

Worcester, Nov. 30, 1856.

(Thanksgiving Day)

Dear Mrs. Chapman

Pray do not think me ungrateful for your kind note because I have not answered it instantly; I did not wish to write very hastily or carelessly & have waited from day to day in hopes to do something better than this; but each day has been frittered away in varied cares & excitements; & as you say yourself, it is difficult to write history & to live history at the same time.

You are aware that the Burns case, or its consequences, cannot yet be regarded as over. Our trials on the State process have been constantly delayed by the pressure of cases under the liquor law (which by statute take precedence of all others) - & as those cases do not diminish, the District Attorney almost despairs of ever reaching ours, & would gladly throw them up, if he with propriety could do so. The United States processes are now just being announced, in fact and they have yet been held public, & I do not yet know whether I shall come in for a share of these or not. We are all glad that Theo. Parker shall be indicted, it must result in a triumph to him in any event, but it is almost to suppose that a Mass. Jury will find him guilty. I think this is no doubt the understanding of some on the Grand Jury who voted to find a bill against him - they knew that to have Mr. Core indicted & were not unwilling that the Antislavery excitement should be kept up, in this way.

You have seen in the Liberator the account  
of the Paterson riot in this city - it was really a  
very remarkable affair - as genuine, <sup>a</sup> popular exhibition  
as the meeting of Haynan by the London brewers.  
And there was a sort of dramatic perfection about  
this; the entire disappearance of Paterson's own friends  
leaving him to be literally & abjectly saved by abductees;  
- the fortunate presence of just the right persons -  
Messrs. Hoar, Foster, Stone & myself - I mean  
the right persons dramatically speaking; this joined  
with the real narrow escape of the man & the  
through frightening of one who had frightened so  
many: - all these gave a tinge of romance to the  
whole thing, such as was perhaps never surpassed. It  
can be worked up better than was ever the Paterson  
mob by some future Scott. You cannot conceive how  
frightened the poor wretch was - our City Marshal  
could not induce him to take the cars anywhere  
between here & Boston - he had to drive him all the  
way, not unwilling; he wd. scarcely even allow the  
horses to be changed at Framingham, he finally got  
out in a bye-place, ~~concealed~~ concealed himself in the  
woods & could not be found for an hour. He had not  
even enter Boston till after night-fall & wd. not go  
to his own home then, lest he should be waylaid - but  
went to an obscure hotel!! If Worcester frightens  
ex-kidnappers thus, you may imagine how it wd. be  
with those who shall pursue the profession.

I thought you wd. like to hear these  
things, & have for the immediate delight of yr. note.  
I was a little frightened by it, fearing lest you  
give me credit for larger plans than I've yet  
formed. The fact is that I wd. take a dozen  
lives to do all the things I've vaguely dreamed of  
doing, & I am not sure even of one. I am  
rather glad to have the whole Atlantic between

and the great European libraries - my brain could not bear a much heavier neighborhood, I fear.

I do believe unequivocally that there are several points of view from which all history is beginning to be seen in a new light & that in this new light it must be re-written; - & one of these, perhaps as yet the most important, is the position taken by the Women's Rights advocates. But to undertake now to prepare this revised sketch - what would be needless - it can only be done in fragments.

[Dec. 7. There occurs a week's interval, during which I have been arraigned before the U.S. Court & held for trial in shack - which will probably put an end to the State process, & come nearer to a trial for High Treason "which you know hath always been considered the crime of a gentleman". To continue; -]

The speciality to which I should like to devote myself for a year or two, had I time would be a history of women in Italy - or more modestly - a literary history of Italian women - from the time of the revival of letters downward - beginning that is, with Proserpina de Rossi & Vittoria Colonna & ending with the last female professor Clotilde Tassoni & Maria Dalle-Donne. A late writer in the Westminster (a well read man too) writes over these women as forgotten celebrities - but they ought not to be so. Mrs. Dale's too bulky book has drawn on the Italian sources & told more about them than any one else. But the late Mrs. Dale has also written slightly upon it in the U.S. - she is a good explorer, but in fact about the only female student I know in America - but she wants literary talent & cannot use well what she obtains.

The authorities for these matters are the Italian literary histories, Tiraboschi, Ginzburg, &c. - the Biographie

Unlikely - several Italian collections of female  
biography & that is all. I think there must be  
French or German compilations or sayings dealing  
on this subject - corresponding to Bonini's Mlle de  
Longueville & such books - but know of none.

There are French books on the Provinces & Troubadours  
I know - but my plan would hardly go back so far.

One thing important to this, is to consult  
the transactions of learned societies, especially that of  
Bologna; the Italian academies having been quite  
a sphere for women. These may be found, I believe  
at the Astor Library, in N.Y., but perhaps else,  
& I may yet be able to consult them there.

I find it quite hard even to obtain authorities as  
to the academiical forms & ceremonies, under which  
women have honored & crowned. I believe the two  
authorities are Bullarius (De Bonlay) de Univ. Paris  
- since & a more modern book by Berrier. - neither  
of which I can here obtain. Nor can I procure the  
standard work on learned academies by Jarckius.

To you see the disadvantages of students who undertake  
to explore a new vein in this country, even if they  
were less overwhelmed with other employment than  
am. But I wish you would undertake it.

I am determined however to write at least  
a lecture or essay (for Putnam's allegoria) on this  
subject - & if you can help me to authorities (with  
the titles or the books) I shall be very grateful -  
if you will collect anything that seems to you ~~interesting~~  
rare & valuable in the way of information, & give  
me hereafter the use of your MSS. it would be  
valuable. I forgot to mention one book, which I  
sent out for, but found it cost beyond my means  
Le Roy de Lincy - de Femmes celebres, I have  
not the exact title at hand. I shall like to know  
what sort of a book that is, & whether I had  
better get it, after all, when I can afford it.

20/11/54

I thank you much for Mr. Griffin's note & am glad to find so learned a man taking up the cause of woman in the face of such a counter-revolutionist (on this point) as Comte, who cordly asserts it as the tendency of all true ~~the~~ social progress to confine woman more exclusively to domestic life.

Dec. 15. Another delay - & I ~~now~~ write from the vicinity of Bangor, where I am lecturing this week. I ~~have~~ have carried this note about with me, hoping to finish it. I hope that you will be able to get from it some idea of my plans & purposes, & I must leave it to your own judgment how far you can assist me.

One of the most important services that could be rendered to the Woman's Rights movement in this country would be either a translation into French of one of our tracts, or a notice of the same in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. The best you know what a step is gained for anything undertaken in this country, if an echo can be heard from across the water. The best adapted for this would be Theo. Parker's sermon, by woman & her wishes & Mrs. Stanton's admirable Appeal to the N.Y. Legislature. The two first of these have been reprinted by Chapman in London.

Lucy Stone with her usual energy has had a series of five tracts stereotyped, & has also a plan for prize stones, & has raised money for these. Lucy is the Green Gas all in this matter, & delights the whole country for Maine to Kentucky - she is a household word down here on the Knobsdot, after one visit a year ago. You have no idea of the stigmata & poise which have been developed in her; she is one of the great providences in history.

I must not forget to thank you for Mr. Griffin's little note, though he attributes it to too vast a design. ~~It~~ Also I have seen (thru your interest) some French newspapers with his articles on the Burns affair &c. I have also his *Philosophie d' XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* - & shall I confess that I was disappointed in it

It is learned, but seemed to me rather  
Confused in its order, nor did I like its philosophy  
- still I shd. like to know him. I was  
pleas'd with his America hypothesis, & a little  
amused at the way W.B. Greene had just daggled  
him & then assaured him with Greenian in  
political & theological matters. The Christian  
Baptists well know themselves - But I  
have seriously thought of translating the reports  
of America travels, for some of our periodicals -  
on the echo policy affair - I may do it yet.  
Please say so when you write to Mr. Griffin or to  
him - with my compliments & thanks.

I know this note will disappoint  
you, dear Mrs. Chapman, but I cannot help it;  
I am afraid that my plan of literary work was  
large enough & definite enough to mark out  
more precisely what I want of you. But I  
cannot make it to now; - though I still hope  
to hear from you somehow. And I hope we  
shall not always be deprived of you in this  
Country where you are so important. Come quickly  
or we may have civil war before you arrive &  
test your non-existence still farther. Perhaps  
it would go when Mrs. Grinke's has gone.

With kind & respectful regards to your  
household I am yours cordially  
J.W. Higginson



Ms. A. 9. 2. 28. 34