

8-5-1895

Letter from Harriet Prescott Spofford,  
Newburyport, Massachusetts, to Anne Whitney,  
Shelburne, New Hampshire, 1895 August 5

Harriet Prescott Spofford

Wellesley College Archives

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#### Recommended Citation

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J. or 1.

Miss Anne Whitney,  
The Knoll,

Shelburne

New Hampshire.





which were dreary, — and it was not  
easy to keep the balance of one's  
thought, — in ways which it is easier  
to tell of than to write of. Death  
is always a little *Sensational*, — or  
I should say, it often is. I have  
seen people die when the Spirit seemed  
to soar out of them, — but when one  
is like an automaton knocked about  
convulsively for hours I know you  
lose sight of the possibility of spirit.  
So altogether it has not been a  
lovely summer, — but I am all  
right now, — I have found my  
place in the universe again, &  
& speak, — from little place,

Newburyport, Mass.  
Aug. 5<sup>th</sup> [1895]

My Dearest One:

I am so glad to  
hear from you, & know you are in  
the land of the living, — at least  
not that, but well & in the mountains.  
And I am so sorry that I am not  
going to be able to go to you. I had  
half meant to write & tell you  
that my plans had been changed for  
me, — but then thought I had best  
wait till the King <sup>(Queen)</sup> threw his hands  
:harding. Well, you can't believe  
how great a disappointment it is

to me, — for it is the very chiefest  
pleasure of the whole winter year.  
It is no use to enumerate the  
reasons, they are too many! Friends  
have & to be had through all  
August & September, — an old Aunt  
of 80, who has signified her fond  
pleasure to come, Fanny's estate  
to be settled, & I needed at  
hand, & the Dentist, most of all  
in weight, & John knows how  
many more bad & sufficient back-  
-saws chains about my feet. It  
is too bad, for me, — I find myself

prizing myself for feeling the joy,  
but needs must. The fact is I  
have really felt the need of some  
high communion, — such as I have  
when I see you & Adeline. You  
must not laugh at me, — if the  
moon were conscious of its light we  
should not have the whole of it. But  
I feel exceedingly tired & depressed  
with Fanny's illness, — although she  
suffered but little, — but the presence  
of impending death in those few  
days was hard, — & there were  
many attending circumstances

gates of heaven be wide open," &  
they were his last words, - & it is  
she was fully conscious to the last  
minute. Directly after that Jimmy  
was taken ill, - & three weeks  
after Jimmy died Mr. Hopkins  
died. So you see where the path  
has led this Summer.

Well, good by, my dear ones, - my  
real strong angels, - I shall see  
you any way in the Fall, - &  
till then I always I am your  
loving and own Hal.

but when I go popping, without a door  
into the fourth dimension, I am  
lost. I dare say this seems ab-  
:surd to you & A. A. - you are always  
poised & oriented, - but I am no  
better than a bit of paper on the  
wind. I always used to tell  
Dick that I was papilionaceous,  
- of the butterfly tribe, touch it go,  
- perhaps I may get as high as  
a bird, as we go on.  
I have thought so much of you &  
my dear A. A., all Summer, -  
hardly a day that I am not  
with you more or less in fancy,

wondering what you or Sarg, I had  
you in. The thought of you is a  
great seal to me.

I went on in May to Washington,  
where they thought Abby Dodge was  
dying, - Mrs. Blaine wrote to me to  
petition to come & finish the book  
for which publishers & printers were  
waiting that I had to go. She  
had brought her book nearly to com-  
-pletion & the materials were all  
there, - & it seems cruel that  
she was not to finish it. But  
she lay apparently dying, & had  
expressed the wish that I should do

it, & of course there was nothing  
else to do, - although personally I  
hated to do it, - not being prepared  
for it, & unaccustomed to do it. I  
came home to find Mrs. Blaine's  
dying, - I had left her just a  
little ill, - nothing that we thought  
anything of. But the day after  
I returned, she suddenly collapsed,  
& died at sunrise. She had the  
over grip, - was full of a contented  
quiet. "Don't try to call me  
back," she said, when they were  
trying to revive her, - "Let the