

1878

**Appleton, T. G.**

Susan Hale

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To Mr. T. G. Appleton.

Washington, May 17, 1878.

Dear Mr. Appleton,

I am having a delicious visit, and think Washington the most entertaining place. Mrs. Edmunds, my hostess, is devoted to giving me pleasure, and her husband the Senator is a very agreeable and much respected man. They have lived here so long that they know exactly how best to show the Lions of the Capital.

The country is beautiful now, like midsummer, and we drive constantly, making expeditions out of town to Mount Vernon, Arlington, the Soldiers' Home, etc., all of which are looking their loveliest in bowers of green. The Capitol rises majestic from every point of view, and makes the key-note of the scene. I have made several sketches, and shall get more, if the weather improves,--but at present it does not match the summer aspect it wears; for it is as cold as Greenland, and rains half the time.

When it rains we occupy ourselves by going to the Capitol, which I find absorbingly interesting,--and every day threatening to be more so, if the Democrats succeed in pushing their investigations. The sessions in the house are tumultuous but good natured, and I enjoy watching them.

Yesterday I went to the funeral of Professor Henry, a good chance to see all the important people in Washington, because they had to be there officially. There was first a brief discourse, in parts impressive, & partly in bad taste:--after that the coffin heaped with masses of white flowers was born aloft by Marines down the broad aisle, and then followed the President and vice President, the Supreme Court, the diplomats, etc., etc., just as if they were all paraded in order for my especial benefit. # # # #

Mr. Corcoran came to see me. He is very active and agreeable, even at 80, and remembers my father and mother.

I have seen lots of interesting people, too numerous to mention;--and must admit that Boston is not exactly the Hub of the Universe, though a very good place to hail from.

Please write. I want to hear if you have had any weather suitable for the Alice. Colonel Winthrop is going to take me in his boat, to row on the Potomac, if it ever stops raining.

Truly yours,  
Susan Hale.

To Mr. T. G. Appleton.

Mount Desert!  
July 22, 1875.

Dear Mr. Appleton,

What delight it was to find your letter one day recently when I came up to town. I had been staying in Worcester; and in the train was thinking rather gloomily how long it was since I had heard from you & that the spell of correspondence was broken. At that moment your envelope was lying on the ledge of my book-case, in a pile of less important ones. And then, you think of coming home. Do more than think of it, come. I'm sure Mr. Longfellow wants you. So do other people. I am to be at Nahant in September, staying with Mrs. Agassiz, at the invitation of Liza Felton who is one of my pupils, and strange to say is fond of me. Would it not be "nice" if you were then at Nahant!

As you said you had not seen yet "the Sheaf of Papers" I directed Niles to send you a copy at once, through Baring's, a thing he should have done of his own impulse, I think. I also ordered you a copy of the "Daily" with your Poet's lovely poem at Bowdoin. Of course you have seen it otherwise, but perhaps not so soon. Everybody is enchanted with it, and with the Occasion, which seems to have been one of just the right effusion.

By your description, I can see the Mackintosh menage, the pictures, the flowers, the people, even the Butler, of whom I should be afraid.

Here I am,--completely out of my element, (if a "Bohemian" as you have called me, has any) in this ridiculous Watering-place. It is not so ridiculous as all of them; there is enough Boston to maintain a certain Moral and Domestic Tone, and to keep the toilettes down to flannel & short petticoats. But there is a good deal of trimming on the flannel, and the skirts are flounced.

An outdoors life however, and the hills and ocean are themselves; which is praise enough. There is much sailing, among pretty islands and ever varying light and shadows, and there are plenty of boats for rowing with stalwart natives at the oar. The George Hales, Seavers, Reveres, plenty of Minot and a good deal of Weld, Linzees and Reveres etc., etc., maintain the credit of our Hub, against Ogdens and Shermans from New York, and Riche and lots of others from Philadelphia. It is very good for our Boston "set" to mingle with these other citizens, if they only gain an additional burr to their Rs by it;--let us hope the benefit is mutual.

I should never be here, but that some impetuous water-colour pupils of last winter "hankered after" drawing out-doors; and we have organized an outdoors sketching-class which is interesting----and lucrative, more or less. Six or eight of us charge resolutely upon Nature every morning after breakfast, armed to the teeth with umbrellas, drawing-boards and water bottles. I think we shall bring Her down, at last;--that is if there is any virtue in Perseverance. I will tell you a secret however, Mt. Desert is not a good place for sketching. It is rather grand after its fashion, and broad and open, and agreeable to the eye; but I should call it geographical rather than picturesque. There are a great many "points of Interest" as the guide-books say, good to go to, to admire, and to have seen;--but few "bits" for the artists,--happy

to be confided to precarious expresses,--let us hope they will turn up!--and we all went on board,--and reached here after a delicious and rapid run. Mr. T. G. and Nathan landed with me, and I showed them the spot, Hunt's studio, etc., with all of which they were much delighted; the mealers were just swarming in to dinner, so I ate mine in my hat. Miss K is in bed with a sore throat caught in the bad rainy weather of last week. The world and his wife, or rather his spinster sister, seem to be here. Ann Caroline! with the Carroll Everetts, Isabella James's daughter & so forth and so on, but I haven't seen the quarter of them, for I have retreated to my corner, and into Miss K's slippers until my trunks shall arrive. # # # # # # #

I shall stick it out here as long as it seems lucrative. The corner is so cozy that I may bear it very well, and all nature looks lovely, but ugh! the squirming mass of beings.

Write lots.

Yrs,  
Suse.

Glad you are in  
such a nice place.

To Mr. T. G. Appleton

Madrid, May 19, 1882.

Dear Mr. Appleton:

We had a delightful voyage, and I wished for you many a time, to enjoy the amusing variety of nationalities, and the excellent menu, which made our dinners every day prolonged and agreeable. There was a Pole on board who talked 14 languages, all fluently, and all very badly. There were Americans who talked no language but their own, a Corsican from Ajaccio,--with his wife from Louisville,--and at a table by themselves a large party of Peruvians, who are coming away to Spain till their war is over, leaving the bravest, apparently of their number, to fight it out, and forward funds. They were interesting people with all the elegant politeness of Castile;--and one of them gave me a Spanish lesson every morning before dejeuner. But I can't help thinking he and his family will feel bad when they get here, for their accent and speech was utterly different to that we now hear in the streets.

But the flower of the ship was the Captain, a most courteous charming Frenchman, who felt himself a host at the head of the table. He talked a very little English,--but was most agreeable in his own tongue, and fired French Calembours all down the table at the Old Pole who sate at the other end.

It was all most amusing; but we all had quite enough of it & were glad to be steaming up the Garonne on Friday morning, 12 days after leaving N. Y. Here the green midsummer landscape began to remind us of Cesar de Cock, with here and there a Corot. Bordeaux bends around the river very gracefully. On the Quai stood Edward E. and Nelly, and we rushed into their arms! Wasn't that splendid? We stayed a day or two at Bordeaux to get off our sea-legs,--it is delightfully French and Southern, the sailors wear Berets and ceintures. Then we came on into Spain, stopping at Bayonne, and Burgos, and now at Madrid but we shall make our long stay here later, after the Southern trip, for fear of being too hot la-bas, later. Burgos was delightfully Spanish, and not so dirty as Lathrop says, in his Harper Article, which is altogether too Bostonian and critical. The Burgos Cathedral is a beauty. Light and graceful, and full of cheerfulness, like all these Southern things. We have immense fun struggling with the Spanish language. Maids, waiters, tram-via conductors are very good-natured about understanding, and we do wonders. 'Tis an easy language, only we can't always think of the right word.

Today it is a festa, the Museo Reale is shut; so we leave the pictures for our return, which is very well, for our heads are spinning after a night in the train. It is the great drawback, that we must travel at night, no way to avoid it, for all the trains are so arranged. But the wagons are as good as on English Railways. The Basque country was lovely, all green and summer-like, what a contrast to the day I left home, when it was snowing,--but near Madrid, it is dreary, like New Hampshire with the soil washed off, and the bare stones left.

Mr. Lowell advised Edward not to take the steamer to Lisbon, & so we may not see the Queen Hensla after all--but perhaps we may return that way. # # # I shall write you more about Madrid when I have been here longer. We have no letters yet to speak of-- I hope you will write lots. With love to Nathan and ever so much for yourself, always

Yrs, Susan.