A Letter from Sarah Orne Jewett to Mary Jewett

[Nd. But probably circa August, 1894. SOJ attended spas in Richfield Springs, New York in August and December of 1886, with Mary in 1893, and alone in August 1894] (in sleeve marked C-9)
[See also Letter F-4 from Richfield Springs dated August 20, 1894]

Dear Mamie [Marrie ??],

You will be pleased to hear from your sister at Bagg’s Hotel.¹ She is now a basking there in a best room, but without her kind and affectionate partner of last year. It seems to me that the house is better kept, but it occurred to me while I was eating my supper that I was in a better frame myself, but pretty tired after a long days travel. While I was trying to make my plans a few days ago I found it was going to be hard to get here and I meant to go right down to New York yesterday afternoon and spend last night and all today with the Howes [?] at the Brevoort² and then come up to Richfield³ that way through New York where I have never been and get there early and without changes. It was, under the circumstances, such a noble plan and I wished to see them again so much that I fell to pieces with disappointment when I found that I couldn’t do it. It was so far to Cummington⁴ that we didn’t get home until sunset: and then I thought that we were going to start early and drive to one station when I found that it would be altogether more convenient to go with the Warners⁵ to another. and I hadn’t spoken about today though I had laughed about meaning to do it (go to N. Y. thinking that we were only a little way from Cummington & could get back in time.[)] We had a lovely evening with music last night and I could hardly get away as it was! Altogether I suppose it was all as it ought to have been, but it would have been such fun to surprise Alice’ and have a nice drive to the Park with her, and then a new little journey. It would all have made hardly any more railroading and have been in two pieces – Sister likes to be murnful [mournful ?] to a sympathetic Sister. – but I must tell you what a funny time we had today. I ran down and said goodbye to Annie Lord – but the old gentleman

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¹ Almost certainly the Bagg’s Hotel in Utica, New York – a well-known stopping spot for dignitaries of the day.
² George and Alice Greenwood Howe
³ The Brevoort was a popular hotel in NYC in the late 1800’s.
⁴ From 1820 on the medicinal properties of the mineral springs in Richfield Springs, NY drew distant travelers. For SOJ’s visits in 1886, 1893, and 1894 see Blanchad’s SOJ, pp. 161, 265, and 270 and Library of America’s SOJ, “Chronology,” p. 922: “1886 ...Travels in August and December to Richfield Springs, spa in New York State (goes there frequently to help ease her rheumatism).” She was accompanied by Mary in September of 1893 (Blanchard p. 265), but went alone in August of 1894 – when Celia Thaxter died (Blanchard, pp. 269-270). See also Letter F-4, August 20, 1894.
⁵ Cummington, MA – home of William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878).
⁶ Charles Dudley Warner and his wife, Susan. SOJ became a close friend of the Warners through AF, and Sarah and Annie visited them at their home in Hartford on occasion. There they met Harriet Beecher Stowe – neighbor of the Warners. Charles Dudley Warner was the editor of The Hartford Courant and co-authored The Gilded Age with Mark Twain. The KLB SOJ collection has a presentation copy of CDW’s The Golden House described as follows: “A presentation copy to Sarah Orne Jewett inscribed in ink on the ffep: “Sarah Orne Jewett/ from/ Chas. Dudley Warner/ Dec. 1894” SOJ was a good friend of the Warners, and many visits were exchanged between their house in Hartford (another literary Mecca) and the houses on Charles Street and in South Brewick. SOJ was visiting the Warners in Hartford in early December, 1894 -- and no doubt she received this newly published novel at that time (See Frost, Vol VI, p. 94). Charles Dudley Warner's relation to SOJ was long standing and supportive -- and he much encouraged her to write "The Tory Lover." His primary claim to a spot in the literary foothills of the Great American Pantheon is his collaboration with Samuel Clemens on "The Gilded Age." His neighbors in Hartford included Clemens and Harriet Beecher Stowe.”
⁷ Alice Howe in NYC – Central Park.
wasn’t up and we started and drove the Warners & I twelve miles down to South Deerfield station and there
were trains coming

[4]

and going and we made for the wrong one and after it went out suddenly we found that the right one was
standing’ the other side and was all ready to go. and Charlie and I caught up our things and cut and couldn’t see
Mrs. Warner anywhere and he even ran back but the brakeman hustled us and we thought she must be on the
train and got on to find she wasn’t!! and were much flustered but he got a telegram and sent one at the next
station or so – and I left him waiting at Springfield. We had half an hour or so and sat on high stools at the
lunch counter and comforted ourselves as best we could. Charlie fell [felt ?] to eat a great California pear and
urged one upon me

[5]

and I was in such a state not being capable of accommodating so large a pear as some persons. He had a cold
resulting from partaking in so many exercises in the open air, and was getting home to take a Turkish Bath so
that delay on Susy’s part was tenderly lamented. I think she must have stepped out to speak with Mrs. Denning
[,] the Ashfield Stage driver’s wife who is a great whip and factotum on occasion for the Nortons & so drove us
down. It is a lovely country up among those hill towns – the air so delicious – and the sleeping car [.] though it
was the nicest I ever saw [.] seemed stuffy afterward. I have got a room in the up street

[6]

corner of the Hotel – nicer than those we had it seems to me though not quite so spacious. and you hear a good
deal of electric cars. I shall have to rise for the 6:30 train or else stay until afternoon. This is “quite a letter” –
but you may not get its like after I get to Richfield! One of those big hand organs is performing Sweet Marie in
a way that would affect T. Stubby considerable. I must draw to a close on account of having no more paper
and being so tired that I shall soon go to bed it being gone of eight o’clock. How nice it is about Susy’s visit. Do
see if she has all she wants to be pretty and comfortable going. Good night from a fond and dear Sister – I
expect Sister Carrie to find points in this letter. Oh if she had only seen the Bryant pies with me!

[Cross-written on p. 1]

You don’t know what a dear caretaking, affectionate girl Sally Norton is! I came away so fond of her. She is
such a beautiful girl especially when she is playing her violin standing in the floor[.] Burne Jones painted her
you know [.] one of his lovely pictures.

[Cross-written on p. 2]

Mr. Norton made a great bonfire on his hill last night above the house. He goes up in his pasture and chops for
exercise & fun and had gathered this great heap of

[Cross-written on p. 3]

brush. Such a burnfire! Do give my love to John [.] Hows Princess?

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8 The family of Charles Eliot Norton, including Sarah (Sally – born in 1864) – a long-time favorite of SOJ’s.
According to Blanchard (p.107) SOJ met the family in the early 70’s. The Norton’s then spent time in Europe –
where Edward Burne Jones must have painted Sally (see below) – and where Mrs. Norton died in 1872. Sally
became quite an accomplished cellist. Charles Eliot Norton is often cited as bringing the concept of a liberal
arts curriculum into the American higher education through his long tenure as an enormously popular professor
at Harvard. See the description by KLB of the Longfellow/Browning book in the TM Collection for more on
Norton.

9 Princess was SOJ’s horse.