all interspersed with green meadows and cottage gardens. Here it was even worse, for it requires a pretty technical vocabulary to talk forestry. At one point we had sat down to rest, and he was striving to get a certain fact into my head and I was getting madder and madder that I could not understand, and he more and more vexed at my denseness, till finally we were glaring at each other like a pair of tom cats. Suddenly the humor of it struck me and I laughed, and got up, making signs of cheerful resignation. Just then I discovered I had been sitting in a pool of pitch, whereat I cursed vigorously in English. That touched him, and we forthwith began to barter our national cuss words, while a group of - I guess they were peasants - "binding faggots nearby", stopped work and became as men spell bound, so strange was the sight of one forest officer and one Americansche man loudly swearing at each other in the forest. I tell you it is a queer thing (for me) this being entirely without the power of speech. It makes me feel like a child and a dunce. Yet I can see that I do learn, perhaps faster than the average. Only my pronunciation certainly is vile. Herr Malsch said to me yesterday, during a particularly long and, I thought, well built sentence of mine "speak English. I understand you better when you speak English".

It is now Sunday. I have just seen the Oberforster, and he has agreed to take me about and teach me all I want to know...

May 27

Dear People,

Today arrived the whole batch of your forwarded letters and very welcome they were. Everyone seems very genial about my leaving this work so abruptly. By now you will have received news of my festive voyage. That will be followed by several letters in which an ill concealed substratum of grumbling tummy and general fish-out-of-waterness showed through a somewhat meagre account of my first week. Now times are distinctly better. I am beginning to get the hang of the victuals and the feather beds, and (passably) of the beastly language. So I sit up and take notice that this is a truly lovely country, for all its complete artificiality, and that there is much mirth and kindness in the people. Herr Jager, the Oberforster, is not a demonstrative person, but he took me into the woods with his cane and his green plumbed hat and attendant dachshund. He taught me more forestry in 2 hours than I ever learnt before in a month. His English is serviceable but absolutely side-splitting (my German must be vastly worse). It was all terribly funny. We walked through the woods on neat little trails over rustic bridges and past tempting benches each named for some female or other. You could not see a dead tree or a bush - nothing but clean bold tall spruce and fir, dark as the forest in Grimm. Every little while in spots where thinnings had been made we came upon groups of men and girls "binding faggots", or in the younger stands upon men pruning saplings under the eye of a forest guard in a green suit who carried an enormous knife in his belt. Always as we approached, every one doffed caps and murmured "Guten Tag, Herr, Oberfoster". On the way home the dog even cornered a genuine hedgehog, one of the little prickly sort, who promptly rolled himself tightly into a ball. Everything was so exactly like the picture books that I felt as if I really were in that mere work of the human imagination, fairyland. When we came out at sundown on a beautiful grassy plateau, and looked down either way over sunny slopes, checked with little unfenced camps in various shades of green, and saw in the hollows, the snug red roofed villages up to their ears in trees, with white roads meandering away through the fields it was so exactly like a Max and Morris drawing that I began to think the country was caricaturing the books*. But now that I begin to understand things a little I find the whole place charming.

The customs came a bit hard at first. They have many greetings and ceremonies in Deutschland. In the morning they say "Guten Morgen"; then at some unknown time in the forenoon they begin to say "N-tag"; and before you know it "N' Abend". Whenever you leave a person you say "Adieu". When they serve you anything to eat they say "Guten Appetit". They ask how you have slept, they tell you how you are going to sleep, and they drink your health - "zum wolh prosit" on the slightest provocation. Also if they have a hat on at the time they remove it with each greeting. There be other points in the code, but these are all I know now, and they seem to me enough.

As for victuals, you have for breakfast cold bread, butter, honey and coffee - if you asked for more than these 4 articles I think they would call in the soldiers. On this foundation you go about your business until 12:30, when you are served three heavy meat courses; distinguished by the cleverly but still undisguised recurrence of the domestic pig-chops, cutlets, schnitzel, sausage, roast ham, and other fry. Being at this time thoroughly famished, you contrive to put away a darn sight more of this truck than is good for you, besides which, not trusting the water, and fearing public disgrace if you drank it anyway, you drink etwas weiss wiener Bier. You then toddle around in a state of coma, wondering why you came abroad anyway, until an Oberforster or an agony of drowsiness, drives you forth for several hours in the forest. At 7:30 or 8 you return to the Gasthaus and the complicated greetings with something like another appetite. This time you get off with only one course, aber still Schwein fleisch. After this you feel lively and sit about the table till bedtime. I was about to say talking with several genial villagers and the junior forest officers. Alas, no!. You would like to talk well enough, and now
and then you dare to break in, or they kindly take out time for a few “where have
you been today? have you seen the Oberforster? or where will you go tomor­row?”, but for the most part you sit, dumb and wistful, wondering how in thunder
human beings can converse in such language, and whether there are any real
words behind the sounds after all. I could be eloquent on how the German tongue
sounds to an ignorant American.
For a time I had the impression that it was composed of about 800,000 words,
each 3 inches or more in length, and beginning 300,000 in auf, 300,000 in aus,
200,000 in neber.
Since then I have had several other equally sarcastic impressions, but I am too
ladylike to mention any more now. Also, Adieu. R.T.F.

* German children’s book remembered by Anne Fisher Tatlock

Hotel D’Orient
6 et 8, Rue Daunou
pres l’Avenue de l’Opera

Thursday May 28, 1903

Dear Mr. Fisher,

I was awfully glad to get your letter, and I would have answered it sooner
mayhap if I had anything to say.

I don’t ever remember thanking you for the good times you gave me on the
boat, and I never can express myself, far less mail it. You might smile ever so
faintly here. So just remember that you gave me an awfully good time.

You must be having a great time with all your little oddities happening to you
all the time. That last sentence was not what I meant to say, but somehow or other
that came out on the paper.

We have been having a simply wonderful time. Seeing Paris, its contents and
surroundings, none of which will interest you in the least.

Miss Endicott and her father are in the same Hotel with us, and we go to the
Opera and on boats all the time.

Yesterday we went to the top of Eiffel Tower, and from the top we sent you a
postal card which we realized after we’d mailed it probably didn’t have enough
stamps on it to reach you. However you may get it.

I have had some of the pictures developed, and so far they are very good, but
I am not going to print them until I get a chance this summer. So you will have to
bide a wee. I have read five books since I left Boston. Ist not Bully for me?

And you know I am all of a thrillful twitter, for Ma got a letter saying I was in
at Dobbs Ferry. Only oh woe it begins on the first of October, but I doubt if Heck
gets there then.

Mother is off looking at a horse, Pony or something. We are going to have
one this summer, but I refuse to own one but my Zeb. So it goes to Elise. It’s
been awfully hot here, but otherwise splendid. I told you that I was crazy to see
the Rickmans, and the (1,2,3,4) second day we were here we met them on the
street. They are staying but a minute away from here so we have great fun.
‘Tis a horribly lazy life one leads here. I eat more than ever, and loaf about
the Sights (not Streets). This is a horribly uninteresting letter, but as soon as I can
think of anything to say I will write it. What boat are you going back on and
when do you go?

I hated to leave the Noordam didn’t you? It was awfully exciting landing at
Boulogne. So late, we spent what was left of the night there and the next morning
went all over Boulogne seeing it thoroughly.

How many trees have you eyed so far? I liked Mr. Graves awfully. But he
gave not a whit for Minnie Heck. She was too young and brainless for The
Professor. Though he was awfully nice the last night I was on board. Told me to
be sure and let him know when I went to New Haven to any of the games, and
he’d show me around. Sweet, I think it was of him to say that, don’t you?

Miss Endicott told me to give you her best regards, and say that every time
she saw a grape fruit, it made her homesick. She really is too nice. It troubled me
immensely for I had to learn the above during dinner, and it almost made me for­
get my second helping of ice cream.

I don’t think you fully appreciate my trade mark (ed., drawing of front profile
of a bunny). I think he is sweet I can’t draw a grapefruit to save my neck. Looks
like I don’t know what. Oh I won’t bore you one minute more. I hope you will
answer this soon, and not forget. Mary C. Hall alias Minnie C. Heck

Elise is going to help me fill up the next sheets, as I’m out to send all I can for
the money and I am pumped dry. I have hardly written a letter since I left the
boat.

Dear Mr. Fisher,

We are having such a good time. I am enjoying every minute. The French
people are so funny. The sweller the Opera the more one feels as if one had got
corked up in a cologne bottle by mistake. Mr. Endicott is so nice. I love him
more and more every time I see him give a present to a beggar. He does it in such
a sweet way and then half apologized to us. May I enclose a wish - just on approval - that you will write to me sometimes as well as to Minnie Heck? Hoping that you are having a wonderful time, too. Very sincerely yours. 

Elise R. Hall.

Konstanz June 1

Dear People,

I stopped here overnight on my way from Stuehlingen to Munchen, and having an hour yet before the Dampfboote sails for Sindan, I will begin another letter to you. Life in the Fatherland grows more and more easy and interesting, but I do not love the Germans any more. One gets a curious impression of them during this two days Feiertag and Finksten - yesterday & today. Coming in from Stuehlingen I saw them taking their holiday everywhere, and especially here in Konstanz in the afternoon. The proper thing seems to be for everyone to dress up just as marvelously and uncomfortably as possible, and then go somewhere in the train and sit in a park or a beer garden and drink beer and send souvenir post cards to their friends. The post card habit is something. From Stuehlingen here in every restaurant I passed and went into there were men, women, and children, choosing picture cards from a cigar box and inscribing laborious greetings on the back. Here in Konstanz, which is a beautiful and beautifully situated town, there was more variety. There is a public garden on the water front with a tremendously old concilium pool beside it, where some old Pope or other was elected, and next to it, a big pretty hotel on a wooded island, which lies just next to the outlet of the Rhine into the lower lake. The other way from the garden are wharves where little steamers are all the time coming and going with passengers for neighboring villages, and beyond these several beer gardens, shaded with the inevitable horse chestnut. In this general region several thousand teutons were assembled, mostly whole families from out of town, with a sprinkling of white trousers, red and blue uniformed soldiers, and Swiss peasants in wonderful knickerbockers and short coats with buttons as large as butter plates, and brogans supporting spindle shanks. The soldiers and the younger members went out continually in horribly unseaworthy double ended boats, rowing ludicrously. There was one turtle shaped craft devoted to boys, which had paddle wheels, worked by a treadmill in the stern. The game with this seemed to be for those in the treadmill and the steersman in the bow to see which could spoil the others efforts to make the boat move. Out on the lake and beyond the view was great, the steamer coming and going, some with bands on their decks, the low green points jutting out on either hand, with red-roofed houses half buried in the green, and far out, rather shadowy in faint blue and white, the Alps marking the horizon. I have several times been called up to notice that they surpass in altitude and impressiveness anything of the kind we have in America, and though I have each time bowed meekly, I have reserved my own private opinion, that the Cascades of the high Sierra, not to mention Rainier and the rest, could overwhelm them single-handed. You see I am just a hide bound Yankee after all. So far I have merely grown prouder and prouder of being an American. I even found myself thinking, after seeing a few of the military, that a few thousand Yankee soldiers could account for the whole brainless beer drinking Army of Kaiser Bill in a single fight.

sent to William James, 28 Renthof, Marburg

June 2

Being in Munchen, and already agreeing heartily with your opinion of the Lowenbrau, my woe, i.e. mucous and sick, has somewhat abated, helped thereto by the now almost certainty that I shall be with you in July, Graves's plans contemplate joining his family for the latter part of July so I shall be free, and no one cares a damn where I go except, vielleicht, you. Where shall it be? Economy suggests that we make it somewhere in central Deutschland, but I will go with you most anywhere. Pick out a good, clean inexpensive burg or county where the streets do not run hop juice and the people sweat the same, thank you. We are off tomorrow to the Bavarian highlands for a week - Tegrend See so my mail (in which I hope to find a line from you) will accumulate here. I am getting so possessed now by delicious previsions of the Little Stranger that forestry has a hard time. I spent most of Pfingsten (Whitsunday) alone in Konstanz - lonely but full of thoughts, and it strikes me the child will be a genuine young master, sui generis, hand made, with a bouquet to him like old Port. Meanwhile to bed, albeit I have yet much to say. R.T.F. an American by God!

Later in Munchen June 2

I came to port safely last evening and found a welcome from Graves and one of my former fellow Yalensians, Meyers. The plan now is to pull out of here tomorrow with no baggage but what will go in a Ruckspack and spend a week in German Alps. So today I have rushed about and spent the apparently appalling sum of 30 marks for the pack sack, a hat, socks, and mountain shoes. Divided by
four the sum is less startling. Munchen is a decorative town, full of imposing pubic buildings, and stately arches built across the street from wall to wall. It is also full of enormous beer halls and beer gardens, where last evening, I saw thousands of fat sweating Germans drinking, drinking, always drinking from great stone mugs of beer. Which Bill & I agree is not an inspiring sight. I am going to see the gallery here today, and perhaps hear some music in the evening. But I shall be glad to get back into the country. We shall return here in about a week for a new start into Austria. R.T.F.

...(beginning missing...)

...to learn this summer and this could well be done in a constant atmosphere of parties, waiters, stiffness and English speaking foresters. What chance would there be for me to learn the tongue in Marburg, if I came there early in July? It looks now as if Graves would be off duty (or rather on duty to his family) for a good part of that month, so I must be looking up where to settle down.

Pour le petit étranger - an item. Among other things we have been having here a bit of a time over Ein Auerholm - grouse, they tell me. One of the under forest officers told me soon after I arrived, in the course of one of the primary school dialogues which form my conversation, that he shot an Auerholm on the 13th of May. Today at Mittagessen we had large slices of dark meat which was said to be Auerholm - his Auerhahn. After the meal, thinking I must have heard amiss as to the date of the killing I asked him the date again - this, of course, in labored German. When the same inedible fact reappeared, I blurt out in involuntary English: "But how did the darn cuss keep so long?" De Forstman has a little English, but that floored him. "Dunkas?" says he, "Demkus? was hest dunkus?" I passed away on the road. The relish of the well known idiom, bewildering the ignorant foreigner overcame me entirely. And it was worse at supper. Again the Auerholm, this time cold. I asked if it was the same bird, and (to recall the brave explicit), if the forstman had shot it. A genial party with cotton in his ears, who sits beside me, leaned toward me and said impressively, "Der Auerholm war krank". As I understand about one word in ten, you can see how that simple joke put me under the table. When I had recovered, I asked how much meat could have come from one Auerholm. Again the G.P. on my left explained the marvel. The forstman had purchased a dead carcass, it seemed, and presented the flesh to the gasthaus. Picture the tableful of fat Germans, the cuckoo clock, and the music box, and the helpless Americano, is it not an enticing scene? It may be it was lovely, this learning a foreign tongue in the Black Forest, but it has its dampers... R.T.F.
whirling about in the original waltz. By this time one of the forsters was making music for them on a zither, hostess was leaning against the wall, and the storm howled without. It was the real thing, as they say. The costume that all the men wear, all the natives, as well as the forester, is very picturesque - hobnailled boots, thick gray stockings coming to just below their bare knees. They all carry big hazel wood staves, rucksacks on their backs, and in bad weather long capes such as I will show you when I get home. It strikes us as a somewhat chilly rig, but very comfortable and light.

The next day the Forstermeister himself went out with us accompanied only by one forster - both in the native costume. They took us across the lake to the west and far back among superb needle peaked mountains, where we saw forests 300 years old, and deep canyons that reminded me of nothing but the far west. Then, yesterday the same forster took us over practically the same route so that we might photograph and take notes, only, this time he varied the trip by taking us up a side gulch with great craggy mountains rising on either side on the chance of showing us a chamois. The sides of the mountains above the immediate banks of the stream were covered with what looked like little meadows sparsely grown over with spruce, and everywhere interrupted with jutting crags and dry gravel runs. Every few meters the forster stopped and scanned the heights through his glasses. At last he said, after many such halts, "Ich sehe ein-zwei" and I gained great kudos by spotting them almost as soon as he with my naked eye. But they were hardly more than specks, so he said we would cross the stream to the hut of one of the duke's jaeger's who had a big glass. The jaeger lived in a little meadow, in a house with rocks on the roof, and several squalid 10 to 14 year old boys all smoking enormous pipes. He received us with courtly "Gruss Gott" and flourishes of his plumed hat, and told us that he had that morning seen 28 chamois in a bunch. There were eight then, so we all sat down on the grass and studied the opposite slope through glasses - this time we had better luck. The forster soon picked out a group of three chamois feeding along the edge of a gravel bed. We trained the big glass on them, and saw what looked like several yellowish brown goats with horns bending back at the points, and I gathered that they had fleas because, while I was looking, one scratched his neck with his hind foot. So now I know where the leather comes from.

I will try to get you a photograph of the town so that you can see what a cozy little place it is. We leave it probably tomorrow to go back to Munich. After that in a few days we go to Salzburg in Austria. I enclose a sheet from a local timetable. Here trains have a casual way of coming and going. R.T.F.

Dear Bill,

This mountain air and strenuous life among the Bavarian bare legs has about done for my mucous, and I am getting keen for all varieties of religious experience.* It is now beyond the shadow of a doubt that I shall be yours for a good fat slice of July, either in Marburg or anywhere else. This, by the way, the immediate purpose was to work off a little Sunday ennui and enlarge upon the wonders of Tegrend See. Sinewy forsters have lugged us over the most Christly mountains east of the Rockies, and we have seen virgin forests, beetling cliffs, roebuck, chamois (still wearing the celebrated leather with the hair on), Tyrolese mule drivers dancing in mountain inns, and so many kilometers of rough country that I am good and glad to spend this Sabbath on my lean and narrow bed. Everything here is neat and picturesque - the only drawback being the unGodly dialect which makes my proud progress in Baden German feel like 10 words of Chinook. They also have here a totally different sort of greeting and farewell - Gruss Gott, Gut zu speisens, Augen - ______. But our beds and the big airy room in which they stand cost us only 1 mark per apiece, and our meals (big ones) only about 4 marks more, so there are compensations.

The Little Stranger continues to expand - in imagination. I have several new ideas for his construction. It may be hasty to predict so fulsomely on nothing but hopes, but I do think (such is the charm of our joint wits!) that the L.S. (if successfully brought to birth) will fascinate the quality and amaze the plebes. Or else, as you say, he will amuse his parents no end.

Did you ever hear of the land of the screw mouthed tick (presumably somewhere in the great west)? He has a body like a nut - an iron nut - and it is his habit to bore himself into the hide of the helpless native, in order to suck his heart's blood. And things went badly in that country until one fractious day arrived civilization and the monkey wrench wherewith the native is now enabled to extract the screw mouthed tick from his person. One cannot vouch for this tale.

I had great fun yesterday watching 2 chamois through a telescope. They were feeding high up on a craggy peak in a little meadow, and I knew that they were real and had fleas because while I was looking one scratched his neck with his high hind foot. Besides, a man with bare knees and a plumed hat told me they were not yellow goats at all but genus belonging to the great duke of _____.

Feeling better. Write me about the ship soon, I shall be in Munchen (90 Schellingstrasse) for a week yet. Your R.T.F.

* A whimsical reference to "Varieties of Religious Experience" by William James, Bill's father.
Dear Bill,

These postal s.o.b.'s have apparently been sending back my mail to the writers in all quarters of the globe on the purely fanciful assertion by the city police that no Fisher lived at 90 Schelling Strasse. So if you have any more words to send or any returned letters to launch again, better send them to the Bayersche Ueriensbank Munchen. If you have just naturally been silent during the last week buck up and tell me how you do, not because I request that you should be always writing but because I want to be sure that it is not an aggravation of mucous that foregather anyway. Write me how you feel and otherwise opine. Yes as much.

R.T.F.

I am in a good deal of a quandary about my work. I do not seem to be accomplishing much. I have to hang to Graves's coat tails a good deal which means wasting some time and somewhat paralyzing my own initiative. On the other hand I get a lot out of him that I could not get otherwise. The more I think of it the more I think that German is the most important thing for me.

Munich June 14 '03

Dear People,

(If you will be properly appreciative & keep them, I will enclose letters I had from my steamer playmate & her big sister)

Since my last letter I have been constantly at Munich, occupied chiefly in reading German, and seeing the town. …… So as soon as I could after I got back here, I hunted up a room of my own. By good luck I got a dandy, 26 Bauer Strasse close to the center of town a stones throw from the two picture galleries and commanding a view across the street of a beautiful walled garden in which I can see the gate and the great pinnacled porticoche of some high life palace or other. Here I have generally spent my mornings and parts of my afternoons. I do not need to stay out till noon for the Hausfrau brings me my tray breakfast of coffee and rolls (latterly supplemental for the stomach's sake, with 2 boiled eggs), and I have conveniently become quite a student and physically very lazy. Day before yesterday Nash arrived from Nutomburg and as Graves left yesterday to recontire Gmuaden beforehand for us. I have knocked off work to take in a few of the sights. So far we (Nash and I or sometimes myself) have set off into galleries in which the old masters interested me the most. They have things of Durer, Rembrandt, Frans Hals, Titnoretto, and others of their school, but not, I should suppose, a very fine representation of these painters. I shall go again today to get a better idea of them. On the whole my feeling for the German civilization (so called) does not grow more affectionate. The people certainly have finer buildings than we, more decorative cities, enormously more scenes of the picturesque (to judge from the drawings & paintings, even to the funny papers), and pleasing reverence for their great musicians and men of letters as shown by the pictures, statues, and streets representing or named after Beethoven and Wagner. But unless the best breed keeps out of sight or unless appearances are unusually deceitful, all this sensibility is disgustingly disguised by ungainly unhosomous bodies.

Men and women were seated at tables each with a quart jug of beer before them. The air was foul with the reek of tobacco, beer, cheese, and human effluvium, and the babble of talk almost drowned the music. At modest estimate there were 6000 person in sight. The music (when you could hear it) was fine, and the beer, we stood it until our heads ached, and then went out to breath. But, there were not a few babes in arms who stood behind with their parents and inhaled the poison, I daresay, half the night.

Graves has just telegraphed back form Munchen for us to come in and join him tomorrow. So we have rushed around to the bank and drawn out some Austrian money, that mysterious currency which is built in two unequal scales of coinage, each called by a different name. The time card says we leave tomorrow at 8:44. That will be a two weeks trip in the mountains.

I have just got a letter from you in which you acknowledge the first two of mine. It seems to be a long walk from here to B __ and the facilities are none too sure. I have got a good many letters from you - 6- I should say and the Republicans* which I was glad to see. But you must not be so exercised about my drinking beer. You can’t drink water over here, you know, first because it’s hard to get and isn’t pure when you get it. I never drink a drop of anything between meals (except a little water from springs) and only a little beer or white wine at meals. If you saw how this nation lives and fattens on these beverages you would not worry over the few drops that get into me...

I am probably coming home with Bill, sailing Sept. 4 from Liverpool. R.T.F.

* The Springfield Republican
......We are seeing things under almost royal guidance. Sunday, Nash, Myers & I travelled from Munchen to Gmund, where we found the professor in great glee over the excursion which the Austrian forest minister at Vienna had laid out for us. The programme was all printed and included twenty days of progress through the Solzkammergut Mts. Foresters had been wired to receive us in every direction, and we were to start the next morning. So we felt very biggety in Gmund. After dinner in our Inn we went down to the esplanade on the lake where the band plays and Austrian high life promenades and drinks. It was a marvelous view - the lake winding away between almost perpendicular mountains, some of them still snow-capped, and in the foreground the slopes to right and left wonderfully green and luxuriant, and dotted with pretty villas and cottages. Almost in the middle stood a massive Schloss, with minarets and curious corners, half buried in trees at the end of a long point. Numberless swans, and bright costumed people and boats made it all look still more like a comic opera. Next morning we set out for our first station - the place you see named on this paper - which we reached by travelling half the day in jerkwater trains and the other half in a light steamer on the Attersee. At the east end of the Altersee lies Weissenbach. It's a jaunt backed up against a 3000 foot cliff, with whole masses of Alps making off south. The little spot of level on which it stands is inhabited, even in summer, by only 150 people, most of them from Vienna and Prague, and their houses with bowers and gardens and tinkling brooks, often right at the waters edge, are almost too cozy to look at. Also their females are extremely ornamental. Well, the Herr Forst Vervalter met us with great cordiality, came and sat most of the night with us, and today took us on a long walk up in the mountains. A young assistant went along, and he was kept on the jump doing things for us. It almost made me ashamed. Just at noon we came to a cabin where we lunched, and early in the afternoon, the young flunky was sent flying ahead to one of the big man's own cabins, where we later found a great fire going and slippers to warm the feet. From there we went down on the back side of the mountain, and found a carriage waiting, in which we were grandly driven back to the hotel. Everything, you see, in style. The forester is a delightful man, full of courtesy and the ceremonious forms thereof, and brilliant besides. He is to lead us about for 4 days and then pass us on to the next one. It is a great thing to have a card from headquarters. R.T.F.

Once more I cannot possibly remember where and when I last wrote you. I suspect it was in Munich last Wednesday. If I did I told you that I had left Graves and the rest of my recent companions in Ischl, being myself decided for reasons of economy and study to come here to Marburg for three weeks. After which I shall either join Graves again in France, or travel a bit more by myself. I am very glad to see a few weeks quiet ahead of me. For the last two years, you may remember, I have done little else than ride in trains, boats, and carriages, walk and live in strange houses for trifling periods. This Marburg where Bill is working is a quiet town with low wooded hills all about it. Nothing seems to go on here but the duels and drinking bouts of the students. There is a fine old castle on a hill behind, which is easily reached in ten minutes from where Bill lives. The castle, I fancy, will be our only place of recreation, for Bill is working day and night, and I, so far as possible, shall follow his example. I mean to get a German student to converse with me each day in grammatical German, so that I can be acquiring the language at the same time that I am working up my forestry. Already I can understand a great deal, but the ability to speak comes very slow indeed.

...I am more and more for the English and Austrians, and less and less for the Germans. The Germans, too, do not seem to be very keen about us in America. No letter from you for more than a week. These mails here are very uncertain. R.T.F.

It strikes me that Eleanor owes me a letter.

So. The West is under water, the East is burning up, and R.T. Fisher has been appointed instructor in forestry at Harvard. None of these facts seems to affect me much. I am a mite too far off - also much occupied. Still, the certainty that I shall be called upon next winter to give forth lectures has somewhat changed my plans. I think now I shall cut short this tour of the Salzkammergut and go back to Germany, probably Marburg, where I can live with Bill for a few weeks (cheaply) and really buckle down to the study of German, which I shall need even more than forestry. Europe is getting populous all of a sudden with my friends. I had a letter from Chauncey. It came with your two about the fires and the instructorship.
Written in mid-ocean. He is now in Paris. Also the Warders are just on their way to Austria, and various students are said to be at large on the continent. I shall not bother with many of them except Stillman if he can be reached and the Warders if they come handy.

I wrote you the other day from Weisenbach which is just over a high rocky mountain from here. Since then we have been having strange and funny adventures. Most of the time when we are in tow of the Forsterwalters (who are great chiefs in these parts) we are little short of royal personages. The Weisenbach man was particularly royal, not only in the demonstrations which he arranged, but in the superb grace and flourish with which he treated us. We were there till Saturday and each day we made a progress through one of his forest districts, with a uniformed forster to carry our rucksacks, and peasants salaaming at every turn. Usually we came out at some village toward 4 or 5 and boarded carriages mysteriously provided to receive us, and then rolled grandly homeward along the lake shore through village after village, around beautiful caves snuggled close under tall cliffs, and everywhere the people, big and little, peasants and probably high life Viennese from their pretty villas, bowed and saluted us as if we were a presidential parade. Myers was very funny about it, saying it was easy to be a king in this country, and addressing me as his royal brother. When I said that people seemed to work after 6 in the villages he said, “Cousin, we will change the law”. But I am not altogether for this graded society. It makes me a bit uncomfortable to see people ordered about and stepped on, and given the scraps of lunch and thrown a 20 heller piece. Still they seem to like it, and any less distant treatment almost makes them faint. For a while I used to take off my hat to the women who greeted us en route, but Myers pointed out that I was degrading the Forsterwalter in the eyes of his subjects, so I had to stop and content myself with a languid inclination of the head and a casual “Gruss Gott”. This will have to be a light letter for I have many more to write. R.T.F.

Gemunden
June 21

Dearest Knockenmann,

England glisters ever more allusively through my Marburg mist. When I direct my face toward the good old setting sun, and see the green land where men bathe and eat and speak a real language, I shall sing me a paean of victory. Three crying evils of German civilization (ask me of these later) continue to poison the air of this neighborhood and I continue to ply my aimless business as far from them as possible. This Vogt household is a rich oasis, I tell you - a delightful mixture of educated foreigners presided over by a thorough housewife and intelligent woman; and spiced with the surprising witticisms and excellent music of an industrious daughter. From which French adjective you will doubtless infer that I find myself quite comfortably established. Johnson and I will inform you further that in this kindly atmosphere I have expanded like any cabbage. Cabbage may not be quite the word, but you should see the afternoon group here under the pear trees, the Hollander & his wife, the Scotch lassie, the German Fraulein and me - myself usually the author of so much idiocy - so much seemingly funny idiocy - that I have almost begun to think myself a wit. Without scruple I launch forth into any kind of a subject whatsoever, blundering, and smiling and gesticulating, bowing and ‘bitte schoning’ the considerate company when they correct me, and finishing often, by putting half the bystanders under the table. It’s really a cinch to be funny in German. Yesterday at the request of the Fraulein, who wanted an Indian story, I told them a tale of a Crow redskin whom I named (exact translation only) Herr Indiane Dommer stimmer. I put him on the platform at Medicine Hat with all the outlandish garbage I could think of on his person, thought of his ancestors & his horses on his land, and a hand outstretched for tourist trinkets. It was not an exciting tale tho that old Thunder Voice told with the unavoidable pauses, the inevitable shiftings of motion, the mock expressions that I used to cover my embarrassment and eternal “wie gesagts” and “disser Herr Indian’s”, it made an unconscionable hit, so great a one that twice again in the day I was called upon to repeat the performance, each time, naturally enough, with less effect. On the whole I won great and unexpected kudos but the strain was evidently great, for today it is almost all I can do to ask for food at the table.

......We are going together tonight for a farewell call upon Chessex whom, by the way we met in the woods last Sunday: walking grimly with his alpenstock. Chessex seems in fair spirits, and says Zumstein has often asked for you since you left. Dear old Dr. Libby is now investigating the origin of the human conscience. The essence thereof when found, will form a new wrinkle in his smile. The idiot child is said to have sprung her spinal cord through prolonged oglings of students; but this may be only a rumor. It is yet too early, perhaps, to congratulate her parent. ......

Your all but demented Baldy.
Dear People,

Some time has passed, I think, since last I sent you any news - more than a week I am afraid. A week ago Sunday I went out to Frankfurt to keep my appointment with Chauncey and his mother. She turned out (as you might imagine) to be a delightful person, and I spent that day and Monday in good company.

We went to the zoo and ate great meals in the hotel (being welcome after my poor diet in Marburg), and Chauncey and I got pretty well caught up on the arrears of conversation. As soon as I got back here Bill began to make preparations for his departure to England and I for a new domicile. My fraulein found me a place in a really highbred family on Universitat Strasse, where a mother and daughter board and lodge several Scotch and English students and give one food, bed, continuous German and kind hospitality for 25 marks a week, 6 dollars. I have a room in a small cottage standing in the garden behind the house. The Scotchmen are friendly fellows, and, I already feel as if I had been here weeks, albeit I manage to speak but little German. German households are certainly homelike. Saturday morning Bill took his departure, and I went with him for a farewell spree in Frankfurt. We spent our entire time at the zoo, and I saw him off for England this morning.

From now on till I sail, I shall stick pretty close here so as to acquire all the German I possibly can. That will also be the cheapest thing I can do with my time. Probably, though I shall go to England about Aug. 20 for I want to spend a few days there and perhaps buy a few jeans thereby saving some money. It is much better I think to get something solid of one place than to be merely skimming about over the surface of a strange country. Marburg is a pretty enough place, and I have met some good people here already but the student life as it meets the eye is not very pretty, most of the students belong to corps (or clubs) and wear colored caps to designate the fact. They begin in the morning to drink beer, persevere therein during the day, and achieve conspicuous inebriation by midnight. Apparently there is absolutely no fellowship except over beer. They greet each other when not in liquor like automatons of wood. They never exercise, rarely bathe, and their complexion are like mottled putty. Every day some corps or other marches into the woods behind a brass band to meet some dozen kegs of beer, beside which they boozie to music until all pass away. Every Saturday they have duels or mensurs as they are called for which they practice all the time. The combatants rarely have any personal grounds for fighting, but the meetings are supposed to cultivate courage, and every man must take part. The affairs occur in an inn close by here in the country, where the authorities find it easier not to see them. A week ago I was taken out to see the combats. It was a nice piece of pig sticking. There was a sort of hall with sawdust in the middle, two chairs with bowls and antisepsics, a lot of white robed doctors, and students crowding all around the sides. The contestants were padded over the arms and body and up to their ears. They reminded one of Tweedledum and Tweedledee before the battle. Their eyes were covered with horn spectacles and only their faces and the tops of their heads were exposed. Their swords were basket hilted, and sharpened like razors for six inches back of the point. When everything was ready, they stood a sword's length apart with the seconds between, and on either side. It seems they must hold the sword arms straight up and strike without lowering it, that is, chiefly with the wrist. They are allowed four blows (each of which has a definite name). At the word "lass" they deliver these with a great clashing of steel in from 6 to 8 seconds, after which the seconds strike at the swords, and the principals step back. A bout lasts 10 minutes (with time taken out between rounds) or until one man has to quit. It is all so quick and the swords are so sharp that at first you cannot see what has happened until a red line begins to widen on somebody's face or blood to ooze from his hair. The first fight I saw was a slaughter. One man was enormously quicker than the other with his blows. At the very first crack he laid his opponent open from just above his right eyebrow almost back to his cerebellum, and the Doctor ran his finger into the cut and raised a flap of bloody hide as wide as a banana peel. After they had patched the poor man up a bit, the other one gave him exactly the same cut on the other side of his head. Still he was not too weak to fight, though bleeding like a pig. In the third round, he got more than he could stand up to. The little speedy man caught him a dropping blow on the left cheek so that his face opened from his cheekbone to his teeth, his facial artery spurted like a fountain, and as he was helped wobbling to his dressing room, a piece of his upper lip hung down like a rag in the wind. It's not a pretty sight you see, and I don't know but I prefer prize fighting. R.T.F.

Thanks, Eleanor, much for your letter.

Marburg July 20

Dear Mother,

This is a still hot Sunday somewhere late in July. I do not know the date for I never keep track of the days now, and wonderful to relate I have just been to church for the first time in two years. Your letter of July 12th came last night, so that I feel quite en rapport with Berkshire. That means a great deal nowadays, I can tell you, for I am worlds away from my usual thoughts and habits, deep in all kinds of strange & fascinating influences. Of course the foremost is the German language, and Endlich hassen mir Gelingen die sprache ein bischen zu beherrschern, in other words I can now enjoy myself thoroughly among German speaking people. Of course, I can speak only the baldest stuff myself, vas I can understand everything. Nothing could have been luckier than my coming to this charming family, with its scotch, french and dutch boarders few of them do any real work....but they are continually chatting together in the garden, having walks and picnics, and music in the evening, so that one cannot help learning continually. The dutchman and his delightful child-wife, the scotch girl and I have fallen
Dear People,

I begin to feel today quite a bit as if I were starting for home, for I have been writing letters to Washington and to woodlot owners, announcing and providing for my return to work in the fall. It is the first step towards a pulling up stakes here and setting out for a last 10 days of delightful poking about - fun - a five days of it by myself in Holland where I shall see some wonderful pictures, and the last in England, part of them at Rye* whither Mr. James has bidden me for a couple of days and part of them in London with Bill. Give heed by the way while we are speaking of home coming. The Bureau and the owners will be sending me letters late in August, and I have asked to have them mailed "hold". Be sure and hang on to them for they contain appointment instructions...hardly safe, I think, to send any letters after Aug. 20th, and of course those marked "hold" you need not send at all. But to return to the argument. Did I write you of the Cassel trip - the gallery and the Kaiser's fountain? I must have. No, be hanged if I did. Well, I went with Perry to see him off as it were on his way to Berkshire. We saw Rembrandts & Frans Halées that took my breath away - they were my first old masters, you know - and it was there among those dutch painters that I made my firm resolve to take in Amsterdam & the Hague on my way home. Rembrandt things hit me harder than any other pictures I have seen this summer. After Cassel I had not long to vegetate, for these two Scotch maidens to one of whom I owe much of my slender German persuaded me to spend Sunday with them in Frankfurt. We sent you a post card from there out of the Palmengarten. You will find the lassie's signature inscribed on the back. It was an amusing day altogether. We were all very sleepy, but all very determined, and we did more organized and professional sight seeing than I have done all summer. We saw the Goethe house, the cathedral, the aforesaid palm garden, and finished up in the evening by going to the Opera for 3 marks. We had front row seats in the balcony, very comfortable and good, and we all leaned our elbows on the plush covered railing and soaked in the music and the beauty of the great auditorium, and the sense of freedom and all for 3 marks. The opera was Samson and Delilah, a new one to me, but very impressive. Aside from the music there was an astounding piece of stage mechanisms at the end when Samson, blind and jeered at by Delilah and all the court, prays to God to have his strength restored, and when the prayer is answered, he bursts the whole vast resplendent structure of the temple with a heave of his shoulder. Pillars and walls and trailing draperies collapse upon the dozens of

P.S. Why did I go to church? For the same cause that took me on the last occasion 2 or 3 years ago.

Summer in Germany, 1903

Aug. 4 1903

T. Fisher
white robed women and priests & soldiers just as you see walls come down in a dream. A dust rose and great dull boomings sounded, and there was only a heap of ruins left, with every jewelled Philistine beneath it. I was quite terrified till Samson reappeared before the footlights, leading the corpulent Delilah by the hand. (Delilah could sing, though, I'll say that for her). After that we rushed for the train, and on the way I crushed one of Scotland's fingers in a train car door, and we didn't reach Marburg till 2 A.M. Then just to show I was a real penitent, I got up the same morning at 6 to put her on a departing train. I am now my own man again having just slept hours. I like being in Deutschland - somewhat.

R.T.F.

* To visit Henry James, the author

August 6, 1903

Dear Bill,

L'Huillen has come and I've seen Zumstein - two stirring events. L'Huillen fascinated me. Zumstein filled me with amusement and Chessex took L'Huillen and me to visit the Anatomische Instiut, and the little man received us in that office of his full of bones and stinks. Zumstein was in a long and very dirty linen overcoat and in the midst of a prepar which he proceeded at once to show us. We then made a tour over the entire building from the room where all the skulls are to the little dissecting corner where Chessex has spent so much of his summer. Zumstein with his quiet little smile and his chubby voice (if one may so call it) taking down bones and innards and... and in every case saying "Colossal" with every other breath. He showed us also, by the way, and with evident admiration, an arm dissected by you, of which he said "Das ist sehr schon gemocht." But the richest part of the experience, what seemed to me most typical of the man and what you have said of him, took place in the pickle room, where all those bones and things with rubber tubes attached to the ends lie all crumpled in glass jars. The little man got down a pot full of black shriveled looking lungs, selected a pair, wiped the rubber tube on his coat tails, and blew the two lobes out to splendid dimensions. He then held the thing aloft and beamed at us. L'Huillen pulled his mustache and mumbled "schone preparat." Zumstein crushed the lung against his stomach, remarking that it was already ten years old and the picture was complete - indefatigable, genial little Toper. What a man he is!

When our inspection was over we went to M_, and though the necessity of speaking English somewhat smothered the conversation, we got on very well and exchanged some tolerably gallant speeches. Chessex quite outdid himself with wise and modest remarks. As for L'Huillen I could not take my eyes off him especially his hands. I don't think I ever saw such hands, so delicate and graceful, so deft and strong, and altogether so expressive of breeding. He was continually pantomiming with them too, pouring imaginary gold pieces into his pocket and shooting truant gelds at imaginary Kellners. At one point in the discourse he turned about in his chair (we were alone in that little neben Zimmer upstairs) and toasted the Emperor's posters in coffee. All very seriously, but also comically derisive. A good deal of what he said recalled your account of his inward discontent, and I felt like you, that it would be a fine thing all round if a place could be had for him in America. He is really too big a man to be coddled and restricted and perhaps wasted in Geneva - if Geneva is indeed such an uninspiring place as he describes it to be. L'Huillen himself seems keen to come across the water. He and Chessex tried to get me to go with them to Hamburg and thence whither the spirit moved, but I resisted, albeit with difficulty, and stayed behind. Perhaps L'Huillen will meet me in Holland. As for Zumstein I shall always see him with the eye of memory, stooping over his glass jar and clutching his bedraggled bow-nails to his bosom as a child gathers his blocks from the floor. Mahlzeit, R.T.F.

Alone in Amsterdam, - and rather bored, with Bill J. & a cordial invitation from his uncle awaiting me across the channel. I am almost unfit to act these next 3 days of solitary sight seeing and hit for England. There's really no money at all in "doing" places by yourself. I have seen the zoo today, and the Queen's Palace, and hundreds of streets with evil smelling canals running down the middle, and I have also taken a steamer trip to the nearby town of Zaandam - all very curious and interesting -, but as it has rained the entire day and as I passed a mean night, I find myself far from jubilant. Yesterday, in coming in from Frankfurt, I managed to get carried past Utrecht, where I should have changed cars, about an hour's ride. First thing I knew, I was alone on the platform of a little Dutch way station, where I was brought before a table with 3 officials around it. It then transpired that I had done a wicked thing in traveling a stretch to which I had no ticket. So I was pleased to pay for a ride from & to Utrecht, whither in another half hour, I was again traversing familiar meadows. At Utrecht I just caught the train from Frankfurt which I had previously decided not to take, because it got in too late; and it was already 10 when I dragged my
bones out of the station at Amsterdam. The Hotel recommended to me by my Dutch friend was full. The proprietor directed me to another - "Herr Wapen Van Frieland". There I took the last room - a marvelous holy of holies with a dozen or more glass doors opening into halls, and laundries and other people's rooms, and also mysteriously connected with sonorous chimes on a neighboring clock tower. In the course of the night I heard 3 peasants, 1 sailor, 2 commercial travellers, a merchant and his wife, and the clock - each & every rascal of them bang and rustle and gossip themselves into bed; and the chimes crashed in upon me every 15 minutes. Today I have another room. "Het Wapen" is not a highlife place, as you may imagine, but it is absolutely native & clean. Tomorrow, Gott Sie dank, I go to my good friends the Kaptjines at Leiden for Sunday. I send you his cordial postcard herewith. From Leiden, I go on to my day in den Haag, and then to Brussels, where I spend the night, so as to get an early start the next day from Ostend. In that way I reach Dover by 3:30 P.M., and should be in Rye and comfort and all the other good things on the right little, tight little Island by 6. This will likely be my last letter to you before I sail, though you never can tell.

I am getting very keen to speak a bit of English again. If one is a foreigner, one speaks chiefly French or German in Holland, and I am not yet what you could call strong even in German. Dutch is a funny language. Any one who knows both German & English can read nearly every word of it. But to understand it spoken is vastly harder. The pronunciation is so decidedly unexpected. They are a fine people though the Dutch, in spite of the fact that their little boys all smoke cigars on the streets. R.T.F.

My departure from Marburg was solemnized by representatives of six nations, who stood about the carriage as the train moved off...it was quite touching & I made a speech through the window in German!

to sister Faith

I am always full of admiration for the way you continue to put only juice in your slim little lines. One of your items in fact seems almost too juicy to be true. You say Will is having a pleasant two weeks in Cambridge, keeping hens and entertaining a few congenial men. So Will has acquired a fancy for poultry. But perhaps I misread the word. I wish Will were over here though instead of keeping hens in Cambridge. For me, I am quite fascinated at last with the German language. I am just getting to the point now where I can manage the ordinary trivialities of the day's gossip and even joke a bit, and I find that there is a charm, a kind of relish of expression in this strange talk that I never have felt in English at all. It is queer that this should be so as I am as yet so clumsy in German and always wake up in the morning, with English on my tongue, which I only get rid of entirely by dinner time. But in the evenings, when I go out with Germans to drink beer in one of the beer gardens above town, I almost fancy myself a German (such is the exhilaration that comes with a single word rightly used) and I am the more disposed to this pleasant delusion in that I seem to make such an unconscionable hit with the people here. At first I thought it was only my laughable German that amused them so, but lately since my small talk has become reasonably correct, and my vogue (as I call it) has in no way diminished, I am tempted to think myself something of a wit. Last night I was quite drunk with the sense of popularity. I went with some Englishmen, Germans and a Hollander to a fest in a village close by here - where I made such a genial fool of myself that the Germans followed me around absolutely holding their breath to hear what I would say next, and one of them had to lie down in order to laugh in comfort. You see the innumerable formalities and ceremonious greetings of this nation fit me like a glove, and mingled with free translations of American slang, they seem to have an almost deadly effect. The show last night was a sort of great court yard of lighted and festooned booths and beer gardens with a band and dancing pavilion in the middle. The whole effect not unlike that of the side shows at a country fair. First we stopped at a shooting booth where you shot clay pipes with an air gun. There I broke six pipes without missing and thereupon handed the gun back to the Fraulein who ran the place explaining that it was really too easy to hit these things, and that if no prize was coming to me I thought I ought to have my money back. Some twenty teutons who had gathered behind us seemed to think this a good idea and several urged the Fraulein to act on it, whereat I made her a great bow (everyone of course had been in fun from the first) and assured her it was honor enough to have used her gun and couldn't I pay for the pipes? Of course she wouldn't hear of it and the procession moved on, gathering small boys at very step. At its head walked a very burly German schoolmaster and I, salaaming and saluting and "bitter schonen" each at every turn. The air was full of "Nach ihren, Meinern. Erlauben sie mir die Ehre. Darf ich ihnen den Herrn Mond vorstellen?" - all of it so apparently spellbinding that I began to fear the police would "sick a king" on us for gathering a crowd. At the dancing pavilion into which no one had yet ventured, there were fully 100 persons in our train. The schoolmaster proposed that we dance as it seemed only fair to give the crowd something for their trouble. So we two advanced upon the empty floor. Just as the music struck up and, after a splendid series of bows and amenities, performed a combination of Tyrolean boot slapping and Dutch wooden shoe clumping that astonished even me. It made a fearful hit with the spectators and when I snatched my hat off and went about begging an alms for the king of England I thought
some people would die of heart failure. I was tolerably excited myself, though not, as you might suppose, with wine. As for the German schoolmaster, he seemed to think me the funniest party he ever saw and if I even winked at him, he would throw his head back and laugh until his eyeglasses fell off. In the end we were saved from hysterics and the polizzi by the overpowering thirst of the Germans, to quench which we had to go back decently to Marburg...

This sort of fooling is the farthest thing in the world from really speaking German - quite so, say you. I mean that it only requires a collection of tolerably fine phrases. When I really have something to say I stick at the first move. Worse luck, too, I must soon be beyond the reach of more practice, for I start the 13th for Holland and eventually for home. I shall spend two days in Amsterdam, Sunday with new friends in Leyden. Tuesday in the Hague and Wednesday I go over to England for a few days with Bill and his uncle (Henry James). The last 4 days of my time before sailing on the 28th from Liverpool I shall spend with Bill in and about London. You will see me in Berkshire about Sept. 7th or 8th. Love to all you families.

as ever, Dick

Will you share this with the mother!

(Postmarked Boston - December 1, 1903)

Dear People,

....... Since I wrote you last I have had a big spree which did me worlds of good. Bill & I went down to So. Orleans on the Cape over Thanksgiving day and Friday and lived with a market hunter & his multitudinous family & shot ducks. All day we sat out in the the marshes behind blinds of wet eel grass, frozen but blissful, and all night we slept in a garret bedroom, less cold but equally happy. In all 22 whistlers and 2 sheldrake fell to our guns, and we came back feeling like new men. I brought up 4 of the birds to Faith, and we ate them last night. They were so good that I wished we hadn't so generously given the rest to the market hunter.

You will be glad to hear that I had Sunday tea with Bowditches. Harry and "Peter" and their sister were there besides the regular inmates and it was most jolly. Vin sang after the meal, and the sister was also persuaded. She has a very sweet and natural voice. All Bowditches seem to. Livvy and Vin both sent much love to you. I shall go there some more. R.T.F.

I am saving money like mad & about to start a bank acct.
The following lengthy grouping signals RTF’s increasing focus on the involving matters of forestry. This outward focus is paralleled by a shift in roles, from youthful son to confident rising star, and this leads to a switch in the psychology of tradition. In one sense, he becomes the parent; his parents, the children. He will counsel them at times “to spend the money wisely” once they become increasingly financially dependent on their son’s success.

And, the grace with which Fisher assumes all the changes of status and hard work and new challenges in his life is part of the story of this letter batch. Although the focus on daily meetings, schedules, or forest policy, may not seem directly personal, they were, after all, written home and meant not only to be edifying and relevant, but interesting. They will show a new and serious side, and the achievements as he accumulates more pressure and responsibilities at the Harvard Forest will be compelling both to readers interested in an early forester and to those looking in another close manner for proof of the good background from which he came.

VIII. FORESTER AND FAMILY, 1904 - 1911

1904

(COLONIAL CLUB (posted Jan 8, 1904, Boston))

Dear People,

Troubles have fallen on my unsuspecting head to such a depth that I thought for a time I should never smile again. They were not physical, be it said. So don’t get agitated. The day after I arrived in Washington they struck me, and there are rumblings still about, although the worst of them cleared away yesterday when I saw Mr. Graves on my way through New Haven. I will not worry you with the details, for they are passed & I am heartily sick of them, but the thing turned on my talks with Marston over the possibility of his coming to Harvard. There was misunderstanding and some indiscretion, for part of which I was (unwittingly) to blame, and the chiefs were sore, and I was thunderstruck, and there was Hell to
Dear Mother,

No news is good news - at least so far as it means floods of busyness. The reason you have heard nothing for so long is that I have been down on the Cape for four days with Olmstead, living in a shanty and getting full of healthy by much eating & sleeping and tramping among the dunes. Previous to that trip (which ended yesterday) I was full of legislative troubles in town and departmental difficulties out here. So you see I was hardly aware that so much time had slipped by. I see more and more that the winter is going to be completely devoted to my college work. One by one I am dropping the side issues and diversions because I discover that I am only good for a very small amount of daily application, - when worry is added - a very small amount indeed. It does not seem as if I should ever again have time or capacity for this kind of detailed record that you like to have in letters. Tell Eleanor, by the way, that I got her post card, and that someday she shall have Prosperpina. I cannot now say when. Before long I hope to get home for a Sunday.

R.T.F.

March 7th

Dear Mrs Fisher,

Margaret’s letter has been waiting for me to add my thanks to hers, and to reply to your kind letter of Feb 5th. I was sorry enough to have missed you. We do not often lock the door and all go out but we were having our Sunday dinner with Mother and I let both the women go. It is quite true that we never catch up with ourselves. I have had a very unsettled winter in my kitchen nor have I yet attained to order there. Thursday morning I start again on the weary search for a woman who can do plain cooking well. I shall hope that our talk will come off next winter for Mrs Fenn gives one a pleasant assurance of your return.

For we sail on April 1st and hope to be back by mid July.

We enjoyed making the acquaintance of Mary and Gladys Thayer. You ask me for my impressions of the “experiment” Well! to be candid it saddened me. These girls have character enough, individuality enough, brains enough to live among their like and the experiment seems to me to be making that already difficult and with the years almost impossible. If Gladys were my girl she would make the plunge a way and be sent to the best school I could discover. She will suffer more than Mary in being what they so pathetically called “different.” But what business have I to an opinion! It is a gifted household facing the problem of life in its own way.

Please give my love and thanks to both the girls for their nice letters. I am not writing letters this hurried winter - but tell them we shall meet again!
Remember me to your husband and I am affectionately yours

Alice H. James

Dear Dad,

I have your check, as I should have told you before and I will soon send you my note for it, albeit I did not mean in my letter to negotiate the loan this moment, but rather to prepare for an approaching need. If I am right, though, in my reckoning the money is better in my hands than where it was, at least, unless you were going to be obliged to use it before summer. I got no hint of a sacrifice in interest from your letter. But my good mother, it disturbs me to find, has other notions about the matter. She believes I have been lending money that I might have used to help you. How shall I answer you, Mother? There is so much justice in your complaints, and yet so much that is unfair. I see your side of it all too clearly: a son supposed to be able by his mother and of whom even tolerable great things expected, and then, instead of the dazzling instantaneous success, apparent frittering away of time, and then squandering for a casual whim of a good part of his savings. It is bitter uphill work, and in spite it has to have to make the defense which I owe you, peace of mind: for when I cast doubt upon my powers (which I can not help feeling I understand better than you) I only substantiate your charges. Grant then, that I have not done the best by my chances, that I have won too much by whim, that I have been too contemptuous of my abilities: even so I have not acted without a purpose (such as it was), or without some occasional
conquests of it. Yet these were small, and cheered no one but myself, so that your impatience is still justifiable. But if I have not been much of a success, and I honestly agree with you that I have not, neither have I for one moment dreamed of throwing away money that you might have had. I am ashamed of myself for explaining such a thing, but in view of appearances it seems due to you to say that the sum I lent Swales last June, I lent him as my assistant, that it would have had to go as my expenses in any case, and that if it had come back to me within a week, I should not have been saved from having to borrow this spring. I wish I could say what I want. I have tried letter after letter, and each one is either too hurt or too haughty or too humiliated. Forget the whole complicated mess. I have blundered in many places, though not in just the case you thought, and I am perhaps still blundering, but I am also trying my prettiest not to. R.T.F.

April, 1904

Dear Mother,

Was n't it great to have Genevieve among us? For me I dont think I have had such a rejuvenating frolic for years you know. In spite of all previous intentions we kept on to Ipswich (it seemed such a pity for us to lose the chance) and we gardened and rambled all day Saturday and Sunday, only separating Sunday night after coming back to Boston together. I felt like another man after all that fresh air and merriment, although it was a long and terrible drop to Monday morning. I do hope Eleanor will have a chance to know the lady better as time goes on.

Well, I must off to Hyde Park to several hundred women & $28.00. Yesterday I saw Fanny Hooper & Frazier Curtis married with all Boston high life looking on. Not that sort of ceremony for me. R.T.F.
am to buy (for the present) very little — only a desk, table and cupboard for one larder. Don’t hurry about making or sending anything. I will come up before long and get my books & a picture or two, and additional articles, unless specially planned, are likely to be hard to fit into our ensemble of sober simplicity. R.T.F.

(posted Sep 19, 1904, Cambridge)

Monday

Dear Eleanor,

At last you are to have Prosperpina. I sent it off to you today, and whether it arrives or not I shall expect to hear from you within a few days. You won’t find much of it very easy music, but the things that you already know and care for I think you will be able to play. I wish now I could find my copy of the play. It’s lent to someone, I suppose.

I spent yesterday at Ipswich with the Lords, and they were all congratulating themselves on having had the visit from you. I guess you made a quiet hit down there. Don’t you think it would be nice to get Hattie up to Berkshire for a few days? I was thinking of bringing her up some time in the autumn. Ask Mother what she thinks of it. Your R.T.F.

(posted Boston & Brighton Oct 1, 1904)

Dear People,

Just a month ago today I fell foul of the elevator, and I am not yet short of the evil consequences. It has been owing partly to these that you have had no letter for so long. By now my walking is fairly normal — though not especially strong — but the shock or the confinement or both, brought me last Tuesday a good old fashioned visitation of indigestion, which has kept me housed ever since. The thing played me the old trick: knocked me out like a dead man in the midst of a dinner party at the Warners. I wish my attacks would not choose such gala occasions for striking me. The Warners are most kind — kept me there to loaf & recuperate ever since, and have begged me — particularly Mrs. W. — to come & live with them the rest of the year. It’s a tempting offer, but of course I can’t take it for many reasons. I must get back to my cell tomorrow at latest. My work having suffered a good deal with all this sick and absence business, and I shall have to live a severely regular and frugal life to catch up. Otherwise I may find that teaching is beyond my talents.

I am planning to come home for the first Sunday I can get off — perhaps next. I doubt if I can bring Bill — he is so frightfully busy. How goes it with you? I hope colds & frozen pipes are thawed. You might tell me when you write how much snow there is left, so I shall know what to expect. R.T.F.

Dear Mother,

It is certainly disappointing about Chauncey, but I do not think we need feel anything beyond the perfectly inevitable readjustment of a married person. It seems I shall only see him here for a day.

I could not get away this Saturday possibly: hence no Hattie Lord. Let us play for the next, with or without her.

All goes finely here, no staggering increase of students but a reasonable number & a good prospect of more. For me I have picked up amazingly since people came back & work has begun. E. Warner says system and restraint are the medicine for me. Can you sympathize with those there seen truant?

I suppose you know that Ted is coming back at Olmstead’s suggestion for a year of study, and I shall have the unexpected or droll pleasure of lecturing to him in one of my courses. R.T.F.

Oct. 26, 1904

Dear People,

Another long while has got past me without any letter to you. I really do not know what is to become of my personal & family affairs. The work piles up, and I peg away literally till bedtime, and still I am not through. My routine of lectures, reading, field work, and daily odds & ends fill up the week until Friday night, and last week, Saturday, I had to go down to Cohasset to fulfill a long standing promise to one of my students, the gifted Bryant. I am apparently very well. Sleeping and eating certainly as well as a man could wish, and feeling fairly active, but, as I say, there is nothing left of me over and above these necessities for games with Eleanor and others. I have been to the Jameses only twice since the first of October. Eleanor & I went to supper at the Lord’s last Friday, and I suppose she came out here to Faith’s on Saturday. This week so far I have not laid eyes on her, but heard today of her being again at the Lords on a recent afternoon. I plan to have a small party here for E & the Ameses as soon as I can see a
clear day ahead. And apropos of clear days, I think E. must positively get more freedom from her school duties both for her health's sake, and for the social chances which she must otherwise lose. It is too absurd for her to have to come in every day at 4, and to be confined every evening except Friday. After all she is not so seriously in need of more book learning as all that. Do write to Mrs. Bellows about it, or depute me to speak to her. Are you well? R.T.F.

COLONIAL CLUB
Thursday, November 3rd, 1904

Dear People,

All goes swimmingly here. Eleanor seems to be settling very cheerfully into her routine and I continue to eat & sleep like a pig. I wish I could hear such good accounts of you - better eyes, more "inmates" & such. Saturday, without warning, the Stillmans turned up. We tried to gather all the faithful then o' there, but Eleanor was slightly indigesting & could not be had. We got the Ameses, though, at a small tea after the game, and I dined with C. & Mary that evening at their hotel. There was still Sunday, however, so that I was able to get Eleanor (already herself again) for another dinner with the Stillmans. I think we all had as good a time as ever, but there's no doubt that their world is no longer ours. It always might be, come the chance, but as it is, we are whirling around different suns. This is nobody's fault & I don't see why it should be anybody's misfortune.

I imagine you are right about Eleanor's work. She has special chance enough as it is. I was to have my tea for her this week but Bill came so I post-poned it. The good Miss Endicott is about to look Eleanor up. I go there to dine tonight & I, trust, Eleanor too. E. will take to her, I am sure, she is such a young middle aged person. Also she plays the piano very well.

Yes I should like your birthday quilt very much. No hurry about it though. R.T.F.

November 11th, 1904

Dear Dad,

So you are about to be left without your spouse. Well, short of riches, I can give you what looks like the best of good news - I only wish it might apply to you as well as me. I have apparently got a new lease of life & effectiveness for my eyes. Vin Bowditch, to whom I mentioned my suspicion that my sight was not all it might be, sent me to (a) young specialist friend of his who made a startling diagnosis. It seems that my poor eyes have been struggling for years with wrong glasses, and that my practice of wearing the glasses only when working gave them only an additional strain of adjustment. After a three days fatiguing and, I fear, expensive test he has put me into permanent spectacles, which bid fair to do away largely with the redness and certainly improve my vision, which blessing, if true, are well worth the price. Already after 2 days the Dr. says there is a great change for the better and I can recognize myself, in spite of the pangs of getting used to the new glasses. Perhaps the young man could do as much for you!

Today we are having our tea for Eleanor, and I am even now waiting for Faith to arrive & assume the charpeonage of the guests. We have asked all the Ameses, Peggy James, Gladys (who is with Faith) Bill James, Ted, Arthur Shurtleff, Tom Perry and Ernest Stillman, not a large gathering, but the females seem to be in a state of anticipation quite terrifying to my humble plans. I suppose I shall have to do something even more notable than rattling their digestions with sweets.

I am relieved to hear that Aunt R. has come down fairly handsome. The fact is I am just now much reduced in pocket - owing to eyes, furnishing a new room, and I do not yet know what the college is going to do for me this year. The secret will be out, though, December first, and I shall know to what extent I must gun for private work. Your R.T.F.

Lawrence Scientific School
Harvard University
December 5th, 1904

Dear People,

I shall certainly come home for Xmas, and it will be a happy day when I set out: my labors here don't get any easier. The college has raised my salary to 1500, and I guess I can afford to contribute to Eleanor's amusements. The money outlook, though, is rather dark, being as my expenses as head of this indefinable department are so heavy. I am trying very hard now to fit in a little government work among my regular duties.

Last Saturday I began the examination of pine lands belonging to Mr. Harold Parker, which meant a tiresome trip down to little hamlets south of Worcester, and I shall repeat the jaunt this week, only this time I shall have to spend the night at some farm house. If I can possibly work it in, I am also going to try to do a little private business in partnership with Carter, my new colleague.

You will be relieved to hear that my enemy has not managed to nominate an opposition ticket to mine and that now the worst he can do will be to talk, which will only get him a comeuppance. I hope the nibble factory will turn out a strong bite. R.T.F.

Did I tell you I have to spend Jan. 2-6 in Washington?
Dear People,

This time I am only a week behind my news, but it is a most complicated week. Last Friday, after going to the theatre in N.Y. with Will, I went in by the midnighter to Washington, & found a good welcome at 1316 S. Saturday I spent putting about the Bureau, & Sunday I devoted to looking up old friends. I walked with Eleanor Patterson in the morning, and Allen & his wife came to dinner at the Hatches, & I made a few calls in the afternoon. Monday morning all of us delegates were herded on to the steps of the War Dept. & subsequently driven in to the White House to shake the President's fishy hand. After we had recovered from that, & I had foragerted with Olmstead awhile, I went & solaced myself with an hour of Mrs. Thoron's delightful company. She asked me to go with her to a big musicale at the McLean's next day, and as a corrective for a day of tiresome speeches the expedition turned out to be a triumph. All Washington was there - and the music - from Schuman-Heink & Dekovics orchestra coming over the long tapestried drawing room & through a great arched opening with clusters of candles at the sides - was wonderfully beautiful. Wednesday was more Congress, followed by a dinner at the Patersons and a big reception at Pinchot's, where all kinds of wild and timid outlanders rubbed elbows with the Elite. The event of Thursday was the President's address to the delegates, which was fine but full of teeth gritting and rancorous intensity. Again I recuperated at Mrs. Thoron's tea table. She seemed to me to have more wit & wisdom than all the previous spell-binders put together. Yesterday I deserted the last day of the Congress in order to come on here & see the Superintendent at Arden. I spent last night with the Lords, the perishing barn household being cleaned for the imminent arrival of the little stranger. I think now I shall take the midnight tonight for Boston & glad am I to do it. Travelling on business has rather come to pall on me. Your R.T.F.

March 17, 1910.

Prof Richard T. Fisher,
Colonial Club,
Cambridge, Mass.

Dear Fisher:

Just a word to acknowledge your letter of January 10, which I have just reached in attempting to work through an immense accumulated mail, and to say how fine it makes me feel when I think how you have been in this matter. It makes me prouder than forty seven peacocks and turkeys put together the way the Service has taken this whole trouble.

Sincerely yours,

Gifford Pinchot
Dear Mother,

As to your letter - it moved me quite a bit. And I have therefore come to some conclusions. First, I have decided to make you a birthday present of a smokeless (or practically smokeless) son. Oaths & pledges are silly, but I guess I can pretty much let the weed alone without much suffering. As for the rest of your inferences, they are very largely true, but require a word of comment. I confess to a grain of recent restiveness in my present harness. At the moment it is all gone and more. I know there is no other main job for me but forestry, and this particular application of it is far and away the best that I could find. If anything was wanted to quicken my sense of being in the right place it came night before last when Mr. James & I walked home from the Elliots dinner. I broached a doubt or two and he reassured me so richly & completely that I wondered I had ever wavered. But more than this, you must remember, mother, that I say a lot of things - from mere idle whimsicality - that I don't really mean. I have to support life in these evil and stupid days. Yet no one should know better than you that at bottom, whatever my ruffling on the surface, I cleave to the clean and wholesome things of the spirit. There is no despair anywhere near me. Neither do I forget how much you are my mother - only - I cannot say these things. Something stops me. But you must not think me either discouraged or nearing a smoker's grave.

R.T.F.

Dear People,

It is Saturday night, and for once I am in Cambridge & at home. I have had quite the busiest and most effective week of the winter - happy equivalence of energy to demand due largely to recent sojourn in the snows of Dublin. Prospects for the summer seem in the main promising but without great signs of moneymaking. In fact a recent fiat from Washington deprives me of a hundred dollar job that I counted on doing during April & May, which loss will bring me still nearer my uppers. Yet I think that I can make something in the summer. There is a chance of my hanging out a shingle on the door of Shurtleff's Boston office. His invitation is most kind and tempting but I have not yet decided to accept it, especially as it would mean immediate additional expense. For many reasons this not yet to be mentioned abroad.

How is the cold? Mine is just gone and the way open for another. No hope yet of any games with Eleanor. Every minute is filled up. R.T.F.

Can you send me my sweater at once - if possible, clean? I have a chance to sell it & increase my ready cash.
April 7th

Dear People,

I am sorry you have had to wait for the Bellows money. It was my idea that you would notify me when you wanted it. You shall have it now, and the whole amount. I can scrape along until the first of June, and anything is better than your dipping into your “Loan & Trust” money. If I can only get time & opportunity for a little more private work I shall easily catch up again. Here is a check for $200.00 anyway. Do not spend it foolishly!

It’s a pity I cannot be at home now with Eleanor, but I am afraid it will be some time before I can get there. Everything is coming on now in a bunch. We are planting at Lincoln this week, & next week I go to Lancaster, and week after to Squam Lake, and after that (which will be in the recess) I migrate to Oxford & North Woodstock for the whole of May. Lectures are over next week Thursday - praise the Lord. This recent change from mainly in to mainly out of doors has put me in the best of condition, and I mean to get the very most out of this summer. Chiefly, I think, I shall do work hereabout, with occasional break for a visit, and (I hope) a fortnight’s solid open air with Bill in September. No more imbecile summers of nervous idling for me. I am for mild yet continuous industry as the foundation of well being. My love to Eleanor, and to Galla also, if she is still with you. Your, R.T.F.

SQUAM LAKE HOUSE
Ashland, N. H. April 20, 1905

Dear People,

Emulating the beginning of our letter in the N. W. comes this sheet. I take my pen in hand to try to exchange the evil atmosphere of this hotel office for something better than before I wrote home from here a year ago last September I think. Well, I forgot your birthday as usual, but then you have doubtless learned that I never remember anybody’s. Eleanor and Faith reminded me of it yesterday. I am sorry I could not have been at home to celebrate. I shall get there in June...

...Mr. Hollis & I are up here to look at some land, and if the ice is out of the lake we are all going across tomorrow in a launch. With good luck we shall get back to the city Saturday. This place makes me see I am old and fastidious. The squalor and the awful dullness of this hotel, and the drivelling gossip of the few stores I have been to fill me with horror of the life they all represent. Human life may be as interesting as ever, but I refuse to mingle with it cheerfully unless out of doors or in a moderately cleanly guise. Dunster Hall has spoiled me for the country hotel.

I am sorry to hear of Dad’s mumps. Everybody ought to have mumps in childhood.

Your R.T.F.

Lawrence Scientific School
Harvard University

May 5, 1905

Dear People,

Did I write you on Sunday? I dunno. Anyway I have been at the point of extinction - at least so far as evidences to my friends - ever since last week. All I can do is scramble through the duties foreordained & let the others go. Monday early I set out with students for Oxford Mass. where I have been living till yesterday, housed by a nice lumberman and laboring daily at the establishment of a forest nursery for the growing of pine. Back today & tomorrow for college routine, my students meanwhile going it alone. Much is brewing in the nature of my career. Assistant Carter has decided to leave me next year & I must face another season of breaking in a teaching man - myself being the most unruly beast in the bunch. Also I must somehow get free for more private work. All I know now is that I cannot be bothered to worry. I will have my fun if I die unknown. Alas - however, for the graces of family intercourse. Where are they? Says you. Indeed they are not well. I will strive for home in June. Yrs, R.T.F.

"a summer of mingled private work and visits"

(posted May 9, 1905, Cambridge)

COLONIAL CLUB

Dear Mother,

There is so much unfortunate misunderstanding in your letter (which has just come) that I sit right down to relieve your mind as far as I can at once. It is a pity that I so often belie myself - or so seldom put through any real exposition of my affairs. In the first place, I honestly think that I am better and stronger this Spring
then ever before in my life. I can do more work, and I am very seldom tired. Faith says that I look 20 years younger than I did last winter. As to your fears for my lack of ambition, I am far too busy to have any desire beyond the arrangement of this school so as to give me time for private work. I want to do private work because I think I can succeed at it, and the President wants me to do it also; but meanwhile I have to get the college machinery running more or less by itself. It is difficult to explain the complications behind all this - at least in a letter - and I am very often in a mood which makes my statements less than usually enlightening. So you must spare yourself these hasty and disturbing inferences. I am not proud of my home correspondence. Ordinarily, I merely try to avoid saying things that will only mix you up. This seems a niggardly way to treat your family, but such is the dark and twisted nature of my past, (joke) that I have no alternative - that is, in letters. When I come home I will hold myself ready to put in some hours expounding my affairs and receiving your suggestions as to my future. Please cheer up. Your R.T.F.

(posted Jun 5, 1905, Cambridge)

Dear Mother,

I am desolated to say it, but for this week my coming home is out of the question. I must keep paddling now or sink. Tell Catherine and Margaret how disappointed I am - if you can - I doubt if I could. Perhaps I might get home by Saturday. I'll make a stab at it. You see I must positively get cleared up here before July, for it looks like a summer of mingled private work and visits. There is much to be settled before next September, programs, instructors, appropriation, equipment - et cetera. Field work is over & we are madly working up figures and tables. Also for the present no more decayed and greasy food. I lost 10 pounds in the last fortnight on those beastly rations. So no more at present. Could I bring Jimmy up for a few days this month? Your R.T.F.

Naushon - Mass.

July 21st (05)

Dear Mother,

You must not be so concerned by rumors - even when Eleanor originates them. I am now going to Dublin at the end of the month, and I am saving time for Berkshire. If I could manage to be more definite in my letters you would have less anxiety about my movements. At the moment I am all upset again - in my plans I mean - by developments at Petersham. I was there from last Sunday to

Friday morning. The social part of the time was very delightful, albeit limited by bias and lassitude. The disturbing element was the big forest tract whose owner (Mr. Brooks) I spent most of my time with. He was a most lovable old man, and the questions which he broached to me may turn out to have very great and happy influence on my affairs. At any rate they will require a deal of settling, and I may have to postpone my home coming again in order to get them in order. I am sorry I cannot be more explicit, and I must ask you to forbear any mention of my relations with Mr. Brooks.

Altogether I am now pretty badly bent with labors. The Pomfret work has developed into a more urgent thing, and there is editing to do in Cambridge, and I may have to go down to Northeast for a talk with the President. So be patient with me if I still stay away. I am down here at Naushon over Sunday, but not altogether with joy, since I have business with my host, Jim Russell, and have brought some work from Cambridge. Cambridge, by the way, is a steaming mill these days.

But to return to Petersham - delightful. Like Berkshire, only more outlook. The Willsons, plain heartsome people, full of fun and good spirits, and possessed of gems of colonial houses, apparently all Unitarian too. R.T.F.
Friday
Dear People,

It is too bad but I am cut off again from a home coming. All of a sudden the much desired Austin Cary, whom we have been trying to get for instructor, has said yes, and asked me to go to Nova Scotia on a timber job with him. I may not be able to go, though wishing it extremely, but at least I must meet him in Maine, and to do that I must stay here for the present and clean up long deferred reports. I am awfully sad not to get home now. These are the trials of responsibility. But I shall be among you all of a sudden - I hope before Peggy leaves you. What do you think of my note paper? Cheap but imposing. Your R.T.F.

(posted Sep 3, 1905)

COlONIAL CLUB

Sunday
Dear Family,

This is my first Sunday in Cambridge for many weeks, being as I am the victim of a cold and an urgency in college affairs. Last week I made a hurried trip to N.H. (stuffing a day & night in Dublin) to sound two more foresters for instructors. But it was all in vain and when I got back Friday night I took a hot lemonade and went to bed. Yesterday I was much recovered, and on receiving a telegram from Cary in Maine, I made arrangements to meet him in East Machias Tuesday morning for a conference on courses and assistants No. 3. On the way back I shall call on the Prex at Mt. Desert, and get back here by Thursday or Friday, with (I trust) all my troubles settled. It is now fairly evident to me that I shall get my pay raised again this year. Just how much I do not know, nor have I any right to speak of my expectation except to those who will keep it in the family.

I am getting keen for a few days at home. If only the distance and the cost didn’t make a day’s visit extravagant I could manage the trip oftener. Tell me what is doing at home. And are you not too tired? Don’t add me to your worries. I am much better today & Edward has dosed me over the telephone. Your R.T.F.
1906

Dear Dad,

I hoped to get a letter to you before mother got home, but lately I have had so much unavoidable writing to do that I have just indulged myself in neglecting my family. I trust you will find your wife returned in good order. Urge her to exercise and not worry over her charges (human or financial), so that she will be able to build on her new freedom. Tell her that I have paid her doctor's bill, and am still well above water.

As for my work, condition & prospects - alles geht schon. There is a let up in lectures just now while students are in the woods with Cary, and I have been able to finish up practically all the private work that I had, and can now go on to more. It is not much altogether but helps some - over $200.00 so far this autumn over & above salary. And the railroad attorneys have tried to speak for me on future damage cases - not meaning, mind you, that I was a biased witness. I am now on a strictly business basis - no pay, no work. If any one asks me to lecture for the good of the cause I show them the door. "Never do anything for nothing," said E. Allen in the old days. "It keeps somebody out of a job." I am no longer a minor poet or a dallyer in drawing rooms: I am a modest and contented money maker. Sic itur ad astra. Stars will pay the bills. Your R.T.F.

Jan 7th 1906

Dear Dad,

I mailed a letter to Eleanor yesterday (Sat.) To resume my story, I went down to morning prayers with Will & heard Prof. Moore. Then with Dick to his splendid apartment. Faith seems to think that Dick will not marry now. I told E. my morning’s occupation, I now recall. Well: the play was great. It began to drizzle just as we left the house to go, & the audience (2000) sat much good naturedly through a drizzle, & many under umbrellas. We, in common with half the people, sat without umbrellas with our hats under our overcoats & I followed the Greek with an open book for two hours without injuring the book materially.

The weather conditions, on the whole, were preferable to a hot sun or a wind. As it was, even with my imperfect hearing, almost every sound was intelligible from our seats, w’h, though directly in front were half way up the amphitheatre. The play was astonishingly impressive - Both the historic accuracy of the reproduction of the Greek open air theatre, & the distinctly solemn, religious impression, (which was also a distinct feature of a Greek drama), were very marked.

I came home at 5, adjusted my dress a little, & walked over to cousin Helen’s - a very peaient tea & chat till 10, with the Matthews.

...... A beautiful marble intaglio head (life like) of a very lovely face, hung on the wall. It was the mother of M. Matthews. A most lovely dignified woman, & the effect as a piece of art most wonderfully increased by the folds of drapery (in marble), hanging on either side of the face, & hanging over the face with startling lifelikeness. By a Scotch artist - you must see it someday.

...... We all went up after to W.’s room to hear a trick phonograph without any electricity. Tomorrow we go to Swampscott to a clam chowder by Mr. Little.

(posted Jun 28 1906 Cambridge)
Yr letter has just come. Cousin H. has already arranged with me about the 4 other boys - I told her I would get them 1 or 2 dollar's worth of “noise & light” & superintend the setting off. I will come up on Monday. Priscilla & Dorothy & Wallace go tomorrow in an early train to R. & we follow at 10:55 A.M.

The ribbon was 59 cents.

Dick’s Michigan business I find was to advise about the buying of a timber acreage. Of course he will not go without good pay.

....... Have you had the carriage or buggy wheels greased & the harness overhauled for weak places? If not, it w’d be well.

Dick has just left Wuster’s "Lady Baltimore" with F. John Power is in receipt now of income $20000, per annum.

All send love, & mine is growing hourly till I see you again - E.T.F.

**COLONIAL CLUB**

July 1

Dear Neglected Mother,

You see how it is: if any of the family are here I never can write to the others. Well, I am mighty glad Daddy came down; I cannot give you your “inside view” of him, because I don’t know what you mean, but he certainly seemed to be enjoying himself. It was good for us, at any rate, to have him here. Faith and I both felt that we had more real intercourse together - we three - than we had had for years. I hope now, with the president set, and prospects improving, that we shall all be together more and more.

Dad will have told you most of my news. July has now crystallized into a very busy month. I have had to give up my northeast harbor visit, and I have about decided to give up a recent but not lucrative request that I visit a copper mine on a Lake Superior island that happened to be overgrown with timber. I go to Ipswich today for the fourth. Then back to Oxford and adjacent parts to work up my Pomfret job which I have to finish on the 14th. On the 15th I go to Prof. Wilson’s at Petersham for a couple of days, and then to Naushon for a few more. I think by the last week of July I shall go to Berkshire for a spell. Sorry I cannot be there during Otto’s vacation.

Today I have moved all my belongings from Dunster to Apshtorp. - a double room occupied this year by Mr. Bowditch and a lad named Ames. Very likely he will come back and room with us next year. So far this room is a chaos of chattels, neither man having as yet removed his furniture. How is my silent sister Eleanor? Yours, R.T.F. July 3, 1906

**Brookline July 6**

I suppose it is really up to me to send you a line of news, and as I have arrived so early as to find Olmsted still deep in letter writing, this seems a good time to do it. Soon after you last heard of me I went up to Dublin - an urgent and well nigh irresistible appeal having come from the Uncle - and there I stayed the unconscionable time of 8 days. Gone were the _____ I had allowed beforehand, but I turned out to be so much more tired than I expected, and the sleeps and the mountain and the good life of the beloved Thayers set me up so fast, that I just staid on and on. One day was very like another except that for two mornings, Gladys worked at a head of me which is a valuable drawing. Also, Gyn & Pete happened to be in town and we had a call from them. Just before I left word came from Washington that I was to go out to the middle west for the summer. This upset my calculations so, that as soon as I got back to Cambridge on the 4th, I talked things over with the President and decided that, if no other plan will suit the Powers, I had better resign from the Bureau. It’s a serious step, and I may not have to take it, but I cannot do two jobs 1000 miles apart. Don’t speak of it, anyhow, or reckon with it yet awhile. One consideration which influenced me in deciding my immediate duty was the fact that I have been put on a permanent appointment here from September 1, 1904, which means that I am now a member of the faculty, although not necessarily that I am to get more money.

As for right away plans, I dunno. I am moving just now - to Dunster. then I must go to Lancaster for a few days, and to Lake Champlain for the College, sometime this month, and possibly to Washington and certainly later to New York and Milford. Perhaps in about a week I shall get up to Berkshire. Address now only the Club.

**COLONIAL CLUB**

July 15, 1906

Dear Mother,

I am in town again for the afternoon and night - just long enough to pick up a new outfit of clothes and read my mail. Tomorrow I go up to Petersham for a couple of days with the Williams', on forest business. Once more I begin to weary of change. Yesterday in Pomfret I had a straining day in hot woods - better than any I have seen for many a long moon. Connecticut would depress me to death if I had to live there. It’s so tame and yet so bushy.

One night this week I slept at Rockport - to escape the heat. Roger is healing his cut very fast. Did I tell you that I had a visit at Ipswich? Yes, I must have. It was a great rejuvenation. So much fun and affection, and so much delightful Genevieve. I gained 7 pounds in a visit which lengthened by inevitable degrees to
5 days. Gyn is now concerned to have taken time which might have been given to Berkshire. To tell the truth I had no intention of taking more than the Fourth, but my fatigue and the comfort of — well, I had to stay. I am going to have a real visit at home, though, before college opens again. I wish you would write to Gyn, by the way. Not that she gave any sign of being owed a letter, or that she needs any cheering, but because she is very genuinely fond of you. R.T.F.

Rockport Aug. 8th '06

Dear Family,

I came down here Saturday night, after my return from Naushon. It seems I stayed there rather longer than I had planned. Certainly I did not feel much need of counting the days while I was there. I arrived at the island rather done up — and I was consequently a very dead one for a number of days. But when I did pick up, I came so fast that I began to think I had forgotten what a vacation was. On a basis of 10 home sleeps and wholesome meals, we tennised, bathed, fished, drove, and rode horseback. This last almost a daily afternoon custom, with all hands on cattle ponies — until I was as brown as leather and active as a goat. So now I really feel keen for work. It was on Monday the hottest ever, but I went up to town and put in a day's work without much distress, albeit I was glad to come back at night to sleep. There is much to do in Cambridge — a new pamphlet to bring out, and courses to arrange with a new instructor, besides which I have a new, big, and unexpected private job. So I don't know my next move quite yet. I shall try to avoid Cambridge nights at any rate. As soon as I hear from a couple of my clients (tomorrow or next day) I shall know when I can come home, but with this new job and the necessity of meeting my new assistant somewhere in New Hampshire I have had to suspend my original plan for August. I was to have visited the Twitchells this week but that is now off. They have asked me several times now, and I think it is time I managed to pay our invaluable man and his family something more than semiannual professional visits. I will write you more definitely of my schedule in a day or two. Your R.T.F.

Dec. 19, 1906

(to W.J. Jr.)

These lines suit me to a T. Yea, even to my aspiring toes, and I can give you the assurance you require. Handaufs Hertz I be still bald (perhaps balder), restless as ever, and so far single. In fact, when your unusually welcome lines came to hand, I was not only urging my bones into increased salicum, but cut off from all commerce (we say commerce) with the dangerous sex. In short, I was spending a strenuous week in the forest of Petersham Mass., leading seven students through miles of valuation surveys in weather close to zero. At the moment I am enduring the tortures of travel by the airless B & M and hence the notebook & pencil. It is true I am full of health, and, when sagged down for reflection, mainly occupied with thoughts of James, his affection, receptiveness, understanding heart, and the rich days to come which this implies. Yet I suppose I must meet your inquiry with the confession that I am minutely preoccupied with a lady. You know the one. Minutely is the word (and, with my well known habits should affect your relief), for the fact is that she already begins to look dubious, not to say unpromising. Although I see her but rarely, I expand in her presence with my usual fluency, and the results should have meant progress. Understandings, greater ease, conclusions. But no. But no. I go splashing & blazing along because I am made that way. Not so she. In her I seem to perceive, with more & more sinking of the heart, the irresolute petrification of tradition, that unconsciously superior glibness that knows neither mood nor tense, a virtual subjection of spirit to form. My words push me somewhat unjustly far; and after all I am still battering a type more than an individual. Already I feel completely penitent on the case in point. Yet I would ask you — what is a man? What is a woman? Are they puppets cut off by the yard, and speaking by the book? Or are they living beings having locomotion, appetites, tastes, impulses — desires to do and share and enjoy, of which they are neither proud nor ashamed? There is a light in me, & it burns, and I follow it, and warm myself about it, and it suffices (to me) to vindicate my existence. But a man has a right to a certain amount of spiritual exchange in this world, and when I find these maidens of the very choicest stock, at the very first tingle of red reality, either glibly covering it with petty phrases or gravely and gently implying a breach of form — as if one had spit upon the carpet or was a near anarchist, then, by God, I rage and curse and write to James. There, my masters, is a man with the full complement of equipment — heart, brains, and technicals, and whether he wants my love, my life, my vote, or my shot gun they are all his to the end. Thine. R.T.F.
Jan 29, 1907

Dear Mother,

I have been treating you shabbily again, and I am sorry it has been so, but I have been even more up than commonly up to my neck in things to do. I simply cannot write a catalogue of what they were - memory and the pen both stick at the job. The main distractions were flying trips - to New Haven, a day in New Canaan, part of a day in New York, and recently to Lancaster, throw in several days at Sharon, an unprecedented lot of letters and committees and interviews on policy, and a couple of theatres, and you have a notion of where my body has been. As for the mind, there is no telling. I do a lot of wondering and scheming these days, and a little repining, and some worrying, but I get a good deal out of the Game none the less. There are, as you say, a number of rare souls still extant, and sometimes I enjoy their company. It is a pity that I could not see your fine friend Mrs. Mosely, for, from her letters, she must be a rare one. I shall see her some day. Faith and I had a walk in a snow storm the other day, and we refreshed ourselves mightily with plenty of talk. Perhaps it is just as well that the chicken pox has deferred Eleanor's visit for I find now that I shall be less busy after than during the midyears. Next week I shall have to go again to Petersham, and there is much to be done here. When the routine begins again, I shall be sure of my small amount of leisure.

I am glad you are having so much pleasant company within reach. Tomorrow I am going to a tea at Mrs. Jack Elliot's. Now to supper.

Your R.T.F.

P.S. O, Miss Sally Walker, daughter of the Admiral used to take me to theatres and play music. She was kind, and I guess I still owe her something. Be nice to her.

(postmarked Boston, April 7, 1907)

COLONIAL CLUB

Dear Family,

Cary and I got back last night from our two-days trip to Petersham. My lumberman friend, H. U. Chaffee went with us, and Mr. Brooks drove us over his woodland during all the daylight there was. All hands were full of enthusiasm at the perfection of the opportunity for successful forestry. In particular I was satisfied with Chaffee's correlation of my estimates on the timber. It's a great thing to know your business by 25 years experience. Chaffee saw those 2000 trees only from the carriage, and, in that 2 days he had arrived at the conclusion that there were 10 million feet of timber on the tract. That had been my own estimate, but it had taken me 10 days to get it. If only we can get the money to buy the land!

You seem to be doing all kinds of things with Eleanor. What is her address to be, by the way? Perhaps I shall write to her. Tonight I go out to dine at the Twitchells. One more week of school, and then mainly outdoors for me.

Your R.T.F.

April 18th (1907)

Dear Family,

I am just back from a wonderfully recuperative visit to Dublin, where I ate like a pig and slept some long sleeps in out of door air. Also, as you will be pleased to hear, Uncle A. did a really remarkable head of me in oils. He quite capered over it, it was so good. No one was at home but He and Aunt Emma, but we had easy talks and great sessions over protective coloration. You have no idea how satisfying it is for me to discover afresh (for I had rather lost the realization) that even a few days in the woods can always dispel cares and renew the fountains of youth. Somebody ought to compel me periodically to "go unto the hills" merely as a means of cooling the furnace.

Tomorrow I've got for the rest of the week to plant trees with students at Oxford. Then, on Monday, I move down to 15 Ware Hall. The rest of the Spring I shall stick pretty close to Cambridge - but come home in June anyway. How do you stand the return of winter? We have no snow but still cold winds. Your R.T.F.

June 6, 1907

(beginning of letter missing)

and, if the employment you offer me is to my taste, that is, if I don't have to impersonate any distressed orphans or other theatrical nuisances, I may, provided there is good food, a plentiful lack of Miss Richardson, consent to carry in a sponge cake and sit it in the Lady's Parlor.

nasal voice close to our ear: "Will ye have tea or coffee?"
April 14, 1908

Dear Mother,

For the first time in The family history I have remembered your birthday - even before Faith reminded me of it - and the recollection has given me spirit to break my scandalous silence. May your years be multiplied! And may they also be happier. Perhaps if my affairs prosper as I hope they will, there may be more traffic and more communication between Berkshire and Petersham. I am trying now, by investing what time and money I can in office and nursery to make my resources grow. They ought to do so, unless the signs fail. Meanwhile, though, I pay a heavy price in liberty and leisure, and in the matters of letters and visits I seem destined to make you and Dad pay as well. I keep very well, but when night comes, I make but a few drowsy remarks to whomever is by, and tumble into bed.

The race begins at the end of the week. I expect to go to Petersham for Friday and Saturday, then down to New Haven to see Mr. Graves, then for a day to New Canaan, and then up to Berkshire for the last of the week. Office work may upset this plan, but I shall manage to get home anyhow, especially since my teeth are just naturally rusting away. So, as the French say, a' bientot. What a personage Eleanor has become! I wish I could have had more than the few glimpses I got of her when she was here. Much love to my parents. We children owe them all our hellish charms. Affectionately, Dick

(postmarked Boston, June 6, 1908)

Dear Family,

Again I have fallen into evil ways as a correspondent. It seems to require some degree of mental leisure for me to write any letters at all. Just now I am at the Boston office, whence, as it's Saturday afternoon, all but me have fled. For once I am positively restive at the arrival of an empty half hour. Mr. Jack is due here for a conference at 3:30 and I am unexpectedly unoccupied before his time. As soon as I am through with him I go out to Lancaster for Sunday at the Parkers. From there on Monday morning I go to Oxford via Worcester to see the Nursery. Back to Cambridge that night. Then to Manchester Tuesday am. for work but back to the faculty at four. Wednesday I go up to Petersham with some Penns. Back on Friday, after which more of the same. Mix and flavor to taste. One week is like another, except that they seldom have any sociable week-ends to them. I will send the money soon.

Love to Dorothy & Dan. Your R.T.F.
extra gauch American humor. The supporters of "predatory wealth" are badly scared. Taft is better than Bryan, but it is the long lease of power of the complacent Republicans that I want to see broken. My goals are always far ahead but "the frenzy of the nations is often the statesmanship of Fate." Your mother is in fine form, and so is your Old Pa.

* sister Eleanor went to Smith College in Northampton

COLONIAL CLUB  Cambridge  December 13, 1908

Dear Family,

Much as I enjoy my return to the delights of company, I begin to long for Petersham again. It seems as if a dozen tasks and commissions had been waiting here to pounce on me when I returned. It may be that I shall have to cut short my stay in Berkshire at Christmas-time. President Eliot has asked me to write a small section of his report describing forestry doings, and Cary, students, and the office all laid a hand on me. Not to mention the logging work at Petersham which tugs at my heart as well as my conscience. But I shall get home for some time anyhow. What about E's macintosh: do we buy it here at a guess for size? Faith inclines to the best grade of basket suitcase. Let me have all Christmas suggestions promptly. I am off across the street to dine with Penn's.

R.T.F.

1909

(postmarked Cambridge)

January 24, 1909

Dear People,

This is Sunday night and I am once more in my warm corner of the house with twenty rooms - relishing more than ever the solitude and the coziness and the windy night that will presently sweep mysteriously into the windows and cool my forehead as I go to sleep. Such a long, unceasingly descriptive sentence can only be the consequence of another book of Wells's ("Tono-Bungay" brought said down) and recent unsocial days.

I have made my little picks at society, this last with, even to the length of one Beacon Street call, the Harvard Club Dinner to Pres. Eliot, a luncheon to an actor at the Tavern Club, and the annual Signet dinner. I was entertained, but I grudged (niggard that I am) the money and the sleep. By habit and constitution I am afraid I am a hopelessly plain person - however much I clamour in imagination for a rich and purple existence. This Petersham sort of thing, all concrete and wholesome, with its magic touch upon food and air and sleep and its tangible (if small) signs of the days work rewarded - with just a little congenial company it would be ideal. I hope Emil is all right again. Regards to him. I go back tomorrow or next day. Your R.T.F.

(postmarked Boston & Syracuse Railroad)

March 9, 1909

Dear Family,

This week my record for letters seems to have fallen off a bit; but there really is, nonetheless, more impulse to writing than common, so do not fear the better days are gone again. Stress seems to enlarge the soul, quite as per Mr. James and his philosophy. Of late I have had more urgent and worrying responsibilities than even since I left my happy home; and yet in a kind of an impersonal way, my spirits keep on rising. Perhaps the real diagnosis of the paradox is health (to which I manage to make the proper daily sacrifices) plus some odd moments of good company - e.g. the Coolidge's small dinner on Thursday. I came up here (Petersham and the empty barracks) for a three day's labor involving inspections and conferences today, town meeting and the tax question tomorrow, and putting a possible new man (with Mrs. Ketcham discharged) through his (and my) paces on Tuesday. Also, on Tuesday night, I take my second initiation to the Grange. Meanwhile I pass constructive hours "hacking it", as the natives say, cooking brief but satisfying breakfasts and suppers in the kitchen, and catching the midday meal where I may. Usually it is in the shanty down in the woods. Today, returning from the job I encountered the exodus from the Unitarian Church dedicated this morning - a first preached in - and was taken to dinner by Miss Dickman to the hotel, where I ate sole among fifteen women. The gossip of the occasion was that the local Baptist minister is going to start a steam laundry on the common. And so to bed - to hear the hooting of a neighboring owl. Your R.T.F.
March 26, 1909

Dear Family,

This seems to be a favorable moment for a letter home. I have just left New Haven on my way back to Cambridge. If anything my speed seems to be increasing of late. Since getting back from Washington I have been twice to Petersham - the last time Monday to Tuesday night - and yes - today noon I took a train for New Haven, where I gave a talk before the Yale Forest Club. Mr. Graves & wife lodged and fed me and the boys gave me a good audience. This afternoon I have a lecture, and this evening some conferences and a meeting of the Harvard Forestry Club. That's the way my days go. I am sorry they leave me so incapable of letters. It is almost pathetic how completely my pen sticks. These catalogues of dates and doings humiliate me more and more, yet they seem to be my limit. If it weren't for the Fenns I should starve to death in my own juice.

By the way, I am reminded, Mother, that in a recent letter you made a plaintive query as to how you had made me think you called me peevish. Perhaps I can explain my elliptical methods. In saying what I did (what puzzled you) I was merely saying for you, forestalling you as it were, the obvious comment on my state of mind as were revealed in the early part of my letter. It was I accusing myself - oh shucks. Why explain? I was joking, and, as usual, I did it awkwardly. Forgive me. Your R.T.F.

Sunday, April 1909

Dear Family,

Things are very handsome with me. The new cook is (or so far seems) a jewel, the boys are happy and diligent, everybody is bursting with health and best of all I have just signed the contract for the sale of all my winter's cut of logs - and the buyer is a fine man too. Perhaps you don't realize what a relief this consummation is. It comes pretty near being the winning of my first year's bet with the Corporation - and there have been times (what with business depression, local politics, ice storms, incipient strikes and so on) when I worried a wee bit. So all is cosy. I don't know when I shall get to Berkshire - perhaps next week.

Your R.T.F.

What news of the Thayers?

May 2, 1909

Dear Mother,

Have you given me up at last - a son too irresponsible to waste letters on? If you had I should well deserve it. Anyway, here is a letter of sorts. The wheels are humming here with very few jars - if we except this recent and still lingering weather, which seems to be monstrous for this most monstrous of climates. A sawmill is sawing up our winter's logs -, each day three students tally its output. Another squad is tree planting under Prof. Jack, and still another surveying under Prof. Cary. As for me I lecture at times, write letters, transact the business of the establishment and do chores most of the time and sort of "shepherd the rear" all the time. Blessed be the cook who continues satisfactory and contented. Jack Ames has got himself married and taken a house in the village - wife, servants, horses and all - whence he cometh and goeth in a magnificent motor car. Beyond these noticeable events nothing has lately penetrated my crowded and selfish thoughts. Food and sleep are nearly uppermost, and after them comes a great striving, mildly exciting, wholesomely worrisome mess of schemings about how to make real money and real foresters. How be you? Dan Mason wrote me for a house in Berkshire and I told him to write to you. Said he couldn't pay over $300. Your R.T.F.

Harvard Forest

October 12, 1909

Dear Family,

First knocking carefully on wood, I take my pen in hand to tell you that this long silence on my part means nothing but health and a highly improved and auspicious situation. We opened school in a renovated house to a class of 14 foresters and 8 landscape gardeners here for a special course. Since then the machinery has run with less friction and more music than I would have believed possible. The food - 0 foremost of all success is excellent and the service of it just right. My new woodsman who is to be the pivot of the woods crew under "Supervising Lumberman" Hackett, is a grand old man, patient, amiable, and instructive to the boys, who like & respect him. He lives in the woods in a cozy shanty, which is already quite a popular point of call for foresters. Hackett also, is a treasure, energetic and experienced. The work is going well and busily, and the boys have enough demands upon their energies during the day time to leave them fairly quiet during the evening. So, except for the fact that my teeth are rotting away with the prospect of repair, all is lovely in Petersham.
I am just off now with Dr. Donaldson* to try to shoot a duck or two in Tom Swamp. I should like to be remembered to Miss Frothingham if she is there. Your R.T.F. This paper is out of date, so I am told to use it up.

* delievered Anne Fisher (Tatlock) in Petersham house

March 13, 1910

Dear Family,

The worst of writing letters is the difficulty of untangling my comings and goings for any kind of coherent narrative. They seem such a snarl of my daily doings. This last week there was Town Meeting at Petersham, where, in spite of eloquence by me and Mr. Brooks, the town voted to try to collect taxes from the college, then a day of showing a new foreman around, followed by more initiation into the Grange in the evening. Wednesday I got back here and plunged into lectures and routine, with an uncommon amount of incidental jobs, such as readjustments of the courses for next year, a new teacher, negotiations with the Forest Service, etc., plus a strong dash of private work thrown in. Bryant is just wrestling with one report to the Canadian Pacific R. R., and besides helping him on that, I have been drawn into a controversy now raging over the arrangement of the trees on Commonwealth Ave. Altogether I was glad of Saturday night. Bill and I went to the Theater, my first of the winter and saw "The Man from Home". This week I am here until Friday - then in Petersham for two days. Your R.T.F.

March 20, 1910

Dear Family,

Again I am discovered alone in my barrack. Having just supped of fried eggs, bread & butter, shredded wheat & milk, and coffee, and having also washed the dishes (as many as three!), and posted last month's accounts, I settle down for a little relaxation - an apple in one hand and a pen in the other. Times are moving here. Yesterday I had a buyer up to look at our logs and today another one. Yesterday, too, I paid off the crew and spent some anxious hours locating my beloved woods boss, Mr. Dennis, who had gone home with a chill. When found (by telephone) he was convalescent and mainly exercised over the fracture of his false teeth. So he comes back to his shanty tonight. This morning Hackett came over in his motor & we went down to the mill yard and planned the next month's work. He will move his mill this week and begin sawing next week Monday. Two weeks from today the students will all come back and we shall be in full blast again. Meanwhile friend Ketcham (who is being let go - will depart and a new man will move in as caretaker. The new one has fewer children and more brains. Tomorrow I go back for a toilsome two days in Cambridge. Sometimes it seems a miracle that things get done - even anyhow - but they do, somehow.

After leaving Hackett today, I went up to the village and lunched at the new hotel. Afterward I inveigled a pleasant school marm into taking a walk. First I got her wet in some unexpected snow left in the woods, and then it rained and I had to let her walk home alone in order to get home partly dry in my only suit myself. Yrs R.T.F.

Gallant episode.

April 2, 1910

Dear Family,

The sensation of our spring opening here is that I have got a horse - a clever, fast, and gentle bay mare, also a yellow buckboard warranted to stand anything, and the usual fixings. You can't imagine what a luxury it is to be able to get anywhere in reasonable time and without continuous walking. Everything is in good trim - the cook all ready for business, the mill primed to start sawing on Monday, and the students even now arriving and falling upstairs with their trunks.
Yesterday I went to Hubbardston with Hackett in his motor to arrange for sawing a lot for Fisher & Bryant. Today I have driven all over town paying off the woods crew and collecting wood money. Tomorrow I shall get to work on lectures. For health I am miraculous. For a week of the heartiest days I never got to bed before one. Helping entertain Peggy’s Bryn Mawr friends and going to two parties with Shaun. Yet I seem to be still fresh. Is it science or work? Yr R.T.F.

from Roger Fenn to elder Fishers

(posted Bellows Falls - September 13, 1910)

Dear Grandma and Grandpa,

We are very busy now, not school-work but getting the house in order before the student body of the family comes down. Although this day was the best fun of any so far, because we worked all the morning in the shop and the afternoon on potting plants, I didn’t like it as much as getting coal, eggs, wood and doing the rest of the chores up there. This was the first summer that we have had a chance to take care of a house, and it was fun, which we shall not forget in a hurry. You ask Wallace if it wasn’t.

In school I have 4 recitations one day and two the next, and as we have 6 periods now, besides 25 minutes of recess, sometimes it is really a “cinch”. Father wants us to anticipate English A to keep busy. Tell Wallace, Emmit Carver says that John Baker passed his History exam.

Please tell me Margery Whitney’s full address.

Father had some hay-fever yesterday but is all well to-day, and has gone to Plymouth to preach. So all down here are well, with the exception of our hearts which “burn with love for thee” and Berkshire.

Donald and I went on Wednesday with Uncle Dick to the aviation meet at Atlantic. When Uncle Dick first saw an aeroplane lighting he said, “Well ain’t that the darndest thing you ever saw?” Grahame-White, our favorite, flew twice around Boston light and around the course in his Bleriot monoplane, which looks like a blue heron lighting, making 33 miles in 38 min. The speed in starting was terrible, and very beautiful to watch. The landing also was very pretty, landing light as a feather. We were all thrilled. White rose 3300 ft. into the air. Yesterday we saw a ball game. Love from, Roger
It could be theorized that the beginning of the Fisher-James high friendship might have begun earlier than the 1890’s. RTF’s and W.J., Jr.’s respective fathers’ Harvard paths, however, probably did not cross. The Philosopher was only fourteen at the time of Edward’s graduation in 1856. From the many existing letters of RTF, the ones written to his dear friend William (“Uncle Bill” to Fisher’s children), show him to be an intimate of the Jameses during his college years, stepping almost daily into and out of their household. These letters constitute the single largest segment. Some of their correspondence has been incorporated under different chapters, most written in the years 1906 and 1907. They give an exhilarating track of their friendship. The men seemingly had the time of their lives, meeting abroad, visiting each other’s parents often, crisscrossing the United States, and in general getting the most out of each other’s company.

Figurative prose was their specialty. Some of the letters might seem arcane and coded for mutual benefit, a few were unintelligible, for instance, Genevieve Lord chided Fisher for his incomprehensibility. Also, there is mention in a few of “The Little Stranger”, which turns out to be a mutual plan - never realized - to publish their letters one day. It might be seen in hindsight, ironically, that their attempt at times to seem sophisticated and urbane might not be as interesting as plain simple reportage of what each one felt and did in their time. It should be added that James, like Rockwell Kent and Louis Agassiz Fuertes, the famous bird illustrator, and others, had their lives positively affected by studying under beloved “Uncle Abbott” Thayer.

There is frustratingly little concrete mention of James’s famous father and only fleeting words about a visit to Henry James, the novelist, in England. Both Fisher and James were on the crest of a great spiritual tide and saw the results of their way of life and their education come to fruition in themselves. They were classy and would rather not hide it. Their self-worth as talented and influential individuals was balanced by their respect and attention to an era in many ways the last and best of the nineteenth century. They manifest a spirit hard to match today. They had their health, beliefs, and hope intact, with which to face the future.
Dear Richard,

Life is certainly hard about these times and I am rapidly becoming worn down to a zero with these exams. They strike me with a hard jolt about every two days and I hardly have time to square off before I am downed again. I sit here now smoking one of my last "Old Gold" cigarettes before I am forever plunged in the miseries of rowing and the wholesome but at times joyless joys of college life. I am almost given to wish that I lived in the days of Dick Whittington that I might fare carelessly forth with my father's blessing and a stewed prune to seek my fortune and the heiress (the two are synonymous). But this being out of the question I am in the position of one resigned, contemplating the medicine before me, and pondering upon the evils of all men, and incidentally slopping over onto your devoted balditude.

And how is the Yale Forest School, and how is the report and how are all the little Fishers, my dear Mr. Baldy? Scratch me raw! But you are a poor one to correspond - to let on even that you are alive or dead. But I must get back to my business, - to this man Wendell and his bard Shakespeare. The question in my mind is whether Wendell's book is more in the nature of a comedy or a joke. I find it almost impossible to decide. I read it all yesterday until my ears rang with "creative imagination", "economy of invention", "The everlasting evils inherent in the fact of sex", "The everlasting mystery of human life", "The irony of fate", "The everlasting results of evil womanhood" and "the constipation of creative imagination". Whereupon I put down the book and turned to our friend Henry IV and read "... and I saw a flea stick upon Bardolph's nose and a' said it was a black soul burning in hell fire." And after a pause I believe I ejaculate "Jesus!" and went out of doors. And do you agree with me Mr. Fisher? As I was saying, Sir, before I was so rudely interrupted, the two Miss Thayers have been paying us a short visit as you probably already know, - and a very pleasant visit. I still maintain that there is a trifle too much "thoughting" inherent in the character of the elder, but my admiration remains the same of the younger. But why does this whole letter consist of "critical notes" and bellyaching and mind throwing - in truth I am a veritable Yahoo. But I feel as if my cross had been suddenly removed and I have nothing to "get back to" when suffering from liebweich.

Ever yrs. W. J. Jr.
June 15, 1906

Lieber Billy,

The old man is again pushing his lean shanks among the elms. I came down from Intervale on Monday, and signalized my return by foolishly getting put up of the Oakley tournament by Rodman Peabody. Now I am in a decline due chiefly to fleshpots and hot nights. Night before last I dined chez votre famille, and received much comfort and entertainment - notable in which pleasing blessings were some remarks of your mother on the lack of moral elegance in the contemporary female. It is reassuring to find that our objections are not without noble support. I also heard a fat letter from you which gave me a good notion of your devouring ways.

Interim for a trip to Brookline, and 2 oratorical hours with a Miss Loring who has a stiffish mind but partly mitigated by a playful wit. Having since dined with Roger and feeling restless and sweaty - Pshaw, James, what ails my hitherto justly celebrated mind? Are there no more worlds to criticize, or am I plain stupid? Back up, and stimulate me with a few hot lines. I should expect, though, that art would tend to atrophy some of the genial ribaldry which formerly found part of its impetus in an uncultured soul. Rather keen, eh? Oh well, the thumb still has a nail. Perge ut Coepisti, which means go to Hell in your own way, for I have confidence in your parts. So if you can't be flippant be turbidly impressionistic in your own circumlocute fashion. But tell me what you smoke and drink, and with whom, and I will tell you what you were - I mean wear. In these parts, James, the gift of wit is waning, and I don't feel very well, myself. If you have the appropriate aperient, send it on. Thine, Diccon

Naushon, August 2, '06

James, William James, the only Bill, how can I tell you what cheer your letter brought the old man's heart? I too was at odds with my environment, not the good Russells, my hosts, or this beautiful island but a strong tincture of the Smart Set in the household, and a consequent sense of indignity to the purity of life. Then you spoke up and declared your faith and my heart pinched the young man's ribs. Bill, let us hang to these lights of ours through everything. There is a word that can always stir me to the deepest consciousness of joy, and it is the same word that comes from you as the perfume leaves a flower: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God". So when I see you turn from the ugly expanses of human fashion, straight to the simpler Garden of the Gods which neither stales nor changes and when I find you loving me as well, I feel that I have the greatest riches that can ever be in store for me. It is an ineffable and rare thing to have a friend in that circle of the soul. A man that is a man has a demon of honor in him that rules him like a tyrant, and for self respect and faith, may make him pay the price of eternal loneliness - or merely isolation. That is in part the story of seers, martyrs, and reformers who come into being in evil times. But if a man or even a mere professor finds that light where his unconquerable hopes burn in the heart of him, the very home of his demon, there is a second demon who speaks his language and calls his demon friend, why then there is forever circumstantial and delightful Hell to pay. We ourselves are Heaven and Hell. "In uns ist die Gause Welt". Ah, Bill - you God damned artist. You don't know how I love you but I do!

But, gentleman, hush.* While you have been painting by day** and disguised*** by night, I have been ingeniously dodging work and the vilest stickiest weather that God ever put to thee parts. About a month ago, in Connecticut, I got a touch of sun, Sir, which pursued me for a week or more, seconded by a certain fluency in the small intestine. These distresses have furnished my excuse for 2 weeks lingering here with the old rogue Russell. And barring the beastly weather, it has been wonderful: hot times nearly every morning, followed by a swim in fresh salt water, and in the afternoon either a canter on ponies or a spell of fishing. One day we went to the West End Pond and caught 23 of the steeliest gamest bass that I have ever seen. The string weighed 12 lbs. It's a marvelous possession this island. I think upon October. Your R.T.F.

* an expression from the book, "The Virginian" by Owen Wister
** W. J. Jr. had decided to become a painter, not a doctor.
*** drunk -obs.

Aug. 21, 1906

Dear Bill,

Draw a long breath and hold hard - there is trouble ahead for you. I am full up to here with four days among the sand dunes. Nor was I alone while I ate or slept or read a book, but other whiles I did bask in such a radiance of quips and cranks and wanton wiles, such a wonder of a rosy, high hearted presence, that, in short James, I feel that in this merely professional existence there is a grave deficiency. The source of which mingled yet delightful sensation is our lady of the Victoria luncheon, Mrs. Frothingham. That I am safe, and that she is also, there is no shadow of doubt, but I say to you, William, that a woman who is a sort of incarnate May morning, with the heart of a child, and the understanding of a poet is a noble thing to see. If you will picture to yourself a great waste of dunes, with a long beach outside, and a misty pearly sea beyond, and then imagine a deepening twilight bringing in low wisps of fog across the stars, you can locate
my whereabouts during last evening with ease. Your memory, if I mistake not,
will supply you a notion of the company I was in. I have learned some more about
the essential fatality of words - even my words. Letting up on you for the moment,
but only to choose another weapon. I wish to curse you for the sin of urging a
willing horse. Since June 1st I have had one measly little scrawl in which you
blundely request some news. Whereas in the same interval, if I have written one, I
have written letters all reeking with humor and affection. Do you no longer draw
your dollars through Coretta & Company? 'Cause why, if so, say when, for I do
not wish to waste my pearls on any mere British prig of a dead letter clerk. In a
word, Bill, I am hungry for a page or two of your observes. Far be it from me to
call under attention to my own more than willing lucubrations, but there is a cer-
tain numbing reaction about shooting in the air, which is depressing both to the
lover and the artist - both of which parts I assume, for the moment, as mine.
Dein R.T.F.

August 21, 1906

Dear Bill,

In Dublin they were in fine form and spirits, with the further enhancement of
a beautiful, high born, and private model dwelling in their midst - very open-
minded, unprioritized, and game as you please. Gladys and the great man are
doing her proud. She, on her part, might "do" me - if she could get sufficiently
propinquitous. Rapid transit is still my curse or my blessing. Your mother asked
me to Chocorua for the third week in September, and my business schedule forced
me to decline. Mr. Merriman, Mrs. Higginson at Rock Harbor, and a Connecticut
man, have among them absorbed all of my September time. There is fun in this
prospect, as you can see, and yet I think this continual impersonation of the short
term guest and the woodlot adviser may come to tarnish my pure young soul. I
have now got the wrong end of hospitality down to a very fine point. I diagnose a
domestic situation at a glance, and shame myself with the most perfect deference
to its foibles and weaknesses. There is a great opus collecting in me. It might be
entitled "The Art of Hospitality", by An Experienced guest. Next Saturday I go
down to Naushon for Sunday. This time to the J.M. Forbes's - but solely on plea-
sure bent. I think I was invited because I made Amelia laugh when she came to
supper one night while I was at the Russell's. Alas, poor R.T.F.
Dearest Knockermann,

You are (you know) and it is, and I tell you I do warm my vitals at the fire which burns between us. You are condemned - pardon me, I am condemned - you are translated. Therefore the soul of the bald man rises, thirsting for its manly meat, and consecrates its dearest moments to the ocean mails. James, if the worm I call my noble self ever makes a brave and joyous squirm it is in the light of your regard. Keep the torch alight. There is no worldly extinguisher that can put it out, or any wealth that can bring or replace it. We have a "Little Stranger" in our midst. Born or unborn - who cares?

A star or two, and we are off again. ....... what lies in my mouth just now - dare I tell him? - is (holding hard) a woman. As B. Shaw says, you cant always tell. Sometimes they is from sawdust made. Yet the defendant in this case, while somewhat tarred with the New England stick, displays nonetheless (to the inward eye of mine you want of) the elements of a MIND. A mind and the emotional guts to use its. Effect, as gallant a little craft as often meets the eye. There are two things that I prize beyond anything in the human pale - the wholesome body and the high mind; for these are what make successful life. It is no idle tattle that the Kingdom of Heaven is in the human heart. In that essential organ blood and thoughts of magic alchemy (if there is such a thing) achieve God only knows what wonders. So here I be, and there is She, and you can see, it's up to me. I am 30 years old, and I know that the big prizes hang high and cannot be whistled down by any mere hat trick and Harvard hat bands. I am prepared to strip off and give the bloods a run for their money (she does not "dwell among the untrodden ways"). But - I say but, James, and you may wince in a sympathetic spot if you still can, I do not wish any more burnt fingers or premature flaccoes to fall upon me. Let us say, then, caution and firmness. Enough play to keep the ground warm but not enough to shake the nerve. You shall never lose me but to gain my superior twin.

And now, Mr. James, will you join me in that grand old hymn of praise - "the mountaineers, they flap their ears". So it seems, methinks, and I mind how, as tender youths, we used to make the welkin ring with its stirring pleasures. 'Twas then we sucked our first Bull Durham cigarettes. O imperishable aroma ( shall I send you a sack - and the makings? And so to bed, per chance to dream — which I seem to be doing already. thine Baldy.

Tell me, can you stand bulletins on the loveliest of Her Sex?

Dear Old Bill,

I make but one jump to the writing desk to curse and bless you for the dearest, God damnedest, most tantalizing fellow in the world. I could weep, - and then hug you for your strong and bitter choice - plainly strong and right for you, and in the heart bitter for me. You will see that I have just read your rolling cloud of a letter - silver on top and lined with disappointment. Well, let the women weep; we are the lads that must eat these trials alive. I mourn the probable postponement of your designs on the manly life, all the more since I think I have myself made some progress along these lines along these lines along these lines - you understand me! The summer has brought a considerable addition ( I believe) to my scope. By which I mean that I have discovered myself to be more of a man than I had thought. I may be wrong, James. I may be wrong, but my suspicion is that I have quite as much of power over my own faculties and (the surprising part) over the human animal as well. This is rather de haut en bas, what? Granted. But damme, William, that is where I live and they will have to kill me to get me down. The inwardness of all this elevation consists chiefly of some good work done, a prosperous outlook in the department here, and - some people I have met! How I wish you were here to give my tongue the chance my pen can so poorly improve! I shall manage somehow, though, even on paper - before the winter is out. A week at the Higginson's was one of the richest experiences of my summer. Hank was there - God bless him - and the Major was a fountain of wisdom and affectionate good spirits. Also there was a woman with what I should call a brain. I think there will be more about her in future epistles. Again I may be wrong, but if I live, she is going to have all the varieties of religious experiences that I know anything about. This for your secret heart. It is not meet to publish such designs. Only, you know the old badger for what he is, and I tell you he is way up on his hind legs, and his claws are fast in the gravel, and when I turn him loose - God help the Irish!

This drip has begun in tears and ended in a kind of muscle-bound brag. Well, "buy a wheel and see life". Swing round your arching searchlight - twill find me on the nest, and if you asked me what you are, I'll say by God the best. Thine (mechanic) Baldy. (port)
Incomparable Badger,

Ineffuctual words stick in my throat. When I read your burst of affectionate joy in my scream of October 1st, I say to myself, right out loud, "by God, that's what I call a man's letter". Since when I have read your pages about once per hour. Not even the soughing of immeasurable mucous in the beak can damp (I mean dash) my spirits. The only thing that gives me concern is that a man who can see the game as gloriously as you, should have to feel himself incomplete. You are naturally so all fired discerning that your soul outburns your life, and any remarks on the slow ripening of the rarest fruits are threatened with confounding eloquence. Yet I tell you - and it was God who told me - that your happiness and effectiveness are the surest gamble in the universe.

(W. J.)

The fact thus far this morning is a somewhat bare rejoinder to your golden eulogium and subsequent bellyache. Yet still I ramp and beat my breast. James, am I not a wonder? A week ago I had doings with the Lady, and followed them up with a rather hot line of note in which highly symbolic and complimentary prose culminated in a toot of verse. She was to leave town today. Now, said I to myself, it will take a true sport to answer that (it would make the usual Back Bayer take to the woods) and she won't make a sign till her train is whistling. Today, at the very last moment, she makes good with as handsome a bit retort as you would like to see. Martial music: triumph of badgerine discernment, hair sprouts on the hard boiled egg; all nature in an uproar. You wish to know her name? There was no intention to conceal it, only the inconspicuous result of a general policy of "never excite any more remark than you can help". I don't mean to embarrass, but vous calmer. But, but, - and here is a mean little fleshly caution,- remember your recent words on the manly life, the life of the body, and do for my sweet sake cherish the machine. Give it air and sleep, and if possible, exercise. You are not an attic hermit or a book worm, and if you expect to eat em alive, you must keep your teeth in good order. Bill, for God's sake take care of yourself. Even more by your leave, the small spark I call myself. And now, Mr. James, the morning stars will oblige by singing together that stirring hymn, we ourselves are Heaven & Hell. Yes, even the sun doth rise and set at just the point where we do set.

Here's honest palms across the Sea.
Keep my divagations out of sight.
Baldy

Oct. 23, 1906

Fitzwilliam - are you there? I would expatiate into your ear for a spell. I have no important news to communicate, only a big bellyache before I crawl into my fearfully folded bedding. The L. of H.S. is away on a visit, and hereabouts is heard the full internal grinding of the academic machine. Therein am I involved, and I begin to pant and sweat somewhat, but my claws are still deep in the wood, and - having paused, am to expel a book against time, 10 seconds - I have none but a smiling face for God. Yet if he (i.e. God) were the man for the place he would take time to smear a few superfluous bipeds I could name. One I saw Sunday at the Curtises, a family pet who actually, in the pose of a "literary man", played swelling comics on the assertion that the whole of your Dad's writing was bosh. This profound critic is the author of many of our most charming sketches about the Smart Set. Mr. Higginson told me that your Dad and his utterances were the most precious things in the community. If I were God I know whose white liver I would tear out of him and feed to the coyotes. But Pshaw, Bill, we are God, you and I, and we can scorn to condescend to castrate such plainly destitute persons. Now I am almost sorry I mentioned the episode except that I have requited my own spleen.

The other night I dined with Hank & Philip Davis at Mrs. Norton's, to meet two obviously rompishly inclined Vassar girls. The point was the chill I got from Mrs. N. upon my attempting to give them a bit of a lead. Moral: do not mix the milieux without asking the Missus, James, "They comes different". Ellen Hooper is not a hearty feeder, and she never makes a hasty movement. Evelyn Sears, who is plainly a person of some intensity, is irritated by Emerson's dictum that nothing great was ever accomplished without enthusiasm. Here you have the detached body, and the uncoordinated, or unrealized mind. Women - most women - are like this: gentle perceptions and loyalties, growing, like delicate epiphytes, on undeveloped minds or repressed bodies. And this their education and experience have largely to answer for. Shall us laugh or be vexed? If you press them, their stoutly stated little principles will almost always be found to originate in some already personal and youthful impression. As for example, Miss Sears's horror of enthusiasm is repugnance of the gushing forth of persons superficially described as enthusiasts. But don't say I said so.

Here is more sermonizing. If it tastes bad in Paris, let me know, and I will reform.

"Night, with her train of stars,
And her great gift of sleep". Yours ever & always. Baldy.
Dear Bill,

Encore de parlez-vous. The merry winter draws on. All is mist, misery, and mucous. Yet, no - not all. I have a friend that in himself is Heaven and Hell. And whiles I talk to him across the Cauldron Sea, the advancing autumn, with its occasional hushed and fragrant days, its procession of dark windy clouds, puts my thoughts much upon James and the ever possible fireside in the brush. Last week I went up to Berkshire and drifted about in windless woods for two days. Nothing fell to my gun, for I hardly fired it, but I builded me some fires, and twice saw the red west fade, and my tall chamber of flickering firelight take its stranger shape in the darkness. Roger is begging me to go off shooting something with him, but though I thirst for the bare brown marsh, I simply must avoid this expedition. I prize Roger anywhere but in the brush. Besides, he might shoot me full of holes. Only think of little Eli feeding oatmeal to his fly. Roger simply hasn't the tact that I require. This is elliptical but I daresay you take me.

Yesterday I had a long walk in the Arboretum with Mrs. Frothingham who was in town for a spell. She is as rosy and charming as ever, and sets a tall standard for muse maidens to be judged by. Youth is ten times as potent a spirit in a matron of thirty - properly trained by plenty of my society - than in the ordinary unroused girl of twenty*. Here you may wonder where is the Person of Brains. Away to the fox hunting in Geneses & just now laid by from a not serious fall. So no more at present. But how do you do, Mr. James? Deiner Diccon.

Hunt appeared in today's papers as attorney for drunken students, juggled last night in the Lexington.

*A spirited page from you - in part corrective of your last - sets me off again. My cue is also to entreat. I too was unduly exercised, and I own that my own mood was as much the cause as yours. Much mucous & confinement had got to my collar. The mucous is still with me but the man is resurgent - we say resurgent. I guess your stamen is still staminate. So I will even wait patiently for your return. Indeed, I have some troubles of my own, and my claws of late - hounded by mucous, dentistry, recalcitrant students, and God awful loneliness - have slipped till I sweated blood to keep my grip. But I think I kept it, at least I spent my fundamental gut in the effort, and God allowed me to lie down at night with no fiends of conscience to hound me. But the comforts and amenities have been blown away in toto, - lady of brains and all. I don't know where I shall bring up. Probably (or perhaps) in a mighty vacant place. Yet I don't care if only I find James there, squinting before his easel, with a Bull Durham tag hanging from his breast pocket, a shot gun by his side, and the light of manhood in his eye. How often must I tell myself that the Kingdom of Heaven is in the human heart? Well, only when a long stretch of loneliness reminds me that some of it is in yours. Be Game. Ever and always. Deiner, Baldy
Beloved William,

It is so many days since I have penned you a line, notwithstanding many strong impulses and choice happenings. Truth is, so much has been doing, so many absorbing and exciting things, all set in the heart warming glory of expanding Spring, thus I have spent my hours to the last minute in taking all the bets of Destiny. In a way it's an annoying circumstance, this procrastination of letters, because it leaves the young man bewildered with accumulated material, all slightly stale or blurred, and he is apt to find himself reduced, through lack of sufficient affluence, to the ancient art of expatiation. Still, as you remark, expatiation invites the muse, and the case is not without hope. Recently I spent a few days in Dublin. Art, Sir, is positively domesticating herself in that spot. Both Gladys and the Great Man have done some figures that put me in a panic of delight. Also the book is done*, and I tell you in gladness it is without parallel for beauty and originality in its field: the G. M. says, "I always more and more love the thought of Billy James". He did a quick head of me - "first time on any stage" - that quite swelled him up. You must see it. What with Spring, and a bit tennis, and field days with the lads, and a few private jobs, I begin to feel considerably expanded. It's a grand thing, I find, and grander every year, this incredible welling up of warmth and song and color straight through the whole texture of life. If a man is only in the way of noticing it, if he is anything more fortunate than a pen pusher on a high stool, he must hear his heart sing like the morning stars. I refer, Mr. James, to the return of sp-p-pring. More soon R.T.F.

* "Protective Coloration in the Animal Kingdom"

Dear Old Bill,

Encore de mucous - I too. But when the "pale face of the Nazarene" sends me such an eloquent look as your last, must give tongue though I perish. Today the mucous has got me temporarily down and bowing before my fireplace. That, however, is nothing. My spirit is still strong and it rises up to give thanks for your incredible Parisian existence. What should I do without your cheering reminders and inexhaustible hot air? (You know it's not hot air, but I choose to call it so). It's funny, how we tend to philosophize, to expatiate, forever to interpret, instead of sticking to the ordinary retail trade in facts. And yet it's not funny, it's natural and lucky, for this is the way we are made, and it's an entertaining kind of a build to have. If you smile I'll kick your tail. It is not being simple to want to slough your complexity. Simplicity is enjoying simply what you are. But I digress. Do you remember one fat Stewart Baird, with a cast off head, your classmate? He trained the Pudding Show this year, and a very good one it was, but at the Graduates Night performance, he had the imprudence to keep coming out on the stage, full of gesticulated warning to the players, and in spite of loud cries of "get off the stage" from the house. There was a big crowd, some of it in liquor, and when the curtain rose on the 2nd Act, and Baird again obtruded his ugly mug, he received on or about his own person, and propelled with great speed, somewhere between 20 and 40 lemons - we say lemons, which, you may know, are now, betimes, the symbols of much contempt and derision. It was a grand and successful coup - with one unexpected result. A chorus girl, misinterpreting the volley, hurled back a single lemon which missed my lamps by an inch and bunged the eye of an elderly party from Lynn, who, they say, with difficulty gets leave of his wife to come to these Pudding shows once a year. No one knows, but all wonder, how he explained his purple damage. And so to bed. Thine, R.T.F.

COLONIAL CLUB

James,

Only the mind is fit to live in, and that, by a blessed chance, is playing up in fine style. Last night it gave me the most magnificent dream of my life. There was a woman in it of course, and I blush to state that she caressingly, and without the slightest recent pretext, began to warm my . . . I went to a great grey castle on a hill, a kind of upper Matlock hill and entered a vast tapestried hall, rich with rugs and silken couches and flickered over with the shadows and half light from a huge fireplace at the side. The Princess sat on a sort of low throne. Save for her and me and the wavering flames there was no life or motion to be seen. I do not know what she said or did, but the feeling with which I approached her and which her behavior seemed to express, was half lover-like and half holy. I seemed to be a Knight and a hero, blessed by the confidence of a being who understood all the knightliness and heroism in the world, and I had a sense, clearer than any waking conviction I have known, that I and man and destiny were alike ineffable and mighty. It was all a superb apotheosis of my own vague expectation of life, and I came to with a fierce reluctance.

Thine, R.T.F, the businessman
May 5, 1907

Writing to James, Sunday morning, with the sun bright and the wind West...having rained and lowered and congealed the earth for days and days the young man now feels somewhat ameliorated. We have been reminded lately of the Romantic's description of his native climate: "Wal, we git 9 months of winter, and the rest of the times it's pretty damn late in the fall." Sic Semper tyrannis in the quaint words of the great Irish patriot. But how do you get along, Mr. James? Long time I no see your handwriting appearing through my letter slot. As for me, I am slowly becoming a man again, after fearing, during a few days of bad tennis, that I had almost lost the power. The truth is, Bill, that the very thing I thrive by most is the very thing I most easily lose, and that is morale. The trouble is the conjunction of the sensitive mind of the child with the periodic spiritual starvation incident to the life of a single professional road agent. You, damn you, might help to keep me in tune, if only you would live somewhere near. All of which is prelude to the assertion that there is a divinity (or a mysterious, self-comforting ego) that shapes our ends. Somehow the queer spirit is indomitably hopeful or indomitably selfish. Yesterday left me tired and shamed,-ashamed of failures, evasions, and procrastinations, and I lay awake a long time, tense and restless. In the night, I suppose from somewhere out of my longings and my memories, came another astounding dream. I sat at a big table, facing a lot of grave people who were catechizing me-how I could not tell. Among them was a woman, also grave, and even more intent upon my behavior than the others. Presently the assemblage began to rise, the whole scene to dissolve and swirl about in a sort of cool wind, and I found myself running hand in hand with the woman over a grassy hill top, with the dawn coming bright ahead of us. Suddenly, she grasped my arm and we slipped. Then she threw back the hood of her cloak, and looked me in the face; and I saw that she was like no one I had ever seen. In the midst of my wonder, she put her hands on my shoulders and kissed me, and said, "I shall love you yet". At this, and the wonderful morning beauty of her, a kind of joy filled me, and I sat down before her and almost sobbed. Something immediately began to lick my face and sniff, and behold there was my old, beloved, boyhood dog. He charged all over me, barking and wagging like mad and all the while the girl stood there and smiled like a roguish angel. But - or and, I woke up. Now what you think of that? You may call it the magic of the Beautiful Powers, or you may call it the chicanery of the cheap Ego, seeking rehabilitation stealthily by night, while the conscience is off duty. Call it what you please it was fun, and tasted like living, and what is conscience anyway - that "doth make cowards of us all"? Queer, I could describe that woman to minutest item, even to her delicate personal redolence (my famous faculty), and yet I never consciously saw her like. Expatiating a few lines, Yours ever, Baldy

May 11, 1907

Another line to Bill. First let me get the weather out of my system. Today it snowed- we say snowed, hard all morning. Fires have been kept up with scarcely a break all spring, and the mercury has averaged 40 degrees for April and May. Also we scarcely see the sun. Little old spring is going to fall clear out of sight between the two stools of spring and summer. As for me, I need a change, a spiritual change. I have been teaching students and promoting timberlands till even my hitherto unfailing vocabulary is drying up. Can't I tap you for a line of talk to feed the springs? I don't know when I have gone so long without a good tongue-feast. I am slowly becoming a man again, after fearing, during a few days of bad tennis, that I had almost lost the power. The truth is, Bill, that the very thing I thrive by most is the very thing I most easily lose, and that is morale. The trouble is the conjunction of the sensitive mind of the child with the periodic spiritual starvation incident to the life of a single professional road agent. You, damn you, might help to keep me in tune, if only you would live somewhere near. All of which is prelude to the assertion that there is a divinity (or a mysterious, self-comforting ego) that shapes our ends. Somehow the queer spirit is indomitably hopeful or indomitably selfish. Yesterday left me tired and shamed,-ashamed of failures, evasions, and procrastinations, and I lay awake a long time, tense and restless. In the night, I suppose from somewhere out of my longings and my memories, came another astounding dream. I sat at a big table, facing a lot of grave people who were catechizing me-how I could not tell. Among them was a woman, also grave, and even more intent upon my behavior than the others. Presently the assemblage began to rise, the whole scene to dissolve and swirl about in a sort of cool wind, and I found myself running hand in hand with the woman over a grassy hill top, with the dawn coming bright ahead of us. Suddenly, she grasped my arm and we slipped. Then she threw back the hood of her cloak, and looked me in the face; and I saw that she was like no one I had ever seen. In the midst of my wonder, she put her hands on my shoulders and kissed me, and said, "I shall love you yet". At this, and the wonderful morning beauty of her, a kind of joy filled me, and I sat down before her and almost sobbed. Something immediately began to lick my face and sniff, and behold there was my old, beloved, boyhood dog. He charged all over me, barking and wagging like mad and all the while the girl stood there and smiled like a roguish angel. But - or and, I woke up. Now what you think of that? You may call it the magic of the Beautiful Powers, or you may call it the chicanery of the cheap Ego, seeking rehabilitation stealthily by night, while the conscience is off duty. Call it what you please it was fun, and tasted like living, and what is conscience anyway - that "doth make cowards of us all"? Queer, I could describe that woman to minutest item, even to her delicate personal redolence (my famous faculty), and yet I never consciously saw her like. Expatiating a few lines, Yours ever, Baldy

June 6, 1907

You are right, my bucko, I am somewhat sad and overtrained. I daresay my feet stink, and I am sure I long for James with a consuming long. If I could have about three days of real euphrosyne quickly with Bill, I think all my dark brown troubles would vanish. Tummy, nerves, and eyes seem to be the principle discord,
and though there is no more routine work to bother me, I seem incapable of self refreshment. There is a hell of a lot of business brewing but I will drag a rest out of the summer, if I have to turn down Rockefeller to do it. I shall be ready for you, damned ready, when you arrive, and we will hit the rails on the road to any turn you please.

Today I play a semifinals at Oakley with one Godfrey Cabot- awful steady and exasperating person- and though I ought to beat him, I am afraid tired nerves will do me. One of my chief diversions lately has been the society of my nephews, who now dwell across the road in the Shaler house. The little cusses are full of spirit, especially Donald, one of whose letters I enclose. It has quite a touch for 12 years old. Eh what? You must send it back for the family wants it. He wrote a note recently to the handsome housemaid beginning, “Dear Della, adorable person” and out balding Baldy in the subsequent phraseology. Adieu, and wish me strong again.

Ever thine, R.T.F.

Dan, you may wot, is little brother and Pat is a goat.

COLONIAL CLUB

June 15, 1907

Lieber liebster Billy,

I hope this letter does not go astray, for it's going to be a fat one. Spirits, some health, and a lot of happy happenings are with me, and James is the man I want the ear of. First, you are a prince of friends and your recent reflections were as timely as they were profound. Sometimes we think, you and I, that most of the world is either born dead, or too deadly accustomed to playing second fiddle to his loneliness. But I am doing pretty well in the doubles tournament. I beat Cabot in the semifinals, and tomorrow I play one Goodale, to whom I owe 15 in the finals. The viscera seemed to auger my winning, also what the papers call the “dope artists” at the club.

The latest innovations in my world are a lot of business for the summer, including a summons from E. N. Harriman, and a royal assignment from Mr. Higginson to supervision of his Champlain estate. I am taking young Bryant into partnership (or rather apprenticeship) in order to swing these growing labors. Maybe I shall yet make money. Certainly I shall acquire chances for visiting with James.

What I most need now is leisure and company in which to invite my soul, and revive the fundamental person. I realized this very keenly in reading the life of Charles Lowell, just sent me by Mrs. Higginson. There was a man of force and fire who was just made of the conviction that the Kingdom of Heaven is in the human heart. Some of his letters to Henry Higginson reminded me vividly of some of our best moments. A commencement speech of his is quoted in which he speaks of the reverence due to youth for its constant faith in, and frequent realization of the impossible. It set my old heart beating again to read it, and I remembered- God send I never forget- how inconceivably precious is the white light of dreams, the fitful vision of the right and the beautiful which alone explains and glorifies. Bill, let us keep this wondrous faith between us, let us keep our hearts fresh, for out of the heart are the issues of life. Allus, R.T.F.

July 2, 1907

Dear Old Bedrock Bill,

My heart is filled entirely with a hunger for your desirable self, and all that pen can lift is going out to you. So stand from under. First, -by God, I love you more everyday. The metal you are made of was forged and tempered in divine fire. It will swing to a feather's touch, and bend to any good cause, but nor man or devil can break it, nor evil dull its edge. There may be more like it in the world, but I never saw any, and I believe that God has lost the recipe. Lord, but I am proud and glad of you, James.

Feeling better but not cured, for desire of late has been of a magnitude. Destiny, i.e. circumstance, episodes etc., have sharpened my human appetites without furnishing any stronger diet. Since last I gave you my news, I have wound up the annual batch of students, put in a day with E. H. Harriman*, set up a new office in town with Cary and E. S. Bryant, spent a week at home with Mrs. Frothingham and family, and learned on a recent return to Boston, that I had won the decanter at Oakley (poor triumph) by default. At the moment I am en route for a few days with Jim Russell at Naushon. There are some anxieties and responsibilities about the college money and such in the back of my head, though nothing to stagger, and on the whole I look promising. But my heart and the Holy Ghost are surely up and seeing God. Money is going to be scarcer this year, yet I have put my little hand in Hank’s to give you one gaudy reception at the frontier. We are scrutinizing North America for a place where a real artist can hook a fish without having his hand bit off by porters or his hands bit off by fleas- to which he is uncommon toothsome. You are right- Hank is a sport and not a mouth organ. But you will see that I still have some manly leanings myself. So don't die.

A few miles back I had a pang of queer unlocalized homesickness the like of which I have not felt since I was a small boy. I think it followed on my recent for-gathering with that vivid and complete creature Mrs. Frothingham. With her
gracious and blooming presence, and her extraordinary combination of mental and physical understanding, she gave the young man a mighty memorable weekjudging from the recent pang, almost too memorable. -Well, more soon,

Mon Prince.

* E. H. Harriman, father of William Averill Harriman, Secretary of Commerce under Roosevelt and diplomat

Dear Dick,

Much gratitude from James to the bald individual and his recent letters, - I may say gratitude from the whole family for your letter from Athol! I have had so many small and sad duties to perform this last ten days that I thought it best not to summon you in their midst, - and I asked Harry, who was then writing you, to make you understand. But things are more peaceful now than they were, and we wish you might come up any time that best suits you. The tennis court is fierce but if you brought 4 fresh balls they might help. I have plenty of new ones but they don't seem to bounce. Thank God for your $200 poverty! I have written to Dick Ware to say that I can't go to Tab. in October for the simple solemn and solus reason that I bank on going later to Pea Island with Baldy, - though I didn't tell him that. Either at Christmas or in the mid-year, hey, we will hit the rails? And it shall be like our first journey to Eli's when I couldn't sleep for thinking of the morning! Perhaps we can get our hands in a bit at Petersham.

Bless you, Baldy, - your letter meant more than I can say! Let us know when to expect you, if you can fit us in.

Ever,

W.J. Jr.

September 15, 1910

Dear Dick,

Much gratitude from James to the bald individual and his recent letters, - I may say gratitude from the whole family for your letter from Athol! I have had so many small and sad duties to perform this last ten days that I thought it best not to summon you in their midst, - and I asked Harry, who was then writing you, to make you understand. But things are more peaceful now than they were, and we wish you might come up any time that best suits you. The tennis court is fierce but if you brought 4 fresh balls they might help. I have plenty of new ones but they don't seem to bounce. Thank God for your $200 poverty! I have written to Dick Ware to say that I can't go to Tab. in October for the simple solemn and solus reason that I bank on going later to Pea Island with Baldy, - though I didn't tell him that. Either at Christmas or in the mid-year, hey, we will hit the rails? And it shall be like our first journey to Eli's when I couldn't sleep for thinking of the morning! Perhaps we can get our hands in a bit at Petersham.

Bless you, Baldy, - your letter meant more than I can say! Let us know when to expect you, if you can fit us in.

Ever,

W.J. Jr.

September 15, 1910

Dear Dick,

By all means come for over the 24th and make the weekend as "strong" as you can. Uncle Henry is not very well and your advent will help us to keep him cheerful. Lang Warner is coming, I think, for this next Sunday. I, personally, am perishing for lack of exercise so be sure and bring a racket.

Ever,

W.J. Jr.

September 10, 1910

September 10, 1910

September, 1910

Dear Dick,

The point is I am invading the Governing Boards of the College with a scheme for acquiring 2000 acres of timberland for "my Division" and barring a generous contribution by the present owner, I am doing all the figuring, and presenting, and arguing by my little bald self. The campaign involves board to board relations with all the captains of conservation from Prexy and C.F. Adams down to my humblest advice. The fun and the privilege are the contact with these men, the beauty of the scheme, and the exhilaration of Baldy knowing what is wanted and gradually writing it all over the ruling academic consciousness. They have me now on my own ground, and though they can't seem to believe that I know more about the value of timber than they do, I strongly opine - we say opine - that I will yet make them swallow their suspicions and defer to my judgement. Hank is my able backer, being on the Visiting Committee, and yesterday C.F. Adams, chairman, gave a lunch to Committee and Division together. I felt like a God - not proud, but perfectly secure, and content to take all the adamant bets that were offered against my project. I may fail, of course, nothing being certain, but to be, even for a time, astride of a cause that is your own - master and servant, and that
will not let you capitulate, not even to the objections of the great - win or lose, that is what I call living. That much of the world is mine. What's yours, Mr. James? Thine, R.T.F.

95 Irving Street
Cambridge
April 7th

Fisher, old party, times I read your letter again an ma bosom swells visibly. If I, in what seems to me my sternly self-absorbed passage through life, am able to make you feel like a hero and a favorite of God what think you am I made to feel like by such an expression as yours? Pretty well, I thank you, - and at the same time somewhat ashamed - by comparison. Anyone is led by pride if nothing else to avoid the more flagrant forms of social selfishness but when it comes down to the bedrock generosity of friendship, to a natural handsomeness of attitude you've got me skunked a mile. I know what that comes from too. It comes from looking for the best rather than for the worst, by cherishing what's good in things so fondly that you're unaffected by what's bad in them, by being grateful rather than critical; it's what makes a good painter, by the bye, and what I admire more than anything else in any man. James, old fellow, go through and do likewise!

Remember the Red Sox. Allus, W.J. Jr.

August 11, 1911

Dear Bill,

Listen and hold your breath. I have been and went and done it. No longer ago than last Sunday the idea first took real hold of me. It was no more than a woman's jeer that set me thinking. I had made one of my idle bluff, and she called it, and I began to see red. At first I couldn't believe that my intentions were really serious. I thought I was only dallying a little more than usual with a familiar possibility. But before three days went by I was thinking at meals, and figuring absorbedly on my income, and waking up at night and wondering if I had been asleep. Are you getting exercised any? Do you wonder what the Hell I did anyway? Well this morning I went and bought a Motor Car! Yes, James, it was not a very large, or a very expensive one, but 'twill serve to hold the hind legs of James, and if it survives the agonies of my novitiate as driver, I will come to Chocorua in it, and we will give old Dobbin a few days in the dugout, or as the fans hath it, on the bench. Probably, I am an armor plated ass, and shall one day go broke, but I am going to have some fun before my money's gone. I haven't been so excited since I got a ferret at the age of thirteen. So now let her go at me. "When you call me that smile."* I await your remarks.

Allus, R.T.F.

I go back to town Monday.

* another expression from "The Virginian" by Owen Wister

Chocorua, N.H.
Aug. 13th 1911

Heh-heh-heh-heh-heh-ll Baldy! Cursed if you ain't the rale ding-dong! Scratch me raw but you're a sport! Ducks Fisher? did I hear you say ducks? Aw, take a walk! Why, Richard, it looks to me as though the sun were changing its orbit and were about to rise and set again in your immediate promiscuous and rectiforme vicinity. Right there is where the pyrotechnics will take place. At that point is the seat of the display. Oh, you baldy!!!

Seriously, Dick, I welcome your news, not only selfishly, for my own pride and pleasure, but with benevolence, and looking down as it were from the exceeding great height upon your devoted bean, for yourself. I don't know anyone, except a doctor, to whom a machine could be more useful than it will to you. I bet you it will be more of an economy than an extravagance.

Now listen my bald one and you shall hear of the midnight ride of Fisher! You boil up here in your old buzzwagon, (it's a six hours run they tell me) and once here I will restore & revive you with tennis and devotion and glimpses of the sweetest of her sex (whose name you wot of) and then I'll take you in my machine over to Dublin to spend the night with my Uncle Abbott who lives there and whom I should like to have you meet! We can lunch with the R.B.M.'s on the way.

The Gregors are not coming up at all so all time limits are removed on you and the town here is wide open. Ever W
September 5th 1911

Dearly beloved Dikkon,

I have news to impart to you of great import, so I bid you take this letter, if so be you are opening it in a railway station or some similar resort, to some quiet spot and there turn this page -

Alice Runnels is Engaged. And so am I. Also clams die of grief and envy when I come round.

I am coming to Cambridge on Friday the 8th to tell grandma, and I shall hope some to see you on Saturday or Sunday. A word to 107 Irving St. (not 95 or it will be forwarded here) as to your whereabouts would relieve me a good deal. I am busting all the rules of the game in telling you but I had to, so don't breathe a word and don't write to her till next week.

This makes no difference about your coming up here mind ye, - and if you want reassurance on that score you can get it from herself.

Also, Dick you know how much I love you. Ever W.J.


Oct. 16, 1911

Dear Bill,

I am on my way home because my mother died very suddenly yesterday afternoon. It's a terrible and unsuspected experience I'm finding, and my thoughts don't seem very orderly. God bless you, dear fellow. Allus, R.T.F.

I don't know what the plans are but I don't believe we shall need any help.

Silver Lake, N.H.

Dear Dick,

I have written to Eleanor how my heart aches for her and for your father and I cannot let the day go without writing you a word also. Indeed I know all the sorrow and loneliness, and the shattering of one's whole world around one that comes with the death of one's nearest and dearest. It is truly the valley of darkness through which one walks, and I cannot bear to think that this has come to you. For me, time has not made it any easier to live without Papa, and what I hope for you is that since you are not at home, and have your work to do, it will not be so desperate a thing.

I loved and reverenced your mother so much, that this comes like a personal shock and loss to me too. Dick, it must be a comfort to you now to think how proud she was of you, and what comfort she took in you.

Words are so inadequate, that I will not try to say anything more. If I have seemed to you already to have been intrusive, you must forgive it. We have been friends so long now, that I cannot help taking your joys and your sorrows very much to heart and trying to speak to you at a time like this, straight out of my sympathy and understanding. May Heaven help you.

Affectionately, Perry. October 20th

Berkshire, Mass., Oct 23, 1911

My dear boy,

I cannot adjust myself yet so as to write, but I do at intervals, begin to see glimpses of peace, and your dear letter helps wonderfully. Faith is a tower of strength and Eleanor not a whit behind. I know you will come over and talk over our readjustments soon. Meanwhile please sign on the line marked (X) this waver of my giving bond to act as executor of the will and return to me before Friday next (Oct. 27th). Otto, after giving us great comfort, goes home tomorrow. Sue's family and we club on a pair of beautiful blankets from Will Merritt's Mill for Gra's wedding present Oct. 30. It certainly makes the next world seem near and homelike, to live every hour with her brave, cheerful spirit holding fast of every word, look and action. Today Eleanor began again cheerfully her work at the Library. The letters continue to pour in. A beautiful fall day today - first since

Your mother's lover

(To R.T.F.)

Last Sunday at Naushon at the Malcolm Forbes's where I spent most of my time musing, marveling with awe and dumb wonder over this the strangest of all the phenomena of modern civilization - the Forbes tribe. As usual I slept cold, but contrary to the custom at the Wm. F's. I had plenty to eat. Of all imperceptive and unconsidering people that were ever ever ever made they take the cake - and they're so God damned good - and catarrhal - and wise - and self satisfied - and they all adore each other in an undemonstrative sort of way, — Baldy, - it almost makes me cry! Ever, W. Fitz

When you've taken all your students around to shoot on that pond you might invite me.
on WJ, Jr.'s wedding

(no date)

Dear Bill,

Can you manage to forgive me if I don't come to your wedding? It wrings my heart to suggest such a thing, for I should be sad if my wedding were to lack your presence, but I cannot see any other way out of it. The squalid fact is that to go to Chicago I should have to go in debt to somebody. Since my mother died the family has required more than ever of my income, and because the college has not been able to pay the cost of school official journeys I am having to make to New York and Washington, there is not much more than pay day between me and poverty. Can you swallow this unlovely fact and, emulating Uncle Toby, say no more about it? Explanations and assurances, as the years go on, seem less and less adequate to the feelings which impel them, yet they remain about the only words I can command. Destiny appears to determine that I shall walk more and more by myself, so that I cling to the thought of you as a sort of final refuge, the last temple where the religious experiences of the mortal man can still be worshipped. I wish for you health and happiness more than I bet you can understand till you have a son (not that I have one ye understand, but you, for all your divine precocity of wisdom, have given me the feeling)...try to remember, if you have any need of it, that one bald man is sympathizing with you to the last limit of his understanding. What a challenge is the future! It has its terrors, but I think the inexhaustibly rich adventure it offers is the aspect a right man should think about. The others are such cowards, and dullards. Even death can only be approached with a cordial curiosity, if not a willing faith, unless a man prefers the negation of his Soul and the atrophy of the powers of living. Bill, I am thine ever and always.

R.T.F.

Now to Berkshire, then Washington, Cambridge the 30th

an answer from WJ, Jr.

95 Irving St.
Dec. 25th 1911

Dear Richard,

Of course I understand, and I know that you will be infinitely more with me on that Saturday than most any of those present! It does make a big challenge of the future, Dickon but if squarely met I think it will make life more nearly what it was meant to be. The longer you live etc. - and I have been finding out a good deal of late. But one thing I knew already, and that was that I shall always be, dear Dick, Your affectionate W.J. In haste!

Smokey Car "Pigsty"

January 19, 1912

Dear Bill - and Alice over your shoulder,

The international mail service is about to be resumed, and the first installment goes to swell the Godspeeds at Hoboken. All that any man need wish you is the forbearance of the sea, for, to judge from the reports of your recent doings, you do not require any man's good wishes. These being superfluous, the poor Badger feels free to indulge his natural sentiment, which, James, is envy. ENVY. It now becomes your job to wish your deserted side partner a similar consolation - if that were possible. Nor shall I on my part be idle. Already I have peeked my overalls and pervaded frequent parties in the Back Bay, to the huge refreshment of the spirit and the mild stimulation of the heart. Opera, dance, musicals, and two dinners already this week, and this is only Friday. Would you believe it? And look at me now in a smelly train, with rain drenching the shady country side, and bound for to examine 1000 acres of swampy forest at Hubbardston. Meals in a shanty. Well, this is how we keep our unquenchable relish for the higher, and lower life of the First Families.

Am I to give rein to my lurid and sometimes profane vocabulary? Or will Alice find me difficult on those terms? Answer: I am and she won't. I enclose a reminder of your solid days. Let me know if you can still laugh.

Allus,
R.T.F.

More soon and bless you.
Dear Bill,

I will try for a moment to keep quiet, to still my chatter so as not to disturb your Olympian tranquility. To this considerable course I am impelled not so much by regard for your comfort as by a certain hiatus in the status quo. There being, as it were, no kernel I am fair to fill my belly with husks. In short, I venture from the signs that I am to cool my heels for a brief spell. So having worked my head off for several days, and cursed the railroads that will not deliver my new car, and been to a dance at the Curtises, and some prize fights at the Union Boat Club, I am trying still further to assuage my impatience by hurling another defiance at James. Did you ever see a poor cowardly biped, trembling and sweating and wobbling at the knees, take himself by the scruff of the neck and walk up to the tiger and pull his whiskers, only to find that it was the lady, perhaps, and no tiger at all? No, you have not. Well, you keep around. I may be bald and stringy and unattractive, but I am going to shin this tree, and if the point falls before I reach it, there will be an earthquake and so to bed.

Ask Alice to shed me one bright tear, and still no motor car. Let us pray.

Allus, R.T.F.

* Georgina Paine

March 25, 1912

Dear Bill,

The sun is warmish, the call of the flicker is heard in the Yard, and though slush still lurks in shady places, the young man begins to perk up. Your last was a good shot, but it did not quite knock me out of the tree. As to waiting till the poor quarry can be surprised asleep on one leg - no fear of that. I admit the whyfore pertinence of said reflection - in some Scotch, ye know; but two facts have attended the situation: first, I am as it were lashed to the wheel - sink or swim, you know, and second, the game is sly and elusive beyond experience or belief. As soon as the mud dries up to make the footing a little firmer, listen for some guerilla warfare, long shots by the bald embattled farmer with the horny hands and the refined features. Something should drop.

You are off, I suppose, for Spain - astir already. I dont see how you can leave Alice long enough to copy, any pictures. They must have spring also in them black and tan countries. Peg is lolling in tropical luxury and prospering greatly in Florida. Alec is taking a clutch or the tail feathers of winter with some of his painting pals at Chocorua. Hank is wisdom and reputation within and without. He's as gray as a badger but as rosy as a boy. The query is in Chestnut St. among the newly married, will Mr. & Mrs. Bill return to live on the hill? Me, I hope you will. It's a cozy neighborhood and handy to the new subway - 8 minutes Park St. to Harvard Square, clean cars and air, always a seat, now in operation - great! Do you know Charles River Court, a court yard of new houses fronting on the esplanade behind Brimmer St.? It looks charming and is already inhabited by many of the sort of people one knows, my dear. Do not spit on the floor - others must not.

And still no motor car. It may be two weeks yet before I get it such is the scramble for freight cars at Detroit. The only consideration is that the country is still almost impassable. Ah but James, that's the sport: To drive your own car, handle its vitals, and control its power. To me it has been a good deal like domesticating one of the sports that one has usually to go far afield to get. When I hop in to the car after a lecture, the poor old brain is taken right out of harness, and the games of dodging traffic from here to State St. is almost as healthy as canoeing on a quick river. Regards to Mrs. James - excuse me, Alice. R.T.F.

April 9, 1912

Dear old Balderoso,

You keep walking around the horse as if there were nothing else in life. If you'd make arrangements for his purchase I'd go to ride with you, or if you'd stop looking at him for a moment I'd walk you off into the brush and show you some pretty scenery, or if you would write to me "Da- a- a-, I was only fooling!" I'd believe you. But at present I'm lost.

"What ails my Baldy?" I inquire to know "wherefore this surcharged manner and implicating speech?"

Comes reply "I am vitally affected."

"Not seriously?" I venture, remembering past history.

"Excruciating" is miserable response.

"Cries of wolf have been listened to before now" I state with references to paleolithic age.

Comes pained rejoinder that such may be the case but this is different.

"Oh Hell!" I vulgarize.

Comes more painful rejoinder that I am immune and in my position unsportsmanlike, with asseveration that the embattled farmer with the refined features is at last on his hind legs with his back to the swamp and the waters rising.

"Poor old badger" I commiserate, with pretense of sympathy, and suspicion that large- new- horsepower- tonneau- motorcar is at the bottom of whole disturbance.

* * *

Excuse me for time to lunch with lord and lady in neighboring baronial mansion, same being friends of Mrs. William James. Otherwise all is well! W. J.
April 29, 1912

Dear Bill,

Nothing doing with the Togoese. I enjoy your humor but I regard your conclusions from a height so great as to render them imperceptible. No more arguments from me. I realize that I have sworn at a mark once or so too often. So jeer away and be damned. All I say is - I say it again - keep around and you will see either the Euthanasia or the Apotheosis of Baldy. When you come back I will tell you what these words mean. Meanwhile, conceive me, if you please, scooting over Massachusetts in my new car like a calf tied to a stake - describing what circles I must, but drawn always to an unforgettable center whither at every chance I joyously return. My tracks are, however, fairly well covered, so be discreet. If only things eventuate as desired, shall I have fun with you? The answer is O Godfrey I shall. And will you eat your peck of dirt? O Jesu, you will. So no more at present. Allus, R.T.F.

Oct. 21, ( 12 ?)

Dear James,

Wednesday night was to a perfect dinner party at 95. Food, liquor and minglement of company masterly. Wendell, Prof. Nielsen, Charlie Cummings and wives, besides self and the family, less the poor Alec who dined in the brown room off Bull Durham and melted milk. Hank urbane we say urbane - to a degree. Peg enchanting. We also have our blissful moments, though far from Rye. No go. The stratum of affectionate idiosy appears to be bottomless. I reckon I will stop and sink a shaft. To close I will mention that Little Tich has today been returned to his maker and that in another week I shall be the owner of a bigger, better, and busier Reo capable of containing five bipeds. Tell me, Bill, how did you manage to win a princess like Alice? If you don't know the answer, ask her to tell you. I need it in my business. Lord, how can I hope to touch the starry purity of a woman like that? Bless you, dear fellow.

Allus, R.T.F.

Jan. 27, 1913

Dear Bill,

Not that I wish to anticipate the pleasures of Currituck that await you, but merely to whet your appetite. I will say that rarely favorable weather has been ours and in the two days we have shot we have killed ducks to a number that I shall always blush to state, and ducks geese swans to numbers that I despair of estimating. One flock of swans we passed was about a third of a mile long and several hundred yards wide, about twenty or so acres of snow white rug on the

Berkshire, Mass May 16, 1912

My Dear Dick,

Your letter to Eleanor, received this AM, has greatly stirred me. From my limited view-point, you have reason to feel encouraged. No woman could misinterpret such pointed and persistent attentions. The mere fact that she allows their continuance is itself an invitation as delicate as a true woman could give. You would profit much, as you are evidently bracing up for the critical question, from the advice of some wise woman who knows you both. The girl's estimate of you might be much influenced by hearing of you and your family from some mutual friend. Could you not set Mrs. James on the situation? This concrete form of my advice sounds silly. But you may have already obtained from the lady herself if not from some common friend, what I want you to secure viz. some expression of interest in you and your family. At least, (and here Faith and Eleanor agree with me) could you not invite her to drive up with you and call on Faith? Her manner of receiving such an invitation would, it seems to me, reveal whether you might not pursue your question or not. Don't be vexed with my interference. Laugh at it, if you will, but remember only love prompts it. We all believe you will succeed in this great adventure. It has stopped raining, and Faith and Eleanor have walked up the hill to call on Mrs. Robbins. I am slowly planting seeds in the cold, soaked ground. I enclose Frank V's letter. I am sending him the photo. By the way, if you want to give or sell any, I have now a doz. (both kinds) on hand. Cost is 85 cents. If convenient, now or next month, I can use more of your hard earned money, my dear boy. Eleanor sent violets to Mrs. Warner last Monday but has not heard of their arrival. Put some of your anxious thinking into another letter of talk to us.

We love you so. Your father
water. The club sits on a tiny knoll of trees in the vast pond-and-creek-pervaded marsh, with the river-like sound about a quarter of a mile to the east, beyond which is more marsh, and then the rampart of high dunes that keeps out the sea. This morning just after sunrise I went up on the roof—summoned there by the tumult of honks and buglings and quackings that came in my window. Gentlemen hush, the sunrise over the waters and sedge and the pink clouded sky was some sight of itself, but about two miles off Currituck Sound all speckled and blotched and banded with waterfowls—that left me speechless. How I wish you could be here! The shooting is wonderful, but the rest of it, the guide, the club management, the natives and their racy spirit, this is what I should like you to enjoy with me. I sent Mrs. W. James a box of fowl. If it arrives O.K. some are to go to you. Self is not due till next week. Allus, R.T.F.

HOTEL D’ITALIA
ROME

19 May 1913

My dear Miss Paine,

May I send you my most sincere congratulations and good wishes on your engagement*, of which Mr. Fisher has just written me? I have known Richard Fisher ever since he came to Cambridge, and with constantly increasing regard and affection. There is no one to whom I could with greater confidence entrust a woman’s happiness, and you will give him the fulness of life and companionship which he so greatly needs.

Mrs. Hankins and I looked forward with great pleasure to making your acquaintance on our return. Sincerely yours, Charles Hankins

* R.T.F. and Georgina Paine were married July 17, 1913.

Letter from Henry James, brother of W.J. Jr. and son of W.J.

Oct. 11 ‘16

Dear Dick -

I’ve had your note announcing the arrival of Miss?* Fisher in sight for a number of days intending to send you a congratulatory letter worthy of such an event. But these days have been very full, and so, rather than wait any longer I’m writing on the train from Princeton to N.Y. and on this abominable paper. Fine for you, old man! That worn phrase is the nugget of the message. Of course I know that its really Mrs. Fisher to whom congratulations and good wishes are chiefly due. I trust that all continues to go well for both her & the youngster. Her father’s death and this event must have been a good deal of emotional and physical strain in so brief a space of time. I say nothing about your eldest, not because he’s lost the center of the stage for the moment, but because I gather that he’s tip-top and needs no solicitous enquiry. Every now and then I see somebody who’s been at Petersham and who sings his praises.

How goes the Harvard Forest School & is the Harvard Forest growing up, or being sold off? Have you taken Mr. Brooks’s place in the community, or are you going to be a C.F. Adams, or a Jim Russell? I trust never a Warner Butler. I was a good deal amused to find that I’d resigned from the visiting committee twice. Any time you want to stimulate some other member into making a vacancy, let me know and I will resign again in a letter which you can place before him as a forcible hint. I can certainly continue to render this sort of service to the committee!

For whom are you voting? I hope not for the SOB skirt-hound who occupies the White House now. I voted for him last time., and wd. fain be able to vote for T.R. today- Hughes is much inferior for the occasion, but seems the much wiser choice of the two candidates.

It has taken me nearly 3/4 hour to shape these characters on this shaking table, and I must stop. My love to your wife, and ever to yourself. Henry James.

* Anne

Leading California Hotels

Fairmont Hotel San Francisco, Cal.

July 21st 1919

Dear Richard,

Behold me among the leading Hotels of California, enjoying again this windy, cheery, precipitous city but thinking at times, with regret, of the dinginess and general spirit of the brotherhood of men which used to pervade the old Occidental. .......

I was glad to hear from you weeks ago in Santa Barbara and I am touched at the thought of revisiting with you the scenes of our youth - and yet - it is as well perhaps that it couldn’t happen. I have noticed, on the Southern Pacific R.R.
advertisements, lists of vacation resorts, reduced fares etc - Lake Tahoe, the Yosemite, the Shasta Country - and the Eel River Country!! I can picture automobile campers washing themselves in that limpid stream and crowding the blue herons into those tall stands of redwood - just as they have crowded the poor bereft road-runners clean off the highway! And there is another of California's teading hotels in Eureka. Those memories are better preserved as they were. Much better that you and Hartwell should come out to Cody where there are at least horses, trout, coyotes, wild cats and perhaps bear even if the season is too early for elk moose and such poor critters as we wouldn't shoot, even if we could, having reached that age of benignity when we no longer take pleasure in such gory pastime. ......

Alice and I have solved the domestic problem by having no domestics. It is wearing on the human parent, at times, but it is good for the children and it is better for the parent to be worn than it is to pay hundreds of dollars to people who do nothing but ball things up. Tell Dicko that we travel with 1 gopher skeleton, one Shag ditto, one bobcat's ear, one pelican's breastbone, one large mammalian vertebra species unknown, one gophersnake's skin, damaged, one partially cracked crab remains, one burro's hoof, abalone shells in all stages of disrepair and a small box of human bones gathered from an Indian cemetery on the Rincon Mt. - These and other things to be exhibited for Dicky's delectation in the James "Museum of Natural History Friends Invited".

Please embrace Nina for Alice and me and tell her that the affection of the James family for her is an ever increasing one in spite of separation.

Peggy and Bruce are living at no great distance, a very happy family life a trois which in a few months will still more happily be a quatre!

I must now take my trick at the wheel which consists in steering those brats through the dangers of a hotel dining room. Yrs. ever. W.J. c/o T.W. Ames, Ishawora (via Cody) Wyoming

Chocorua N.H.
Sept. 11th 1919

Richard, my ancient, we are back once more in your promiscuous parts and are looking forward to meeting you in or about Cambridge within the next 3 weeks. I shall be there toward the end of the month. Shall you be in Petersham till Nov.? How doth the Forestry Dept? I hear that 20 millions or so is to be raised among the graduates for our alma mater. How much of it, I wonder, is to go to equipment or the maintenance of equipment. We've had recent demonstration that if the world is to wag right men's minds have got to work straight and true and the hope of that lies in education of the right kind and it is men who educate rather than laboratories and museums and bath tubs.

Agassiz was worth more to the college than his museum and yet he didn't cost nearly so much. I should like to found a college that had no equipment but a library and where teachers were paid from 10 to 50 thousand a year. No exams. A fellow might attend for 3 years and at the end know no more than when he arrived. With others, though, the case would be different. We will colloqui further on this subject shortly. In the meanwhile my love to your wife and to your humans various. Yrs. W.J.

Cambridge

89 Irving Street

Oct. 19th 1919

R.T. Fishball, my ancient enthusiast, my incorrigible golf nut, what say you to going to Seapuit on Friday Nov. 7th or Nov. 14th? C.A. Hartwell who is a traffic cop beside the No. Station says he can get away on one of those Friday p.m.'s returning Sunday night. He will let me know this week which one. The hope is to get Alice, Nina, and Cordie to be of the party though this may take some cajolery. What do you think of these things? What does Nina think? There is something about the Cape at this season which seems to me even more fascinating than the game at which you have been stealing such unfair marches. yours always, W.J.

William James
89 Irving Street
Cambridge, Mass.

July 4th 1920

Biddles, Fisher, Biddles Biddles Biddles! Crabs eyes on the top. Ay, and freshly painted wheels, Um-hum, and a marine blue body, Yays, and 4 speeds ahead! But what touches me most is that some of those speeds, notably the 2nd
and 4th, remind me so of the sound of the dear old Mercer that I could cry! I shall bring it, later in the summer, to Petersham but at present, what do you think, I am afflicted with whooping cough. The vaccine seems to be having a great effect on it and it may cut it short but if it doesn’t I am sewed up here till about Aug. 20th. Great thing to beget children and catch diseases from them. Vicious circle, Baldy, I call it.

Tell Nina that I have begun the copy of her father’s portrait and that I consider it a privilege to have anything to do with that picture. I don’t think any finer portrait was ever painted.

Did you read the whole of Cumming’s opening speech at the Dem. convention? It was great, and made me happier than anything has for a year & a half.

Yrs allus. W.J.

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89 Irving Street
Cambridge
Dec. 9th 1921

Dear Dick,

Unable to reach you by tell.

Harry Copley Greene has a head of a dog painted for his aunt by Uncle Abbott which he wishes to sell & give the proceeds to charity. It is a fine head with much of Uncle A. in it but does not, of course, have the interest that a human subject would have. I should like to own it if my bank account would permit which it doesn’t. I thought you might be interested & if you are H.G. would be glad to have you stop & see it.

I go to Seapuit this p.m. and shall hope to hear that you will turn up in the next 10 days.

Yrs. W.J.

I know nothing about price I don’t think H.G. does either. He says he wants to get “all he can” for said charitable purpose. If you want it I should offer him whatever you feel it is worth to you. It doesn’t seem to me to be essentially saleable save to lovers of A.H.T. Forgive so much advice!

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Dear Richard,

Thank you for your letter, and for what you said of your feeling toward Mama. Her going had loomed like a woeful cloud on the horizon ever since last July, and though she suffered a good deal of pain during the summer, which she bore without one word of complaint, the last weeks were painless and she died very peacefully. But the mystery of it is still there, - a mystery which some I think, have been able to solve but none have been able to impart. I feel moved, more than ever toward a search for that understanding. But they don’t altogether leave us, as witness the way in which your Uncle Abbott lives almost daily and hourly in my thoughts.

We have been enjoying the season and are looking forward to the winter here as never before. We have a tutor for the boys who has turned out to be a delightful addition to the household and the boys themselves are already showing the good effects of such surroundings. As for myself I have concluded that to live in the midst of a beautiful solitude with my family but without a telephone is my idea of the millennium! So long as one’s friends will come to it and we are counting on you and Nina for that. I chop an hour or two every day and think of Fisher and his short handled hatchet while so doing. Also an open fire and a winter evening and no nothing but forest about you makes a good time and place to talk. Please give my love to Nina. Yours always. W.J.

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Ribault Club
Fort George Island
Florida Feb. 25th

Dear Dick,

Alice & John & I are still here. John recuperating from a bad time with grippe & ears. Hank has gone.

In the morning Alice & John play 9 holes of golf and I play 9 or 18 with whatever men there are here. In the morning we paddle or row 1/2 mile to some barrier sand dunes and then walk 1/2 mile through the dunes to an ocean beach 6 miles long without a living thing on it save semi palmed sandpipers & gulls. Outside are coot, shad, pelicans, more gulls and porpoises. Then we go into that surf, cold enough to give you a reaction but warm enough to make it almost impossible to get Alice out of it. Then you come home feeling more nearly as you did in some of those brave days of yore, with Fisher, than you believed possible.
The club house is very comfortable and the food delicious. Now, it seems to me, that you and Nina should picture to yourselves what I have described and should accustom your minds to the thought of becoming members of this club that the Fisher & James family may still snatch some more weeks, each year, of happiness in each other's company, before, by the great horned spoon, we become incapable of some!

I leave in 3 days for Boston, where I have 2 days, and thence to N.Y. to paint a portrait.

I saw Cortissoz, who was delightful, and asked me to convey his many thanks to you for your notes. Of course, he can write about A.H.T. better and easier than any one alive, when he gets round to it.

With love to all of you. Yrs. W.J.
Dear Dick,

If your mother isn’t a brick and an angel, I’d like to know who is? She wrote me the bulliest letter the other day, and I want you, Sir, to send me your father’s name instanter, so that I may address her in due form. Immediate, do you understand - on a postal card if necessary, but her address I must have at once so that I may write an answer to her dear heart warming letter. There! I’ve worked it off on you, so now there is less chance of my overwhelming her with my gratitude. But without exaggeration, Dick, I don’t know when I have been more pleased.

We expect, Peter and I, to be married April 21st, and I hope you are going to be able to be there. It will of course, be a very small wedding, but not too small for you, Dick! But there won’t be more than fifty or sixty there, I am sorry to say.

Thank you for writing to Pete as you did - I appreciated it as much as he.

Be sure to send me that address p.d.q. As ever yours. G.L.

April 12

Dear Dick,

To think that it is two weeks since I had any reason to write to you, and wanted to and yet have not all this time! I won’t apologize, but I’m not too proud to explain. I had a horrid cold the day I saw your mother and it’s not gone yet. Then besides that, there were dressmakers and a journey to New York and since then festivities without end, so you will forgive me. I know.

But Dick, when I think how delightful she was, and cordial and kind and sympathetic I wonder how I could have been busy enough and miserable enough to delay writing to you and telling you all about it. She is just the kind of mother you would have, of course, and oh I did enjoy seeing her! Why don’t we buy a farm in Berkshire right off, I wonder!

Write to me here when you feel moved. ....... As ever, Genevieve Lord.

Feb 14, 1900.

158 Columbia Heights

Bride and Groom,
Georgina Paine, Richard T. Fisher,
July 17, 1913
Dear Dick,

If you are receiving an avalanche of letters from this region, it is because we met with your uncle a while ago and it made each of us feel that we had been neglectful of our California forester. Isn’t Mr. Thayer a brick though? He asked us there to dinner last Thursday and we went and had a beautiful time, and we are going again to-morrow I think. It gave me such a nice Dick-y feeling to talk to him; though of course that’s all nonsense - for it’s you who are like him, I suppose. Anyhow he, and Mrs. Thayer too, were just as friendly and cordial and delightful as they could be, and we went away feeling that we had met some real people.

We walked over to Petersham last week, 22 miles the first day and 12 the second, which is pretty good for me, I think. It was a fine trip - we stayed at the Gill’s a couple of days and then came back in one morning, by walking part way and railroading the rest. A week from to-day we are due in N.Y. I grieve to say, though I am glad to think of getting back to 251 W 88th again.

Our chief excitement here is hunting a rat which inhabits this shanty (we are where Dr. Stowell had his office) - he climbs around our loft when we sleep; in the dim dawn I wake and see him walking down the wall and I try to wake Pete in time for him to hit it, but although we take a broom, a baseball bat, not to speak of boots up to bed with us, we haven’t slain him yet. It is glorious fun, when you’re not too sleepy, to lie in wait for the beastie.

We haven’t heard a word about you for ages. What are you going to do this winter? Is it Washington or Europe? Here is Peter to add something, so good bye.

(by Peter)

That ends as if the job was wearing on her, Dicket. It might without offense to you, I think. This pon-and-ink business is damnable, as you can imagine some of your profane associates to say. For myself, I never use bad language and seldom good. Yet will I confess to a certain casting about for words fitly applicable to you when I beheld the tree-top of virtue in which you had placed me for Uncle Abbott. He had no more than touched the trunk in admiration as it were when down I fell among the lower branches bruising myself and grieving him, and thankful enough not to come all the way to earth. My wife reads this and pronounces it "silly", I think; but not objectionable "to him from you". So much for the joy of chasing an allegory to the death, albeit a poor and unworthy allegory. Doubtless the judgement is just; but observe how an impartial society lumps us together, Dicket, and appraises our verbiage. "Silly" is a word to take no joy of. So let’s have a crack at words of one syllable and plain talk if you can read such.

Uncle Abbott thought from you I was a corker, devoted body & soul to the law, happy in it, and looking ahead to its biggest prizes. A hint of my longing for more country life swung him over like a pendulum to consider me as a shirker of my true life for the sake of money to be got out of a distasteful profession. In that distress, he asked us to dinner the next day, at which, with a little help from me, he got me back again to a comfortable number of virtues, to his own great pleasure - for he evidently wished to think well of us for your sake. That pleased us in turn so we had a very enjoyable time, and promise ourselves another before we leave. (It is not to be overlooked that the meal was of the best. My stomach is not the direct way to my heart, I like to think, but the roads to the two certainly connect).

Perhaps it is this connection I speak of which turns me from writing to you to thoughts of my approaching dinner. There is at least a compliment involved in closing with such a suggestion, which I miss in my wife’s ending. But there is of course no need of compliment among us. Come back to see us soon, Dick, and write us your whens and wheres and hows.

Goodbye. Your good friends, Gyn, Pete.

Hillside, Sunday

Dick! You flatterer, you turner of heads and winner of hearts! Tell me, how can a body listen to such things and keep steady? I know it’s nonsense, and yet - and yet when you say it I more than half believe it, and I go about for days with a serene inner consciousness that in spite of the obliviousness of the general, I am a jewel and a letter writer. Yes, there you touch me. Occasionally - write a letter; and when you say I can I think with pity for posterity how unpublishable my best productions are!

Don’t you suppose, Dick, that the very best letters must be the private ones - The ones that say nothing at all except to the two initiated ones? Like Bill James’, for instance - chock full of allusions which mean everything to you, and are Greek to everyone else.

Now to business - let me know if you can, what train you take from New Haven. .......... The connection at New Canaan isn’t to be counted on if the New Haven train is late, so the nicest thing is to be met by a nice little horse and a nice little cart and me. I’m glowing at the prospect.

There’s fine skating here now - will you bring your skates, unless I let you know to the contrary?

It is seven miles from New Canaan to Stamford, so give me time to get the horse and get down there please.

Goodnight, Dick! As ever, Gyn.
Berkshire, but selfishly I'd give my best slippers to have you here! It will console me somewhat if I hear you felt peevish after you obdurately left me - I almost forgot what I started to say which was this - "I was only foolin'" as the children say when I have you "not to tell" - Of course I told mother and B......too. He snorted quite jealously - but mother thought it was a very good idea telephoning to you. I may be clandestine in the matter of letters, but otherwise I am fairly honest.

It is almost time for the postman, so I must leave the thousand things I have to say. I shall burst if you don't come down soon! Would a walk on the dunes Monday or Tuesday tempt you?

Yours on tip-toe (oh Dick such a day it is for a hill-top!) Gyn

Aug 16, 1906

Dear Dick,

Mother spoke last night of your coming for the weekend. Why don't you? Very likely Peter may be here - do you know - he may go west again - isn't it horrid?

These days - so wonderful - I have longed for you to share them with -

In haste, aftermit - oh well, English is good enough for me. Two words! Gyn

Dodo's house, The next day

Dear Dick,

A charm was laid upon me yesterday. I have been ever since in a state of peaceful unrest - or at least I know no better way to describe the heart-singing rejoiceful condition of me. In short I have drunk, and my thirst is insatiate. Truly it was a golden afternoon. I am still exalted because you thought of putting me near to Bill James in your love. That letter of his, Dick! Tho I never see him again I shall always love him for that. It makes me very proud to be thought of in the same breath with him. Mixed metaphor so you say? Comprenez rhetoric! I scorn to be bound by rules.

Ah Dick! You know what that means now. I mean you've had the satisfaction of making me explain; for of course you always knew, or I shouldn't and couldn't have meant it. But since yesterday it means something deeper, more sweet more ripe than ever before - so that while in one sense I am athirst in another I feel a deep and abiding satisfaction.

Once more good by, Dick, dear. As ever, Gyn. Nov. 13, 1906

Dodo's house, The next day

Dear Dick,

That was a ridiculously tantalizing experience yesterday! I find myself with a curious exasperated aching void sort of feeling inside, and an unreasonable and unfounded hope which is yet not a hope that I may hear your voice through the telephone asking to spend the week-end here. I really wish you to go to
Dear Dick,

This poor train-scrawl speaks for itself and the part of your Mother’s which refers to my place does also. I wonder if your heart speaks to your ears as it does to mine - the part where she says she has had “no word from Dick for two weeks”. Dick, that’s not right - no excuse sans downright illness is valid. My dear old Dick, don’t you know that good sons are the stuff good husbands are made of? If you can’t hum that little “lamb of sacrifice”, the writing to your mother every week, you aren’t ready for the sacrifices and rejoicing self-abnegations of married life. Even a line to show them you remember them - Please, Dick! I know you will take this as you always do my fault-finding - with perfect sweetness and magnanimity. I love you so much I have to tell you when I think you are wrong. Do you forgive?

And send me one word soon as you can so that I may let your mother know.

As ever,

Gyn

The Glencove, Seal Harbor, Me.

July 13, 1907

Dick you delightful boy, wherever shall I begin? I have such heaps to say and your letter inspires such heaps more that I’ll have to let them say themselves helter-skelter though the result will be a hodge-podge, not a letter.

First, because it’s entirely unimportant, I must tell you about the telegraph pole - You wouldn’t think there was anything about a telegraph -pole to make me think of you - but that only shows how stooopid you are. I passed this particular one yesterday - and suddenly oh! The magic of it - There I was under a big birch tree on the side of a sunny hill with you, Dick, and an anxious mother woodpecker peering at us. Yes Sir, there’s a nest and that hole not six feet from the ground, and why everybody doesn’t hear the hungry little things inside and why the nest hasn’t been robbed, I don’t see -

I told mother that must be a woodpecker’s nest - but she doesn’t know the golden color of the wings or the golden color of my memories. Dick! That was a good meeting! As for the ghost - can you believe it - I can scarcely recall his form. Truly, my sense of all’s rightness and happiness is so great that I literally cannot remember first what the shade was that troubled you. He’s gone anyhow - let him lie in peace, leaving nothing but light and truth between us.

Speaking of truth, and I admit that today I am inconsequent - mother and I are having the most beautiful time reading Pragmatism. I want to hear Professor James, he says things so deliciously - I am almost tempted to say “Ah William” to him in fact! Dear me, come to think of it, there’s a connotation there - well never mind - Dick! Am I a bold-faced jig?

So you have presentiments about A.L.K. have you? Look out, they are dangerous things, because they always turn out wrong, and that’s so upsetting. It’s just as well I took a firm stand about twosomes at Squam, for I see plainly that I shouldn’t have a chance anyhow. Well, I am a kind old thing, and I shall be the sort of chaperone, falling in with all your schemes for canoeing with Anne or blackberrying with Anne or even having a fire with Anne, tho that will take unselfishness of a rare order. Bless you Dick, if you got her for a fourth, what a quartet to be sure! Any two or three are perfectly happy together. Now there’s something that is too good to be true.

Did you score? Ah Dick! How you have scored these last three weeks! My only criticism of existence now is that I haven’t time to count my gold! There’s so much that all I can do is to look in my treasure-chamber and think tomorrow. Next week I can take each rare piece up, and weigh it; caress it with loving fingers and only lay it down to take up another still more precious.

There are whole days I haven’t thought of since they passed - midsummer night - Dream Hill, the Edge of the Wood, and Hermit Thrush Hill Top, all calling to be remembered and given thanks for. Old age seems almost desirable.

I have thought of you many times a day since we parted at Thayer McNees - and by the way I got some black pumps and tan shoes which I am quite pleased with - and this is the first time I have had a chance to sit down alone. And I can’t write to you with a mask on - When I write a smiling thought, I want to smile without risk of being thought demented - or worse still, of arousing undue curiosity. I must stop, Dick though I haven’t said half what I meant to - wasted all my precious time in idle chatter. Better next time. Will you write soon again? Your letter that you gave me kept me going till this one from Wood’s Hole came. But I’m like the little woodpeckers, clamoring for more. Goodbye, Dick dear. Yours always, Gyn

* Boston shoe store of yore
St. Hubert's

O Petersham! Thou hateful place! - to think that my ever-looked for, ever hoped for, ever-fond rival should prove to be nothing better than an old woodlot! I don't know whether I am more provoked or relieved, but I'm pretty sure I'm some exercised anyhow. You don't convince me for a minute that you really have to be there all the summer, but you are honest enough to intimate that you are happy in your devotion so I suppose it is useless to try to lure you away. But all the same, I'm going to say this once more and risk being a bore thereby - To wit, if you spend all your energies on Petersham, you will find next winter that you haven't recuperated enough and you'll be tired before December is over. Listen to the voice of Reason since Friendship's you ignore, and take some weeks off before the mill-wheels begin to turn again. Go to Pottersville even - I can bear to live without a sight of you, though it's cruel hard. But get some real vacation somehow. There's my last word of advice and entreaty, and I beg you to give it ear.

As for my disappointment. There's no use talking about it, but it is very real none the less. I wanted to see you and to see you up here in these wonderful woods. I am going to Ipswich in September, and perhaps Petersham will spare you for a weekend then, though it's a poor makeshift - I don't want to share you! I ought to be satisfied now that I see how little I interfere with your duty! In spite of all complaints I have still two words for you. Good bye Dick! As ever, Gyn. Am I becoming utterly illegible?

G.L. Frothingham, Ipswich, Mass.
Strawberry Hill
Sept. 3, 1907

Dear Dick,

Your Talismatic address came up the road in Hattie's* hand just as I was wishing I knew where to write to you direct - for my heart told me that you were in need of a charm from a friendly source (I started to say sorceress, and then I thought perhaps after all it was sorcerer, so I compromised on plain source!) Oh yes, I hear you say that you always like sauce from me, but that's a very poor pun and I refuse to smile. Let's see where was I? Oh yes - a charm sez I is what he needs, but I'm thinking it's from the hand of Bill James he'll get it this time. I'd like to put a word in that young man's ear - but no, what have I to say to him? I suppose what I had in mind was something to this effect: "Here, see what you can do with him. I had him for ten days and you see the result!"

Dick I have one piece of advice, no I am going to say one favor to ask you and that is not to talk about your Squam troubles any more, and to think of them as little as possible. Edward said when I spoke of your not having felt my cheerful "Well, he was damned nice anyhow" and I think that expresses the sentiments of the Islanders and ought to satisfy you on the whole. I don't ask you to stop talking about it because I don't want to hear, but because I think you are as you say yourself "in no state to be your own judge" and the sooner you turn over that page for keeps the better. What ink you spilled was over your own writing and no one cares if you were a little messy. In other words Dick dear, Peter loves you and I love you. That is fond of you and Edward thinks you are "damned nice" and Anne, who knows what that charming sphinx thinks? - but anyhow you are a popular cuss and I don't want to hear any more laments.

FINIS to that!

..........Goodbye, Dick - God bless you. As ever, Gyn.

* Gyn's sister

Mar. 18 '09

Dear old Dick,

Have you felt them knocking at your heart? - all those messages I have been sending you ever since that wonderful letter of yours came. It called aloud for an instant response- but though pen and paper have not till now come together I hope you have felt the deep assent that has been in me. Amen and amen to all you say- and never believe I could want foolery in place of such golden stuff.

You're back in harness again- and does that mean no Dick till perhaps July at Ipswich? That seems almost unbearable. Is there no speech that must be spoken in New Haven this spring? Can't I conjure with a spell woven of wood-smoke and spring sunshine? We shall be in New Canaan till about June- then Lake George for a month and then Ipswich. I dreamed I saw you the other night and I was glad! Always, Gyn
Dick!

Why aren't you here some of these golden days? Four days in succession—maybe five—I have driven off into the countryside and had my little fire and noonday meal—sometimes with Hattie and Dicky—twice with Edward and Nat—but never you. .......

Peter is in Dublin with snow and sun enough for a God—lucky Peter—I wish I were there too, or I should be if Mrs. F. and Frank weren't there*. They are dampness.

When are we going to have some of the rare song to hear? Oh and there are so many places I want you to see—I'm beckoning! As ever, Gyn

* Peter’s mother and brother

Ipswich Mass
August 2

Dear Dick,

Have I really managed not to write for ten days? I can hardly believe it—and with such a letter in my table drawer to answer, too. Hi Dick, I must be getting indifferent—thats quite a soothing thought—-to me— I trust it upsets you. That’s what I said it for. Dick, honey, I feel amused with myself. I’ve been looking in my glass for a good—no a bad quarter of an hour— and I ended it by wrinkling up my nose and sticking out my tongue at myself. Do you know what it meant? It means ... Gyn, you’re getting to be an old frump. How much longer will they “smile at you, a comin’ through the rye?” And then I picked up your letter and read for the nth time (consult J. K. if you don’t understand my mathematical terms) something about your seeing me by the fire and feeling 21 yourself—and also a most heart-warming quotation about “infinite variety” and now look at the old thing, she is smiling in the same self-satisfying way she is wont to do when you say nice things in her greedy ear. Dick, Dick what a frivolous idiot it is to be sure. I long to see you. .......

The next night— 11 P. M.— and I ought to be asleep.

I had such fun the other day describing to Peter my clandestine correspondence with you. Perhaps you didn’t know it is clandestine, but it is. I shouldn’t dare let the family know all the letters I’ve written and received since you were here a month ago. So when your letters come I hastily conceal them, and as for mine to you, I write them as I am writing this one, perched on the side of my bed with a flaming candle for a light; and I surreptitiously post them when no one is looking.

Well I started to talk about Alice, but it occurred to me that the knowledge of all my subterfuges might add a zest to an otherwise etc etc.

Dick, you must see her! If you don’t love her I shan’t love you anymore. Why Dick she is wonderful—a great deal nicer than I am (not that that is wonderful) well, I’d like you to marry someone like her. You wait till you see her and then you will know what kind of girl to look out for. When you do see her, you will forgive yourself for criticizing the Petersham girl. Goodness isn’t the only thing you want— you know you said yourself I was too nice to be good—I’m really very good and not very nice. (Can’t you see Dick I need to see you? I am quite humble about myself)— You must have wit (she mustn’t make flat jokes Dick) and tenderness and spirit besides.

I must go to bed. Goodnight!

Next morning.

A plan has just occurred to me— couldn’t I dash through the Hoosack tunnel to see your mother while I am in Dublin? Might there not be points of merit in that? Another thing— Don’t get all your October and November weekends filled. We three must have some time together. Peter is in the Adirondacks now with Fran (and some others) lucky boy. As ever, Gyn

Sample letters from Georgina Paine - RTF 1912, and others

March 10, 1912

Dear Mr. Fisher,

These spoils are most satisfactory, and keep me well reminded of my amazing forbearance! Sincerely yours, Georgina Paine

(addressed “Care Mr. John M. Woolsey, 198 E. 34th St. NYC)
Well, there isn’t much to these days except Dicky. Yesterday & today by being very efficient I got through chores in the A.M. in time for a rest, and Maria has been busy in the afternoons & has helped a lot. I find that after taking all the care of Dicky there’s very little of me left over for entertaining time. And the poor boy has a right to expect some amusement. He breathed queerly the last two nights and has a little cold, and I have asked Dr. H.I. Bowditch to come & have a look at him. I tried to get Cousin Edward to tell me who to get if he can’t come himself but he was out and I wanted to get someone & have it off my mind. I’ll finish this when he’s been here....

...Dr. Bowditch came and exerted a wonderful influence on Dicky and me. Dicky fell in love with him at first glance and it was too funny to see it. Dr. B. has a very understanding and delicate way with ‘em and evidently has lots of fun with his own two small sons who are two and one yrs. old. The older one has a broken collar bone from falling out of his pen. Well, Dicky has neither grippe nor bronchitis nor new adenoids - nothing but a slight cold. And Dr. B. thought him a fine baby etc. and asked if he hadn’t been pretty large when born! And he thinks the reason he’s had the queer spells of wakefulness lately is probably because he’s hungry! Isn’t that humiliating! So we’re to pick him up at 10 P.M. & give him some milk. Also some medicine for the cold, for a few days. I feel so much relaxed and relieved. But I felt like an idiot during the call because Dicko was careering round from the flowers to the bookcase to the light. And I tried to leave him more or less alone so that I could pay attention to the Dr., and I’m sure he thinks I habitually let Dicko do what he likes. However, what he thinks of me isn’t as important as what I think of him. And its so satisfactory to have a doctor who has two babe’s of practically Dicky’s age himself. He spoke very warmly of the Parks who he said had lived on $30 a month for the first year. Doesn’t that make us & our Mercer seem almost indecent. I dreamt about it in all its gunmetal glory last night. I wish I could see your expression when driving it for the first time, but perhaps it will be still more exuberant when you get here. Last night Papa said, “Dick is a right husky boy”. He weighed 27 -13 - The day he & I went sleighing (I think I told you) he was puzzled by the fact that there were no wheels, & tonight Papa was telling one of the Aunts about it & said, “It takes a pretty bright baby to find that out the first time sleighing. So I guess he’ll do. All the love in the world to my mongoose. Your Dinnie.

My own - o — oo —
You were so dear to call me up from Fitchburg this afternoon that I’d have given anything to remove Papa and Helen from the parlor so that I could tell you what I thought of you. You see I thought the call was for you not from you, so I hadn’t shut the door. I feel as empty and hollow without you as a - I don’t know what. And I love you and I’m coming up to our own old house just as soon as I can, my belovedest!

........ Dinnie

Hotel
Niagara Falls New York

Wednesday 191(5 or 1916)

My own old Mongoose,
I think I’ll have to invent a way of writing that no one else could read it in case one of my letters went to the dead letter office. You be thinking of a sign or symbol - will you?

What do you think of our being at a German hotel run, served, and patronized entirely by Germans? I think it’s a disgrace but the other hotel is on the main street with car tracks and shops in front instead of grass and the river like this, so it can’t be helped. Well, here we are, - all very energetic and full of tourist manners. We had a good night on the train and strawberries on the dining car for breakfast. It was cold in the night, but I managed to keep warm with the pillows tucked in where the blankets left off, - and the train went so smoothly that it was easy to sleep - The temperature and sky and air and everything have been perfect today for seeing Niagara, and Niagara did not disappoint me as I thought perhaps it might. What do you spose, all the bottom is still full of ice and snow cakes and looks as if you could walk across in many places! I’d forgotten that winter was so little gone. I think I imagined the size and shape of the falls about as they really
Life in Letters of Richard T. Fisher

are, but I never dreamed of the consistency of the foam, or the rainbows, or the
dazzling sparkle of the river before it reaches the jumping off place. And I never
even wondered what became of it after it jumped, so that the gorge (which we
trolley-rode for several miles, first on the Canadian side and home on this side)
was an entire surprise. Going down we were way above, with a sheer drop part of
the way and very steep slopes covered with trees that were mostly real cedar trees
(not juniper) the rest. Then coming back we were down by the river’s level and
had most gorgeous sights of foam and swiftness, with hundreds of sea-gulls to
make it still more lovely. It was uncanny to see them sitting calmly on the water
in places that looked as if they were rushing by at top speed, but they seemed to
know all the eddies by heart.

Well, my dearest, what do you care about Niagara Falls? I’m a goose to have
taken up so much time with them when they are so unimportant compared with
the fact that I love my old man. They are beautiful and awesome, but they haven’t
got the kind of soul that makes it sad and lonely not to be seeing them with you.
Some things I couldn’t bear to see for the first time away from you. Like Greeley
Pond, for instance.

I’ve got to stop now - but here’s lots and lots what you want - my ownest -
God bless you.

Dinnie

Starting to bed at 5:50!

from sister Eleanor

July 23, 1912

Dear Dick,

As Faith has probably told you, we are hoping to see you the end of this
week, for Peggy says you said you were probably coming here in July! If you do
come we are also hoping, Peggy and I, that you will take Papa and me up to
Williamstown to spend the day on Sunday!

Well, how goes everything with you, dear boy? We are jogging on quite hap­
pily most of the time and I can hardly wait till August to get over to Petersham to
see you all. I do hate to leave Papa all alone while I am gone, for even Otto* who

is a great joy and a companion to him will be gone and there is no one else who
will come to see him and keep him company in the evenings, but I don’t see what
can be done about it, and of course he says he doesn’t mind being left alone.

Yesterday Aunt Kate and Uncle Fisher dropped into the library at about three
o’ clock and took me home in their machine and made us a call of about two hours
but wouldn’t stay to supper much to my relief. If they hadn’t been delayed in
Vermont by the rain they were planning to stop in Petersham before they came to
us.

Do you remember that little Kodak picture that Hattie Lord took of you up at
Lake George a year or two ago? Well it is an excellent picture of you and we
have had it enlarged and now I am going to frame it.

It has been such a joy seeing Peggy these last two weeks. I do get hungry for
people of my own age and kind to talk to. She came down from Williamstown a
week ago Saturday and stayed over Sunday and this last Sunday she came and
spent the day. She seems so much better than she did, both mentally and
physically, and she is getting such joy out of her singing lessons, I am almost
tempted to spend some of my earnings in that way myself.

I must write other letters. I love you, Eleanor

* Otto Weirham, a neighbor in Berkshire

from Donald Fenn

7 Wadsworth House
Cambridge

April 29, 1914

Dear Aunt Nina,

I could sit and think and write about Petersham for hours and still not be
through.

It seems to be so much nicer than it used to be, and the people I know up there are
enjoying it so much more. I wish I was going to be there all summer.

We spent two very pleasant summers up there ourselves not very long ago
and it was certainly worth while to look up the old places we used to know and
recall the old associations.
The one-time Marsh house wouldn't know itself now. The last time I was in Petersham, the paper-hangers working in the School were throwing rocks through the windows by way of amusement, and red squirrels were running in and out of the roof of the shed. I want to come up again some time if you will let me.

Roger and I forgot to settle with you for a box of Zee Zee ginger snaps we got at the store the morning we walked home from the mill, so don't be surprised when you find the item on your bill.

The family thought our pictures were just as good as they could be. We keep them side by side by way of comparison. I never had my portrait painted before and I feel quite proud.

Tell me when you go up to see those porcupines. I have a very friendly feeling for both of them, especially the one that sat at the top of the tree and laughed when I poked the other one out of his bed. Very sincerely yours, Donald Fenn

October 2, 1914

Dear Aunt Nina,

I have more of a really comfortable good time when I get to your house than I do anywhere else. You all seem to be enjoying yourselves and everybody else so much that it is catching. I never saw people make such a proper use of their car. What is the use of owning one, I wonder, if you are going to try to make yourself believe that you ought to use it "just for business" or "when it is very necessary" and never for pleasure?

I should like to stay with you and plant things in your garden just to see, if I am really going to be a farmer, how good I am at making things grow.

But your baby rightly occupies the center of the stage. I am not much of a hand with babies, but I am nevertheless just as anxious to have him grow to our age when he will remember me from one visit to the next and like me as much as I like him, if he will.

You tell him, or if you are too modest, ask Uncle Dick to tell him that he is the luckiest son that ever was. There is no need I am sure of telling you how lucky you are.

Very sincerely yours, Donald

Congratulatory notes on the birth of RTF’s first child, RTF, Jr.,
(Dicko, Uncle Dock)

The Springfield Republican
Massachusetts
Established in 1824 by Samuel Bowles

Dear “Unculus Richardus”: -

This is just a hasty note to inform you that I was close to the “other” end of the telephone at Peterboro on the The Fourth and could not help hearing why Mrs. Fenn was prevented from making her proposed visit to Petersham. It was the topic of the day at Peterboro, and when Dorothy and I informed Wallace at his camp on the next day, he was more enthusiastic than I have seen him for a long time. I have been at my wits end to get even with you on the congratulating cousins, and now find a most unexpected chance right at hand. I hope you will pass my “best” on to Mrs. Fisher, whom I have not yet met, and to whom I must, therefore, do the congratulating more or less by proxy. But I fail to see why you should not be congratulated as much as she, so here it is. I can at least do that much now. I hope to be able to do something a little more personal when I have me the youngster and his mother. Yours. Bob.

July 7, 1914
Dear Nina,

Life in Letters of Richard T. Fisher

Monadnock, N.H.

July 13, 1914

Dear Dick & Nina!
David sends his love
and his happiest greetings to
his new darling little cousin
and playmate,
Independence Paine Fisher,

Yours, Gra and Alma

July 6 -
Peterborough N.H.

Dear Nina,

We are so deeply glad that it is all safely over- and so thankful that it was so
blessedly short for you. Now I hope the weather will stay cool - for bed is not a
comfortable place when the thermometer gets up into the nineties - I can hardly
wait to see my nephew. I know Dick will have many notes to write, but he please
must write or telephone to me and let me know that everything is going all right. I
do not suppose you will have to stay very long at the hospital. I never could
understand why a woman must stay in bed on these occasions at all - and my
Chicago doctor said that he was not at all sure that it was really necessary!

I had the little blanket all done up ready to take over to Petersham if I had
gone next Tuesday and now I am sending it by mail for I want him to use it
while he is still small. I am distressed about the appearance of the box, but it is
the best this isolated little red house can produce.

I have not said half what I want to, but I think about you and Dick and the
baby so much that I do not know how to put it into words - but you will under­
stand. With much love, Faith

HOLLISTON HILL FARM
HOLLISTON, MASS.

July 9, 1914

Dear Dick,

I have a letter from Gyn today, in answer to my announcement of the arrival
of a son last Sunday evening, in which she informed us that you had been doing
the very same thing. Congratulations. Ours weighed 7 lbs. 13 oz. and is to be
named Philemon. Ethel is having some horrid headaches but is really getting on
very well. Don't bother to reciprocate to the extent of a letter. A first vintage is
so much more important than a third that the latter doesn't expect much notice.
Dr. de Normandie officiated for us (darned well too). He says he knows you. I
wish you would come and see us sometime. Ethel sends her love.

Yours, Edward Kirkham
Abbott Thayer as an intense young man. He is artist of renown, fabled uncle, fabulous friend, and of great influence on his nephew, RT Fisher.

Dick's younger sister Eleanor in a wistful moment. It is her memoirs, "My Berkshire," that sheds a warm and loving light upon the pure country images and web of now by-gone family relationships of the Fisher childhood.
August 8, 1916.

Dear Richard:

Do you know the foresters--Munson-Whitaker Company, or something of that sort? I have from them a letter signed by Mr. O'Shea. They asked leave to look over our place at Manchester, and now they write me of many defects, diseases, &c., in the trees. I am wondering about them—as to knowledge and character. They propose to do the work, going in where I choose, doing what I choose, and stopping when I please. They charge eighty cents an hour for each man, plus the materials used. To the uninitiated, it strikes me as liberal pay.

Mrs. Higginson has great reliance on you and your judgment, and our gardener sententiously suggested to me that if these men did nothing, the trees would probably be just as well off as if they did much work. Our gardener is an honest, stupid man, but I am inclined to agree with him. It would seem to me that, with a week or two of my own time and such men as we have, who cost perhaps two dollars a day, we would accomplish all that is necessary; but, again, I should like your advice.

Tell me how Mr. Paine is. As one old man after another dies, we think more carefully about each other, and I am wondering whether there is anybody on earth who calls Mr. Paine by his first name except myself and of course his sisters.

With kind regards, I am

Yours truly,

Henry L. Higginson

*founder of the Boston Symphony Orchestra
RTF's celebrated Uncle Abbott Thayer, in person or presence, cannot be overemphasized. From beginning to end he is behind the scenes, approving and disapproving, giving his word on most everything. He was perhaps the kind of man that other inspired men secretly aspired to be - tied to no one, no corporation, no school of thought. He never went to college. He was not so much the antithesis of his reliable physician father as he was the artist his father decided not to be, channeling his well of light-heartedness. Yet the stern condition to control and give credible voice to issues of interest meant also old reliance on correctness of action, perception, even morals. Thayer's symptomatic attention to artistic detail was also a large part of his other life. His household, it has been intimated under various biographic source, tended towards the topsy turvy, while trying to match daily requirements with so many ideals.

The Thayer Legacy for the Fisher story is a fitting juncture for the personification of many trace causes; a bit of the majestic vision, perhaps, of trying to hold and uplift a mystic America, of the panoramic 1830's variety. If thoughts and ideals were funneled from limitless landscapes of the imaginative kind and centered on conscious efforts within a scope understood to be possible and perfectible, the very commodity then applied on canvas or graph moves as one, into a gradual uniformity of expression, both Thayer's and Fishers.

Few would understand that part of Thayer's perception of the way the tiny and the huge related together was in the abundance of evidence in the out-of-doors, where all lessors take a backseat to that which outlasts us and outshines us. William Dutcher, founder of the National Audubon Society, also reaped benefit from Thayer's labors, "dunning" well-heeled art patrons for the environmental cause, perhaps in part reparation for the hundreds of birds that he and his nephew had skinned in the past. Living according to high belief, to Thayer, was a prime ingredient in a glorious assessment of life: matching both unusual lifestyle and honest eyesight to the true natural blessings God has bestowed on our land and that trickle as freely as a mountain brook through the glens. Another messianic cause he and his son Gerald succeeded in, to no future drum roll of thanks, was in almost single-handedly saving Mt. Monadnock from development.*

Yet Abbott Thayer could have easily done more if he had cared to sacrifice his privacy, which was his standard, his quirky demands for a subjective rule of excellence. His language saved in letters to friends on art highly suggests he could have been a successful author. Thayer stuck his neck out and gave utterance to causal matters of natural relationships when the world of scientific causation, was not ready to give credit due crucial pioneering steps. He did his homework alone, cultivated his art, out talked the talkers; won over many. He was the inspiration behind the inspiration, the star, the point of view, the authority, and among his fans was Mark Twain, who had earlier asked his second wife, Emma Beach, on shipboard, for marriage (denied). Abbott Thayer was "quite a man", an "Adonis", as described in his youth by his cousin Barry Faulkner the muralist.
Fisher's decision to pursue forestry as a life goal ties directly to walks with Uncle Abbott, extolling the beauty and harmony of earth and animals, and the greatness of life. As dominant family figure within home constellations Berkshire and Keene, and as a near anatomical double, Fisher was more than once mistaken for his magnetic, opinionated artist uncle. Thayers and Fishers shared pursuits, holidays, worked in interest of each other's lives. Even today, what might be considered a Fisher characteristic is a Thayer characteristic; and because Abbott Thayer's opinion and energy is behind so much of what Fisher did in life, his "esthetic emotion" spread finely into movements of early days of environmental consciousness, more demands to be written.

In this editorial reading, Fisher and Thayer come to combine, and therefore personify, the strengthening, not the weakening, of nineteenth century Transcendentalism - that the elements of discovery are unique because, matching them, are the elements of character and value, not the values of the economy and human cunning.

* They also collaborated on a book - "Concealing Coloration in the Animal Kingdom"

XI. THAYERS & FISHERS

from cousin Gladys Thayer

Sunday, September 2nd 1900.
6 minutes to nine P.M.

Home

Dear Dick,

Well, well, Dick, you not only answered my letter, which was a tremendous surprise in itself, but wrote me a fine, long nice letter, and I was so much tickled when I found it in the post office one afternoon (on the 29th) when I had been most of the way 'round the lake by myself (this summer we have our mail to the Monadnock P.O. it is so much nearer; address us so), any way, I was so much tickled - as I said, - and my cheeks were bulging so for ticklement that I could hardly read it. You were mighty good - or something - to spend so much time on me, and tell me so much about everything. All the news went to the right spot with us all - we had known so little about you this summer - and I read the letter over and over again. I didn't happen to like the letter I wrote you and I'm glad if you did. I suppose any news from home and one's relations is awfully much appreciated when one is way off far, the way you are. But, anyhow, I never, never got so much thanks for so little trouble before. Because it seems so easy to feed you, I am writing again.

First I will tell you the incredible Thayer news, which I suppose you won't have heard before you get this, but maybe you will have. We are going to spend the winter in Italy!! O Dick, don't faint; I'd a great deal rather not go, but now that it is decided, and there is no way out of it, I have decided to be glad and enjoy the prospect of it, and it, like a civilized being, and remember that it's only four months away from that old inevitably dear place called "Home". And of course, anyone knows we shall have a fine time. We mean to start near the beginning of December and come home in April, - not later! - And our party will probably consist of our family and Ferdinand Of. (he is very anxious to go and seems to think that he can.) It hangs almost entirely on whether his father will have money at the time - though Papa is going to try and sell one of Ferdinand's really very beautiful and talented landscapes for him, to Sears or some one, to enable him to go. Papa wants to have nice young company for Gra, and make the party a jolly one, but we naturally don't want to have any one go whom we aren't sure to get on well with. Ferdinand Of is one that we do get on well with. He is awfully childlike and undeveloped in most ways; we say he seems like a nice, innocent boy of eight, in a great many ways. But he is awfully nice. Addie is simply wild over him, which is a good sign. Now, you see, the whole family are calling him by his first or second name. Papa hasn't yet asked Barry to come. Barry is another sort; a good fellow, awfully good, but Jefe and I are selfish enough, I suppose, to feel his Faulknerness a good deal. I like him, no one could help it, but the thought of having him actually in the family for so long, well, it doesn't seem to me just right. Oh Lord, how selfish. No, we really should be glad to have him along, I suppose, if he were really getting a great deal of fun out of it. Papa is pretty sure, anyway, that his father won't have the money, and no people are allowed that can't pay their own fare. So far we haven't heard of any other boy who would answer to all these descriptions: have money, be one whom we should enjoy through and through, and one who would want to come. Louis* is out of the question; he wouldn't, or at any rate oughtn't, to leave his family, who are all of them in pretty miserable health. But we should all like to have him, he is awfully good company, isn't he? And you, Dick, you alas are too much out of the question to think of. Well, our main reason for doing this extraordinary thing is that poor Mary Greene finds our Scarboro house the best place for her crazy sister, and
she said in a letter about two weeks ago that if we should by any chance be going
to Europe she would like to keep our house, our animals and the servants till we
come back. So this capped the climax. Those damned grown people kept that
secret tight in their minds for two weeks, and we didn’t hear of it till day before
yesterday, and it nearly knocked us silly. Now it is after supper, about half past
seven. We aren’t yet sure what the girls and Edward will do. (Addie is just begin-
ning to read a Stevenson letter to Paps, at my side, but I’m going to go on writing
this; and shut my ears to the nice letter.) Addie is probably going home to Ireland
for the winter months at least. Bessie and Polly and Edward will probably either
stay with Mary Greene or Addie’s family.

Gras is still in Berkshire. He is coming home on the 6th. On Tuesday Papa
goes to New York to meet an assembly of third ticket men (you know what I’m
trying to say). He is just going for the sake of meeting them all; he doesn’t expect
do much good, but I don’t know, Papa is getting mighty interested in political
affairs, he is continually writing fine articles on that class of subject. No, I can’t
write with reading in my ears, it’s impossible. Excuse these flabby sentences.

I sold my little pony day before yesterday. You will wonder why. You see
she didn’t get enough exercise. I was the only one to ride her, and riding alone
grew tedious, naturally. But now I actually miss the taking care of her

Now good night.

Love from all, your Galla.

P.S. This is Monday morning. I thought I should have to open this letter to tell
you that a week ago today your fine friends Victor Frothingham and his wife O
what a siren! came to dinner. Aren’t they fine people! Isn’t she all right! I do
think she is just what everybody ought to be! I simply fell in love with her. G.

* Louis Agassiz Fuertes

Abbott Thayer to sister Nellie, RTF’s mother, 1900-1901

Monadnock, N.H

July 18

Dear Nellie,

This is a hard letter to write all the more because I know how little you
respect my feelings what shall I say? some part of me. I must go it unrespectfully as
your letter to me about Mary’s engagement somewhat showed. I am sorry for you

that I can’t help you by giving you G. (of course I see that it would not lack
advantages for him) I will turn my heart inside out and show you a reason that is
final to me, while it will look like weakness, etc., to you. Gerald & I are in the
deepest harmony with each other, richly so, yet such a prey to irritability have I
been that our life together so far lies all scratched and tarnished with hard bitter
memories of wasted hours. So that a summons to begin now that inevitable Next
Period that you and Ned and the Whitings are already accustomed to is like the
trump of doom to me, saying to me ‘There was no such thing for you as a beau-
tiful life with your son. You have tried it and failed, for all eternity.

When your proposal came my weak old heart clutched for escape and soon
lighted on a really brilliant use to make of the shag you gave me. I said ‘I will
buy the privilege of keeping him by me till he goes West next summer perhaps
with Dick, by making this whole remaining period one unbroken triumph, one
normal father and son year to look back through forever afterward, till I die and I
will use the sickly terror it roused in me as the hitherto missing power to cure me!
Really I can’t and shan’t think of letting him go till after this triumph.

I deeply believe that this is of even greater, far less imaginary importance to
Gerald in after years than to me. You know he will be there a month at least in the
last part of winter and of course will be your pupil.

We are very anxious to have dear Eleanor come - Do Come Eleanor. Gerald
will go to bring you. We all love you so you really will bask in it.

Good bye to you all. Your Affectionate Abbott.

Thank you Ned I’ll write myself to Canada about socks.

Monadnock July 30, ’01

Dear Nellie,

I am sincerely sorry you have no better brother than I. I seem never to have
overcome the barbaric blood-for-blood thing. Wife, son, or sister, all the same
when some fault in them happens to hit me. I hunt them till I bring them to tears,
then feel all my normal tenderness come back with a rush, and as far as I am con-
cerned the thing is over all but my selfish sufferings that they have become less
exhilaratingly conscious.

Isn’t this a delightful letter from Dick! Is he actually to be in New Haven?
then we shall surely get some sight of him - my own pictures are far ahead of any
I ever did, certainly in execution and I intend to send one of them to London as a
gauntlet to Whistler & Sargent.

On my thinking side or dare I say in my sympathetic side I knew well how
dastardly a thing it is to add to your tough burden as I have done.
Life is a funny thing and I even sometimes think we also blame ourselves erroneously. Why did I do this unkindness? Maybe somehow he wasn't wholly in the wrong, who knows, at least, I protest, I wish I had only given you help to be cheerful.

By midwinter I do believe there will be big funds in this family, anyway - Good bye my dear. If you know how to conjure out my hard streak try it. I should be humbly grateful. Love to Ned. Your Affect. Abbott

from Gladys Thayer

Wednesday, September 26th 1900
Dublin (about four o’clock)

Dear Dick,

Your letter was an awfully good one. It’s too good to believe that Dick, whom I never hoped to actually have a letter from, and who is way off on the other edge of the big country, and fearfully busy, should be one of my very best correspondents. Really how can I dare to ask you to write to me again?

Aunt Nelly must have told you about Faith’s coming here, but I will tell you it too. Its the best thing that ever happened. She and Dorothy and Wallace had been staying at Keene for about a week, and day before yesterday afternoon came over (Arthur Faulkner drove them) and spent the night and the next day till about five o’clock. It was fine to see them. What nice kids! I think Dorothy has changed awfully much since I saw her three years ago. I liked her much better than before, though she seemed nice then too. We couldn’t do anything while they were here except go out once or twice on the lake, Jefe and Faith and Papa some of the time in the canoe, and the kids and Gra and I in the boat. Oh! yes, we did a great deal of carrying of them on our shoulders and nice things like that. Larry has been up in Windsor for a week and comes back in a day or two. Ferdinand goes home to New York on Saturday. We must try not to feel lonely, but it will be an awful job. We’re succeeded in getting one of his landscapes sold for him. The good-natured big Cattin family were kind enough to buy one for two hundred dollars, one he did down at the graveyard on a cloudy day, and had been working at off and on all summer. Papa thinks and thought that it was a mighty good picture, and when the Cattins saw all his pictures they said they would buy this one if he would take out the grave stones. Of course he was overjoyed at the prospect of selling it, and didn’t mind at all about taking out the stones. At our suggestion he put in sheep instead, and the picture is wonderfully improved. This morning he and Jefe and I walked around to the great Cattin house, faced the jovial but gigantic Mr. Cattin, which made us all feel horribly dwarved and insignificant, and stood around while he and his wife praised the picture, approving of the change highly, till they fished out the check. Then we went home feeling very successful, and Ferdinand and I had a swim, for it is an unusually hot day. Gra and Dr. Stowell have gone up the mountain for the night. “Goo goo” didn’t want to go, for he has such a short time to finish one of his pictures out in Dwight’s field. Papa didn’t want to go because he wanted to save his brains, etc. for painting, and didn’t want to risk a nights sleep. I didn’t want to go because I’d already begged my next Saturday holiday for today, and didn’t work this morning. (I don’t often do a naughty thing like that, but I had reasons that would take too long to tell) so they had to go up alone - Jefe never goes.

Papa has written you of our nice scheme hasn’t he? of having our Dick come up to his Berkshire in November when we shall very probably be living in our house there. Is it out of the question? The thought of your not having a Chauncey Stillman or even a Thayer family to come to in the winter seemed so sad, that we almost felt like staying at home for the sake of our seeing each other off and on. But if only you could come up to Berkshire that would make everything all right. I don’t know anything about your power to change your vacation time around. Faith seemed to fear that you couldn’t at all. O, if only you could! Do try to!

Jefe and I are eagerly translating that wonderful, unique book that I think we have both told you about. We glory in the thought of how certain people, such as you and our family and a good many others, will revel in it. It’s a wonder, you never knew anything like it! O, if no one else has translated it before us! We have gotten it just half done, and have the merest shadow of a hope of getting through with it before we go away to that far away Italy.

Addie is having a studio built on the path up to the Bucks. She needed it very badly, and is having great fun with the building, and planning of windows and so on. The workmen are hammering away at it now. Poor old Dublin is getting fearfully changed. I hate to tell you that Mrs. Green is building horrible house on both Pine and Oak hill; and making great rough driveways up to it through the woods. But we seem suddenly quite hardened to it. We picture our Dublin turned into actual towns, and then take pleasure in the fact that there are no more houses than there are. If only our Monadnock will stay unmolested. (Now I must go out and see the sun set in the field.)

...............Now it’s Thursday evening, and I’m going to finish up this letter for nothing has happened.

Yours, Galla
Sept 24, 1901

(on back of envelope: “Real life is fast perfecting his letters. They are delightful.)

Dear Nellie,

In your letter to Mary you end a mystery for me. You say you have never heard from me.

No, it is you that have strangely forgotten. You say you haven’t seen my writing since you wrote to me in Mary’s behalf. I wrote you a cross letter early in the summer and you answered in a naturally unhappy strain. You probably think you only imagined this correspondence. Then I wrote again - a penitent letter calculated to make everything as right as things afterward can be. Spokes of the barbaric cruel blood for blood vein in me that seemingly had to be appeased before I could be sane and humble.

I wish I could see the mushrooms you are painting. You ought to do them very beautifully and I think you have. Eleanor and I got on fine together didn’t we Eleanor! We made one mistake with the crowd in not making them share our chores more.

They had too long a loaf (not of bread). I am so full of appetite to be with you all that it will sometime later bear fruit. I’m delighted you are coming here in Oct. No I haven’t seen Aunt Kate. I am so disgusted that McKinley got martyr-gilded - our cause was uphill enough without that. To hear on all sides that that full blown venial office seeker character by virtue of which no office seeker ever does anything that would lose him votes, to hear this spoken of everywhere as the humble greatness of a true Servant of his people.

Dear, you gave me a bad shock when you said you almost felt with the crowd that McK. was great and fine or somewhat of this. I think the pulpit gas since his assassination is the most intolerable thing yet offered to good men. Isn’t it splendid how plainly England is doomed to failure. I give them 3 to 4 years to back out.

Well dears, good bye. I am the same boy you find so much to love in, and so much to regret in. I am all love for you inside...

So much for “vague agony”, as we call it on the Advocate, by way of self-consolation. If I can’t have reality I hang tenderly over the recollection. But now let me scare you with my catalogue of plans. In the first place you and I are going to form a conspiracy, the object of which shall be to discuss forbidden subjects when your head is not around. Perhaps sometimes, if we are crafty, we can get your head to join the talk without his knowing it. You see, there are some very pleasant things that have happened to me this winter which must somehow be detailed to you. College is a romance after all, as I have found at last! And then, the summer term must see the renewal of your “education”, philosophy, ethics, and literature have each opinions to exchange with you, and if you did not know it by experience how easily their spokesman can be choked off, your brain would quake for very weariness. But most of all you and I and Gra, (and Ted, at last, as I hear) are going to tramp about with our fingers on our lips, content to be in the great man’s company, whether he speaks or not. But, now I come to think of it, you may be allowed to let your lips go unfingered. It is only we of the multitudes who must restrain our speech.
September 7, 1897

Dear Uncle Abbott,

It was a curious tardy sadness that accompanied my leaving Dublin. Not till all the chill and freshness of the ride to Peterboro had thawed out of me, and I was sweating in that glorious plain at Winchendon, did I begin to realize (as I usually do in time for a sentimental parting!) what a heaven of a time I had. It took me all that day to leave off reviewing the scenes and incidents of our walks, and to focus my senses on this gentle region. (I hear our upland plovers at this instant. I am under the trees in Reid’s pasture). Well, the very afternoon I got here, in order not to let down too abruptly, I took Anna K. and the old blunderbuss and wandered up the reservoir. It really seemed as if the genie of my old haunts had divined my thoughts; resented the allegiance to Dublin which she perceived in my regretful dreams; and exerted herself to win me back (I hope a genie is a she!)

But, to have done with nonsense, I should like very much to have a word from you or Gra to while away the time till I see you all in Dublin. For bird incidents I have only two novelties to tell you. One is a robin’s nest ( lately abandoned by the young), set among ferns on a bank some ten feet above the brook. To see that nest fall upon the ground was a new sight to me, but far more curious to behold was the stolid occupant of the nest. A large green, bull frog, so large as completely to fill the nest, squatted there in idleness, and gurgled his throat. Nor could I budge him from his position, even by most vicious pokes with a pointed stick.

The other novelty in my bird experience, was the sight of young screech owls. Night before last, in very dim twilight, as I was coming through the big woods beside the Berkshire wood, I heard from three quarters a very squeaky note which reminded me of a screech owl’s. In range and cadence it was exactly similar; only the quality was different. I managed to see one of the little whiners. He wobbled across between me and the sky when I went and stood under his tree and threw a stone at the place whence he was continually squealing for food.

On the reservoir the grebes continue to croak and hoot with surprising loudness and frequency. They must be breeding there I think.

All this talk of mine has worked me to an unbearable craving for spruce woods. Before I am a day older I shall sit among the numerous spruces for very regard for Dublin, the mecca of my year. Yours, R. T. Fisher

Love to the animals and the Thayers in their degree!

Berkshires

September 7, 1897

Thayers & Fishers
Life in Letters of Richard T. Fisher

(In same envelope as previous letter)

Wednesday, November 1900

My dear boy,

I got your beautiful photos of those tremendous mountains - and it became a real plan for Gra and me and perhaps the whole crowd to get there before very long. - How much you are in my mind. I scrawl this scrap in aghastness at the length of time you haven't heard from me. I do believe I shall write soon.

I love you. All well here. Your AHT June 29.

(no date)

My dear fellow,

Do you feel that England is more justified because the Boers keep slaves and their government has become venal under the presence of foreigners with axes to grind. Geo. Washington kept slaves - that whole part of the case is merely a matter of social development. We that no longer keep slaves in the crude sense, keep them, just and truly, compared with a future standard. We pay them - to be our slaves or we give ourselves pleasures at the expense of others etc. Suffice it; Washington kept slaves, yet you know he felt just. This part of the matter seems to me rather to hinge on the question how brave your adversaries prove - if totally so, like the Transvaalers, then plainly your last vestige of excuse for trying to crush him out of his home is lacking. You have no right to rob posterity of such stock. And where is England's fairplay reputation? I'll cork up if you will at once read Wm Stead's speech herewith sent you-

Send this and it, if your choose, to Chauncey.

Is it the duty of every great rich nation to extirpate every other people that have faults? and plant their own there, with the true church?

If ever a case was just the wolf & the lamb at the brook here it is, only this wolf won't get the lamb, or Tolstoi is wrong. He says that every people who in pure devotion have used guerilla warfare to rid their land of oppressors have conquered - that is merely saying that if they are pure in determination i.e., prefer each one of them death, to submission, they will remain unconquered even when scattered and fighting separately as opportunity serves, will, with the aid of the fact they are at home, that every ravine and bog is their friend and their enemy's foe utterly tire him out in the end as did our ancestors here. And think of our own U.S.A. disgrace, imitating England in our Philippines, not even original in our policy of cant-gilded rapacity that so frankly was simple gold craze, the whole real cause, that the English were too reckless to get up even a good make-believe.

Behold I am coming to Washington late in April and you & I must have a real melt-down together.

......Look at England today. In any disagreement which party do the brutal mobbing of opponents who are simply speaking their minds - You and Chauncey are on the side with the cockfighting gentry of England who have now this season mobbed brave speakers in every part of the island. Try to think up a case where that has been done by people in the right. A.H.T.

Thurs. Apr. 5th 1900

Dear Dick,

I'm glad Papa has written you this letter, and I do hope it will convert you, for indeed I can't stand having you on the English side.

As the feeling for the Boers grows daily more hot with us, it gets more and more hard to have any loved one in the other camp. I hope Chauncey too will be converted. I got the impression he was not so set as you in the matter. Oh Dick! - as Papa says - Come off!

I take the liberty of sending you another thing about the Boers, which, as a logical demonstration of the rights of the case, seems to me the best thing of the kind that I've read.

All my thoughts and interest are in this war - this and possible or probable future ones. (If you read Mr. Stead's speech, and still more the page in that paper headed: "Will England be invaded by France in September", you will understand what I mean by that. Russia also is causing England great anxiety). We are wildly happy about the Boers now!

Oh! It is a privilege to live at such a time, and be allowed to witness one of the sublimest triumphs Freedom has ever gained!

We have made a big Transvaal flag, and it is flying over your house to-day!

Good-bye, Dick! I couldn't possibly screw out any other thoughts just now than these, so you must be content with such a letter.

Good-bye, and let us hear soon that you are now a good Boer!

Your affectionate Mary.
RTF'S reply

April 2

I see I must have another go at you. That first outburst was too largely affection to be effective. What I still want to do is understand how I got in the way of this harangue. I seem to remember your writing me, not a month ago, and with some penitence, of your return to the "ancient attitude of our country," which you implied I had maintained from the beginning; and I was touched at your announcement, especially when I thought how lukewarm my partisanship had been at best. Now what gets me, is how I became expansionist in your eyes. It's possible I made some foolish remarks for the English when I was at Scarborough in February, being as I was drunk with joy, but my recollection of that day contains no such record: only a deep thrill of sympathy at what you told me of the Boers. It's possible, too, that my apathy may have caused my undoing, and that, I admit, is fairly just cause for your charge. But I cannot, no matter how I rack my brains, understand how I came to be considered actively British. Come off yourself, dear man, and let me see you sprinkle ashes on your beloved head. I demand reparation, and that of the most princely brand. R.T.F.

Feb. 26, 1901

(to Thayer)

Your thrice welcome postal instantly sets me chattering again. All my treasury of splendid reminiscence surges up before me so that for the first time in months I fret at the flight of days. After all, it seems as I think in my present mood there is no use in living except as you can repeat your impressions and pleasant experiences to Mr. Thayer. Extravagant language, you say. Yes, but I am in an extravagant mood. I have been so consistently on what you call an "up wave" of elation for the last three months, that I have been more and more eager to forgather with you. What a gloat we'll have!

Only night before last I had my first real taste of thrushes singing, especially hermits. They are not very common here this year, and up to that night I hadn't been able to go far enough to reach any real hermit region. But Thursday night, just at dusk, I came out from Pittsfield by the Dalton cars and walked home along the gulf road, between the swamps and the mountain side. Such a chorus! In the low woods at my left, veeries and wood thrushes filling the air with song; and across the road among the scrub trees and stumps, the chewinks were "wee-tee tit-talting" as if they were in Dwight's field itself. But above everything, in beauty as well as situation were the hermits. Half way up that bare hill side, so cut and burnt off that only a few spruces are left among the smaller brush, there were several singing. That seemed to me the natural hierarchy of songsters: the hermit thrust at the very top. The other birds sing marvelously, but with a sort of earthy rejoicing. The veerie is cheerful and careless; the wood thrush mellow and serene; but each is on the lower levels of sentiment. They sing of the evanescent beauties of the lowlands. But listen to the hermit. He sits far up in the rare spicy air of heights, amid the realest silence; and when he begins that contralto note of his, it reminds one of a Schubert song. Somehow, the hermit knows all about the life below him; he has reviewed the whole, and is giving you his hopeful verdict that the real thing is happiness. He seems to have a faith of experience, not the ignorant faith that fears to learn, but that faith that survives the most disturbing discoveries: a supreme belief in the protectorate of God.

There are those to whom all this would seem like a living fairy-tale, but isn't it (at least to us) indisputably the fact, that the regions where a hermit lives, bring nearest the state of virgin solitudes, the heart of nature, so to speak, have produced a singer who comes correspondingly near to omniscient beauty of song. This is all just what we have said, I think; at least what you have thought. But I was so newly and completely awed by hearing the bird again, that I had to give myself the fun of repeating the old story. And speaking of thrushes and the big world has reminded me that I have an Advocate that I want you to see. There are two articles that I want to bring to your attention. One is a sort of essay by Robert Utter, which deals in a pretty clever way with matters very dear to you and me. You may not wholly agree with it (though I think you will); but it's pretty good writing. The other article so called is an attempt of mine to say in verse just about what I have been chattering to you about for some two pages back. It's pretty colorless, but you may recognize some familiar conceptions in it. The misprints I wish to state for the honor of the Advocate, are not intentional. I didn't read the proof, being out of town for a day, so the old printer was allowed to spell the name of the deity with a small letter. And the editorial, also by Broletter, may interest you as a sidelight on your country's whims.

Ah - this has comforted me greatly. I can exist till August (I am going soon to Greylock). Yours R.T.F.
to Gerald Thayer

Saturday

Here is the paper with the envelope I sent some time ago. I stole it from a boy in Cambridge.

Dear Gra, would you believe it? A certain person had the following experience: On going out this morning a large bird flew up from beneath my feet; but though I pursued it several hundred yards I was unable to discover what was its species. I consider it to be a hitherto-unknown variety of garrulous garret, now observed for the first time by me. Its note, which, through long experience I was able to record most accurately, was something between the scream of an eagle and the chirp of a humming bird. In color the creature was brown all over, except his belly which was... (end of letter missing)

(Postal Card stamped Monadnock, N.H. Sept 15, PM 1909)

Tues 14 Sept

Never was a better mood or more opulent atmosphere here for you to pop into at any time – and the causes are like to last. I am in full blossom at last, at every twig. Your old AHT

(addressed to Prof. Richard T. Fisher, Fisher & Bryant, 141 Milk St. Boston)

Monadnock, N.H.
Feb. 4, 1914

Dear Dick and Nina,

Ever since we lost the chance to have you come when you were able, we have been consciously waiting for the first holiday climax in our affairs. The first coalescence of internal and external favorableness.

Well here she is! and now, of course, if we try for next Sunday, you will have to confess that you can't come. If you can, do. We are very high-feathery.
Vacation at Basin Harbor Lodge, Lake Champlain, 1927?
Abbott Thayer dies in 1921. The intense involvement with Mt. Monadnock is no more. The Fisher presence in Berkshire has gone by 1912. Gerald, Abbott’s son, has been divorced from fair Alma. Dick Fisher becomes his guardian for a short term, and Gerald, after living in Brazil, will end the family bond to New England by moving to Texas. Many years later, his secret cave on the old Mt. Monadnock will be discovered one day by accident by nephew; Abbott Fenn.

XII. LAST LETTERS

August 6, 1914

My beloved Dinnie,

I think of you so much and so longingly that I have to send you my God bless you before I go to bed. If only I did not have to think of you put back to bed again for a time and all uncomfortable, I should feel all made of joy tonight. We had a very happy conference at the Bussey, and it was mighty costly and pleasant getting to Weston, and being plying with affectionate questions about you and the Wriggler. Only, my dearest, - if only I had not been so thoughtless as to take you on that long cold ride. I know you will say this - that it was nothing, and I worship and worship you for the infinite love and courage that makes you act this way. Miss Coughlin says you are getting all right fast, and I will postpone some of the inexpressible things I feel like telling. But Dinnie dearest, I love you and love you, and I am so glad and proud to be your lover and husband and the father of your wonderful little Wriggler.

Ever and ever yours,

R.T.F.

Aug. 27, 1915

Dear Bill,

How about a line to Baldy - if the pen has not entirely lost its whylome supremacy over the sword? My thoughts have been considerably heavy of late. Everything I am doing seems increasingly futile - trying to get up a new course, and planting those trees in the Harvard Yard - and yet I have to do it. Meanwhile
there is James becoming a sharpshooter (pardon me, being discovered a
sharpshooter) and no amount of occupation will dispel the loneliness and distur-
bances thereby caused. I wish I could talk to you, and learn how things look to
you. Are my doings human progress or merely piss? The answer to such ques-
tions is doubtless a large order for a letter and maybe will keep till we meet. It
would be nuts, though, to the ancient briar-patch badger, whose gossips too often
smell of cow-dung, to hear a few observes about life in Plattsburg, how much
rheumatic and dry-joint ensues, what are the chief evolutions, and what you think
of J.R.'s remarks. To a fairly sound man, there must be considerable fun in the
experience ------ or did I hear your joints creak? Send me your sentiments if not
your news, or vice versa - if only on a postcard. Also would fain know your
schedule after leaving Plattsburg, and if any individual or family foregathering is
possible.

Yours from old days and hereafter

R.T.F.

Much regards to Alec, Wig and other neighbors who may be at hand.

Dear Bill,

I call you. We have a daughter. Having demonstrated our capacity for the
other achievement we now turn to the finer clay. However, be that as it may, we
have to admit she is dretful small - under 5 lbs. - and probably a bit premature,
though vigorous, hungry, and according to Doc Hubbard and Morse, entirely like-
ly to prosper. Neither of these specialists were present at her arrival, which took
place early Wednesday, assisted by the village sawbones and the faithful Katie.
Even I was absent in Boston, and had only the excitement of rounding up the
experts the day after. Nina, as you doubtless infer, had a very easy time, and is in
fine condition. So there you are. The name at this writing looks like Ann - for
short. Will you pass this on to Alice, who perhaps will forgive me for not writing
direct to her?

Yours ever,
Dick

Sept. 30, 1916

Dear Richard,

We are now moved into this house (where we hope ere long to welcome you
& Nina) and it seems very natural and homelike to be living here. Hank arrived 3
days ago wearing your brown Siberian unborn lambskin fur coat which he left
behind when he went to N.Y. Should you like it sent to Petersham or kept here
for you?

Hank probably told you of his & my adventures at Scapuit. I made a couple of
45's but nothing better, - and yet - and yet = humanly speaking - I feel that I am
almost much better than that for I was repeatedly hole high in 2 iron shots on
every hole on that course save No. 8. That much length should be useful, some-
how in their score. You come down there before many weeks with me & show
me how to do it!

Hank also said that you had reason to feel proud of your work for H.U!
Was to California this summer and will say that the sun & jog in San
Francisco Bay took me back to student-assistant days though I didn't realize how
beautiful it was then. With love to Nina
Crossing the continent is always, to me, an immensely thrilling adventure!

Savoy Hotel
Paseo del Prado, 26
Madrid

June 17, 1926

Dear Richard:

A cable has just been forwarded from you saying "Reasoner writing letters
apparently given Cortissoz".*

I confess I heave a sigh of relief. Great is my love for A.H.T. and great
would have been the fun of cooperation with you therein, - but it would also have
meant taking on a lot of difficult undertakings which don't belong to us and which
do belong to such men as Cortissoz. My change of mind was prompted chiefly by
admiration and affection, - which go a long way but by no means constitute all the
equipment required. I hope my change of mind will not have roused any “feelings” or regrets in any quarter. I believe he will do the thing sympathetically, skillfully and very well, - and it may be that we can be of some service to him.***

Many thanks for the cables.

I leave here in 3 days to join Alice in London. Madrid is a most uninteresting town save for the Prado which strikes me as being the most wonderful gallery in the world. I think Nina has seen it hasn’t she?

I am fed up with the European ways of living. I long for the woods, an axe, some country where people or the signs of people are not everywhere in sight. There is a good deal of such in Spain - like our South West- and it makes me homesick. I invited you to join one in an expedition to such land - we shan’t have to go far - at your earliest convenience!

Yrs W.J.

* Royal Cortissoz, Art editor of the N.Y. Tribune

** Cortissoz was to write the introduction to the catalogue of the retrospective exhibition of A.H.T. at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY

Goring Hotel, London

June 25, 1926

Dear Richard:

I find yours of June 9th, upon my arrival here and also a bully letter from Dave Reasoner. I expect that boy is A No.1. Every day of my life I am more glad that Cortissoz is doing that book. It needs a professional. And that leaves me free to put in my own form, in some sort of article or essay or what not, something of what I saw and loved and am indebted to in A.H.T. - if I can. Perhaps with your and God’s help I may be able! I say "something of" for to put it all in would be well nigh impossible. As time goes on I am beginning to suspect that the finest glimpses you and I have had into Nature’s universe are due in some way to him. I don’t say Man’s universe because that seems to me an inferior business that is mostly too much with us. But his was a fine way of looking not only at what he painted but at whatever he saw.

Just now comes your cable to come along home and see life! Yea go! I am headed hence in less than 3 weeks and to judge from the Americans I have seen about one in the last month I shall expect to find you and Nina and Hank to be the absolutely sole occupants of them United States. Yours ever W.J.
Upon Fisher’s unexpected death on June 12, 1934, hundreds of condolence letters poured forth from friends, family, forest colleagues. The old points of a cousinly constellation remain in Berkshire through a continuation of the Fisher homeschool. Margery Whiting, in her own homeschool, teaches future film actress Bette Davis. Harry Whiting, town pillar like his father, silent Edward, runs a summer farm camp at Crestalban Farm, attended by Fisher’s youngest, Jack, much later by Cameron Forbes. Evelyn Whiting, in 1992, lives on at "Crestalban", no longer a farm, in the same small Berkshire village.
Richard Thornton Fisher

One of nature's noblemen has gone from us suddenly. An idealist with the love of beauty so completely filling his life that in spite of his great gift of making all men his friends, he seemed a little apart from them all. A quiet dignity was his, and the real simplicity of a philosopher, who looked for the good in all things and generally found it. After graduating from Harvard in 1898, he worked with Barrett Wendell, helping him as an assistant in his English. But the woods were always calling to him and soon left the academic cloisters to follow. Gifford Pinchot, Theodore Roosevelt's pianist, made chief of the Bureau of Forestry. Dick Fisher's ability was recognized at once and he was almost immediately appointed special agent of the United States Biological Survey, and attached to the United States Bureau of Forestry as forest assistant.

He was the first man Pinchot chose to make a reconnaissance of the forests of the West. Taking with him two young colleagues, they rode all down the coast of California and roughed it through the mountains of the far Western States. It was thanks to his judgments, that most of the Forest Reserves there were selected which are now among the nation's most cherished possessions. Feeling such work was his chosen profession, he studied forestry in Europe, and on his return, when President Eliot decided that Harvard College needed to add a School of Forestry to its long list of activities, he chose Fisher for the director of the department. It is thanks to his untiring devotion and thorough knowledge that Harvard has given us the Harvard Forest at Petersham, Mass—a managed forest, nearly self-supporting, justly famous both here and abroad.

Whatever he did, he did well. His interests were many and varied, yet he met each situation or problem in the same quiet, perceptive, fair-minded and courteous fashion. Many will grieve at his passing; especially those who studied under him and who, touched by his sincere, quiet enthusiasm, will always carry with them the memory of a great teacher and a gallant gentleman.

HENRY H. TRYON.
Cornwall-on-Hudson, N. Y., June 18, 1934

The Late Richard Thornton Fisher.

To the Editor of The New York Times:
The sudden death of Richard Thornton Fisher has taken a great forester and a great idealist. He had the gift of drawing many people to him, yet such was his love of beauty that he seemed a bit apart from the rest of us. Academic reserve was his, with a quiet, natural dignity and a sincere, philosophical simplicity which sought the good in everything.

He was Barrett Wendell's assistant for a short time after graduating from Harvard in 1898. But he cared too much for the out-of-doors and soon entered what was then the Bureau of Forestry, where, under Gifford Pinchot, he made extensive reconnaissance surveys of vast areas of Western forest lands. It is owing in large measure to his keen and balanced judgment that many of the national forests of today are among the nation's valued possessions. President Eliot chose him to head the new Harvard Forest School. His unceasing devotion and thorough knowledge has given us the Harvard Forest at Petersham, Mass—a managed forest, nearly self-supporting, justly famous both here and abroad.

Whatever he did, he did well. His interests were many and varied, yet he met each situation or problem in the same quiet, perceptive, fair-minded and courteous fashion. Many will grieve at his passing; especially those who studied under him and who, touched by his sincere, quiet enthusiasm, will always carry with them the memory of a great teacher and a gallant gentleman.

HENRY H. TRYON.
Cornwall-on-Hudson, N. Y., June 18, 1934

North Easton, Massachusetts.
June 10, 1934.

My dear Mrs. Fisher:
I cannot express the depth of my sorrow at the loss of my classmates, friends and colleague, nor can I adequately express the feeling of admiration I had for him. Dick came to be one of my closest friends in the University and our intimate was delightful. It seems that the passing of time brought us into closer and closer association, and only a few days ago we had planned for a meeting in Petersham and for a still closer relationship between the institutions to which we devoted so many years of our lives.

Affection for Dick was stimulated by his simple, kindly manner and his genuine enthusiasm. A community deprived of his presence loses a rare and inspiring personality.

I fear I shall be unable to reach Petersham tomorrow, but wherever I happen to be at three-thirty I shall be with uncrowed and a bronze frame Dick kindly of black.

With sincere sorrow at your loss.
Believe me.
Your faithfully,

*Arnold Professor of Botany, Bussey Institute.

Harold Emerson
June 11, 1784.

CHOCORUA
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Dear Nina:

I think that was the most beautiful service I ever listened to. I expect you chose some of those selections from the psalms and from the gospels. But what a beautiful prayer he said. What a fine man that preacher must be... he knows and appreciates Dick.

I have been amazed to find in these few days, how much I owe to Dick. I had never dreamed it was because I couldn't conceive of his not being there. He opened the door for me, by some magic, to realize... to beauty, to what was fine. And the door that this door opens into has no limits. Trivial experiences, when shared with him became unforgettable. And the beauty of the landscape, and the sights of the balls at Seabright, have lost something for me because they can no longer be shared.

But I have been thinking also of you Nina. I don't see how can be so brave. I admire and love you very much... Affectionately yours,

This isn't to be acknowledged!

Norfolk House.
June 12.

Dear Nina,

It would never Dick's own gift of words to express what for me is impossible... my heart so aches with sympathy for you that I feel as if I should not even mention my own sorrow. I look back on the years, and his friendship seems one of the most beautiful things in my life. No one else had his...
There lies before me a letter from a friend of Fisher's—not a forester it so happens—who knew him intimately for thirty-five years. "I did not realize until lately," he writes, "how much I owed to Dick. From those early days he opened, somehow, for me the doors of romance. Fields that were without limit. First of all in music. In biology, and everything that had to do with nature. To some extent in literature. And always he was on the side of appreciation rather than of criticism. He became a part, or a possible part, of all my recreations. (Incidentally he was my most sympathetic audience. He believed in me.) I shall miss Dick, but above all I shall miss what he understood and appreciated. The world and the sunlight seem poorer without his response." If the writer of these sentences were to be reminded that Dick Fisher didn't know a great deal about music and was quite ignorant about vast areas in the field of biology, he would admit it, and would add:—"That didn’t matter."

Excerpt from article by Henry James
from the Harvard Forest Memorial Bulletin
Dear Nina,

Once upon a time Dick published an observation or reflection to the effect that one reason why the wood-cock were "coming back" in New England was that so many thousands of acres had become better feeding ground by reason of the fact that the removal of 2nd growth pine stands had let the sun light onto the soil and encouraged soil-bacteria & then earthworms. I'm not sure that Dick didn't say these things by the way in the course of a paper primarily concerned with something else than wood-cock. Do you happen to know what I'm referring to? And if so could you give me a reference without trouble? The matter is not one over which you should take trouble. I want to pass the reference on to another for whom I would take a little but not much trouble.

Dick is often in mind, especially when I'm in the country-side (-as here for a while-) about which he taught me so much and was himself so full of feeling and wisdom. I hope you and the children are well and flourish, and I much regret that its such a long time since I've seen you, and that I have no dealings with any of the young ones. I'm sure they are unaware of the need of anything of that sort! But if any of them frequent New York, or if I could serve them in any way, I'd love - if only for their father's sake, to know it and do my best. I have to lead a rather in inactive life with respect to travel and exercise, else I should have succeeded in looking in at Petersham.

Ever Sincerely Yours,

Henry James
RICHARD THORNTON FISHER


Business: Forester; Director of the Harvard Forest and assistant professor of forestry.
Address: Petersham, Mass.

Immediately after leaving College I got a job with the U. S. Biological Survey as a member of the Shasta Expedition to northern California. Furs and feathers for the National Museum. The following autumn and winter I spent as assistant to Professors Wendell and Copeland at Harvard. This conflict between science and the humanities resulted in a compromise on forestry, and in June, 1899, I joined the Federal Forestry Department. With an intermission of a little over a year—October, 1902, to August, 1903,—which was devoted to getting an M.F. degree from Yale, and a few observations in Germany and Austria, I stayed with the Government, mostly in Washington, Oregon, and California. Since February, 1904, I have been promoting forestry at Harvard. At present, I manage The Harvard Forest, which is an experiment station and a research laboratory for advanced students, and conduct the instruction in lumbering at the Harvard Business School. The Forest, I may add, is at the head of its class in the country.

What little public service I have been able to do has been mainly professional. I have a hand in shaping some of the legislation relating to forestry in Massachusetts, and through the development of the Harvard Forest, in the establishment of practical methods of timber land management in New England. The only public office I have not been able to avoid is that of Tree Warden of the town of Petersham.

My hobbies are staged where the rest of you (erroneously) suppose I practice my business, i.e., out-of-doors. When possible I enjoy Nature, whether rough as in the tall timber, or curried as on a golf course. It keeps you from brooding too much on your game. From the rifle to the axe, from the axe to the niblic,—that is likely to be the story of my sporting life. From May until November we live in Petersham, the balance of the year in Weston, whence I commute to Cambridge and elsewhere.

During the War I was an inglorious member of the Food Administration, being chairman of the town (Petersham) Food Committee. I helped organize farms and farm production, acted as dispenser of advice from Washington, and factotum for the various "drives." It was not very dangerous.


Member: The number of associations that I belong to for promoting things is only equalled by the numbers I belong to for preventing other things,—most of them concern the welfare of forests, trees, birds, game, antiquities, the English Nation, National parks, and others; (chairman) New England Section of the Society of American Foresters, an organization of Simon-pure professional men; The Country Club, Brookline; Tatmuck Club, Worcester; Weston Golf Club, Weston; Oakley Country Club, Belmont; Seapuit Golf Club, Osterville; and Petersham Country Club, Petersham; The Pea Island Club of North Carolina and the Boston Harvard Club.
PETERSHAM FORESTS

Editor, Athol Transcript:

The Tax Collector of Petersham has called my attention to Mr. Daniel Hanson's letter in your columns about the Harvard Forest in Petersham. The Collector was kind enough to say that most citizens would know that the statements in Mr. Hanson's letter were false, and that since its establishment the Harvard Forest had greatly increased both the taxable property in Petersham and the wellbeing of the town.

The Harvard Forest has scrupulously carried out both in letter and spirit its obligations to the town and to the state law under which its exempted from taxation except for a small area accepted with the knowledge and approval of the town officers and given to make possible the preservation forever of substantial strips along the Barre road. The Forest has not acquired additional land and the land to which Mr. Hanson refers between the village and the Barre line was part of the original purchase and has recently been designated by signs so that passers-by might know its location.

It is not true that Harvard has discarded the teaching of forestry. On the contrary, the Harvard Forest as a place for general and practical training in forest management, is recognized as the best place of its kind in the country. It has had students from as far away as Australia and China, and has each year a group of picked men, always graduates of forest schools, and often men of high standing in their profession, who come to Petersham for enlarged technical training or experience.

Mr. Hanson says that the Petersham work is carried on under the School of Business Administration. The Harvard Forest has nothing to do with the School of Business Administration, either financially or educationally, and its only connection with the Harvard Forest is one of the many by the Director. Mr. Hanson speaks vaguely of "a generous income from logging." From the beginning this income has been barely sufficient to maintain in only possible condition the Harvard Forest building, apparatus and equipment necessary for housing the students and conducting the experimental work in forestry. The annual income from a forest which is kept up to produce forever is different from what could be obtained by cutting and planting the forest at once. On the Harvard Forest all land that has been cut over has always been reproduced to a new crop, either by planting or natural seeding. The annual net money return from the woods for upkeep and experimental purposes has been from $1,000 to $2,000 a year. It seems plain, therefore, that the facts of Mr. Hanson's protest are false that neither the Harvard Forest nor the University has been guilty of the "Machiavellians in Western Massachusetts," which he seems to dread.

On the contrary, it is known to well informed people, of whom the Petersham Tax Collector is one, that in the eighteenth years of its existence the Harvard Forest has contributed very materially to the prosperity of Petersham. The Harvard Forest officially and through the members of its staff, spends annually between $15,000 and $20,000 in wages, purchases, and other costs. Very largely in Petersham or its immediate neighborhood.

The Harvard Forest gives to the profession which it serves and to the public of Petersham, and by its influence in the state law exempting the Harvard Forest from taxation, confers a real benefit on the town.

Very truly yours,

R. T. FISHER
Director of the Harvard Forest.

Petersham, October 15.
Dear Cameron,

Giving your girls The Chewing Gum Man (enclosed copy) and hearing you say you had never known that side of your grandfather’s nature started me on a very pleasant train of memories that I always want to share with some one else who might be interested.

When I knew him best he was a bachelor, not averse to “going out among ’em” occasionally (though until he got interested in your grandmother this meant to him general sociability in mixed company), but what we looked forward to with perpetual eagerness was his visits to his sister’s house, where he could always pick up one or two of four young fry to take to a professional base-ball game with the Red Sox, or to a Battery A vs. First Corps Cadets football game as a change from his regular academic duties as Professor of Forestry in Harvard College.

These adventures were not usually planned in advance but at least as far as we knew were spur-of-the-light-hearted moment ideas. And none of them were indoors expeditions but always outdoors - forester’s choice. A relatively elaborate one that I remember was an afternoon in a rented canoe on the Charles River at Norumbega Park. The afternoon session at the Peabody School was taken care of by a note to the teacher next morning from mother which said, in effect, “I kept the children out of school because I thought they would learn more with their uncle on the river than they would in the school”. A word of serious caution about sitting still in a tippy canoe on the bottom facing stern, made a quick turn at the bow-man’s call of “there’s a turtle”, the paddling stopped in mid-stroke, I turned back, and my uncle had his eye, solemn for the moment, fixed on me not the turtle; I got the message and he resumed padding. Nothing more. An unforgettable afternoon.

More often we took a trolley car to the vicinity of Fresh Pond and walked around, coming back when we were ready. We saw meadow larks in the fields if it was spring, and canvas backs, widgeons, etc., on the pond if it was still open water in the fall or early spring. One day he turned up with a Brist Boomerang which had to be tried out in the open field next to our house. It was a wooden model of a four-bladed propeller of an ordinary prop plane. Throw it straight away from you in any direction and it would make a big circle and land at our feet. Speaking of airplanes, he took us to the original airplane show at Squantum in 1906 or 8. There were wooden bleachers beside a race track for horses. A Curtis bi-plane flew the appointed course out to a designated buoy in Boston Harbor and back and thrilled the audience with its speed. A tri-plane flew the course and showed what freight travel could be. Another bi-plane or two to make the competition lively and Graham-White appeared from England with a monoplane. He was back from the buoy before the noise of his take-off had died down and everybody knew we were in a new world, that Uncle Dick had shown us.

At Rockport in summer vacation, when Our Prince Edward Island cook stood in a chair with each leg of the chair in an empty water glass for insulation in a thunderstorm, he told us about sleeping on the ground in a thunderstorm in the Rocky Mountains when he was trapping small mammals for the Smithsonian. On a Sunday morning when we rejoiced that we couldn’t go to Sunday School anyway because there wasn’t any church near enough for us to walk, he said he would show us something he knew about the Bible that not many Sunday School teachers knew. Then he took two pieces of stout cord about 2 feet long, tied them to opposite sides of a piece of flexible leather about the size of the palm of your hand, put a loop in one string to go over the middle finger of his right hand, and holding the free end of the other string between his thumb and forefinger of his right hand, he put a stone with Goliath’s name on it in the leather cup and told us all to get behind the backs of rocking chairs (this being on the porch of our summer house facing the open ocean), and see how David really did it. He whirled the sling around his head, let go the free string at the right time, and the stone went half way out to Milk Island.

At least once at Rockport he brought from town a piece of steak and a strip of 1/2 inch wire mesh 10 inches by 20, folded in the middle to be square. If for some reason no picnic was possible but only a short trip in the woods, he took it with him anyway, built a small fire and broiled it as it should be broiled, and putting it out, meticulously, he never lectured you pedantically but let you see, if you had any sense, which he always assumed, correctly, that you did have, that tiny twigs were just as good as paper for kindling, that small, short branches if dead and dry, would burn to coals better and quicker than bignes would, that ashes still warm could easily heat up again in a breeze and set the whole woods afire. Where could you find a better companion than that?

One more yarn. Uncle Dick came on Saturday morning and proposed an expedition. He got 3 of us right away. Wallace was a graduate student studying upstairs for his Ph.d. We all went up, to get the full complement. Uncle Dick laid out the plan. Wallace looked interested but shook his head. “Couldn’t”. A moment of silence, and Uncle Dick said thoughtfully, “Wallace, you and I should go into business together.” Nobody understood at once. “With your hard work and my brains, we could make millions”. We went joyfully on our expedition and Wallace got his Ph.d. in time.

With best of good wishes to you and my Uncle’s great granddaughters, Donald Fenn Oct. 10, 1976
Dear C,

You have rain on your face.

Occasional showers.

This is vapor.

So take the Corps of Discovery.

New expeditions.

selected elements.

At the battle of Normandy, through a window.

A war made in the desert.

Surround the town.

After the battle of Normandy.

A river.

and c

priness

field.

a crop

a circle

in a boat on the Cheshire reservoir
Errata

P. xi, line 22: Donald Fisher Penn
P. xviii, line 12: “Sweede” should read “Scottish” (born and raised American citizen)
P. xxii, Geneology: Wallace Q. Penn, Eleanor (no S), Lawrence B., David T.
P. 17, line 6 from bottom: “fruga” should read “fringe”
P. 64, line 7: Dorothy (no Fisher) Penn Duncan
P. 107, line 2: “deBrush” should read “deForest Brushi”
P. 113, line 18: “Aunt Marcia” should read “Aunt Maria”
P. 116, *: “Dr. Dooley” should ready Mr. Dooley
P. 133, line 2: “thinks” should read “things”
P. 147, line 18: “coal face” should read “coal face”
P. 148, 6th line from bottom: “back” should read “back”
5th line from bottom: “sw up” should read “saw up”
P. 154, line 11 from bottom: “marrin?” should read “marionettes”
   line 10 from bottom: “foc’ tte” should read “foc’sle”
P. 155, line 19: “seaboard down” should read “seaboard town”
P. 193, line 7: “corvelas” should read “corollas”
   *: “Secretary of Interior under McKinley” should read “Secretary of State under McKinley”
P. 235, line 1, second letter: “Swain’s” should read “Swan’s”
P. 249, line 2 from bottom: “other” should read “otters”
P. 307, line 23: “fein” is wrong – by
   line 24: “persmenzg” should read “personenzug”
   line 30: Eisenbaum should read “Eisenhann”
P. 355, line 3: “thin” should read “thing”
   line 11, second letter: “C.F. Adams’s” should read “C.F. Adams”
P. 358, line 10: “Wister’s” should read “Wister’s”
P. 372, line 12 from bottom: “Whitney’s” should read “Whiting’s”
P. 388, *: “Protective Coloration” should read “Concealing Coloration”
P. 407, line 6 from bottom of first letter: What can H.J. mean? Woodrow Wilson
   was no “skirt chaser.”
P.413, bottom caption: “July 1911” should read “July 17, 1913”
P. 429, *: “Otto Wierham” should read “Otto Wierum”
P. 461, line 4 from bottom, middle letter: “sun & jog” should read “sun & fog”
P. 482, line 19: insert “I” after “tern,”

Addenda

P. 14: *John Alden Carpenter was a distinguished American composer.
P. 127: *The twins, Donald and Roger, had a private language incomprehensible to
   anyone but themselves.
P. 265 footnote to middle letter: Rex went off and died by himself.
re: Abbott Thayer: The newly reopened Freer Gallery on the Mall in Washing-
   ton, D.C. contains an “Abbott Thayer” room.