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ANNIE FIELDS
and
THE GIFT OF SYMPATHY

by

Norma Haft Mandel

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of
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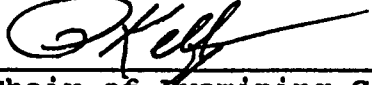
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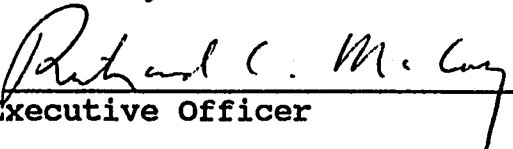
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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation to two generations of my family:

To my parents, Hannah and William Haft, who would have said: "We knew you could do it!"

And to my grandchildren: Claire and Julia Mandel-Folly, Hannah and Timothy Mandel, and Glenn Mandel, who I know will inherit our family's gift of sympathy.

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Preface

Sitting still in her own library was only one of the things Annie Fields *did*; and almost all the others required energy, initiative, decisiveness, and organizational skill. Annie Fields was an efficient manager, and she managed her hostessing as well as she did everything else in her life. At the same time, the dominant quality in her personality, the power behind the activism...was a lively sympathetic engagement with other people.

(Blanchard 125-26)

Annie Adams Fields, the subject of my dissertation, was a literary hostess, editor, poet, diarist, and philanthropist. Although historically she has been undervalued, often described only as the wife of publisher James T. Fields, she was a complex and talented woman who played an important role in the social, political, and literary changes that occurred during her adult lifetime.

Annie Fields contributed to the world of letters through her encouragement of young writers, and to the field of social reform through her work in a variety of philanthropies. As her husband's editorial assistant and confidant, she affected several generations of authors, many of whom became members of the various literary circles which developed with her at their core. Not only did she influence these writers, she engendered feelings of connection and empathy among them. As the co-founder of the Associated Charities of Boston, she helped to effect changes

which resulted in what today would be called community services. She was successful in her many endeavors because of her intelligence, her education, her marriage, and her gift of sympathy.

This concept of a gift of sympathy, the ability to give and receive in an empathetic relationship, is central to my examination of the life of Annie Fields. It is the lens through which her role in the nineteenth-century literary and philanthropic circles of Boston is enlarged and clarified. The gift of sympathy explains Annie's skill in making her home at 148 Charles Street an integral part of her husband's success as a publisher; it elucidates her friendships with the leading authors of the century and illuminates her relationships with the wide variety of men and women who constituted her circles of friends. Gradually her gift of sympathy touched even more people as she became a leader in emerging educational, social, and philanthropic reforms. Her ability to empathize did not diminish as she grew older, so that, until the end of her life, she was surrounded by loving friends.

An appraisal of Annie Fields' life is relevant today because there is a renewed interest not only in writers but in their literary circles, their publishers, and their influence--in other words, their milieu. Annie Fields is an ideal subject because she lived at the very center of Boston's literary and social world. Moreover, she lived

during a crucial period in which the definitions of women, work, education, philanthropy, sex, race, and class were changing. Her career is one example of how the nineteenth-century "Angel in the House" evolved into the turn of the century "New Woman."

Although I am interested in Annie Fields as a catalyst, not a writer, her memoirs of Longfellow, Holmes, Stowe, Thaxter, and other nineteenth-century authors provide lasting descriptions of these authors thanks to her intimate knowledge of their lives. In her life and in her diaries, letters, and books, Annie Fields leaves a valuable legacy for literary and social historians.

Willa Cather often refers to Sarah Orne Jewett's advice to write about "the thing that teases the mind over and over for years" (Not Over Forty 76). Annie Fields has indeed "teased my mind" for a long time; in the process of writing this dissertation I have realized that I feel a personal identification with her; I admire her intelligence, her grace, her ability to maintain her privacy in a very public life, and most of all her gift of sympathy. My study of her life will reveal not only the way that gift of sympathy influenced and enriched the lives of many nineteenth-century women and men but also provided the foundation for her own fulfilling life.

Annie Adams Fields

In Sarah Orne Jewett's The Country of the Pointed Firs, Mrs. Todd asks "I wonder who she was before she was married?" (91). Who Annie Fields was before she married is important to an understanding of the woman she became.

Ann West Adams was born in Boston on June 6, 1834, the sixth of seven children (two of whom died in infancy) of Dr. Zabdiel Boylston Adams and Sarah May Holland. Her father was an eighth-generation descendant of Henry Adams of Braintree, related to presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams and to the Boylstons, a wealthy Boston merchant family. Annie's father and older brother were physicians, and both were named after Dr. Zabdiel Boylston, who in 1721 developed an inoculation for smallpox (Morison, 1: 203). William Tryon describes Annie's father as "widely respected, obviously well-to-do, much interested in public education, and one of the best and most renowned physicians in Boston" (210). Dr. Adams died shortly after Annie's marriage, and following her father's death, Annie appears to have become the family caretaker.¹

Annie's mother's family, the Mays, were early colonists who later became noted social reformers and abolitionists. Sarah Adams was a distant cousin of Louisa May Alcott's mother Abba. Very little is known about Mrs. Adams, as she appears to have avoided any kind of public life. Although Annie seldom mentions her in her diaries, she frequently

visited with her after her marriage and often wrote to her when she was away. She grieved deeply when her mother died in 1877.

Like most proper Bostonians of the time, Annie's family was Unitarian. They attended the Federal Street Church where the minister, the Reverend Ezra Stiles Gannett, had been the pastor when Margaret Fuller attended the church twenty years earlier. Like Timothy Fuller, Dr. Adams believed in a sound education for girls. Annie was educated first at a school near home and later at George Emerson's School for Young Ladies, which had been founded in 1823 by a group of concerned fathers to provide classical secondary education for their daughters. Emerson (cousin of Ralph Waldo and much admired by Elizabeth Peabody) stressed moral and religious principles as well as Latin, the romance languages, history, arithmetic, and geography. In addition to believing that girls should have a well-rounded education, he also advocated that adult women play active roles in their communities.

Except for her education at Emerson's School, little is known of Annie's childhood. Information about her siblings is also sketchy. Her sister Sarah Holland Adams, eleven years older than Annie, was crippled throughout her life. She was a German scholar who lived for many years in Weimar, Germany, where she gained a reputation as a translator of the philosopher Hermann Grimm. Elizabeth Adams (Lissie) was

nine years older than Annie and appears to have been the family rebel. She studied art at the Boston Museum, lived in Italy where she spent some time as a copyist and some as a painter, and eventually moved to Baltimore where she lived with a friend, Miss Burnap, the daughter of a local minister. Judith Roman writes that "The two women built a home in Baltimore, where Lissie taught art to young women, performed charity work, and helped found the Decorative Art society, the Women's Literary Club, and the Arundel Club" (6). There are only a few references in Annie's diaries to her other sister, Louisa Beal, and to her brother Boylston, although she appears to have been fond of their children, particularly Boylston's son, who was a physician. Annie bequeathed her home in Manchester to him.

On November 15, 1854, when she was twenty years old, Annie married James T. Fields. At the time of their marriage Fields, who was thirty-seven, was the junior partner in Ticknor and Fields and the most renowned publisher in America. Clients of his publishing firm, founded in 1840, included not only major American authors and poets such as Hawthorne, Whittier, and Longfellow, but British writers as well, among them Tennyson, Thackeray, Dickens, and Carlyle.

Annie and James were married for twenty-seven years before his death in 1881. During these years, they shared an extraordinary degree of their time. While giving lip

service to the tradition of subordinate roles for wives in nineteenth-century marriages, they, in fact, had a marriage which could be considered a partnership. James relied upon Annie's editorial judgment, encouraged her to write, and supported her civic and charitable interests. Believing that her primary responsibility was to make her home a haven for the authors her husband represented, Annie became the ideal hostess, or what today would be called an executive wife.² As Judith Roman observes, the role Annie played in her marriage was "a rarity in the nineteenth century because of the separate spheres in which middle-class husbands and wives generally lived" (23).

Shortly after their marriage, Annie and James moved into a home at 148 Charles Street in Boston. It was secured through the generosity of George Ticknor, who arranged for the firm to buy the house and then lease it to them. It was there that Annie's fame as a hostess was established as her celebrated breakfasts and dinner parties became the center of the social life of Boston's literati. Moreover, according to Joan Hedrick: "It was the one place that women writers, excluded from the network of male clubs, could meet on an equal footing with male writers and publishers" (294).

May Sarton's observation that "Place as well as person was instrumental" (174) is particularly relevant to Annie Fields' entry into the world of publishing. As critics from Van Wyck Brooks to Laurence Buell have attested, living in

Boston in the nineteenth century was an extraordinary experience, particularly for those fortunate enough to be included in the many intellectual circles which existed at that time. William Dean Howells, James Fields' successor as editor of the Atlantic, summed up the awe of the young writer when he explained: "The literary theories we accepted were New England theories, the criticism we valued was New England criticism, or, more strictly speaking, Boston theories, Boston criticism" (Literary Friends and Acquaintance 115). It is easy to understand his enthusiasm; Boston and its environs had been home to America's most famous authors: Nathaniel Hawthorne, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau. Moreover, as Richard Brodhead suggests: "The Boston Howells visited, as he fully recognizes, was the center from which the new American literary high culture was being fashioned and spread" (470). The cultural élite of Boston were sophisticated, worldly, and well educated men and women who not only prized arts and letters, but felt obliged to try to impose a sense of their values throughout the country.³ They were instrumental in the advancement of public education, the administration of libraries, and the development of liberal arts colleges. They also held editorial control of popular magazines, such as Harper's, Scribner's, and, of course, the Atlantic Monthly. This influential magazine, founded in 1857 by Boston's leading

authors and intellectuals, was purchased by Ticknor and Fields in 1859.⁴ Thomas Wentworth Higginson relates that the writers who founded the magazine:

were teachers, educators, and bringers of the light with a deep and affectionate feeling of obligation towards the young republic their fathers had brought into being. That New England was appointed to guide the nation, to civilize it, to humanize it, none of them doubted. (167)

James Fields was editor of the Atlantic from 1861 to 1871, when its contributors included Oliver Wendell Holmes, Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Stowe, and many other prominent authors.⁵ Annie Fields entered this world of culture and social responsibility with ease, thanks to her family background, her marriage, and her own special abilities. Sarah Orne Jewett, in her depiction of Mrs. Blackett, renders a memorable description of Annie in her role as a hostess:

Her hospitality was something exquisite; she had the gift which so many women lack, of being able to make themselves and their houses belong entirely to a guest's pleasure,--that charming surrender for the moment of themselves and whatever belongs to them, so that they make a part of one's own life that can never be forgotten.

(Jewett, Pointed Firs 46)

In Annie's Guest Album, which she bequeathed to the Pierpont Morgan Library, there are almost a hundred original manuscripts of the most famous poems written in the nineteenth century.⁶ These poems were presented to Annie

and James by their authors; they are a testimony to the admiration of the visitors to 148 Charles Street. The list of guests in the album reads like a Who's Who of nineteenth-century British and American writers. These poets and authors were more than casual acquaintances; they were devoted friends who comprised Annie and James Fields' literary circles. Many of them left reminiscences of Annie, praising her beauty, intelligence and compassion.

In her home Annie Fields recreated the ambiance of an earlier age. The young Willa Cather, the urbane Henry James and the peripatetic Charles Dickens all recorded how 148 Charles Street was, for them, a link with the past, a symbol of refinement and culture. For Henry James in particular, this association with tradition was significant. He had met Annie in 1864 when, according to Leon Edel, "Mrs. Fields had welcomed him as a precocious young man of letters to her salon in Charles Street" (470). When he returned to America in 1904, he called on her again and described his impressions in The American Scene:

Here, behind the effaced anonymous door,
was the little ark of the modern
deluge... here still the long drawing-
room that looks over the water and
toward the sunset with a seat for every
visiting shade...and relics and tokens
so thick on its walls as to make it
positively, in all the town, the votive
temple to memory. (244-5)

As Willa Cather, Harriet Prescott Spofford, and Eliabeth Shepley Sergeant agree in their memoirs of Annie, the charm

of 148 Charles Street and the vitality of its hostess never diminished.

In addition to entertaining, Annie traveled widely with James both in the eastern United States and abroad. They made extensive trips to Europe in 1859 and 1869, which were partly business and partly pleasure (although for James business was pleasure). During these trips Annie met James' many British and European literary friends and charmed them as completely as she did those in America. Their second trip was particularly memorable because of the time they spent with Charles Dickens, who died the year after their visit.

While much of Annie Fields' time was devoted to entertaining and travelling, this did not preclude the pursuit of her own literary ambitions. She aspired to be a poet, and, with her husband's encouragement, wrote constantly.⁷ Unfortunately, her literary ambitions often conflicted with other obligations. A diary entry illustrates her frustration with her lack of time for herself. In 1866 she wrote: "What a strange full life this is of ours--So many pleasant friends! Will the solitary days be rich for us when this is over--I love them best and yet I love my friends too" (2 Jan.). Moreover, Judith Roman believes that being the wife of an important publisher was a disadvantage for Annie's literary career and notes that "Everything published through Under the Olive in 1881

appeared anonymously, under a pseudonym, or was privately printed. Annie's discretion had to be impeccable, and she censored her creative impulses from fear of a misstep" (30).

Despite her effort, Annie's attempts at writing poetry resulted in works that were sentimental and insubstantial. She wrote hundreds of poems which she kept in her notebooks: poems for anniversaries, birthdays, weddings, poems about nature, the Civil War, and religious subjects. A few of these appeared anonymously in the Atlantic; later ones were also published in Harper's Monthly and Scribner's. Ode at the inauguration of the great organ in Boston, which had been recited by Charlotte Cushman, and The Children of Lebanon, a sentimental poem inspired by the Shakers, were privately printed in 1863 and 1872. In 1881, shortly before James' death, Houghton Mifflin published another book of poems, Under the Olive; later two more volumes of poetry appeared: The Singing Shepherd (1895) and Orpheus (1900). All her work was favorably, albeit unenthusiastically, reviewed. One critique of Under the Olive read: "it can hardly be said that the treatment of the themes is strong and vigorous enough to offset the great disadvantage under which the author labored in selecting hackneyed classical themes" (Roman 119).

Annie Fields' contribution to literature is also problematic. Like James, she was a better critic than writer; her style was overly romantic and nostalgic even for

Victorian standards. Immediately after James' death she wrote a biography of her husband entitled James T. Fields: Biographical Notes and Personal Sketches. While the writing of the book served as a kind of therapy for her because it allowed her to eulogize the man she loved so deeply, from a scholarly viewpoint it was flawed by sentimentality. Her only novel Asphodel, published by Ticknor and Fields in 1886, is an eminently forgettable melodrama about a widower who woos his daughter's governess, then deserts her for a teenager. At the end of the novel, the young bride develops tuberculosis, and the rejected governess goes mad! True to the conventions of the time, there is a note of hope, however, when the daughter falls in love with the son of old friends. Even judged by the criteria of the most sentimental of nineteenth-century novels, this plot has little to recommend it.

Eventually Annie did achieve literary success as a writer of memoirs because it was in this genre that she was able to utilize a lifetime of first-hand experiences. Between 1859 and 1877 she kept extensive journals and diaries; she turned to them again in the 90s at a time when most of her old circle had died. From these fifty-three blue books comes an intimate and intuitive appraisal of many of the most important literary figures of late nineteenth-century America.⁸ George Curry, who studied her diaries

extensively for his monograph Dickens and Annie Fields, has described them accurately:

Each of her notebooks covers two or three months, often with an entry or reference for each day, identified by date, though at times only the day of the week is given. Frequently the entries were written hastily, it appears, in pen and sometimes in pencil, the punctuation may be erratic or quite lacking, the work being done whenever her busy schedule permitted...Her style is artless and individualistic...and each page offers, typically, a mixture of the important and the trivial...(2-3)

These diaries were the primary sources for the articles and books which Annie began to publish in the years after James' death. In 1883 her first memoir, "Mr. Emerson in the Lecture Room," a paraphrase of Emerson's 1870 lectures at Harvard, was published in the Atlantic. Her next Emerson article, "Glimpses of Emerson" appeared in 1884, followed by essays about Charles Reade, Longfellow, Tennyson, and Whittier. They were published in the Century and Harper's as well as the Atlantic. Later Annie wrote biographies of Whittier, Hawthorne, Charles Dudley Warner, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. In her biographical writing she bases her interpretation of her subjects on stories she has heard from her husband and friends as well as her own intimate knowledge; as a result, her writing conveys a feeling of intimacy with her subjects. While she does not hesitate to mention her friends' flaws, she is generous in her praise and never resorts to gossip. Throughout these essays her

tone is elegiac and her style, conventional. Her biography of Hawthorne (1899) is an example of her best work; she culls from his letters and her personal experience the essence of his personality which she presents in an intelligent, readable form.

Annie also edited the letters of Celia Thaxter, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Sarah Orne Jewett. In each of these small books her gift of sympathy is evident in her description of her friendship with each of these women.

Most of Annie Fields' best work was collected in A Shelf of Old Books (1894) and Authors and Friends (1896). In A Shelf of Old Books, which Judith Roman characterizes as "a combination of literary anecdote, myth, and love of books and literary mementoes" (126), Annie describes the authors of the books in Leigh Hunt's library, which James Fields had purchased. The books, many of which were autographed first editions, now lined the shelves of the library on Charles Street. Annie, writing about Hunt and his friends Shelley and Keats, Milton, DeQuincey, Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott, and several lesser known British authors, not only describes the authors but adds personal anecdotes about those men she or James knew. This comment about Leigh Hunt is typical of the style of the book; it is also interesting in light of Annie's lack of success with her own poetry:

In looking over the works of any true poet, and such Leigh Hunt undoubtedly was, we must in justice seek to know him in his poems; for, however well a poet

may write prose, we must search his poetry to learn his most sincere expression and to discover that capacity, if he have it, for rising above his subject, which is a necessary quality of all good writing. (22)

One of the most engaging descriptions in A Shelf of Old Books is of Anna B. Proctor, the stepdaughter of Basil Montague and wife of Brian Waller Proctor, a solicitor and barrister who wrote under the pseudonym of Barry Cornwall. Annie describes Mrs. Proctor as "one of most brilliant women in London Society" (187) and writes admiringly that "Her powers of social endurance were remarkable" (188). I imagine that she was a role model for Annie, who quotes from an article written after Mrs. Proctor's death in the London Academy. Describing Mrs. Proctor's association with the leading literary figures of her day, particularly Thackeray, Dickens, and Browning, it could easily have been written about Annie:

She survived to be looked up to with respect and curiosity by a third generation, to whom the friends of her youth were English classics...Not that Mrs. Proctor was at all a repository of reminiscences. She took a keen interest in the topics of the day, and her talk was admirable, both for what she said and the way in which she said it...(190)

Authors and Friends is a collection of essays about four men, Longfellow, Emerson, Holmes, and Whittier, and two women, Stowe and Thaxter, with whom Annie Fields was well acquainted. Judged by today's standards, the text is nostalgic and the subjects are romanticized, but there are

flashes of insight and poetic language which are very appealing. Consider the introduction to the first chapter:

Every year when the lilac buds begin to burst their sheaths and until the full-blown clusters have spent themselves in the early summer air, the remembrance of Longfellow--something of his presence--wakes with us in the morning and recurs with every fragrant breeze. "Now is the time to come to Cambridge," he would say; "the lilacs are getting ready to receive you." (3)

Like Whitman, Annie effectively uses lilacs as a metaphor for immortality. Furthermore, she attempts to portray her subjects realistically; she mentions Emerson's constant striving for perfection, Stowe's forgetfulness, Holmes' egotism: "It cannot be said, however, in this age marked by altruisms, that he was altruistic; on the contrary, he loved himself and made himself his prime study..."(109). The chapter on Celia Thaxter (1835-1894) is probably the best because she provides important biographical information on this less well known poet and because, as with Harriet Beecher Stowe, she describes the frustrations in the lives of married women who attempted to pursue a career.

Authors and Friends is as important for what it says about the author as what it says about the subjects: throughout the book we see Annie's remarkable ability to empathize with others. Its style is sentimental; there are no deep insights, but it is pleasant to read. I perceive it as an old photograph that one values more for its mood and feeling than for its artistry.

In addition to her ability as a diarist, Annie Fields was also a perceptive editor. Annie's contribution to the world of the Atlantic is well documented. During the years that James was editor of the Atlantic, she read manuscripts and made recommendations about prospective articles, served as a liaison between her husband and many of the contributors, particularly women, and, most important, made "148 Charles Street a veritable hospice for aspiring, as well as established, authors" (Donovan, New England Local Color Literature 39). She encouraged the careers of numerous women, including Gail Hamilton, Louise Guiney, Rebecca Harding Davis, Celia Thaxter, and Lucy Larcom. She was responsible for urging Sophia Hawthorne to publish her husband's notebooks and provided moral support for Harriet Beecher Stowe during her many domestic crises. She recommended the publication in the Atlantic of Henry James' story "Compagnons de Voyage," Louisa May Alcott's poem on Thoreau, and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps' The Gates Ajar.

During this time Annie Fields' friends were not limited to women. She had many male friends with whom she had a warm and caring relationship, including Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, James, and Dickens among many others. Annie's friendships with men verify the breadth of her gift of sympathy, and signify her ability to form a relationship on the basis of shared interests and empathy.

After James retired in 1871, he and Annie continued to collaborate on cultural and civic ventures and the movement to further women's education, including the founding of Radcliffe College. Mark Howe noted the importance of their efforts:

Of the various "causes" to which Mrs. Fields and her husband paid allegiance, the cause of equal opportunity for men and women cannot justly be left unmentioned. They espoused it before its friends were taken with the seriousness they have long commanded, and...were full of sympathy with those who fought its early battles. (275)

Increasingly Annie undertook projects on her own, many of which she pursued successfully after his death. Freed from her obligation to entertain James' clients and recognizing that her ability as a poet was limited, she began to devote more time to what she viewed as her social responsibility. One of her main interests was aiding the new Irish immigrants in the North End of Boston where she volunteered at missions and helped to establish coffeehouses. In 1875 Annie became one of the founders of the Co-operative Society of Visitors among the Poor and later, in 1879, helped to establish the Associated Charities of Boston. She wrote many articles concerning these activities, culminating in her book How to Help the Poor, which was a guide to the philosophy of the Associated Charities of Boston.⁹

James Fields died in 1881; in 1882 Annie Fields and Sarah Orne Jewett began a twenty-eight year relationship

ending with Jewett's death in 1909. Lillian Faderman defines friendships such as theirs, called Boston Marriages, as "the monogamous relationship between two otherwise unmarried women" (199). These friendships were not uncommon in the nineteenth century and were viewed as socially acceptable, particularly among upper class women. Although Henry James was reported to have been uncomfortable with his sister Alice's relationship with Katharine Loring, he welcomed Jewett as "a young friend of great talent whose prevailing presence in her [Fields] life had come little by little to give it something like a new centre". "She had come to Mrs. Fields," he wrote "as an adoptive daughter, both a sharer and a sustainer." ("Mr. and Mrs. James T. Fields" 30). During their years together Jewett wrote her best books and short stories and Annie, while continuing to maintain her role as a hostess, also developed a reputation as a dedicated philanthropist.

Annie Fields outlived Sarah Orne Jewett by six years; Mark Howe describes her after Sarah's death as "bereaved as by the loss of half her personal world, yet indomitable of spirit and energy." He concludes: "in her outward mien through all the later years, there was that which must have recalled to many the ancient couplet:--'No Spring, nor summer's beauty hath such grace/ As I have seen in one autumnal face'" (Memories of a Hostess 304-5).

On January 5, 1915, at the age of eighty-one, Annie Adams Fields died; she was cremated and buried beside her husband at Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge. Although her home was sold and subsequently demolished, it lives on in her memoirs and those of many of her contemporaries. Her accomplishments live on as well, providing insights into a long and productive life.

There is an anecdote at the beginning of Annie Fields' essay "Tennyson" which is undoubtedly autobiographical. In it she describes a little girl who memorized all of "The Lady of Shalott" and recited it to her class, only to be met with a lack of enthusiasm and "a slight air of depreciation" from her teacher. She concludes the story: "One joy had for the present faded from her life, that of a sure sympathy and understanding" (338).

This story has a particular poignancy knowing the significance of a gift of sympathy in Annie Fields' adult life. We can imagine how deeply she was hurt since the pain still lingered many years later. While the "joy of a sure sympathy and understanding" had faded from her life then, fortunately it returned in later years in the gift of sympathy which informed her life and the lives of those she knew.

In my first chapter I will define this gift of sympathy and elaborate on its origin in feelings of connection among women. I will show how it existed in Annie Fields' circles of friends, both male and female. In subsequent chapters I will show how feelings of empathy were an intrinsic part of every aspect of her adult life: in her intimate relationships with James T. Fields and Sarah Orne Jewett, in her friendships with the female and male members of her many circles of friends, and in her philanthropic career.

Through an understanding of this gift of sympathy I hope to enhance our knowledge of Annie Fields' contributions to nineteenth-century literary and feminist history.

Notes

1. Long, affectionate letter to Annie's mother and sisters exist. Many of them Annie wrote when she travelled. Some of these letters indicate a concern with her sister Lissie, for example:

Dear Sisters, It is just a week since we left Lissie and Florence behind us. We think and talk of her often and what she is probably about, but not one word has she written...We considered it a great responsibility to take, to allow her to do as she thought she wanted to, in this matter, but she needed so much the bracing climate of Florence and that of Rome would have been too debilitating...

(Annie Fields, letter to sisters,
21 February 1860, Massachusetts Historical
Society, Boston)

2. Gollin calls 148 Charles Street the "social annex" of Ticknor and Fields ("Subordinated Power" 144).

3. Richard Brodhead writes: "Typical of such imperialism, when Beadle's Dime Novels caught on as a mass entertainment, Charles Eliot Norton, cosmopolite Harvard art historian and early champion of the aesthetic, tried to persuade Beadle to print dime Shakespeares instead of dime novels..." (471)

4. The founders of the Atlantic Monthly included Francis Underwood, James Russell Lowell, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, E.P. Whipple and James Fields.

5. As I will show, many new writers also contributed to the Atlantic, including Rose Terry, Louisa May Alcott, Harriet Prescott Spofford, Rebecca Harding Davis, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Henry James, and William Dean Howells.

6. In her will Annie wrote: "The volume of poems in ms. I leave to the Library of Mr. Morgan and his librarian, Miss Greene, for their promise to safe-guard and cherish the book which will allow such persons to see as express or feel an interest to do so. It will be easily found in a shabby velvet cover in the autograph case at the end of the library on the street."

7. As much as James encouraged her, in reality he only published her poems in the Atlantic as "fillers."

8. Rita Gollin calls these journals "treasure troves for literary and cultural historians" (Legacy Profile 28).

9. Judith Roman writes: "It is ironic that Annie's first long publications in the leading magazines came only after she had set aside her literary ambitions to devote her major energy to charity...Annie skillfully used the press to publicize her projects and inform interested citizens about how they could help" (85)

Chapter One: The Gift of Sympathy

The truths of relationship, however,
 return in the rediscovery of connection,
 in the realization that self and other
 are interdependent and that life,
 however valuable in itself, can only be
 sustained by care in relationships.
 (Gilligan 127)

In the tradition of self-reliance which dominated nineteenth-century American literature, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: "It is simpler to be self-dependent. The height, the deity of man is to be self-sustained, to need no gift, no foreign force. Society is good when it does not violate me, but best when it is likeliest to solitude" (Complete Essays 90). An admiring Whitman echoed the sentiment: "One's Self I sing, a simple separate person" (165).

In contrast with Emerson, Whitman, and other male writers of this time, Annie Fields and her circles of friends made significant contributions to American literary history through their gift of sympathy, their ability to empathize with others.¹ It is important to view the late nineteenth century from the standpoint of human connection, as well from the traditional belief in self-reliance. This perspective adds a new dimension to our appreciation of the work of gifted authors, such as Annie Fields' friends, who fall outside the traditional canon.²

In American Renaissance, his seminal study of Emerson, Hawthorne, Thoreau, Melville, and Whitman, F.O. Matthiessen

established self-reliance as the central theme in American literary history.³ Based on his analyses of Representative Men, The Scarlet Letter, The House of the Seven Gables, Moby Dick, Pierre, Walden, and Leaves of Grass, he defines literary greatness exclusively in male terms: "You might search all the rest of American literature without being able to collect a group of books equal to these in imaginative vitality" (vii). His book was the authoritative text for American literature for years after its publication in 1941. Its effect on the study and the interpretation of American literature cannot be overstated, nor can its preference for male authors be ignored. As Jane Tompkins observes:

With this list Matthiessen determined the books that students would read and critics would write about for decades to come. More important, he influenced our assumptions about what kind of person can be a literary genius, what kinds of subjects great literature can discuss, our notions about who can be a hero and who cannot, notions of what constitutes heroic behavior, significant activity, central issues. (199)

To see Matthiessen as gender biased is not to deprecate American Renaissance nor his choice of authors. Clearly Emerson, Hawthorne, Thoreau, Melville, and Whitman are major figures in American literature. What is disconcerting is his lack of attention to women and women writers: for example, he refers to James T. Fields five times in his editorial capacity at the Atlantic Monthly without ever

mentioning Annie Fields, who often shared her husband's editorial duties. He mentions Bronson Alcott, but not his more talented daughter, Louisa. He writes of Margaret Fuller only in reference to her relationship with Emerson. While he does admire Emily Dickinson and praises her poetry over Emerson's: "her conceits, unlike many of his, do not dissipate in every direction, since they are subordinated to a central issue" (115), he cites Edith Wharton and Willa Cather simply in passing.

What troubles me most, however, is that Matthiessen, in his overriding concern with individualism and self-reliance, fails to address the equally important issue of connectedness. It is not as if the male authors cited by Matthiessen were untouched by friends and family: Emerson's commitment to individualism is tempered in much of his writing, particularly in his essay on "Friendship." Thoreau too expressed a need for companionship, writing in his journal: "It would give me such joy to know that a friend had come to see me, and yet that pleasure I seldom if ever experience" (69). Moreover, at times Matthiessen himself hints at problems that might arise from a philosophy of self-reliance, but he does not explore them in depth. For example, he proposes that Hawthorne might have been seeking connectedness among men:

...it was primarily by virtue of [Hawthorne's moral] perception that he broke through the individualism of his day to a reassertion not of man's idiosyncrasies, but of his elemental traits. It is no exaggeration to say that his recognition of the general bond of sin brought him closest to universality. (341)

He also comments that in the characters of Ahab and Moby Dick, Melville understood "the tragedy of extreme individualism, the disasters of the selfish will, the agony of a spirit so walled within itself that it seemed cut off from any possibility of salvation" (656). However, Matthiessen does not pursue these deliberations. In particular, he never explores the idea of empathy; it is as if that emotion did not exist during the American Renaissance. Despite evidence to the contrary, he presents little indication that a gift of sympathy influenced the lives of the men about whom he wrote. In this dissertation I will show that feelings of empathy *did* affect the writing of both male and female authors during the nineteenth century, that connection as well as individualism informed their lives and their work.

Defining Connection and Empathy

The legacy of Matthiessen's neglect lasted until the 1970's when feminist critics began to see the nineteenth century through a different lens. The importance of sympathy and empathy, which is today's "connectedness," became apparent when critics began to read the neglected works of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women writers. In Sensational Designs (1985), Jane Tompkins considers the work of several women authors, including Harriet Beecher Stowe. Assessing Stowe from a feminist perspective, she states:

Stowe relocates the center of power in American life, placing it...in the kitchen...The image of the home...is in no sense a shelter from the stormy blast of economic and political life...it is conceived as a dynamic center of activity, physical and spiritual, economic and moral, whose influence spreads out in ever-widening circles.

(145)

Seen from this viewpoint, the roles traditionally reserved for women--childbearing and raising, homemaking, preservation of religion--are revalued for their relevance in the lives of women and society. By "retrieving" these feminine values, the lives of women in the nineteenth century can be appreciated in a fresh light. In particular, this recognition enhances our understanding of the work of members of Annie Fields' circles of friends, such as Sarah Orne Jewett, Celia Thaxter, Rebecca Harding Davis, and Elizabeth Phelps Ward.

Tompkins and other critics also called for a redefining of the literary canon as it was taught in colleges and graduate schools and for a reassessment of non-canonical writing in light of new appraisals of these works. Tompkins argues that:

The recognition that literary texts are man-made, historically produced objects, whose value has been created and recreated by men and women out of their particular needs, suggests a need to study the interests, institutional practices, and social arrangements that sustains the canon of classic works. It also opens the way for a retrieval of the values and interests embodied in other, non-canonical texts which the literary establishment responsible for the canon in its present form has--for a variety of reasons--suppressed. (37)

Tompkins asserts that an author's sex, social position, and political connections directly effected the probability of a novel becoming part of the canon. In her effort to describe the fabrication of an author's reputation, she compares the careers of Hawthorne and Susan Warner. While Warner's The Wide, Wide World, second in popularity in the nineteenth century only to Uncle Tom's Cabin, was dismissed by academics as sentimental piety, Hawthorne's writing was praised for its insight into a darker reality. Interestingly, from the viewpoint of this dissertation, Tompkins cites James Fields' role in promoting the work of Hawthorne as an example of how male authors' reputations were often insured:

But most important in assuring Hawthorne's continuing presence in the cultural foreground was James T. Fields. Fields, wanting to make good on his investment, followed his former practice of putting out anything he thought would pique the public's interest in his author and managed to produce eleven posthumous editions of Hawthorne's work between 1864 and 1883. This meant, twenty years after he was dead, that Hawthorne was still being reviewed as a live author. (29)

Through her comparison of the careers of Hawthorne and Warner, Tompkins illustrates "how important belonging to the right network was as a precondition for long standing critical success" (25). While I agree with Tompkins that some novels, particularly those by women, which had great popularity in the mid and late nineteenth century did not become classics for reasons that had little to do with their literary merit but had much to do with social and political forces, I also believe that from a literary standpoint The Scarlet Letter is more deserving of attention than The Wide, Wide, World. Nevertheless, Warner's novels, as well as those by Maria Cummings, E.D.E.N. Southworth, and other nineteenth-century sentimental writers merit consideration for their descriptions of the lives and emotions of women during the last century.

Following the work of Tompkins, Elaine Showalter proposes that the 1990s demand a reading of American literary history different not only from the 1950s, but from the 1970s as well:

In such classic post-World War II studies as F.O. Matthiessen's American Renaissance, Henry Nash Smith's Virgin Land, Leo Marx's Machine in the Garden, and Richard Poirier's A World Elsewhere, the special nature of American literature was variously defined as democratic individualism, pastoralism, myths and symbols, or the forging of a new language. But in the 1990s, American literary history, which has always depended on an unspoken consensus of exceptionalism, objectivity, and uniformity, is now in a new phase. Beginning with the addition of what were initially seen as anomalous texts by writers who were black, female, regional or popular, the anomalies have accumulated in extra-canonical space and the canon has imploded.

(16-7)

Showalter is referring to a canon that now includes multi-cultural works by men and women who heretofore were unrecognized. She is also revising the notion of writing only for and about women in favor of an awareness "of the interdependencies of men's and women's lives" (18). The name of her book, Sister's Choice, was suggested by Alice Walker's Color Purple in which the female protagonists, Celie and Sophia, make a quilt together from a pattern called "Sister's Choice." Walker's novel, says Showalter, is "an act of homage" to Zora Neale Hurston, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Flannery O'Connor (20), women of different times, backgrounds, and points of view.

Not only modern literary theories, but also contemporary theories of the psychodynamics of female friendship provide an understanding of the role of

connection in women's lives. These new hypotheses about women's development emerged in the 1970s as a result of studies indicating that there are substantial differences between men's and women's psychological experiences and their development of self. These guidelines for analyzing women's emotional growth were in opposition to Freudian and other male-oriented theories. Many psychologists based their ideas on the notion of empathy, which Judith Jordan defines as the "affective-cognitive experience of understanding another person" (Women's Growth in Connection 83). She explains: "In order to empathize, one must have a well-differentiated sense of self in addition to an appreciation of and sensitivity to the differentness as well as the sameness of the other" (69). This definition of empathy is significant because it emphasizes not only an ability to understand another person but also shows that the truly empathetic woman must have maturity and self-confidence, qualities Annie Fields displayed throughout her adult life.

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Carol Gilligan, author of In a Different Voice (1982), presents valuable insights into these revised theories. For her, the "different voice" can be discovered by comparing the emotional development of men and women: "In the different voice of women lies the truth of an ethic of care, the tie between relationship and responsibility, and the origins of aggression in the failure of connection" (173).

In contrast with the emphasis men place on individuality, she believes that women value connection, and she emphasizes its centrality as a woman matures. Like Carol Gilligan, Jean Miller, in Toward a new psychology of women (1976), is seeking "a more accurate understanding of women's psychology as it arises out of women's life experience" (49). Again, one of these experiences is women's "recognition of the essential cooperative nature of human existence" (41). The central theme of Toward a new psychology of women is "that women's sense of self becomes very much organized around being able to make and then, to maintain, affiliation and relationships" (83). The emergence of women's clubs, the valuing of relationships among women, the records of numerous epistolary friendships, all suggest that friendship was as important for nineteenth-century women as it is today.

Women's Growth in Connection (1991), a collection of writings from the Stone Center at Wellesley College, provides another helpful source of information about modern developmental concepts useful in understanding nineteenth-century women. The authors are psychologists who are seeking to incorporate feminist theories into their clinical practices, particularly by exploring feelings of empathy and mutuality with patients who are in therapy. Their observations provide insights into the many relationships which Annie Fields developed. For example, in her article

"The Development of Women's Sense of Self," Jean Miller suggests that:

to feel "more related to another person" means to feel one's self enhanced, not threatened. It does not feel like a loss of part of one's self; instead it becomes a step toward more pleasure and effectiveness ...Being in relationship, picking up the feelings of the other and attending to the "interaction between" becomes an accepted, "natural-seeming" way of being and acting...Most important, it is desired; it is a goal...

(Women's Growth in Connection 15)

Many psychologists believe that traditionally women have remained in dependent roles during most of their lives, first as daughters, then as wives. Therapists feel that when women seek close relationships in which they are not dependent, but are in fact empowered, it is an indication that they are gaining in self-esteem.

Another of these suppositions which pertains to nineteenth-century women is that of empowerment. I agree with psychologist Janice Raymond that we must move beyond "theories of women's oppression to theories of women's empowerment" (18) if we are to have a clear understanding of female development. Because empowerment is one of the most important, yet also one of the most conflicted, realms for women, it deserves close attention. Traditionally power has meant:

...the ability to advance oneself and, simultaneously, to control, limit, and if possible destroy the power of others. That is, power, so far, has had at least two Components: power for oneself and power over others.

Miller, Toward a new psychology 116)

Once again, this is a male-oriented definition. It is the reason many women have been uncomfortable with either newly found power in the marketplace or with what they perceive to be the necessity of exerting power. Being in a position of power has not been part of the conventional developmental model for women: cooperation, not competition, has been the feminine paradigm.

Now the definitions are being revised so that power, like connection and empathy, are goals to which women aspire. Equally important, critics are examining women's search for power in earlier centuries. For example, in the nineteenth century the need for empowerment was especially strong among women writers. James Fields and his and Annie's male friends, particularly Hawthorne, Emerson, Holmes, Whittier, and Dickens, had an abundance of political, literary, and social power. It was different for female authors. As Ann Douglas posits in The Feminization of American Culture:

...both women and ministers had special reasons for being attracted to a literary career, yet it is nonetheless true that such a career gave the women, as it did not the ministers, a first glimpse of the privileges that professional life could bestow: an independent income, a group of friends

outside the family circle, and self-sufficient creative activity beyond the procreation of children. (96)

In other words, these women gained a feeling of empowerment through their newly found money, independence, and, most importantly, friendships.

Under nineteenth-century laws, women had no legal identity separate from their husbands and fathers.⁴ Having their own income enabled them not only to feel independent, but actually gave them a degree of independence from their male relatives which they had not enjoyed before. For them, as for their husbands, fathers and brothers, money was power. In addition, their friendships fostered self-confidence and provided a connection with women who shared their goals and valued their ideas. Striving for recognition in nineteenth-century America was a difficult and undesirable task for a woman alone; the empowerment gained through female connectedness heightened the accomplishments of these talented women.

Although Emerson, as I have indicated, valued self-reliance, it is he who best illustrates this parallel between friendship and power, emphasizing the role of mutuality in the relationship:

Friendship requires that rare mean
betwixt likeness and unlikeness that
piques each with the presence of power
and of consent in the other party...Let
it be an alliance of two large,

formidable natures, mutually beheld,
mutually feared, before yet they
recognize the deep identity which,
beneath these disparities, unites them.
(Complete Essays 232)

His words underscore the modern theories I have been discussing, for when women experience a feeling of empowerment, their friendships deepen, and they enhance their own lives as well as the lives of others.

Although modern feminist critics and psychologists do not use the term "a gift of sympathy" directly, its influence is revealed in their discussions of interconnectedness and empathy.⁵ I believe that the correlation between the nineteenth-century gift of sympathy and these twentieth-century theories of connection is unmistakable: the latter supply a rationale for the former, and it becomes evident that when women communicate with other women successfully, the basic components of the gift of sympathy are present to facilitate their responses. These new models of women's development often describe the interaction between Annie Fields and her friends and offer insights into nineteenth-century concepts of empathy.

The Gift of Sympathy

The concept of a gift of sympathy is an integral component of my dissertation. It is an elusive idea because it refers to instinctive traits which are difficult to define. I equate sympathy with empathy, the capacity to enter into or share the feelings of others. Both ideas evolve from concepts of giving and receiving united by compassion. For me, Annie Fields' gift of sympathy is the thread that ties together the diverse facets of her life: wife, hostess, poet, philanthropist, companion in a Boston marriage, center of many circles of friends. It informs my analysis of her relationships and is basic to an understanding of her accomplishments.

In her biography of Willa Cather, Sharon O'Brien presents a thoughtful discussion of a gift of sympathy. She explains that the word gift has two distinct meanings: it is an innate faculty, and it is something one can give or receive: "the gift suggests the magic of contradictions, being simultaneously a metaphor of selfhood and of relationship" (347). Annie Fields acknowledged this reciprocity in her Introduction to the Letters of S.O.J. when she wrote that the readers would find in the letters: "the portrait of a friend and the power that lies in friendship to sustain the giver as well as the receiver" (11).

friendship to sustain the giver as well as the receiver" (11).

In addition to explaining how empathy affected Annie Fields herself, the gift of sympathy also helps to clarify her role in nineteenth-century literary history. Although there are few references to her in traditional texts, recently she has been rediscovered by feminist critics. One reason is that writers today are acknowledging the place of empathy in an understanding of literature and literary circles. Recognizing the ramifications of Annie's ability to connect with other women, Sharon Harris comments:

Covering nearly six decades of involvement--during which she supported women writers, edited selected letters by Harriet Beecher Stowe and Sarah Orne Jewett, and published her own poetry and essays--Annie Adams Fields's legacy to American literature is an impressive one. (84)

Similar praise for Annie appears in Paula Blanchard's recent biography of Sarah Orne Jewett, in Joan Hedrick's Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Josephine Donovan's New England Local Color Literature.

Throughout her adult life Annie Fields displayed a "gift for giving;" she gave of herself spontaneously in her relationships with James Fields and Sarah Orne Jewett, and with her family and friends as well. She tended to their needs unselfishly, sometimes sublimating her own feelings.⁶ She empathized in small ways as well as large: her gift of sympathy can be seen in her everyday correspondence as well

as her most ambitious undertakings. A letter from the singer Modjeska to Annie illustrates how her kindness effected others: "It is difficult to express how happy you made me by your message. Your sweet note and Miss Longfellow's letter are put away with my cherished souvenirs, and I thank you with all my heart for the kind thought which prompted you to bestow on me such precious gifts."⁷ A note from Henry James also shows how her thoughtfulness was appreciated: "I have left too many days unacknowledged the so beautiful & touching letters prompted by your generous appreciation of my Volume of Notes."⁸

We can see the metaphor of gift giving in Annie's poetry in addition to her letters. She left ten composition books of poems, composed between 1865 and 1880 as anniversary and birthday presents for her friends and family. "Canticles of Married Love," written for her husband and never published, are poems more in the style of Donne than the Victorians.⁹ Undoubtedly, not only Donne's romantic language, but his belief that "no man is an island," appealed to Annie.

In a letter and poem Annie sent to Mary Putnam on Easter Sunday 1873, her ability to empathize is particularly poignant:

I send you these lines dedicated in my heart to you. They have been written a week or two, as you will see, for I hesitated to let you see them--I do it now with the understanding that they need never be mentioned between us, but

The poem, entitled "Ten Years After," describes Annie's reactions to seeing Mrs. Putnam, "a matron in life's prime/ Sitting in her high-backed (sic) pew," who had given "Her last young boy for her country's good." It concludes:

And there she sits within her pew
Calmly, nor lets the teardrops fall,
While we with brimming eyelids view
Those tracings on the wall.

Annie's gift of sympathy is illustrated by the delicacy with which she presents her poem to this woman, the admiration she shows for her, and the empathy she feels. For Annie, who usually guarded her emotions, these gifts of poetry were private expressions of her love.

Examples of the gift metaphor appear in the lives and writing of Annie's friends as well as her own. Willa Cather explained that in dedicating O Pioneers! to Sarah Orne Jewett, she was presenting her with a gift in return for the advice her mentor had given her:

I dedicated my novel O Pioneers! to Miss Jewett because I had talked over some of the characters in it with her one day in Manchester, and in this book I tried to tell the story of the people as truthfully and simply as if I were telling it to her by word of mouth.
(Kingdom of Art 448)

Cather admired Jewett's ability to project "a quality of voice that is exclusively the writer's own, individual, unique" (Not Under Forty 78) and learned from her the importance of presenting her characters realistically. She

was grateful to Jewett for guiding her away from her use of Jamesian imitations into a successful style of her own.

Not only the gift metaphor, but actual gifts were synonymous with the gift of sympathy for Annie and many of her friends. For Harriet Beecher Stowe, presents were a way of connecting with others as she grew older. Joan Hedrick describes what the giving of gifts meant to the aging author when her writing became less popular and her mental state deteriorated:

...The last years of her life were filled with very small yet significant gestures of human connectedness: writing notes to friends, fashioning homemade wedding gifts, sending poems and flowers...Through the exchange of small gifts...she kept in touch with a network of friends and family...(392)

Time and time again Stowe and other members of Annie Fields' circles communicated their feelings of empathy with thoughtful presents of flowers, handkerchiefs, books, and food. Their gifts and words of encouragement conveyed a depth of feeling which could only spring from genuine compassion.

In addition to the giving aspect, there is a receiving component to the gift of sympathy. To be in a truly empathetic relationship, one must be able to accept as well as express feelings of connection. This receptivity can be a complicated emotion because it implies a willingness to welcome another person into your own life. Rachel

Brownstein writes that George Eliot recognized the problem of conveying a message of interdependence, and she worried

about connecting with the readers she hoped to teach how to make and understand human connections...Her readers were meant to experience what she called elsewhere the "equivalent center of self" of another human being; the novels were intended to exert the "blessed influence of one true loving human soul on another."

(Becoming a Heroine 237-8)

For Annie, the receiving element of the gift of sympathy was never a problem. According to all accounts, her twenty-seven year marriage to James Fields and her twenty-eight year partnership with Sarah Orne Jewett were characterized by love and sharing, while her correspondence with her many friends attests to her ability to enjoy their company and to turn to them for advice on her writing and help in her philanthropic projects. Her sense of self-efficacy, allied with her keen gift of sympathy, assured the reciprocity necessary for her to receive as well as to give in an empathetic way.

There are other significant aspects to the concept of a gift of sympathy. One of the most important is that feelings of empathy help to explain the parallels between friendship and creativity. Through their connections with one another, nineteenth-century women authors became more productive as they shared their ideas and their feelings. Empathy enriched Annie's own biographical writings and memoirs, the stories of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Elizabeth

Phelps Ward, and Rebecca Harding Davis, and the poetry of Louise Imogene Guiney and Celia Thaxter.

For Sarah Orne Jewett in particular, the relationship between the gift of sympathy and creativity was significant. Not only her friendship with Annie Fields, but with John Greenleaf Whittier, Sarah Norton, Celia Thaxter, and many others was enriched by compassion and understanding. These same feelings are evident in her writing, where it is conveyed exquisitely in The Country of the Pointed Firs and in her stories, including "The Flight of Miss Betsey Lane" and "Miss Tempy's Watchers." As Paula Blanchard remarks, Jewett presents a world in which misery and cruelty exist, but these misfortunes are:

seen in a context in which most people, most of the time, can still cope. The unspoken but constant assumption is that they cannot cope if the living currents of sympathy and memory between people and between generations fail...She did persistently depict (and who can argue with her?) compassion and the recognition of human interconnectedness as the only defense against the darker forces outside the village bounds.

(102-3)

Culminating in her portrayal of Mrs. Todd in The Country of the Pointed Firs, her characters show the ways in which the gift of sympathy enables men and women to survive the isolation of gender, age, and geography.

These issues of isolation and connection which Jewett addresses are, of course, age-old concerns. Carol Gilligan posits that the myth of Demeter and Persephone reveals basic

tenets of female psychology, "a life-cycle story par excellence" (22):

The elusive mystery of women's development lies in its recognition of the continuing importance of attachment in the human life cycle. Woman's place in man's life cycle is to protect this recognition while the developmental litany intones the celebration of separation, individuation, and natural rights. The myth of Persephone speaks directly to the distortion in this view by reminding us that narcissism leads to death, that the fertility of the earth is in some mysterious way tied to the continuation of the mother-daughter relationship, and that the life cycle itself arises from the alternation between the world of women and that of men. (23)

Not only does this ancient myth, with its emphasis on connection and continuation, contribute to our understanding of the importance of these factors in women's lives but it enhances our appreciation of Annie Fields and her gift of sympathy. In fact, she used this legend in 1877 when she wrote The Return of Persephone: A Dramatic Sketch, which she dedicated "To the memory of my mother." In her version of the story, Persephone goes underground willingly with Hades and grows into a mature and wise woman during her years with him. In her reunion with Demeter, she admits that her allegiance is now to both her husband and her mother:

To [Demeter] belongs a portion of the fruit,
Pomegranate, which thy love hast given to me,
And eating I have learned to know the seed
Shall fall, the many seeds shall fall
Into the dark earth, then grow again to light.

(Under the Olive, "The Return of Persephone" 178)

When Annie shows Persephone affirming a daughter's need for separation from her mother as well as her desire for a husband's love, she is demonstrating the importance of the many different connections which exist in a woman's life, connections which she herself sought and established.

Sarah Sherman postulates that Annie's interpretation of this myth provides a key to the relationship between Annie and Sarah Orne Jewett.¹¹ In her biography of Jewett, subtitled "An American Persephone," she states: "In 'The Return of Persephone' we can see the qualities that drew the younger artist to the older one and that made Annie Fields the wise mentor she was" (85). By expanding the range of Persephone's love beyond the maternal world of Demeter, Annie is suggesting a more universal definition of a woman's love, which Jewett also endorsed.

In A Little Book of Friends (1916), Harriet Spofford observes that "the words that Demeter spoke to her Persephone were the keynote" of Annie Fields' life: "But as thou goest pluck blossoms from thy path/ and strew them in places without bloom" (9). Placing Annie in the center of her group of friends, she portrays her as a source of comfort for those who surrounded her. She suggests that Annie's poetry recalled Eleusinian imagery as she:

infused humanity and to-day into the
thoughts and fancies of a dead world,
and made old legends live with the new
life in an atmosphere as high as joy,
and as deep as sorrow. (13)

Although Spofford indulges in the hyperbole of Victorian writing, her illustration of how Annie Fields in her person and in her poetry evoked the image of Demeter is meaningful.

Another idea which Gilligan explores in In a Different Voice also pertains to Annie Fields: the role gender differences play in the concept of morality. She writes that men view morality in terms of rules of right and wrong while women are concerned with "the understanding of responsibility and relationship" (19). As a result of these distinctions, "women bring to the life cycle a different point of view and order human experience in terms of different priorities" (22). One of Annie's moral concerns was reflected in her desire to establish coffee houses to replace the pubs frequented by many immigrant Irish men. She did not believe in abstinence--there is ample evidence that wine was enjoyed in her home--but she deplored drunkenness, which she felt led to physical abuse in the home and loss of jobs in the workplace.¹² Her solution was not to outlaw liquor but to present an alternative that would present a place where men could go for relaxation and companionship without the ill effects of drinking. Rather than suggesting legislation to outlaw liquor, she chose to provide a viable alternative. From 1870 to 1872 she worked to establish coffee houses and continued to support them throughout her career with the Associated Charities. By January 1871, "the city fathers of Boston had indicated that

they supported her plan to 'establish Coffee houses all over the city at 5 cents a cup'" (Roman 81).

Another moral issue which concerned Annie was prostitution. I agree with Judith Roman "that Annie Fields knew a great deal more about the lives of Boston prostitutes than she recorded in her diaries" (172). While Josephine Donovan is correct that Annie Fields was a "genteel lady" (American Women Writers 32), it would be a mistake to think of her as sheltered or naïve. She and Mary Lodge worked to improve women's prisons in Massachusetts and to found a home for "wandering girls." In her work as a Visitor for the Associated Charities and in the contacts she made in the coffee houses, Annie was exposed to the seamier side of life in Boston. She and her friends were often faced with making moral judgements about a world far different from Beacon Hill, and they accepted that responsibility. Annie Field's ability to empathize was not limited to any social class, but extended to almost everyone with whom she came in contact.

When Rebecca Harding Davis wrote "The Promise of Dawn," a short story about a prostitute, she sought Annie's assistance in securing James' approval. Reflecting Gilligan's premise that men see morality in terms of right and wrong, he felt that "The depiction of a prostitute, driven to her decline not by her own sinfulness but by societal hypocrisies, was not 'realistic'" (Harris 99).

Annie, however, recognized the significance of the story, a precursor of Stephen Crane's Maggie: A Girl of the Streets (1896); she understood its premise that the Civil War and poverty were causes of prostitution and convinced James to publish it in the Atlantic in January 1863.

Some years later, from 1910 to 1922, Fanny Quincy Howe (1870-1933), wife of Mark De Wolfe Howe, Annie's friend and literary executor, corresponded with a prostitute named Maimie Pinzer. Pinzer, who came from a dysfunctional Jewish family in Philadelphia, had spent her youth learning to survive through prostitution. During a struggle to free herself from morphine addiction, she came into contact with a social worker who knew Mrs. Howe and asked her to correspond with Maimie. Like Annie, Fanny Howe was a proper Bostonian whose gift of sympathy enabled her to relate to many different people.¹³ Maimie, an articulate woman whose letters were honest and straightforward, responded to Mrs. Howe's concern and affection for her. As Ruth Rosen observes in her Introduction to The Maimie Papers: "Mrs. Howe became a diary for her, the one person to whom Maimie could honestly relate her fears and anxieties, her struggle to survive without 'going back'" (xviii). Fanny Howe, who was a frequent visitor to 148 Charles Street, knew of Annie's concern with social issues and undoubtedly shared Maimie's letters with her.

Annie's desire to help Rebecca Harding Davis, her empathy with the Boston's poor immigrants, her interest in the world of Maimie, all indicate her wish to be part of events that were occurring beyond the realm of Charles Street. One way she could achieve this was through the position of power which she had attained not only through her family connections and marriage but also through her own aegis. Feminists like Carolyn Heilbrun believe that:

The true representation of power is not of a big man beating a smaller man or a woman. Power is the ability to take one's place in whatever discourse is essential to action and the right to have one's part matter. This is true in the Pentagon, in marriage, in friendship, and in politics.

(Writing a Woman's Life 18)

It is this conception of power that applies to our interpretation of Annie Fields. From the time of her marriage, empowerment was a vital part of her relationships with other women who sought her help in critiquing their writing, gaining access to the Atlantic through her husband, solving personal problems, and advancing philanthropic causes. For her, power was "the right to have one's part matter." Obviously, part of her authority was based on traditional factors: her social position and her marriage to James T. Fields. But her real power came from her gift of sympathy, her ability to empathize others. As psychologist Janet Surrey argues: "Personal empowerment can be viewed only through the larger lens of power through connection,

that is, through the establishment of mutually empathic and mutually empowering relationships" (Women's Growth in Connection 164). Annie Fields' involvement with so many circles of friends fostered her ability to help individuals and to advance her social and political concerns. She accomplished so much in her adult lifetime because, as she assumed power, she also gave it to others, thus broadening her scope of influence and extending her base of power.

To understand Annie Fields, we must recognize that her experiences as a woman were responsible for her development into a person whose life was defined and enriched by feelings of connection. The relationships which she developed from childhood through her traditional marriage with James Fields and then her Boston Marriage with Sarah Orne Jewett were critical factors in her development as an empathetic adult. The human connections she made and the commitments she honored reveal that her empathy extended to men and women she met in the coffee houses she established, immigrants she visited as a volunteer for the Associated Charities, people she met fleetingly during her travels, as well as her friends and family. Her identity was shaped by her devotion to social and political causes; her "moral domain" was enlarged by her gift of sympathy. The significance of the connections she made and her ability to integrate them into all aspects of her life are fundamental to an appreciation of the woman she became.

Annie Fields' Circles

Annie Fields' gift of sympathy flourished in the many circles which evolved with her at their core. These circles included her family as well as men and women who were connected by the feelings of empathy which she engendered. Their sanctuary was 148 Charles Street, where those outside the family came originally as guests of James Fields but returned in response to the charm, intelligence, and sincerity of his wife.¹⁴ Some of the women in her circles were unable to travel to Boston, so they maintained their connections through letters. Helen Heinmen describes the importance of epistolary friendships to Victorian women:

their commitment to a mutual correspondence kept them sensitive to the quality of one another's experience and made them friends for life, though their futures were widely divergent ...These familiar letters unlock the inner lives of women, moving the reader beyond the evidence of statistics or cultural artifacts in tracing the dawning consciousness of a shared female condition. (2)

For the women who lived in Boston or who were able to visit, the experience was different. In Paula Blanchard's words:

Perhaps the greatest benefit they gained from their friendship was just the sight of one another: the physical evidence that each was not alone, that if she wanted to talk about her work there were listeners who would take her seriously and offer concrete advice, and that she belonged to a group of women for whom accomplishment--most of it involving a high degree of public visibility,

creativity, or executive talent--was not an aberration but a normal and enjoyable way of life. (222)

These were the years when women all over America were organizing clubs and discussion groups; for Annie Fields' visitors, coming together on Beacon Hill was one way of affirming female friendship, a confirmation of their connectedness.

Among Annie's male friends, many knew one another from their ties to the "old boy network" of Boston: Harvard College, the Saturday Club, the Dante Club. In some cases the circles were extended; as Mark Howe wrote, "the friendships with one and another were constantly overlapping and interlocking" (5). For example, many of Annie's acquaintances gathered at Celia Thaxter's hotel at Appeldore in the summer, attended meetings of the New England Women's Club, or belonged to the Hartford literary community.

Annie's earliest circle included her mother and sisters; it is this first circle which has important implications for the feelings of female connectedness which evolved as she matured. As Janet Surrey has indicated:

...We can postulate that as the early mother-daughter relationship grows over the life cycle, it forms the precursors of women's style of learning, of pleasure, and of self-enhancement in relatedness...A good relationship is highly valued by both mother and daughter and becomes a fundamental

component of women's sense of self-worth. This, too, continues to evolve through other relationships throughout the life cycle.

(Women's Growth in Connection 57)

Annie's relationship with her family was that of a loving sister and daughter. Her letters and diary entries show her devotion, concern for their health, and her interest in their lives.

After her marriage, other circles evolved, including one composed of aspiring authors who sometimes sought Annie's help in gaining access to her husband and the Atlantic. Another consisted of the famous men and women whom she and James entertained. One new writer whose life was influenced by Annie Fields was Rebecca Harding Davis; their initial relationship serves as a paradigm of the gift of sympathy. In January 1861 James Fields had accepted "Life in the Iron Mills" for publication in the Atlantic. When Davis next submitted "Margaret Howth," he rejected it because of its gloominess; however, wanting to keep Davis as a contributor, he asked Annie to write her a letter of encouragement. A close friendship between the two women developed, first through correspondence and then through Davis' visit to Boston:

Nearly the same age, Annie and Rebecca shared confidences and developed an intellectual intimacy during those few short weeks in Boston that would last through the difficulties of the coming years. Annie introduced Davis to several other women writers, including Celia Thaxter and Kate Field...But

Annie's influence was more than personal support...Annie ardently supported Davis's literary endeavors, becoming a sensitive and at times a persuasive intermediary between the Virginia author and James Fields.

(Harris 83-84)

Eventually Annie turned to Rebecca for help with her own writing:

When Annie began to publish her own poetry, she cautiously asked Rebecca to read her first published ode "Tenderly." Davis not only eagerly read the lyric but extended Annie the courtesy of taking it seriously enough to send a critique...She suggests... that Annie view her own writing as artistry, an artistry that warrants public attention.

It was the kind of encouragement few women writers of the time received.

(Harris 120-121)

In 1867 Rebecca broke her exclusive contract with the Atlantic and began to publish in other magazines. She had not anticipated that this would hurt her relationship with the Fields, but unfortunately it did. Although the friendship between the two women deteriorated, the early years when they confided in each other and encouraged one another exemplify the gift metaphor, the spirit of "selfhood and relationship" (O'Brien 347).

As Annie gained experience and confidence, other friendships grew. In addition to Rebecca Harding Davis, Celia Thaxter, who felt forsaken because of the demands of her husband and family, and Louise Guiney, who was overwhelmed by physical and mental problems, became dependent upon her for advice not only in their writing

careers but also in their personal lives. The satisfaction of being in a relationship is evident in these friendships which were as fulfilling to Annie as they were to the other women. In the words of Carol Gilligan: "The concept of identity expands to include the experience of interconnection. The moral domain is similarly enlarged by the inclusion of responsibility and care in relationship" (173).

Of course, not all Annie's friendships were untroubled. She was unforgiving of any one who disagreed with her husband; not only Rebecca Harding Davis, but Gail Hamilton, and Sophia Hawthorne are examples of women who fell from grace when they had problems with James.¹⁵ Later on, Horace Scudder and Henry Houghton, whom she and Sarah Jewett had known for years, met their wrath when these editors did not pay Annie the amount she felt she deserved for her writing. Nevertheless, most of her friendships were lasting and were marked by kindness and thoughtfulness.

In addition to her literary circles, others developed composed of Annie's friends from her philanthropic and political activities. Turning back to Janet Surrey:

The development of new and diverse forms of relationship (beyond the nuclear mother-daughter dyad or the immediate family) is essential for woman's full development, especially in arenas such as the workplace and the larger social, economic, and political scene. Moreover, the presence of women who

value and model relational growth can bring new energy and structure into these arenas. (63)

Her ability to grow through interaction and connectedness resulted in Annie Fields' developing into a mature, effective, and empathetic member of society. Her many circles of friends and the social causes she espoused benefitted from her contact with fresh ideas and new people.

If modern feminist theories help explain the gift of sympathy as it relates to the women in Annie Fields' circles, what explains her relationship with the male members of her circles? In other words, if the gift of sympathy is the thread that ties together the women in her life, what is its role among the men? In an "About Men" column in The New York Times Magazine (April 1994) author Morton Hunt wrote: "How is it that after having been friends for 20 or 30 years (and in some cases much longer), we are only now becoming intimate?" (28). After giving several poignant instances of a growing intimacy with his friends, he concludes:

...I find myself wanting to open up to men who are longtime friends, and doing so in a way I never did...What seems strange is how easy, comforting and natural it is to do so now that we all know we are in the last act of the drama... How fortunate that we can be intimate now, when we need to be. How sad that we never could before. (29)

I quote this twentieth-century writer to illustrate that although feelings of connection are difficult for men,

they are possible and men value them. An examination of Annie Fields' relationship with the men in her circles reveals that she was able to go beyond ordinary male/female boundaries and engender the kind of intimacy and communication that Hunt discovered through her gift of sympathy. This ability is evident in her friendship with John Greenleaf Whittier, Olive Wendell Holmes, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and other men who cared deeply about James Fields and who continued in an affectionate relationship with Annie after his death.

One reason Annie was able to feel at ease with these men was because she sustained a nurturing and supportive relationship with her father.¹⁶ Throughout her life she was proud of his devotion to his medical profession, his participation in Boston civic affairs, and his commitment to secondary education for girls. Through his love for her and the others in her family, he generated feelings of confidence which enabled her to seek out other relationships with men in which she would feel similarly comfortable. Annie's marriage to James Fields, seventeen years her senior, and her friendship with men like Whittier, Holmes and Longfellow, support the assumption that her relationship with her father helped her to feel at ease with men who were older than she. For Annie (as well as Sarah Orne Jewett and other members of their circles) gender was not as important as the quality of the relationship; to them the gift of

sympathy was the hallmark of a friendship. As Paula Blanchard, referring to Sarah Orne Jewett but including Annie as well, observed: "the transfiguring power of friendship certainly was not limited in her own mind by sex, age, or any other peripheral characteristic" (211).

An important clue to the relationships that Sarah Jewett and Annie Fields shared with men appears in Marjorie Pryse's introduction to The Country of the Pointed Firs. In discussing the narrator's visit with the lonely widower Elijah Tilley, she comments:

...Mr. Tilley, through his "continual loneliness," through the memory of his wife, and through the heritage of the mother who taught him how to knit, illustrates that the inner lives, anxieties, and visions of women can be shared by men. They have only to "find out" about them in order to share them.
(xviii)

It seems to me this is just what Annie Fields did; she always displayed an interest in the lives and feelings of the men she cared about (and cared for, such as Holmes and Whittier). She proved that modern theories of empathy and connectedness apply to men as well as women. Needless to say, in all these relationships, she never violated her sense of propriety: she was the perfect hostess, mentor and confidant, always keeping the proper balance between her friendship and decorum. Her gift of sympathy never led to any inappropriate demonstration of affection or undignified behavior.¹⁷

Carol Gilligan maintains that when women feel connected with others, meaning both men and women, they develop a larger conception of self and increase their perceptions of relationships. Clearly this occurred in Annie Fields' life. Although devastated by the loss of her husband, she found love and companionship with Sarah Orne Jewett; she also developed other new friendships and continued in mutually beneficial associations with men she had known for many years. She discovered the growth promoting aspects of empathy to which modern psychologists refer: vitality, empowerment, feelings of self worth, and desire for more connections. As a result, she had the capability to be flexible in her relationships and to respond and change at each stage of her life. This facility is communicated in Willa Cather's eloquent tribute:

At eighty she could still entertain new
people, new ideas, new forms of art.
And she brought to her greeting of the
new all the richness of her rich past: a
long, unbroken chain of splendid,
beautiful friendships.

(Not Under Forty 71)

Notes

1. Among those American authors to whom the theme of connectedness was central were Sarah Orne Jewett, Celia Thaxter, Louisa May Alcott, and Harriet Beecher Stowe.
2. Examining nineteenth-century America through the perspective of connectedness also expands our understanding of the social and political changes which were occurring throughout the country as the United States changed from a land which valued rugged individualism to an urban industrialized society which required co-operation among its members in order to succeed.
3. Matthiessen, educated at Yale and Harvard, was well known as a teacher, political liberal, and incisive literary critic. His first book, published in 1929, was a biography of Sarah Orne Jewett.
4. For example, a woman's right to dispose of property by sale, by will, even by gift, was severely limited.
5. Judith Fryer is one author who, in her article "What Goes on in the Ladies Room? Sarah Orne Jewett, Annie Fields and Their Community of Women" (The Massachusetts Review, 1989), discusses the gift of sympathy and relates it directly to her subjects.
6. A diary entry on 19 January 1866 reveals the frustration Annie sometimes felt: "I have had hardly an hour for study or reading except when too tired to give my best devotion to my work...The slight cares of housekeeping and entertaining beside of [sic] visiting cannot be neglected in the smallest of particulars, else others who depend upon me will be made uncomfortable."
7. Modjeska, letter to Annie Fields, January 1907, Houghton Library, Cambridge.
8. Henry James, letter to Annie Fields, 25 July 1914, Houghton Library, Cambridge.
9. Judith Roman believes that the "Canticles of Married Love" "reveal more of Annie's inner life than do most of her published poems and may be her best poetry" (21).
10. Annie Fields, letter to Mary Putnam, Easter Sunday 1873, Huntington Library, San Marino.
11. Sarah Sherman writes: "in the ancient story of a divine mother and daughter Victorian women found figures for their own experience" (x).

12. Annie's opinions about the effects of drinking are presented in her article "Systematic Visiting Among the Poor" and in her book How to Help the Poor. I will discuss this subject further in Chapter Six.

13. Ruth Rosen writes: "It was characteristic of Fanny to empathize deeply with those less fortunate than herself" (xviii).

14. In an article entitled: "The Generous Tribute of One Member of the Famous New England Group to Another Member," Frank B. Sanborn wrote: "The death of this lady, after a period of decline, removes from the group of gifted women who long made Boston noted for grace, wit, good taste, literary skill, hospitality and charity, both public and private, one who was prominent among them: at first by the eminence of her husband, the poet and publisher, and soon by the gentle force of her own genius and activity"..(The Boston Evening Transcript, Jan. 13, 1915

15. I will describe the conflicts with Gail Hamilton and Sophia Hawthorne in Chapter Two.

16. Carol Gilligan observes: "Self esteem [then] is related to the degree of emotional sharing, openness, and shared sense of understanding and regard" (57).

17. Annie's guests were equally proper. As Paula Blanchard observes: "...all her friends, even the much-talked-about Isabella Gardner, were ladies in the strictest sense. They all, including those who agitated for suffrage or preached in public or founded schools and colleges for women, conformed without question to the current norms set for womanhood, putting family or church before work, dressing in irreproachable fashion with corsets and bustles, and gracefully deferring to the gentlemen when custom required. One could scarcely hope to find a more decorous group anywhere in America" (222-3).

Chapter Two: James T. Fields

There is a sacredness about the belongings of good and great men which is quite apart from the value and significance of the things themselves. Their books become especially endeared to us; as we turn the pages they have loved, we can see another hand pointing along the lines, another head bending over the open volume.

(Fields, Mrs. James, A Shelf of Old Books 3)

The two most important people in Annie Fields' life were James T. Fields, her husband in a traditional marriage for twenty-seven years, and Sarah Orne Jewett, her companion in a Boston marriage for twenty-eight years. She was completely devoted to each of them. A spirit of empathy characterized her relationship with both; in each case, she had an instinctive understanding of her partner's needs. Respect, sharing, and honesty were the touchstones of Annie Fields' life and the foundations of her love. The distinguishing feature of these relationships was the ability of each partner to maintain his/her independence without forfeiting a sense of security and affection that was so important to each of them. Issues of power and jealousy did not exist. James and Sarah pursued careers which were more successful than Annie's, but she was never envious of their fame. Her love for them, her pride in their achievements, and her own self-confidence enriched her life to such a degree that comparisons were never made. During the final years of James' life and during all her

time with Sarah, Annie pursued her interest in philanthropy, even though it necessitated her spending time away from home. Just as she admired their successes, they delighted in the recognition she received in her career. There was a reciprocity in Annie's relationships which was almost instinctive and which assured the happiness of her partnerships.

James Fields' childhood was very different from Annie's. He was born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire on December 31, 1817, into a family which has been called "undistinguished" (Tryon 2). His father died when he was two, and he was raised by his mother Margaret, whom he venerated. He graduated from high school in 1831 at the age of fourteen and, like many of his contemporaries, moved from the country to the city.¹ Through a family friend, he gained employment at Carter & Hendee's Bookstore in Boston. In 1834 the business was purchased by William Ticknor and became The Old Corner Bookstore.

The young clerk matured into a handsome, dandified young man, who carried a cane, wore a gold watch chain, "and collars turned down like Lord Byron" (Tryon 34). He was a copious reader and began collecting books, despite his lack of money. He made friends easily, the most intimate and enduring of whom, Edwin Whipple and Thomas Gould, he met at the Mercantile Library. He also wrote poetry, some of which began to be published. In 1840, according to Tryon: "Fields

received new recognition when Whittier asked him for a poem for the projected anti-slavery annual, The North Star. Fields, who had no more interest in politics than he had in abolition, immediately complied" (79). In 1842 one of his poems appeared in an Appendix to Rufus Griswold's The Poets and Poetry of America, one of the most popular anthologies of its time and still acknowledged for its presentation of the poetic tastes of the nineteenth century.² James' appearance in this anthology secured him a place as an accepted American poet. As a result of the recognition he received, he gained entrée into the world of lecturing where, in William Tryon's words, he "was perfectly at home before an audience. He had a fine speaking voice and a decided flair for histrionics" (81).

Despite the pleasure he took in writing and lecturing, the most important part of Fields' life was his job at the Old Corner Bookstore. Impressed by James' hard work and ability to understand the business, William Ticknor encouraged him to assume more responsibility so that by his twenty-first birthday he was the store's senior clerk. In 1840 James persuaded Ticknor to convert the Old Corner from a bookstore into a publishing house, where his talent for attracting clients became evident. Their first book was a new edition of Horace and James Smith's Rejected Addresses; then came a volume of William Motherwell's poetry and Thomas DeQuincey's Confessions of an English Opium-Eater; next was

a real coup, the controversial poetry of Tennyson, which, by the fourth edition in 1856, had sold 12,000 copies. In June 1843 James became a junior partner at Ticknor, Reed & Co., the precursor of Ticknor & Fields. Their clients included Whittier,³ Holmes,⁴ Lowell, and Longfellow.⁵ As America's most popular poets, they assured their publishers' preeminent position in the world of publishing.

Van Wyck Brooks characterizes James T. Fields as an engaging, successful publisher:

The younger partner [in Ticknor and Fields], James T. Fields, a man of letters in his own right, was a big, jovial creature, always dressed in Scotch tweeds, with a full beard, abundant hair, keen, twinkling eyes and a hearty manner. The Old Corner Bookstore in Washington Street, where Fields sat behind his green curtain, laughing and manufacturing reputations, was already an institution.

(The Flowering of New England 478)

Mark Howe describes his contemporary reputation in glowing terms: "Among publishers Fields stood quite alone. In all the annals of American commerce in books there is no other such instance of a man who combined in his own person the offices of friendship and of business" (The Atlantic Monthly and Its Makers 39). Referring to Fields' editorial ability, Henry James wrote: "he had a conception of possibilities of relation with his authors and contributors that I judge no other member of his body in all the land to have had" ("Mr. and Mrs. James T. Fields" 23). In addition to his primary occupations of editor and publisher, Fields was also a poet,

lecturer, philanthropist, and world traveler, who made friends wherever he went.⁶

Geography, as well as James' personality and expertise, played a role in Ticknor & Fields' success. Lawrence Buell describes the rise of Boston as the literary center of America and their role in this ascent:

There was, in short, a strong centripetal tendency among the region's antebellum writers with respect to publishing as well as residence. That, plus the increasing centralization of significant literary activity around Boston, may help account for the ease with which Ticknor & Fields, with a little charm and financial inducement, were able to corral so many of the literary eminences between the mid-1840's and 1860.

(37)

With James Fields' charm and William Ticknor's money, the firm expanded. In 1847 Fields made his first trip to Europe, where he met authors who would become important social and business friends, including Mary Mitford and William Wordsworth. In 1850 he scored one of the great coups of his career. In a story which has often been told (although I think it may be apocryphal), James went to see Hawthorne after he had lost his job at the Custom House and asked him if he had written anything since the publication of Twice Told Tales. According to Annie's account, her husband said:

I remember I pressed him to reveal to me what he had been writing. He shook his head, and gave me to understand he had produced nothing. At that moment I

caught sight of a bureau...near where we were sitting, and immediately it occurred to me that hidden away somewhere in that article of furniture was a story or stories by the author of the Twice Told Tales; and I became so positive of it that I charged him vehemently with the fact. ...I was hurrying down the stairs when he called after me from the chamber, asking me to stop a moment. Then, quickly stepping into the entry with a roll of manuscript in his hands, he said: "How in Heaven's name did you know this thing was there? As you found me out, take what I have written and tell me, after you get home and have time to read it, if it is good for anything. It is either very good or very bad, I don't know which." On my way to Boston I read the germ of The Scarlet Letter. Before I slept that night, I wrote him a note all aglow with admiration..."

(Fields, Annie, Hawthorne 86)

James' flare for the dramatic is evident in this story; nevertheless, the truth remains that the publication of The Scarlet Letter was one of the most important events in American literary history, and one more indication of Fields' business acumen.

James T. Fields' influence on the dissemination of culture in New England and the creation of an economic foundation for Boston's literary development is impressive. Through his skill in marketing his authors, book publishing became a major industry. William Dean Howells describes Ticknor & Fields as "literary publishers in a sense such as the business world has known nowhere else before or since. Their imprint was a warrant of quality to the reader and of immortality to the author" (13). Fields' success lay in his

ability to be both a charming, cultivated, *bon vivant* and a shrewd, calculating, businessman, the "patron of letters and huckster of the product" (Tryon 167). He supplied the American reading public with the quality literature they wanted, and he provided his authors with the income they needed. Although he continued the usual practice of publishing at the author's expense, he kept the publisher's commission at ten percent; he also paid ten percent in royalties on the retail price of copies sold. While not a large amount, his American authors appreciated it because most publishing houses concentrated on British authors to whom no royalties were paid. Furthermore, he frequently paid more than the customary percentage to his first class authors: Emerson, Hawthorne, Holmes, Longfellow, Thoreau, and Whittier. While this practice eventually led to problems with less talented authors, it was a shrewd tactic at the time.

Although James' career was blossoming during these years, his personal life was filled with tragedy. When he was twenty-nine, his fiancée, Mary Gannett died; in 1850, at age thirty-two, he married her eighteen year old sister, Eliza, who died a year later of consumption. In an effort to assuage his grief, he made a second tour of Europe. It was during this trip that he met Thackery, with whom he soon developed a close relationship. He also solidified his

contacts with DeQuincey, the Brownings, Carlyle, and Dickens and other English writers.

Two years after James returned from Europe, he began wooing his late wife's cousin, Annie Adams Fields, who was seventeen years younger than he. In October 1854 they were engaged, and on November 15th they were married. In a letter to his good friend Mary Mitford, James wrote:

Have you room in your heart for one more American?...you will please to congratulate me that after an engagement of a few weeks I am, on the 7th or 10th of next month to go to church with one of the best Yankee girls of my acquaintance. Indeed she is the best in anybody's acquaintance. Just the girl you wd. choose for me. She has never written books altho' she is capable of doing that some, never held an argument on Woman's Rights or Wrongs in her whole life, and so full of goodness of heart and beauty that you would say at once 'that is the maid of all others for my friend Fields'. Her name is Annie Adams, and I have known her since childhood and have held her on my knee many and many a time...'

When James wrote this letter, he did not foresee that their marriage would develop into what today would be regarded as an egalitarian marriage, in which each partner makes a valuable contribution to its success. He introduced Annie to the world of literary society where she became the ideal hostess, advancing his career through her warmth, intelligence, and propriety. She also collaborated with him in his editorial duties by attracting new talent, reviewing

manuscripts, and acting as an intermediary with bothersome clients. As Tryon observes:

It was a marriage which was to have great professional consequences for Fields though at the moment these were unforeseen. It was also one of the happiest of marriages. Annie worshiped her famous and popular husband and James in turn cherished deeply, almost paternally, this child who had entrusted her life to him. Scarcely a day was to pass that Fields did not send her a book, a message, or a bouquet of flowers from the Old Corner by a special messenger (211)

James not only welcomed Annie's help in his career, he also encouraged her to pursue her own literary, philanthropic, and social interests. For example, although he was concerned that Annie's work in Boston's North End might endanger her health, he wrote:

It is not for me ever to put a bar between you and inclination. It has always been my desire to see you contented and happy in your duties in life, and to help on so far as I could in wisdom in the helping. The Mission seems to be your magnet, and in God's name, I say, go on and do all the good you can, everywhere."

Unlike the stereotypical nineteenth-century husband who desired a wife who would be an "angel in the house," Fields supported Annie's commitment to charitable work, even though it meant that she was frequently away from their home. In fact, after his retirement from publishing, he and Oliver Wendell Holmes often spoke at the Friday evening lectures at Annie's original charity, the North End Mission.

True to the conventions of the nineteenth-century, intimate details of their private life are absent from both James' and Annie's diaries and letters; nevertheless, a picture emerges of a loving, dependent husband and an adoring, caring wife.⁹ On their fifth anniversary, James wrote this poem for Annie: "Open then your chamber door/ And take the flowers that autumn bore; And let my little gift impart/ A summer fragrance to your heart/ For every tree and leaflet tells/ My home is where my Annie dwells" (Tryon 242). While their hospitality at 148 Charles Street was legendary, there is also evidence of quiet, private moments together, particularly during their vacations and at their summer home, Manchester-by-the-Sea. The paternalism evident in their courtship and the early days of their marriage faded away as their relationship developed into a marriage of respect and devotion.

In the years after his marriage, James' career flourished as Ticknor and Fields' reputation grew. Their Blue and Gold editions, described as the finest literature published in America, were widely distributed.¹⁰ Until 1856 the usual Ticknor binding had been a fudge brown color, but James, with his flair for the elegant, chose a new format--pocket-sized volumes bound in blue with gilt overlay on the spine and edges. The type was easy to read, and they were printed on fine paper. The first volume in the series was the collected poems of Tennyson. The books were

immensely successful: the series eventually included forty-one titles in fifty-seven volumes.

In 1860 Annie began her famous breakfasts, lunches, and dinners, augmenting her husband's growing success and popularity. Through her charm, wit, and social grace, she made each guest feel welcome. With the help of only a small staff of servants, she was able to entertain a steady stream of Ticknor and Fields' authors and prospective clients. In fact, James Austin believes that "Fields would have been far less successful in business without the aid of his wife, who could be counted upon to charm into compliance anyone whom her husband wished to impress" (120). Her parties included not only the most famous American and British writers but also musicians, such as Ole Bull, the violinist, opera singers Christine Nilsson and Modjeska, and artists, including Sarah Whitman and William Hunt. While Annie's youth and beauty contributed to her success, her reputation was assured through her intelligence and charm. She was immensely tactful, never dominating the conversation and always creating a comfortable milieu for her guests. As Judith Roman notes: "She was what a later generation would call a good facilitator. At the same time, her parties were not shapeless; she exerted her intelligence to put the right people together and to control the atmosphere" (24).

At the Old Corner Bookstore, also called Parnassus Corner because so many of the literati gathered there, James

held court during the day. There the ambiance was very different from Charles Street:

...a veritable mob of the gifted, the talented, the clever, and the wise, thronged the crowded bookstore. They came to look over the new offerings temptingly displayed on the counters, to chat with friends they met in the aisles, and sooner or later to drop behind the green curtain and join Fields in gossip, repartee, bad puns and good jokes which flowed unendingly within its privacy. (Tryon, 218)

Although Annie enthusiastically participated in James' business life at home, there is no record of her visiting the Old Corner Bookstore; she apparently remained aloof from this world of men. Until the outbreak of the Civil War, James seemed to have little regard for politics. As Tryon explains:

Indifferent to the abolition crusade, which was the most disturbing topic, he was likewise unconcerned over the great issues of the day. On labor, Transcendentalism, religious reform, and the score of humanitarian projects that had made New England a seething caldron, Fields remained largely silent. Once he said he was opposed to capital punishment. It was about the limit of his zeal. (251)

It was Annie who interested him in women's rights, and it was she who reacted more strongly to John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry. In December 1859 she wrote in her diary: "We hear that Brown was executed the 2d of December. I wept strong hot tears, not for him but for our country. The wound it makes in my heart is as deep as the love I bear

her....I believed and hoped it could not, would not be--May we wipe out this national sin."

In June 1861 James was named editor of the Atlantic Monthly, succeeding James Russell Lowell, who had held this position since its founding in 1857. The magazine, like its rival, Harper's, was not directed toward the general public; it was a serious journal for literary America. It contained, however, enough light literature and commentary to make it profitable. When James became the editor, he had plans for broadening the readership: more young contributors, a wider circulation, more popular appeal. He instituted his own methods for reimbursing his Atlantic Monthly authors:

He introduced the practice of paying for articles when they were accepted instead of waiting until they were printed. He was one of the first editors to advance money for articles to be written. And he not infrequently increased a writer's rate of pay voluntarily when he thought the increase was deserved. His policy of generosity was designed to keep his writers with him, and he hated to permit any of his regular contributors to write for other magazines. (Austin 30)

James' innovations were successful; the Atlantic's circulation rose from thirty-two thousand in 1863 to fifty thousand in 1870 (Austin 31).

Since James assumed the editorship just as Bull Run was lost, he could not afford to ignore politics. He took a strong stand on the Civil War, supporting the Union, backing the Republican Party, and attacking slave owners. Among the

contributions to the Atlantic during the war years were Emerson's "The President's Proclamation," "The Man Without a Country" by Edward Everett Hale, "Barbara Frietchie" by Whittier, and Julia Ward Howe's "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." Nevertheless, according to Mark Howe, "By far the greater portion of each issue was devoted to the fiction, the essays, the poetry, the criticism that would have appeared in any period of peace" (The Atlantic Monthly and Its Makers 45). James continued to seek new talent, publishing works by Rose Terry Cooke, Lucy Larcom, and Celia Thaxter. These women all became members of Annie's circle of friends.

In 1864 The Old Corner Bookstore was sold to E.P. Dutton Booksellers, and Ticknor and Fields leased a large mansion at 125 Tremont Street, which James furnished extravagantly. In the same year Ticknor and Fields purchased the North American Review and a juvenile monthly, Our Young Folks.¹¹ They also began printing "elegant" volumes of literature, Red Line Editions on tinted paper with gilt bindings for the newly rich of the Gilded Age.¹² Business could not have been better; five major periodicals and thousands of books were being published. Throngs of customers crowded the showroom, and Fields was besieged by visitors.

By 1865, however, James was becoming physically tired; he had always suffered from migraines and, since 1857, from

a lame wrist. William Dean Howells became assistant editor of the Atlantic, and gradually took over most of the management of the magazine, although Fields stayed on as editor until July 1871.

In November 1867 Charles Dickens arrived in Boston. His visit proved to be one of the most fascinating episodes in Annie and James' marriage. For five months, Dickens and his needs dominated their lives. Annie was attracted by both the charm and the dependency of the man she called "the Great Enchanter." Although she had grown accustomed to famous authors, the legends surrounding Dickens made him intriguing. In addition, he aroused her sympathy when he confided in her about his physical and emotional problems, including his depression over his separation from his young mistress, the actress Ellen Ternan.

Dickens' appeal for James was different; Annie provides a clue to it in her diary:

He says the moment he is removed from the man he is overwhelmed by the thought of his great genius; fortunately while he is with him and their relations are simple and manly he does not think of it but afterward and now continually he reflects upon the many sided intellect and the rare heart and the noble spirit we call Charles Dickens and wonders why America does not rise to do him honor.

(Diary, 10 March 1868)

Motivated originally by his business interests, James experienced a real bonding with this intelligent man who could be as warm, outgoing, and fun-loving as himself. This

visit, which was so memorable for them both, will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Unfortunately, the years from 1867 to 1869 were not only the golden Dickens years for James Fields; they were troubled times as well as business and personal problems began to develop. Fields was still the most respected editor and publisher in Boston, surrounded by many admiring friends. However, the economic uncertainties of post-Civil War America led to instability in the book trade. Fields countered by launching a new line of cheaper books: some were designed for railway reading; others were less expensive editions of his most popular authors. He also halved the number of new titles he published in 1867 and offered new editions of his old standards, thus keeping his publishing business afloat.

Fields was not as successful with his magazines, particularly the North American, Every Saturday, and the Atlantic. The North American, a quarterly journal, had never been profitable, but James felt that it was a prestigious publication and constantly tried to improve it. Despite his efforts, it operated at a loss until it was sold in 1880 to D. Appleton & Co. of New York. Every Saturday, a popular weekly journal, had been successful under the editorship of Thomas Bailey Aldrich, but when James Osgood decided to change the format and convert it to a pictorial

magazine, problems arose. It came into direct competition with Harper's Weekly, and subscriptions fell precipitously. Eventually it returned to its original format, was never profitable.

James was experiencing other problems at the Atlantic Monthly. Although the circulation of the Atlantic dropped only slightly, there was increasing criticism of its editor by younger authors whose work was not being accepted. Fields was accused of provincialism, of favoritism toward his New England authors, of being heavy-handed in his editing, and of holding articles too long before printing them. For someone for whom good public relations were paramount, this criticism was unsettling.

The publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's "The True Story of Lady Byron's Life" in September 1869 exacerbated the problems of the Atlantic. In 1856 Lady Byron had confided to Stowe that Lord Byron was an adulterer, who had also committed incest with his half-sister Augusta Leigh. At that time, she suggested that Lady Byron not reveal the story because of the pain public knowledge would entail. By 1869, however, Lady Byron had died, and Harriet was ready to right the wrong, especially since Countess Guiccioli, Byron's mistress, had just published a book praising Lord Byron and condemning his wife. Neither Oliver Wendell Holmes, who read the article before it was submitted, nor William Dean Howells, who was acting editor of the Atlantic

because James Fields was in Europe, nor Fields himself, anticipated the uproar the article would produce. Both the magazine and its author were accused of sensationalism and prurience and attacked for besmirching Lord Byron's reputation. Mark Howe discreetly describes the article as "an exceedingly outspoken 'revelation' of Lord Byron's personal character" and continues: "What is noteworthy, with special reference to the history of the Atlantic, is that the article so outraged a large number of its readers that the circulation of the magazine suffered a grievous reduction--indeed so serious a blow that the recovery from it was not accomplished for many years" (The Atlantic Monthly and Its Makers 49-50).

There appear to be several reasons why Stowe had chosen to write the article at this inopportune time. One was that in 1869 she and her husband had been delegates to the Hartford Suffrage convention where she became involved in this movement, as she had in the Abolitionist cause. Not only a woman's right to vote, but her rights as a married woman were at issue. In supporting the Fourteenth Amendment, Harriet Beecher Stowe embarked on another crusade; as Joan Hedrick writes: "'The True Story of Lady Byron's Life' would be the Uncle Tom's Cabin of sexual slavery" (356). By exposing the infidelities of Lord Byron, she hoped to show the burdens which married women in the nineteenth century often endured.

A second reason for writing about Lady Byron was Stowe's anger with the Nation, a prestigious journal which emerged after the Civil War. It had become a bastion of male power whose reviewers frequently attacked women writers. She and her friends Anna Dickinson and Rebecca Harding Davis had become targets for condescending reviews deriding women's sentimentality and didacticism. In Harriet's mind, the time had come to defend not only Lady Byron, with whom she felt a close identity, but all women who were misused by men. Unfortunately for James Fields, the time was not right for her revelations; the public was not sympathetic, and the reputation of the Atlantic suffered.

To add to his problems, James was experiencing an unpleasant falling out with his partners. Howard Ticknor, William Ticknor's oldest son, graduated from Harvard in 1860 and immediately began to work at the Old Corner Bookstore, first as a clerk and then, upon his father's death, as one of the junior partners. For reasons that remain unclear, James never liked him. By chance, one Saturday afternoon in September 1868, Fields saw him kissing one of the women employees. Of course, such behavior was unacceptable, and Fields used the incident as a reason to fire Howard Ticknor. After stormy negotiations, Ticknor was bought out. Much to James' delight, a new partnership, Fields, Osgood & Company, was formed in November 1868.

Even more disturbing than these problems with his magazines and his partners were Fields' disputes with a number of his authors. Trouble arose with Julia Ward Howe's criticism of the Ode which Annie had written for the dedication of the Great Organ which had been installed in 1863 in Boston's newly remodelled Music Hall. The Fields' old friend, actress Charlotte Cushman, had been asked to recite a poem at the dedication, and she invited Annie to write it. Her Ode of nearly two hundred lines was clearly the work of a young, inexperienced, and not very talented poet, but it did not deserve the criticism Mrs. Howe heaped on it. Although it had been published anonymously, the author was known to be Annie Fields. Possibly because she felt that she should have been asked to write the poem and possibly because she was angry at James Fields for not publishing some of her poetry, Mrs. Howe wrote a scathing review in the Commonwealth:

The Ode which was now presented to the public, judged from a literary point of view, deserves neither praise nor criticism. It had no characteristic of a poem other than phrase and rhyme...A mere statement, couched in the usual phraseology, and interrupted by irrelevant rhyme can in no wise be called a poem. Such, alas! the present Ode proved to be, with no stamp of originality, and with no line that will remain...the occasion was one calling for poetry, and the false ambition of this attempt merely blocked the way from something better. (1)

Eventually Mrs. Howe apologized, but the damage was done, and thereafter the friendship between the Howes and the Fields was strained.

Problems of more far-reaching proportions developed with Mary Abigail Dodge, whose pen name was Gail Hamilton. She was a writer of essays, books, and juvenile poems and stories who had drawn James' attention when she wrote an article in the Atlantic in 1860. Two years later he published her first book Country Living, and within six years he issued eight more of her works, most of which were very popular. During this time a friendship developed between Annie, James, and Gail, who wrote:

Mr. Fields is not only a handsome man, but one of the nicest men in the world, straightforward, genial, simple-hearted, though in the thick of the city. I like him very much, and he has the sweetest wife, and beautiful, too...(Tryon 335)

The Fields entertained her at dinner, took her to concerts, and introduced her to many of their friends. Annie went out of her way to cement the friendship. James admired her talent, although he did describe her as an "eccentric," and "a queer bird" (Tryon 335).

The situation changed radically when Hamilton, reading an article in the Congregationalist entitled "Pay of Authors," discovered that publishers usually paid authors ten percent of the retail price of each book sold. Because this was not what she had been paid, she wrote to Fields in a friendly fashion, pointing out the discrepancy. Indeed

she was right. James believed that he could best serve his authors through his own arrangements, which included an variable fee schedule based on a variety of circumstances.¹³ Under such a system, it was incumbent that he be scrupulously fair and careful in all his agreements but, unfortunately, James tended to be casual in his business affairs. His bookkeeping was lax, and he depended upon his charm and reputation to insure his authors' loyalty. For her first book Hamilton received a royalty of 10 per cent, with the first edition exempt from payment. For her second work, she was promised a royalty of a set sum of fifteen cents on each volume sold rather than a percentage of the retail price. This new agreement was proposed supposedly because of the changing market during the Civil War. For her next two books, she received the same amount. As he had always done, Fields conducted these negotiations quickly and casually, and Gail Hamilton agreed to his terms. However, it now occurred to her that she had gotten a bad deal. The fluctuating prices to which James referred were fluctuating upward. While the retail price of her book remained at \$1.50, she lost nothing with her fifteen cent royalty; when the prices rose, she was receiving a much lower percentage.

At this point James made a tactical error; neither he nor Annie understood the extent of Hamilton's animosity. Annie did not recognize the cause of her complaints; she

wrote in her diary: "Having a woman's instincts in me I think she was mortally wounded because we did not invite her to meet Dickens and this is the root of the trouble..." (7 June 1868). More important, James did not take Gail's complaints seriously and probably felt that he could solve the problems with his usual charm. Instead, the problem escalated. Hamilton began writing to other authors whom Ticknor and Fields represented apprising them of her situation and suggesting that they might also be subjected to the same deceit. After months of negotiations, she and her lawyers finally arranged for a tribunal to judge the controversy. She asked for over \$3,000 in fees owed, but she was awarded only "\$1250 as compensation for royalties on the volumes not under written contract" (Tryon 348). The referees "rendered no moral judgement on either party" and ruled that neither "party intended to defraud the other" (Tryon 347). The outcome was satisfactory neither to James nor to Gail Hamilton. She countered with a vicious attack on James in A Battle of the Books.

That James and Annie were so devastated by this experience suggests a certain naiveté on their part. While their original feelings toward Hamilton had been sincere, her words and actions revealed that she was a vindictive, uncompromising person, and it is surprising that they were so hurt by her actions. Afterwards Annie longed to write to her again, but she never did. For James, the experience

symbolized a world which he did not understand and with which he could not cope. It was one more step in his disenchantment with the world of publishing.

Among those most receptive to Gail Hamilton's vituperation was Sophia Hawthorne. Since her husband's death in 1864, she had been in constant financial straits, plaguing James with letters about her lack of funds. Although she earned some money through the publication of Hawthorne's journals, which she edited for the Atlantic, it was not enough to support her adult family, none of whom worked. As the widow of one of America's foremost authors and longtime friend of the Fields, she felt that she deserved special consideration from them. But, as Randall Stewart notes: "The reader of these passages from Mrs. Hawthorne's letters is likely to be a little impatient with her management of affairs. The children appear to have been pampered...Moreover, Mrs. Hawthorne's tone of martyrdom is unpleasant." ("Mrs. Hawthorne's Financial Difficulties" 52-53).¹⁴

Ticknor and Fields had been both publishers and bankers for Nathaniel Hawthorne, an arrangement which he agreed upon: "Indeed, so great had been Hawthorne's confidence in their acumen and integrity that no systematic accounts had been required or rendered" (Stewart, "Mrs. Hawthorne's Quarrel" 254).¹⁵ Nonetheless, when her funds began to run

out, Sophia began to question James about her husband's royalties. Hamilton fueled the fire:

Mrs. Hawthorne's rigorous inquiry into financial matters was, as we have seen, the natural result of straitened circumstances. But it is doubtful if she would have lost confidence in Fields, or quarreled with him, had it not been for the persuasive influence of her friend Gail Hamilton, who at this same time was challenging the justice of Field's dealings with his authors...

(Stewart, "Mrs. Hawthorne's Quarrel" 255)

In 1868 the outspoken Elizabeth Peabody approached James on her sister's behalf; he immediately showed her a written contract with Hawthorne in which he had agreed in 1864 that his fifteen per cent would be changed to twelve cents per copy. Elizabeth retracted her argument in a letter to James in which she said: "I shall be happy to give my testimony that the business transactions between your firm and the Hawthornes are *legally* [my italics] righteous..."¹⁶

Although he had never done anything illegal, in truth, James' practice of making verbal agreements and friendly deals with his authors aggravated the situation. In the end, regardless of who was right and who was wrong, the two families became permanently alienated. Sophia left for Europe in 1868 where she died in 1871, and Julian Hawthorne omitted all reference to the Fields in his biography of his father.

As a result of the strain of both his business and physical problems, James left Fields, Osgood and Co.

in 1870 and in 1871 he retired from the Atlantic.¹⁷ During the Grant Administration, the economy had begun to falter; high prices, unemployment, inflation and bankruptcies were common, all of which effected the publishing trade.

Although James was only fifty-three at the time, he had become ill and depressed and welcomed the opportunity to turn to writing and the lecture circuit. In 1871 he began travelling to New York, Philadelphia, and throughout New England. Annie usually stayed at home. She was becoming involved with charitable work, and, in any case, did not enjoy the rigors of railroad travel. She did, however, accompany James on two of his long western trips and wrote him daily when they were apart. In 1874 they also began building their summer home in Manchester-By-The-Sea, which became a comforting retreat for them for the rest of their lives.

During the decade of the seventies James suffered from a variety of illnesses: "water-on-the-knee," a sore wrist, bronchial colds, neuralgia, headaches. In May 1879, while lecturing at Wellesley College, he suffered a brain hemorrhage and collapsed. While he was recuperating, no visitors were allowed; Annie, who was his only companion, read to him from his favorite British authors: Thackeray, Eliot, and Milton. During the next two years, two more hemorrhages occurred; again Annie remained constantly at his side. In early 1881, he suffered a massive heart attack and

then, on April 23, 1881, at home with his wife, he suffered a fatal attack. As Tryon observes: "The grief-stricken widow he left was but forty-six, yet despite all differences of age it had been a life together of singular attachment and devotion" (382). All his estate, worth almost \$160,000 was left to Annie. He was buried in a private ceremony in the Adams family lot in Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge.

Annie Fields' adult life was defined by her marriage to this charismatic, loving, dependent husband who gave her the empowerment implicit in a secure relationship. Their relationship was not one-sided, however; Annie brought to their marriage the poise that money, education, and social status confers. Her background and family connections enabled her to feel at ease with James and his literary friends despite the fact that she was so much younger than most of his acquaintances. During her years of marriage, Annie flourished in her several roles: hostess, editorial collaborator, and wife of a famous man. For his part, James took great pride in Annie's social grace and charm and respected her literary opinions. While he recognized her limitations as an author and poet, he respected her ability as a diarist.¹⁶ On 15 June 1871 Annie noted: "writing out my memories...for J. to use". In his *magnus opus*, Yesterdays with Authors, his debt to her is clear, particularly in his description of Dickens' visit where he

included without any acknowledgement) excerpts directly from her diaries.¹⁹

That Annie and James Fields loved one another and depended upon one another is obvious; that she was able to maintain her individuality and assert her opinion in her marriage is also apparent. As Rita Gollin explains:

If her friendships, interests, and standards were essentially the same as her husband's, she nonetheless tilted him, as when she advised him to publish a poem by Louisa May Alcott, a story by Henry James, or a novel by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.

("Subordinated Power 157)

The incident with Louisa May Alcott to which Gollin refers is a typical instance of James' respect for Annie's opinion. Although Annie and Louisa were cousins, they were never friendly.²⁰ James did not admire her work; in fact, "he is said to have advised Louisa early in her career that she had no talent for writing" (Roman 45). In 1863 Hawthorne sent Alcott's memorial poem "Thoreau's Flute" to James for publication but he did not publish it until Annie saw it and sent Louisa suggestions for revision.²¹

In her biography Chapters from a Life, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps provides another example of Annie's influence upon James. In the mid-1860s Phelps had submitted her manuscript for The Gates Ajar to James; after a long wait, he finally accepted it. Phelps observed:

I have the impression that the disposal of the book...wavered for a while upon the decision of one man, whose wife shared the reading of the manuscript. "Take it," she said at last, decidedly; and the fiat went forth. (108)

Annie preserved her identity in other ways as well. As I have mentioned, she rarely traveled with James when he was on the lecture circuit after his retirement; instead, she pursued her own interest in writing, translating, and philanthropy. Although James was concerned that she was devoting too much time to these interests, he never discouraged her. In a letter written during a lecture tour in 1875, he said: "So, my dear love, do not let me stand in the way of your happiness, but if you think you can...do that work...I must not interfere."²²

Although Annie pursued her own career, her relationship with James never diminished; in fact, her independence is a testament to the power of the gift of sympathy they shared. This same self-sufficiency played a role in her happiness with her next great love, Sarah Orne Jewett.

Notes

1. Explaining Fields' place in nineteenth-century American history, William Tryon writes "As a single representative of the larger movement, the journey of James T. Fields from Portsmouth village to the city of Boston epitomized the trend of a whole nation" (19).
2. Referring to the many anthologies of poetry which appeared in pre Civil War America, Thomas Wortham writes: "By far the most popular of these anthologies, and an excellent index to the poetic tastes and achievements of early nineteenth-century America, is Rufus Griswold's The Poets and Poetry of America (1842). Gathered within its nearly six hundred large, quarto-sized pages were extracts from the writings of some hundred and fifty persons, nearly all of them contemporary to the volume's publication" (278).
3. In his effort to encourage American literature, in 1843 James Fields persuaded William Ticknor to publish Whittier's Lays of My Home and Other Poems and assume all the risks of publication; Whittier was paid a royalty of ten per cent.
4. Because of his interest in medical books, Ticknor had published Oliver Wendell Holmes' Homeopathy and its Kindred Delusions in 1842. It was Fields who encouraged Dr. Holmes' ambition to write poetry.
5. When James convinced Longfellow to join the ranks of Ticknor's authors in 1846, "it was a landmark in the firm's history" (Tryon 108).
6. Ellen Ballou presents a less flattering view of James Fields. Comparing him with his long-time partner William Ticknor, she writes: "Fields...had been brought up by a widowed mother. In consequence, he was self-centered, but graced with a charm that generally concealed his egotism. In religion he was a Unitarian, in politics, uncommitted until the course of events had shown the locally accepted way" (62). Although there is some truth in Ballou's assessment, the complimentary descriptions are generally accepted.
7. James T. Fields, letter to Mary Russell Mitford, 27 October 1854, Huntington Library, San Marino.
8. James T. Fields, letter to Annie Fields, n.d., Huntington Library, San Marino.
9. There is a box at the Huntington Library with fifty-seven letters from James to Annie, the most emotional part of which are the salutations to "My dearest". There are no extant letters from Annie to James.

10. In her essay, "148 Charles Street", Willa Cather described her first visit to that famous address. Her friend, Mrs. Brandeis, "thought I would enjoy meeting a very charming old lady who was a near neighbor of hers, the widow of James T. Fields, of the publishing firm of Ticknor and Fields. The name of that firm meant something to me. In my father's bookcase there were little volumes of Longfellow and Hawthorne with that imprint" (53).

11. In an attempt to persuade Lydia Child to contribute to the magazine, James listed her name without her permission. When she was offended "He sent her an unexpected royalty check for \$460, a copy of the first issue of Our Young Folks, a request that she become a contributor, and got Annie to ask for a set of her previous publications and to dispatch a cordial invitation to the salon on Charles Street. Fields was getting older but the touch was as sure as ever" (Tryon 289-90).

12. Tryon observes: "Whether the volumes were vulgarly cheap or vulgarly dear, gone were simple, tasteful books, swamped by Grantism and the brown decades" (295).

13. Fields also believed in oral contracts rather than written ones. He was able to set his own rules because he often published and sold books that no other publisher would handle, lending the prestige of his house to their work, and paying generous royalties. He believed that "the imprint of his house was the hallmark of literary success; he himself was the American Maecenas, the guardian and protector of them all" (Tryon 337).

14. Annie began to lose patience with the family's demands upon herself and James. In her diary in September 1867 she wrote: "Yesterday Mrs. Hawthorne came to him [Fields] complaining of poverty. He has already given her 700 dollars above what he owes her and she has debts in Concord to the same amount, yet Julian lives at the Parker House and in spite of his mother's assertions to the contrary spends a great deal of money."

15. Even in the mid twentieth-century there were publishers who acted as bankers for famous authors. For many years, beginning in the 1930's, Holt paid Robert Frost a guaranteed annual income.

16. Elizabeth Peabody, letter to James T. Fields, 4 January 1869, Boston Public Library, Boston.

17. Not only did James have migraine headaches, but there are indications that at times he suffered from depression as well.

18. Annie's writings in the Atlantic were fillers, not features, and upon occasion her work was omitted when more important authors submitted poems or stories at the last minute.

19. Confirming this pirating of Annie's work, Rita Gollin writes: "What has remained virtually unknown is the use James T. Fields made of his wife's diaries. In fact, he lifted from them whole sketches of his essays on Dickens and Hawthorne, which appeared in the Atlantic in 1871 and were republished the following year in his most famous book, Yesterdays with Authors (Legacy 29). In Memories of a Hostess, Mark Howe notes: "In Yesterdays with Authors (see pp. 230-31), Fields made use, with revisions and omissions, of this portion of his wife's diary" (176).

20. However, Louisa did live at the Fields' home in 1861 when she was teaching in Boston.

21. Louisa wrote thanking "Dear Cousin Annie" for helping her: "if any one takes the trouble to criticize it seems to prove that the thing is worth mending."

Louisa May Alcott, letter to Annie Fields, 2 June 1863, Huntington Library, San Marino.

22. James Fields, letter to Annie Fields, 25 January 1875, Huntington Library, San Marino.

Chapter Three: Sarah Orne Jewett

"It is manifestly unfair that feminine
friendship should be unnatural"
(Willa Cather to Louise Pound,
June 15, 1892)

The friendship between Sarah Orne Jewett and Annie Fields began in 1869 shortly after William Dean Howells accepted Jewett's short story "Mr. Bruce" for publication in the Atlantic Monthly. The earliest letter from Sarah to Annie is dated December 4, 1877. Their relationship grew during the years that followed, and, in the winter of 1882, less than a year after James Fields' death, Sarah moved for a part of each year from her home in South Berwick, Maine, to the Fields' home either at 148 Charles Street or Manchester-by-the Sea. She was thirty-three, and Annie was forty-eight when they began their life together.

Sarah Orne Jewett was born in South Berwick, Maine, in 1849, the second of three daughters; she grew up in a happy, closely-knit, upper-middle class family. Her maternal grandfather was a sea captain who left his children and grandchildren independently wealthy; her paternal grandfather was a country doctor, as was her father. Although as an adult she travelled extensively and lived part of each year in Massachusetts, most of her writing was set in Maine. One reason for this enduring connection with her home was her attachment to her father. In Paula Blanchard's biography of Jewett, she writes that Theodore

Jewett's "influence on Sarah cannot be overstated. He was father, teacher, comrade and model" (24). She continues:

She absorbed his love of reading and his wide-ranging intellectual curiosity, following his explorations of literature, science, history, and religion. She shared as well his interest in herbs and plants...From her father she gained her emotional poise, the sensitive balance of compassion and humor with which she viewed the human scene around her...like him she learned to imaginatively participate in the intimate griefs of others without either retreating or being overwhelmed...Like her father she became retiring and courteous to the point of diffidence while at the same time maintaining a sturdy respect for her own abilities.

(25)

In 1878, just as Sarah's friendship with Annie was developing, Dr. Jewett died of a heart attack.

Although biographers tend to downplay their relationship, her mother was also an important influence on Sarah's life.¹ Caroline Jewett loved reading, her tastes running to popular fiction as well as Austen, Eliot, and Oliphant. In the manner of small town New Englanders, she enjoyed entertaining her friends and relatives at home. It was a tradition Sarah and her sisters continued after their mother's death and which appears as a symbol for human interdependence in much of Sarah's writing. Laura Richards, Julia Ward Howe's daughter, describes a familiar scene:

Much as I loved to find her [Jewett] in Boston, I loved better still to see her at home in Berwick...I began by going as my mother's companion. She and the

"Jewett girls", Sarah and Mary, were great cronies...With Sarah and Mary Jewett she was a girl again. I was allowed to join in their delightful play. She sat at the piano playing and singing old songs. Sometimes we all joined in, Sarah--I can see her now, standing by the piano, looking like a damask rose in a green velvet sheath--turning the pages with quip and jest.
(363-365)

Happy in the security of her family and her life in South Berwick, Jewett postponed decisions of sexuality and identity which arose from intense female friendships she developed during her youth.² Sarah's diaries, written between 1867 and 1879, document her "crushes" on young women such as Cecily Burt, a girl she met in Cincinnati, and Ella Walworth and Grace Gordon, childhood friends. While she outgrew the fervor of these early relationships, she always had close female friendships. Even during the years she spent with Annie Fields, she was deeply devoted to several other women: Sarah Whitman, Harriet Prescott Spofford, Louise Imogene Guiney, Celia Thaxter, and Sara Norton.

Critics have commented that Sarah prolonged her childhood well past adolescence. They observe that even most of her writing was for children rather than adults until her early thirties. Paula Blanchard believes that

the extension of childhood was essential to the preservation of the writer she would become. The sense of seeing everyone and everything with a fresh eye, the playfulness, the absolute

honesty and lack of pretense that we associate with the characteristic Jewett style, all belong to the childhood self.
(44-45)

I agree with Blanchard that Sarah's "childhood self" was an integral part of her adulthood and contributed to her manner of writing, but this interpretation neglects Jewett's well-defined theory of imaginative realism, which is an important aspect of her style.³ It also denies the seriousness with which Jewett took her profession. Sharon O'Brien confirms Jewett's commitment to improving her technique:

...Jewett took Flaubert as her mentor because she wanted to affect her readers by a finely honed art. Whereas some members of the preceding generation of women writers disclaimed artistic responsibility for their works, Jewett self-consciously experimented with form and technique, willingly devoting time and effort to improving her craft.
(341)

Efforts to portray Sarah Orne Jewett as childlike infantilize her. Instead of interpreting her oft-quoted remark on her forty-ninth birthday: "this is my birthday and I am always nine years old," (Fields, Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett 125) as a wish to remain a child, I suggest that it was a reflection of her pleasure with her life at that time. Furthermore, I think that the implications of her use of pet names for herself, her friends, and Annie Fields have been exaggerated since this practice was common among many women in her circle.⁴ Moreover, Annie participated in, and even

encouraged, Sarah's juvenile behavior. In an early letter to Annie, Sarah wrote:

...I do hope to be in Boston again and I should like dearly to make you a little visit though I am afraid I could not carry out the kind and thoughtful play with each other which you make out for the whole month--And we will play with each other whenever we have a chance, and talk about the rose tea set and find time every day for one handkerchief doll at least...⁵

Once Sarah Orne Jewett began to gain recognition as a writer, she became dedicated to her career. Her style became skillful and well defined. As she explored new ideas, her mastery of the Maine dialect enhanced the artistry of her local color writing. Her insights into the lives of the women about whom she wrote also expanded. Referring to Kate Chopin, Ellen Glasgow, Mary Wilkins Freeman, and Sarah Jewett as regionalists, Cecelia Tichi states:

Under the cover of regionalism, however, these women writers explored the territory of women's lives. Their essential agenda in the era of the new woman was to map the geography of their gender. They were regionalists--but not solely in the ways critics have conventionally thought. The geography of America formed an important part of their work, but essentially they charted the regions of women's lives, regions both without and within the self. (598)

For these early feminist authors, the setting of their work was only one aspect of their writing; the other was the psyche of their characters. Their exploration of both the

internal and external aspects of women's lives resulted in representations of complex characters like Edna Pontellier, Sarah Penn, and Almira Todd.

No one is sure when Sarah Jewett began to write, but her first published story, "Jenny Garrow's Lovers," appeared when she was eighteen. She regarded the publication of "Mr. Bruce" in the Atlantic Monthly in 1873 as the beginning of her career. Since all her early work was submitted to the Atlantic, she had to endure years of rejections and editorial comments from James Fields and William Dean Howells before she became a regular contributor. When Howells succeeded Fields at the Atlantic, he became her mentor and friend. Horace Scudder, editor of the juvenile publication, The Riverside Magazine, had published several of Sarah's early stories for children, and he, too, was one of her literary advisors.

Several significant events occurred as Sarah's career was developing. After the death of her maternal grandmother in 1870, she suffered from a depression which lasted almost eight years. She was plagued with uncertainty about her self-worth, questioning--in terms evocative of many women today--what her role in life should be:

Above all, she was tormented by doubts about what her "work" really was. Certainly writing stories was work, but she did not know whether writing letters, running errands, visiting the aunt, and so on was not equally her

"work" as a woman. Trying to do everything, she accomplished very little. (Blanchard 66)

Sarah turned to the religious commitment of her friend Kate de C. Birckhead of Newport and to Phillips Brooks, Boston's charismatic Episcopal minister, for support. By immersing herself in the doctrines and activities of the church, she found a way to assuage her anxieties through the help of a loving and caring God.

In this spirit of Christian devotion, Sarah expanded her reading to include exemplary Christian writers, especially Theophilus Parsons, a Harvard law professor and Swedenborgian, with whom she developed a personal relationship. Because Swedenborgian philosophy emphasized individual responsibility, her relationship with him helped her achieve a calmer and more cosmic view of life. He strengthened her commitment to her career and urged her to reach out to others. Through his encouragement, she regained her self-confidence and began to write seriously. Since this was the era of Stowe and Phelps, they also became role models who showed that a woman's writing could serve religion. As she became involved in her community, her innate gift of sympathy began to develop, and she took pleasure in teaching a Sunday Class and helping Lillian Munger, the troubled daughter of a local minister. Sarah's friendship with Professor Parsons lasted from approximately 1872 to 1877, the year Deephaven was published. Although

their last letters ended in June shortly after Sarah's first winter with Annie, I agree with Paula Blanchard's observation that "the effect of Parsons' Swedenborgian teaching can hardly be overstated, and we must take at face value Jewett's statement that she kept 'a sense of it under everything else'" (78).

Deephaven, Sarah Orne Jewett's first successful novel, was published by James R. Osgood & Co., the successor to Ticknor and Fields.⁶ The book is a series of sketches about a pair of wealthy young city women, Kate Lancaster and Helen Denis, who spend a summer together in the small fishing village of Deephaven. Elements of plot, theme, and character in Deephaven foreshadow Jewett's later stories and novels. Young women from the city learning from a generation of men and women who have faced the vicissitudes of sea-faring lives became a favorite subject for Jewett culminating in The Country of the Pointed Firs in 1896.⁷ Deephaven not only anticipates her later works, but it also expresses Jewett's long-standing concern with friendship. In addition to the diaries she kept as a teenager, Sarah had written a holograph entitled "Outgrown Friends." Marjorie Pryse postulates that these works "show Jewett turning to writing initially as a way of exploring female friendship, then, in the process, discovering writing as her vocation" (47). Pryse sees the diaries as Jewett's first

fiction, allowing "her to give both her friends and her feelings about her friends a 'habitation'" (52).

The theme of friendship is central to Deephaven. In the preface Jewett wrote: "I dedicate this story of out-of-door life and country people first to my father and mother, my two best friends, and also to all my other friends, whose names I say to myself lovingly, though I do not write them here." Throughout the novel, the relationship between the two women is paramount. Describing their final days in Deephaven, Helen says:

We both grew so well and brown and strong,
and Kate and I did not get tired of each
other at all, which I think was wonderful,
for few friendships could bear such a test.
We were together always, and alone together
a great deal: and we became wonderfully well
acquainted...(251)

This passage anticipates Annie and Sarah's relationship in which the spirit of empathy was the overriding feature, beautifully described here as "together always, and alone together."

The publication of Deephaven marked a turning point in Jewett's life as she evolved from a little-known children's writer into a well-recognized adult author. In her new status, she was introduced to Boston's literary world, giving her more opportunities to see Annie Fields. In August 1880 both Sarah and the Fields were vacationing at Appledore, Celia Thaxter's Isles of Shoal Hotel. During their visit Annie and Sarah spent time together exploring

the island. Later that month she visited Manchester-by-the-Sea, and three months later Annie sent her a copy of her newly published book of poems, Under the Olive. In her letter of thanks, Sarah acknowledged the significance of this gesture: "I take it, as I know you will let me, as a sign of something there is between us, and since we have hold of each others hands we will not let them go."⁸ But at this time both women were leading busy lives; thus, despite their attraction to one another, their friendship grew slowly.

The year after their summer at Appledore, James Fields died. Celia Thaxter was visiting the Fields in April 1881 when he suffered his fatal heart attack. In November she wrote to his devastated widow: "Of all things on earth, don't shut yourself away, throw bridges over your moat and let love come to you or you will die a thousand deaths of silence and sorrow and despair."⁹ Perhaps as a result of this letter, Annie invited Sarah to 148 Charles Street. During this visit, the younger woman consoled her bereaved hostess, and Annie comforted Sarah during her attacks of rheumatoid arthritis. The attachment, generated by their mutual gifts of sympathy, quickly blossomed. As Paula Blanchard explains:

Sarah's talent for appreciating the meager charms of a Massachusetts April, with its frogs still half-drugged with cold, its shriveled barberries and gone-by pussy willows, made her an ideal companion in grief --the essential New

Englander who, to borrow a phrase from Robert Frost, knows what to make of a diminished thing. (154)

After spending the winter together, they decided to go abroad. For Annie it would be a distraction from her mourning; for Sarah it would be a search for relief from her illness. A letter from Annie to friends in Europe describes her feelings at this time:

I have let our cottage at Manchester for the summer and I am talking of passing a few months on your side of the water. I have partly promised to join my sister in Switzerland for a month, but I go with a young lady, Sarah Orne Jewett, who is not strong and who needs such a journey. We have both known her for several years because her native land is the neighbourhood of Portsmouth, New Hampshire and we both liked her from the first. This winter she has been living with me and I have learned to love her and to find great comfort in caring for her health and spirits...¹⁰

Upon their return from Europe, Annie and Sarah settled into a routine they would follow for many years: unless they were travelling, they spent the winters in Boston, followed by a spring visit to Maine and summers in Manchester-By-The-Sea, then another visit to Maine, and back to Boston. When at home at 148 Charles Street, Sarah spent most of her day writing, and Annie divided her time between household management, the Associated Charities of Boston, and her own writing. Part of each day was devoted to time together-- alone or with their many visitors.

The reasons why their friendship developed so quickly and so intensely are complex. Annie had many women friends who would have been more than willing to try to fill the void left by James' death, but with Sarah there seemed to be an immediate bond. One basis for the attraction between them was the similarity in their backgrounds and interests: they were both from old New England families, daughters of doctors, attached to their families, devoted to writing, with sincere religious commitments and a life-long love of literature.

In Memories of a Hostess Mark Howe suggests another reason: he believed that James Fields encouraged the relationship. He quotes "Together," a romantic, emotional poem written by Sarah and published in May 1875 in the Atlantic.¹¹ He mentions it, he says, "to explain in a way the union--there is no truer word for it--that came later to exist between herself and Mrs. Fields" (282). He continues with an explanation of James' role:

It was not strange that the writer of such a poem should have seemed to Fields, before his death in 1881, the ideal friend to fill the impending gap in the life of his wife...He must have realized that the intensely personal element in her nature would require an outlet through an intensely personal devotion. If he could have foreseen the relation that grew up between Mrs. Fields and Miss Jewett...almost immediately upon his death...he would surely have felt a great security of satisfaction in what was yet to be.

(283)

Seen through the lens of feminist psychology, the insights Howe presents are intriguing. Not only does he sanction this relationship, but he implies that it was arranged by her (much older) husband. Howe's approval, however, was not unusual since Boston Marriages were fairly common at this time.¹² What is fascinating is Fields' participation in the arrangement. That he did encourage it cannot be doubted--not only Howe, but Harriet Prescott Spofford, another of Annie's friends and biographers, mentions it in A Little Book of Friends: "Before his death, Mr. Fields suggested Sarah Orne Jewett as a possible friend and companion for his wife in the future" (18).

While it is conceivable that James wanted to protect his wife both from loneliness and from other men, it is more likely that he was simply reflecting nineteenth-century norms. It is improbable that he envisioned a sexual relationship between the two women. In light of that century's ideal of the purity of women, he would not have contemplated this possibility. Instead, he accepted the prevailing view of women's friendships:

...nineteenth-century American society did not taboo close female relationships but rather recognized them as a socially viable form of human contact--and, as such, acceptable throughout a woman's life. Indeed it was not these homosocial ties that were inhibited but rather heterosexual leanings....One could thus argue what within such a world of female support, intimacy and

ritual it was only to be expected that adult women would turn trustingly and lovingly to each other.

(Smith-Rosenberg 27-28)

That Annie Fields acquiesced happily to her husband's wishes indicates that she did not have any hesitation about forming an alliance with another woman; she and Sarah lived together, travelled widely, and wrote endearing letters without a trace of self-consciousness. However, it is important to reiterate that throughout the years they were together, Sarah maintained her close friendships with other women, and Annie preserved her independence and profound sense of vocation.

For Sarah, to whom friendships with women were so important, Annie Fields was the ideal companion. Not only did she return her affection, but living at 148 Charles Street provided a stimulating cultural and intellectual life for the young woman from a small town in Maine. She had access both to Annie's library and to her friends: "She was not only Annie's darling, she was everybody's darling; in Boston as well as Berwick she was 'our dear Sarah'" (Blanchard 137).

Invigorated by her new life, Sarah wrote constantly, publishing nine books and at least sixty periodical sketches and articles between 1883-1890. Her style matured, and her range of subjects expanded. In her quasi-autobiographical novel A Country Doctor (1884), Jewett addresses the question of marriage vs. career. Years before she wrote the book,

she had made a decision not to marry. While spinsterhood was not uncommon in Maine at that time (among the Jewett sisters, only Caroline married), Sarah's antipathy to it was unusual. This story of a young woman, Nan Prince, who chooses a career as a doctor over marriage, reflects Sarah's feelings. Nan wants to follow in the footsteps of the gentle and wise Dr. Leslie, a fictional version of Dr. Jewett, rather than marry the pedantic young lawyer, George Gerry. Jewett's aversion to marriage is evident when Nan refuses George's proposal: "I have never since I can remember thought of myself and my life in any way but unmarried,--going on alone to the work I am fit to do" (241-2).

Other themes appear in A Country Doctor. While earlier works had reflected Jewett's own dilemma about conflicts between city and country life, in A Country Doctor she is able to integrate the two. Nan finds fulfillment both in her urban, professional life and in her visits to the countryside. This issue of urban and country values is also central in "A White Heron" (1886). In this story, Jewett expresses and resolves the problem movingly. The young girl Sylvia, who has been raised in the country, is asked by an ornithologist from the city to show him where he can find a heron which he wishes to kill and stuff for his collection. Although both her grandmother and the hunter urge her to

betray the bird who has become her woodland "friend," in the end she cannot do it:

No, she must keep silence! What is it that suddenly forbids her and makes her dumb? Has she been nine years growing, and now, when the great world for the first time puts out a hand to her, must she thrust it aside for a bird's sake? The murmur of the pine's green branches is in her ears, she remembers how the white heron came flying through the golden air and how they watched the sea and the morning together, and Sylvia cannot speak; she cannot tell the heron's secret and give its life away.
(Best Short Stories 90)

In addition to stories reflecting rural/urban conflict, Sarah wrote country sketches, stories involving role reversals like "Tom's Husband" (1882), classic spinster tales including "The Dulham Ladies" (1886), and stories focusing on father-child relationships, such as "The King of Folly Island" (1886). More important, she began to acknowledge the significance of a community of women. In the words of Josephine Donovan:

Jewett seems to have been moving toward a more complex and philosophical statement about life and the importance of the social bond. This was to culminate in her masterpiece, The Country of the Pointed Firs. Undoubtedly it also reflects Jewett's growing personal awareness of how central her own community of friends had become in providing her with support and with what she called "transcendence".
(Sarah Orne Jewett 75)

This theme begins to appear in Jewett's writing in the 1880s, in response, I believe, to the feelings engendered by

her relationship with Annie Fields and the women in her circles. Her earlier work had stressed self-reliance, epitomized by Nan Prince's decision to forego marriage to become a physician. Jewett gradually replaces a stress on individualism with an emphasis on community, valuing the support and encouragement which communities provide. The Bowden family reunion in The Country of the Pointed Firs is the archetypal example of this theme and the power of women's traditions.

The Bowden family included most of the people in Dunnet's Landing: "Those that aren't kin by blood are kin by marriage" explains Mrs. Todd (96). Each year they held a family reunion at the end of the summer. In a Biblical voice, Jewett describes the islanders gathering at the old farmhouse before lunch:

Each heart is warm and every face shines
with the ancient light. Such a day as
this has transfiguring powers, and
easily makes friends of those who have
been cold-hearted, and gives to those
who are dumb their chance to speak and
lends some beauty to the plainest face.

(96)

The narrator is welcome in this community of men and women where Mrs. Blackett is "always the queen" and "Mrs. Todd received her own full share of honor." She remarks: "I already knew some of Mrs. Todd's friends and kindred, and felt like an adopted Bowden in this happy moment" (98-9). The guests walk from the farmhouse to a grove of trees in a procession which evokes mythical imagery:

...we might have been a company of ancient Greeks going to celebrate a victory, oal to the respec god of harvests, in the grove above...we were no more a New England family celebrating its own existence and simple progress; we carried the tokens and inheritance of all such households from which this had descended, and were only the latest of our line. (100)

Although the older men have a role in the reunion, it is the women preparing the food, gossiping, reminiscing, and sharing recipes who create an atmosphere of community. Despite months of separation and remnants of old feuds, the lonely islanders are united through the spirit of friendship. The overriding feeling of the day is a sense of community.

At the height of her professional career, on her fifty-third birthday, Sarah was thrown from her carriage when her horse slipped as it descended a hill. She suffered a concussion and damage to her neck from which she never fully recovered. Annie stayed with her after the accident until she appeared to be improving. Then, shortly after her return to Boston and possibly as the result of the stress of worry over Sarah, Annie suffered a mild stroke. For the next three months, each woman was confined to her own home filled with anxiety about her friend. In April 1903 Sarah was finally able to go to Boston, but, by October, more than a year after the accident, it was apparent that her health was not improving. For the next six years, until her death in 1909, she was more or less an invalid. Sometimes she was

able to write letters, but any serious writing was out of the question. Except for a four month vacation to Europe in 1903, probably on doctor's orders, Annie spent as much time as possible with her.

For Sarah, the most significant event during this time was her meeting with Willa Cather. Her friendship with the younger woman, as I will discuss in Chapter Four, changed Cather's life profoundly. The relationship gave Sarah pleasure as well because it allowed her, at a time when she could do little else, to befriend a talented writer. As Sharon O'Brien suggests:

Both women gained from their short association. Cather offered the ailing Jewett the chance to be a mentor and to find a literary inheritor, while Jewett gave Cather the loving support and sound literary advice the younger woman needed during a time of professional conflict and self-doubt. (135)

In March 1909, during a stay at Charles Street, Sarah suffered a stroke; in April she was moved by special train and ambulance to South Berwick, where her health steadily declined. On June 23, she died. Elizabeth Sergeant quotes a friend who remembered Sarah saying: "I was born here and I know the room I want to die in, leaving the lilac bushes green and growing, and all the chairs in their place" (63). Fortunately her wish was granted.

A posthumous tribute to Sarah Orne Jewett written by an anonymous contributor to the Atlantic Monthly suggests how closely her life was entwined with her art:

There is but one familiar portrait of Miss Jewett...This portrait is intimately symbolic of her work. It typifies with a rare faithfulness the quality of all the products of her pen. In them one found, and finds, the same abiding elements of beauty, sympathy, and distinction. The element of sympathy--perhaps the greatest of these--found its expression in a humor that provoked less of outward laughter than of smiles within, and in a pathos the very counterpart of this delicate quality...
(July 1909, 302-3)

The all-important sharing of the gift of sympathy, the thread that bound Annie and Sarah's relationship together, was apparent to her readers as well as her friends. It pervaded her life and her work and lived on after her.

Jewett's ability to empathize is most evident in her stories about the elderly. She once remarked to Willa Cather "that her head was full of dear old houses and dear old women, and that when an old house and an old woman came together in her brain with a click, she knew a story was underway" (Willa Cather on Writing 55). "The Flight of Miss Betsey Lane" (1893) is one such story. It illustrates Jewett's superb use of dialect and epitomizes several motifs central to Jewett's writing: the sustaining power of a community of women, relationships between older and younger women, life in rural New England in the late nineteenth-century. The dominant theme, however, is the gift of sympathy.

"The Flight of Miss Betsey Lane" tells of three friends living in a poorhouse in a rural area; true to the realism

of Jewett's local color writing, these women are not unhappy with their lot:

There was a cheerful feeling of activity, and even an air of comfort, about the Byfleet Poor-house. Almost every one was possessed of a most interesting past, though there was less to be said of the future. The inmates were by no means distressed or unhappy; many of them retired to this shelter for the winter season, and would go out presently...far from lamenting the fact that they were town charges, they rather liked the change and excitement of a winter residence on the poor-farm.

(190)

Each of the friends is portrayed very differently: Miss Peggy Bond is "a very small, belligerent-looking person" who had trouble with her eyes and "so was always tripping and stubbing her bruised way through the world," Mrs. Lavina Dow, "a different sort of person altogether, of great dignity and, occasionally, almost aggressive behavior," and Betsey Lane, who had "spent most of her life as aid-in-general to the respected household of old General Thornton" (192-3). They are all old, but Betsey, at sixty-nine is the youngest: "Peggy Bond was far on in the seventies, and Mrs. Dow was at least ten years older" (193). Betsey had a burning desire to go to the Centennial Celebration in Philadelphia: "It seems to me as if I can't be happy 'less I do... I ain't never seen nothin' of the world, an' here I be" (194). Fortunately Betsey's wish is made possible when the daughter of the family for whom she had worked comes to visit and leaves her a small sum of money. Without telling

anyone at the farm of her good fortune, she slips out early one June morning and makes her way to Philadelphia. Once there she has a wonderful time: "She saw the wonders of the West and the splendors of the East with equal calmness and satisfaction; she had always known that there was an amazing world outside the boundaries of Byfleet" (205). She also makes friends wherever she goes: "Nearly all the busy people of the Exhibition called her either Aunty or Grandma at once, and made little pleasures for her as best they could" (206). She buys small presents for everyone at home, but she is particularly anxious to find glasses for Peggy. She meets a doctor who convinces her that Peggy probably doesn't need glasses and promises to visit her the next time he is near By-Fleet. Betsey is delighted: "Now I've done what I set to do for her, I do believe, an't wa'n't glasses, neither. I'll git her a pritty little shawl with that money I laid aside. Peggy Bond ain't got a pritty shawl. I always wanted to have a real good time, an' now I'm havin' it." (208)

Meanwhile, however, Peggy Bond and Aunt Lavina Dow have become convinced that Betsey has drowned herself. A week after her disappearance they are searching the fields near the farm when Betsey returns. In a magnificent display of one-upmanship, Betsey, returning from the Fair, comes up behind them and says: "Why, what's the matter, Mis' Dow? You ain't overdoin', be ye? an' Peggy's all of a flutter.

What in the name of natur' ails ye?" Peggy Bond responds: "There ain't ain't nothin' the matter, as I know on...We only thought we'd take a stroll this pleasant mornin'," she added with sublime self-possession. "Where've you be'n, Betsey Lane?" "To Pheladelphia, ma'am," said Betsey, looking quite young and gay and wearing a townish and unfamiliar air that up held her words" (209).

The conclusion of the story is Sarah Orne Jewett, her community of women, and her gift of sympathy at their finest:

I don't know how soon I be goin' to settle down," proclaimed the rustic sister of Sinbad. "What's for the good o' one's for the good of all. You just wait till we're setting together up in the old shed chamber! You know, my dear Mis' Katy Strafford give me a han'some present o' money that day she come to see me; and I'd be'n a-dreamin' by night an' day o' seein' that Centennial; and when I come to think on 't I felt sure somebody ought to go from this neighborhood, if't was only for the good o' the rest; and I thought I 'd better be the one. I wa'n't goin' to ask the selec'men neither. I've come back with ofe-thirty-five in money, and I see everything there, an' I fetched ye all a little somethin'; but I'm full o' dust now, an' pretty nigh beat out. I never see a place more friendly than Pheladelphia; but't ain't natural to a Byfleet person to be always walkin' on a level. There, now, Peggy, you take my bundle-handkerchief and the basket, and let Mis' Dow sag on to me. I'll git her along twice as easy." With this the small elderly company set forth triumphant toward the poor-house, across the wide green field. (210)

It is easy to see why this story appealed to Annie Fields; "The Flight of Miss Betsey Lane" appeared when Annie was fifty-nine, a time when most women become more reflective about aging. Betsey Lane is a woman who has faced her mortality, taken a risk, and emerged stronger and more independent. She is a participant in a community of women, but she has also asserted her independence and sense of humor; she is proud of being a woman and comfortable with her friends. Most of all, Betsey Lane has the gift of sympathy which Annie so admired, an empathy for her friends which translated into repeated acts of gentleness and kindness.

Of course, the gift of sympathy can also be found in The Country of the Pointed Firs. This book, Sarah Orne Jewett's best known and best loved, includes every important element of her style: her command of dialect, her understanding of the lives of the men and women who inhabited the Maine coast, her use of myths to emphasize a character or a scene, her intimate knowledge of friendship between an older and younger woman, her sense of humor, her skillful balancing of the themes of isolation, independence, and community--and most significantly, her gift of sympathy. For me, the character of Mrs. Blackett suggests Annie Fields. I see a similarity between the two in Jewett's description of Mrs. Blackett's qualities of empathy and her warmth as a hostess:

Mrs. Blackett was of those who do not live to themselves, and who have long since passed the line that divides mere self-concern from a valued share in whatever Society can give and take. There were those of her neighbors who never had taken the trouble to furnish a best room, but Mrs. Blackett was one who knew the uses of a parlor. (41)

The traditions of hospitality and other womanly occupations that have often been trivialized, such as housekeeping, cooking and gardening, become for Jewett symbols of the gift of sympathy. Annie Fields was the embodiment of these traits in real life, and Mrs. Blackett is their embodiment in the novel. These feelings of empathy, which so pervaded both women's lives, became the basis for their love.

Annie and Sarah were devoted to each other for many reasons. Although in most ways they had an equalitarian relationship, their age difference allowed Annie to indulge her maternal feelings. The Fields were childless, a situation which was never publicly discussed but was alluded to in a series of unpublished poems, "Canticles of Married Love".¹³ In the second series of "Canticles," Annie describes the emptiness she feels: "No young bright curls nor sound of little feet/ No baby voices ringing up the stair/ Nor budding grace to follow the hours fleet/ And laugh to see them make youths' gold more fair!" As the poem progresses, Annie explains what she conceives as the duty of the childless to devote time and money to poor and orphaned

children. In the end, she sees heavenly rewards for helping them: "they who have loved these wandering children best/
Shall hear their voices falling on the ear/ And singing
"Glory through the lofty skies..."

Although in her diaries Annie mentions taking in a homeless child, she never did, possibly because of her concern for what she and James perceived as the uncertain hereditary factor of poor children, possibly because of a lack of tolerance for young children. Since Sarah was childlike in some ways, she could be a substitute daughter for Annie. Annie's letters to her often begin with "Dearest Child" and include endearing names which Mark Howe found necessary to delete in Memories of a Hostess. For example, in 1887 she wrote "Dearest Pin: Did you send me more claret? I say dear child please do not continue to do these things!...I do not see my way baby darling to get off just now..."¹⁴

This is not to imply that Jewett always played the role of a child. As biographers from Howe to Blanchard stress, the relationship between Sarah and Annie was never one-sided. Mark Howe's assessment of their relationship was unequivocal: "In the friendship of these two women it would have been impossible to define either one, to the exclusion of the other, as the giver or the receiver. They were certainly both sustained by their relationship" (Memoirs of a Hostess 280). Henry James wrote: "She had come to Mrs.

Fields as an adoptive daughter, but a sharer and a sustainer" (James, "Mr. and Mrs. James T. Fields 30). Paula Blanchard agrees:

Equal comrades and colleagues, both women also had uninhibited access to the maternal and dependent in themselves, each expressing one or the other as needed. Sarah's impatience when she was away from Annie, for example, was based not only on her love for her friend, but on her understanding that depression was likely to descend whenever Annie was alone to brood upon her widowhood.

(154)

An undated letter from Annie to Sarah, one of the few in which she admits to her loneliness, confirms Annie's need and affection for her companion:

...I have never had such an empty house before. I feel as if you would find it very dull--I suppose it is all natural enough considering all things, but the habit of many years cannot be unlearned--for it still seems as if it were yesterday I began my lonely pilgrimage [sic]...and now my darling, I want to tell you, if I only could, how dearly I love you and long to see you. I shall try hard not to have anything for Tuesday P.M. so I may be at home to greet you...¹⁵

In another she says: "How I wish for you all the time! I get quite tired sometimes making decisions and thinking about things when you are not here..."¹⁶ Although the letters often thank Sarah for actual gifts, usually of flowers or food: "THE CAKE IS BEYOND WORDS,"¹⁷ her gratitude for the intangible gift of sympathy is most pervasive.

Another example of Annie's dependence on Sarah is that she often sought Sarah's opinions on her writing; as the younger woman was a more successful author, Annie would defer to her judgement. In one letter she wrote: "My darling: I send with this a little copy of verses which I am going to ask you to take a quiet half hour some time and to see if there is anything in them--Pinney put me up to this idea--please be frank about them."¹⁸ Although in the nineteenth century many upper class women faced criticism for becoming professional writers, neither Annie or Sarah had this problem.¹⁹ Both their families were supportive; any hesitancy on James' part had to do with the quality of Annie's writing, which he recognized as unexceptional, not with her desire to be published. When Annie began living with Sarah, her most creative work appeared. She gained a reputation through her memoirs and her most widely printed book, How To Help the Poor. As Judith Roman notes:

Because Annie's writing created no dilemmas for Sarah, as it had for James during his tenure as publisher and editor, Sarah's encouragement was more wholehearted and unambivalent. She and Annie became advocates for one another, encouraging each other's projects, doing what they could to create an audience for one another. (107)

During the years they were together, Annie and Sarah consulted not only on style but also on the payments for their work. Unlike many women authors, they were not embarrassed to discuss money and be responsible for their

own finances. Perhaps they had also learned from the experiences of Gail Hamilton and Sophia Hawthorne with Annie's own "Jamie" that it was essential to strike a hard bargain. When Horace Scudder, who had become editor of the Atlantic in 1890, offered Annie less for an article than she was accustomed to receiving, Sarah was furious. He had, in fact, offered her the same rate as Century had; in view of Annie's ties to the Atlantic, this was unacceptable. Sarah, who received top rates for her work, advised Annie to state her price when she submitted a manuscript, as she did. This incident led to a coldness between Jewett, Fields, and Scudder. After Scudder replaced Thomas Aldrich, a close friend of both women, as editor of the Atlantic in 1890, Sarah refrained from sending any of her work to the magazine from 1892 to 1893. It was during this time that she made the remark: "What a strange world this is, full of scudders and things" (Ballou 436).

Horace Scudder could not understand the problem that clouded his twenty-year relationship with Sarah Orne Jewett, but he attributed it to his having refused Annie's The Singing Shepherd on the grounds that her price was more than the Atlantic could afford. Eventually Sarah and--to use Ballou's somewhat derisive expression--"the widow of Charles Street" made their peace with Scudder. Clearly he had some trepidation about dealing with Annie: "I am afraid that in bringing about this change...I may have been laying a trap

for myself,' Scudder noted ruefully. 'Too much good will on her part!'" (Ballou 436). As this letter indicates, he was also troubled that Sarah was asking over thirty-five dollars a thousand words for her work:

As the representative, in purpose at any rate, of the most stable and pure American literature it [the Atlantic] can ill afford to dispense with stories from you; it has no disposition to part company with an honored contributor. We shall pay your prices as laid down in your letter; the only difference will be that we must content ourselves with less frequent publication. (Ballou 445)

Thanks to his persistence and courtesy, however, he was rewarded with The Country of the Pointed Firs in 1896.

In 1896 George Mifflin took over the administration of Houghton Mifflin, determined that he would not reduce his list of authors despite the fact that the book market was depressed. Ballou notes: "When Sarah Orne Jewett carped at the price she was paid for an Atlantic story, she was sent an extra \$50. In his Christmas letters, Mifflin gave cheering reports of sales; Miss Jewett's Pointed Firs was in its sixth thousand; Mrs. Fields's Authors and Friends in its fifth" (423). The two women had made their point: their finances were in their own hands. They had challenged the presumptions of the most patriarchal of institutions, the publishing industry. Having chosen to find personal fulfillment through their work, they demanded that they be taken seriously and, albeit grudgingly, they were. In this

regard they clearly met the qualifications for the twentieth-century's New Women as defined by Cecelia Tichi:

...the idea of conscious choice in and of itself was a hallmark of the identity of the new woman, who was very much a middle-class figure, since women lower on the socioeconomic ladder, laborers for decades as domestics and as factory operatives, were not at liberty to shape their lives to such principles. For the privileged new woman, however, the principles were paramount. Her modernity was neither whimsical nor idiosyncratic, but based upon intellectually informed (and personally distressing) analyses of woman's place in contemporary society. (592)

In their professional lives, Annie and Sarah displayed characteristics of the New Woman. In their sexual lives, however, they did not renounce marriage and espouse sexual freedom, as many New Women did. Their Boston Marriage was a typically nineteenth-century phenomenon, conservative and proper among upper class women. In the twentieth century, however, the question of whether the participants in such relationships would be considered lesbians has arisen. I will explore the question of whether Annie and Sarah were lesbians, not because I feel that is essential to an understanding of them per se, but because I feel that both Boston Marriages and lesbianism are part of feminist literary history. Other nineteenth-century writers, including Louise Imogene Guiney and Alice Brown, were partners in Boston Marriages, and contemporary books,

such as Henry James' The Bostonians, alluded to these relationships.

I have found two definitions of "lesbians" to be helpful. One is Blanche Wisen Cook's: "Women who love women, who choose women to nurture and support and to create a living environment in which to work creatively and independently, are lesbians" (739). The other, which is more specific, is Lillian Faderman's:

'Lesbian' describes a relationship in which two women's strongest emotions and affections are directed toward each other. Sexual contact may be a part of the relationship to a greater or lesser degree, or it may be entirely absent. By preference the two women spend most of their time together and share most aspects of their lives with each other.

(17-18)

Judged by these definitions, we would conclude that Annie Fields and Sarah Orne Jewett indeed were lesbians. However, we would reach this assumption through twentieth-century standards, which are very different from those of the nineteenth century. As Carroll Smith-Rosenberg demonstrates:

The twentieth-century tendency to view human love and sexuality within a dichotomized universe of deviance and normality, genitility and platonic love, is alien to the emotions and attitudes of the nineteenth century and fundamentally distorts the nature of these women's emotional interaction.

(6)

The words "lesbian" and "homosexual" did not come into usage until the end of the nineteenth-century; when they

did, they redefined Boston Marriages and other close female friendships. In his recent book, Romantic Longings, Steven Seidman writes: "In the first two decades of the twentieth century the tradition of romantic friendship between women began to be replaced by a notion of lesbian love. Whereas in the former paradigm female intimacy is legitimate and valued, in the latter framework it is discredited and stigmatized" (109). While Jewett and Fields' relationship was never devalued, relationships of other women were. As Nancy Sahli observes:

As long as women loved each other as they did for much of the nineteenth century, without threatening the system itself, their relationships were either simply ignored by men or were regarded as an acceptable part of the female sphere. Feminists, college graduates, and other independent women, however, were a real threat to the established order, and one way to control these sexless termites, hermaphroditic spinsters, or whatever one might call them, was to condemn their love relationships. (27)

It is clear that the historical context in which we view women's friendships is of utmost important in interpreting Annie's and Sarah's relationship. Lillian Faderman believes that nineteenth-century female friendships were probably not sexual since "women in centuries other than ours often internalized the view of females as having little sexual passion. Thus they might kiss, fondle each other, sleep together, utter expressions of overwhelming

love and promises of eternal faithfulness, and yet see their passions as nothing more than effusions of the spirit" (15-16). This is an opinion shared by many historians who feel that a lack of sexual passion is one of the primary differences between women loving women in the nineteenth century and in the twentieth century.

Faderman's argument is countered by Terry Castle who, in her discussion of the diaries of Anne Lister (1791-1840), writes: "Lister's journals cast an altogether new light on the "romantic friendship" issue. Not only do her often ticklish revelations challenge assumptions about the supposed sexual "innocence" of women in earlier centuries, they offer a spectacular rebuke to the no-lesbians-before-1900 myth" (96).

While the issue of sexuality in Boston Marriages remains open to question, there is another difference between women's friendships in the last century and in this one which is obvious; it is the lack of self-consciousness with which nineteenth-century women viewed their relationships with one another. A comparison between Sarah Orne Jewett and Willa Cather, twenty-five years her junior, illustrates the changing perception of women's loving relationships, the difference between the nineteenth-century's romantic friendships and the twentieth-century's lesbian attractions. By the time Jewett and Cather met in 1908, Cather had experienced several intense affairs with

women, including Louise Pound and Isabel McClung. She and Edith Lewis, who was to become her lifelong companion, had just made a decision to live together; Cather wrote to Sarah describing their apartment. However, Willa Cather never publicly revealed her sexual preference, although she did hint at it when she wrote to Louise Pound in 1892 that "It is manifestly unfair that feminine friendship should be unnatural" (O'Brien 117). Another reference appears in her essay, "The Novel D meubl ":

Whatever is felt upon the page without being specifically named there--that, one might say, is created. It is the inexplicable presence of the thing not named, of the overtone divined by the ear but not heard by it, the verbal mood, the emotional aura of the fact or the thing or the deed, that gives high quality to the novel or the drama, as well as to poetry itself.

(Not Over Forty 50)

What is most absent in Cather's writing, and what is most present in Jewett's, are emotional bonds between women. This is "the thing not named" to which Cather eludes. This difference between the two authors is apparent when comparing Jewett's "Martha's Lady" (1897) with Cather's "On the Gull's Road" (1908). "Martha's Lady" depicts the intense attachment Martha, a servant woman, develops for Helena, a young woman who visits the home where she works and who has been very kind to her. Helena promises to return soon, but she marries and does not come back for

twenty years. During this time Martha follows the course of her life, worshipping her memory, and dreaming of her return. When they are at last reunited, Helena realizes the love and devotion Martha has bestowed upon her from afar:

That night Martha waited in her lady's room just as she used, humble and silent, and went through with the old unforgotten loving services. The long years seemed like days. At last she lingered a moment trying to think of something else that might be done, then she was going silently away, but Helena called her back. She suddenly knew the whole story and could hardly speak.

"Oh, my dear Martha!" she cried, "won't you kiss me good-night? Oh, Martha, have you remembered like this, all these years!"

(Best Stories of Sarah Orne Jewett 255)

What strikes the modern reader most about this story is Jewett's forthrightness in describing the feelings Martha has for Helena and Helena's response to Martha's love. As Faderman comments, this story "could never have been written by Cather--not because Cather did not whole-heartedly believe in the premise about the redemptive power of love, but because the two principals were female" (202).

Cather's "On The Gulls Road" is a story told by a male narrator. The similarity between his tale and Martha's is that he nurtures a love for twenty years. As a young man making a sea voyage, he falls in love with the wife of the ship's chief engineer. She returns his love, but will not leave her husband, even though he is a mean-spirited womanizer. When the ship docks in New York, she returns to

Norway where she dies in her father's home. Her lover is left with only a sketch of her which he drew, a swatch of her hair, and his memories. "On The Gulls Road," with its obvious Jamesian overtones, is certainly not one of Cather's best works. Nevertheless, she sent it to Sarah Orne Jewett for her critique; after praising the story as it had been written, she suggested:

...The lover is as well done as he could be when a woman writes in the man's character,--it must always, I believe, be something of a masquerade. I think it is safer to write about him as you did about the others and not try to be he! And you could almost have done it as yourself--a woman could love her in that same protecting way--a woman could even care enough to wish to take her away from such a life, by some means or other...²⁰

Jewett's response reveals how, through her gift of sympathy, she is able to offer criticism carefully shielded by praise. It also illustrates how candidly she asserted the power of women loving women. Her answer can only be interpreted as reenforcing her affection for Annie Fields and for the other women whose friendships she always valued. There is no doubt that Annie would have agreed with her response.

The question still remains as to the physical nature of Fields' and Jewett's relationship. Paula Blanchard believes that it was not sexual; she has written: "Sarah Orne Jewett's love for other women was as passionate and absorbing as any heterosexual man's, but from all available evidence, it never led to direct sexual expression" (54).

I am not so sure. Not only were Annie and Sarah's bedrooms adjoining whenever they were together, but several letters can be found which are intensely personal, even by the standards of nineteenth-century friendships. In March 1882 Sarah wrote to Annie: "Are you sure you know how much I love you? If you don't I can't tell you! but I think of you and think of you and am always reminded of you and I long for your letter tonight..."²¹ In June of the same year she wrote: "Oh My dear darling I had forgotten that we loved each other so much a year ago---for it all seems so new to me every day. There is so much for us to remember already-- -But a year ago last winter seems a great way off for we have lived so much since..."²² And in October: "...this is the first morning in more than seven months that I have n't (sic) waked up to hear your dear voice and see your dear face."²³

In one of her letters to Sarah, Annie wrote: "Darling I need not say I miss you for I love you and you are mine..."²⁴ In 1887 she wrote: "As sweet and refreshing as your goodness is to me I feel as if you had other claims and as if you were giving me more than you ought. But I rejoice all the same in your love and care and wrap myself in it by night and by day..."²⁵ Even though these letters do not prove that a sexual relationship existed between the two women, they do portray a high degree of emotional and sensual attraction.

In Lillian Faderman's insightful discussion of Boston Marriages she observes:

The women were generally independent of men, either through inheritance or because of a career. They were usually feminists, New Women, often pioneers in a profession. They were also very involved in culture and social betterment, and these female values, which they shared with each other, formed a strong basis for their life together.

(Surpassing the Love of Men, 199)

Faderman's words describe Annie Fields and Sarah Orne Jewett. In many areas, particularly their careers, they were New Women; both were independently wealthy; both, feminists. Jewett had made her position clear in A Country Doctor:

It was seldom, Dr. Leslie was aware, that so typical and evident an example as this could offer itself of the class of women who are a result of natural progression and variation not for better work, but for different work, and who are designed for certain public and social duties...The preservation of the race is no longer the only question; the welfare of the individual will be considered more and more. (248)

Annie, in more subtle ways perhaps, was also a feminist and certainly a pioneer in the field of social work.

Annie Fields' and Sarah Orne Jewett's relationship is best defined as a quintessential Boston Marriage, a union which may or may not have had a sexual component. Because their alliance fell so completely within the parameters of nineteenth-century women's friendships, it must be viewed by

the standards of that century. Despite their devotion to one another, Annie and Sarah were able to preserve their individual voices during their years together. While they had much common, they also had differences. Sarah's career focused almost exclusively on her literary output, while Annie's best work was done in the world outside of literature, in her charitable endeavors. The demands of her philanthropic work, particularly the Associated Charities, occupied much of Annie's time. Despite Sarah's requests that Annie join her in South Berwick during her visits home, she usually refused because of her commitment to her work. In one letter, written in 1887, Annie said: "...I do not see my way baby darling to get off just now for there is such a need of workers here...Rejoice with me my darling, that I can be of use again in these days that remain and bid me "good speed"--of course I wish we were together, but I feel as if my life were here..."²⁶ This dedication to her work demonstrates her independent spirit; while in no way diminishing her love for Sarah, Annie was determined to fulfill her obligations and pursue her philanthropic and writing career. In her traditional marriage, she always put James' needs first; in her Boston Marriage she satisfied herself. This was a sign of her maturity, her secure relationship with Sarah, her life as a New Woman.

Sarah's individual voice was maintained through her writing, her family, and her friendships with other women.

While Sarah and Annie's relationships with others never excluded one another, Sarah, as I have noted, always maintained intense friendships with women. Sarah Whitman (1842-1904) was one of them. Whitman had been born in Boston but raised in Baltimore. She returned to Boston after her marriage in 1866 to Henry Whitman, a wool merchant.²⁷ There she pursued a career in art, establishing herself as a portraitist, book and interior designer, and stained glass artist. In the 1880s and '90s she was the leading book designer for Houghton Mifflin, creating covers for most of Jewett's works. Strangers and Wayfarers is dedicated to her. She was intensely devoted to her friends, especially to Sarah. The feeling was reciprocated; as Blanchard remarks: "Only Annie was dearer to Jewett than Sarah Whitman, and like some of her letters to Annie, some of those to Whitman, are truly love letters" (219).

Another close woman friend was Celia Thaxter. Sarah had been acquainted with her before she came to live with Annie, but their friendship blossomed during the early 1880s. They had much in common: their interest in spiritualism, their love of gardens, their circumscribed childhoods--Thaxter in the Isles of Shoal, Jewett in South Berwick. Both women felt a link with history, having spent their childhoods listening to the tales of an older generation of islanders.

John Greenleaf Whittier was also a dear friend of Jewett's. She met him in 1877 and corresponded with him for the rest of her life. Whittier had a long-standing friendship with James and Annie Fields, which I will discuss in Chapter Four, but to Sarah he was:

Literary aid and model, fellow moralist and spiritualist, country boy and surrogate father, Whittier was many things to Jewett. Above all he was "Thy Friend," an elderly man whose sweet disposition and archaic manners masked a certain moral ferocity, and whose chronic ailments gained him much solicitude from his large flock of women friends. (Blanchard 185)

Although she shared these friends with Annie, her relationships with Whitman, Thaxter, and Whittier were vehicles through which Sarah Jewett could look outside her life with Annie Fields. With Sarah Whitman she continued the intensity of her childhood attachments, with Thaxter and Whittier she shared a kind of spirituality which did not extend to Annie, as much as she loved her. There was an innocence in their lives as well as a strength that made them what Blanchard calls "babes in the wood of the Gilded Age" (186). It came through in their writing, in their love of nature, in their fascination with the supernatural that was somehow less sophisticated than Annie's. When Sarah was with them, she could return with ease to her South Berwick persona.

Jewett returned to South Berwick in other ways as well. When she was seriously determined to write, she would go

home, and when her family needed her, as they often did, she also returned. Annie did not feel obliged to accompany her. It was not that she was unwelcome there; in letters Annie often thanks Mary Jewett and her mother for a variety of gifts--flowers, eggs, apples--while they, in turn, thank her for more urban treats: wine, candy, meats.²⁸ At first she invited Mary to visit Boston, but it was difficult because Mary had the main responsibility of her now ailing mother and, even after her mother died, she chose to stay in Maine. Annie frankly preferred Boston and Manchester-By-The-Sea, and while she would make token visits, in reality she distanced herself from Sarah's other home.

Fortunately for Sarah and Annie, they were able to realize Virginia Woolf's imperative that "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (A Room of One's Own 4). While Annie did not write fiction, she did need space in which to do other kinds of writing. That both women had independent incomes, Sarah from her grandfather and Annie from her husband, insured that neither was dependent on the other. Furthermore, although the most famous portrait of Annie and Sarah shows the two companions seated in the library at 148 Charles Street, in actuality each had her own study which opened off the main room. Although they were side by side, each woman also had her own bedroom. In addition, when Sarah wanted to devote herself

exclusively to writing, she always had her room in South Berwick. Unlike their famous predecessors, from Shakespeare's imaginary sister to Jane Austen and Charlotte Bronte, and unlike their friends Harriet Beecher Stowe and Celia Thaxter, both Annie and Sarah were able to work undisturbed.

Their financial situation enhanced Sarah and Annie's lives in other ways as well. Their independent incomes supplemented what they earned and supplied the extra money necessary for vacationing. Again they were fortunate to be able to heed Virginia Woolf's advice:

By hook or by crook, I hope that you will possess yourselves of money enough to travel and to idle, to contemplate the future or the past of the world, to dream over books and loiter at street corners and let the line of thought dip deep into the stream.

(A Room of One's Own 109)

A discussion of Annie Fields' life with Sarah Orne Jewett inevitably leads to a comparison with her traditional marriage. Which was more instrumental in determining the mature woman she became? This question does not imply that Annie was so malleable that she depended upon either James or Sarah to shape her personality. Rather, it acknowledges that long-standing relationships with either sex inevitably have an influence.

In her life with James Fields, despite the respect he showed for her editorial skills and for her contribution to his career through her intelligence and grace in their home,

Annie was always Mrs. James T. Fields. This is how she saw herself and how the world saw her, and she was not dismayed by this perception. In her life with Sarah Orne Jewett, she developed her own identity. Although she was always Mrs. James T. Fields, she expanded her definition of herself. In her conclusion to Writing a Woman's Life, Carolyn Heilbrun discusses "the coming of age," the problems and possibilities women face as they grow old:

But most often, particularly with the support of other women, the coming of age portends all the freedoms men have always known and women never--mostly the freedom from fulfilling the needs of others and from being a female impersonator. (130)

Annie Fields took advantage of all the freedom her "coming of age" encouraged; she remained alert, active, engaging. Willa Cather attests to her vitality when she declares: "Although Mrs. Fields was past seventy when I was first conducted into the long drawing-room, she did not seem old to me. Frail, diminished in force, yes; but, emphatically, *not old*" (Not Under Forty 57). During the years she lived with Sarah Orne Jewett, Annie matured and changed. Her commitment to social, educational and political causes solidified; her intellectual pursuits broadened; her confidence increased. From the perspective of Heilbrun's observations, Annie's relationship with Jewett enhanced her later life; by sharing so many years with Sarah, she was able to go beyond the restrictions of a

nineteenth-century marriage and pursue her vocation. She developed a sense of self which would not have occurred had remained in her traditional marriage. Her marriage to James Fields lay the foundation for her future life; her Boston Marriage provided the stability she needed to enter the world of the New Woman.

Notes

1. Caroline Jewett deserves praise for providing her daughters with a happy childhood and for giving them "a sense of their place in the world as women and as members of family and community" (Blanchard 29). Eventually, however, the care of her aging mother during her many years of illness became a burden for Sarah, particularly when it kept her from being with Annie. In a letter of condolence written to Thomas Aldrich at the time of his mother's death, she referred to her own ambivalent feelings: "I know how different this loss is from any other. As long as one's mother lives the sense of being lovingly protected never fails, and one is always a child...It makes a great change in one's life, but it is a change for the better. I never felt so near my mother or kept such a sense of love for her as I have since she died" (Sherman 52).
2. Josephine Donovan writes: "While it is true that Jewett had a strong relationship with her father, it is clear from the poems and the diaries that Jewett's primary relationships were with women" ("The Unpublished Love Poems of Sarah Orne Jewett" 108).
3. Josephine Donovan explains that this term, which Jewett coined, "implies that the writer deals not just with the "facts" of the story but rather uses those facts to point to a dimension beyond the real" (New England Local Color 102). This was the theory she recommended to Willa Cather.
4. Richard Cary writes: "As a matter of fact, Miss Jewett's clique was addicted to pet names. Mrs. Thaxter called Miss Jewett "Owlett"; Louise Imogen Guiney was "Linnet"; Mary Greenwood Lodge was "Marigold"; Louise Desel answered to "Loulie"..."(Sarah Orne Jewett Letters 74).
5. Sarah Orne Jewett, letter to Annie Fields, 23 November 1880, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.
6. In 1878 Henry Oscar Houghton of the Riverside Press became a partner of Osgood and the firm became Houghton & Osgood. By 1881, when Sarah Orne Jewett published her fourth book, Osgood had left and George Mifflin had joined the firm, establishing Houghton Mifflin.
7. By the publication of The Country of the Pointed Firs Sarah had spent the previous fourteen years with Annie Fields and, as Marjorie Pryse observes: "Jewett 'outgrew' her fears of the loss of friendship Deephaven records, but did not outgrow female friendship as both the frame for and motivating force behind her fiction" (63).

8. Sarah Orne Jewett, letter to Annie Fields, 23 November 1880, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

9. Celia Thaxter, letter to Annie Fields, 23 October 1881, Boston Public Library, Boston.

10. Annie Fields, letter to "Friends," 20 February 1882, Schlesinger Library, Cambridge.

11.

TOGETHER

I wonder if you really send
 Those dreams of you that come and go!
 I like to say, "She thought of me
 And I have known it." Is it so?

Though other friends walk by your side,
 Yet sometimes it must surely be,
 They wonder where your thoughts have gone,
 Because I have you here with me.

And when the busy day is done
 And work is ended, voices cease,
 When every one has said good night,
 In fading firelight, then in peace.

I idly rest: you come to me,--
 Your dear love holds me close to you.
 If I could see you face to face
 It would not be more sweet and true;

I do not hear the words you speak,
 Nor touch your hands, nor see your eyes:
 Yet, far away the flowers may grow
 From whence to me the fragrance flies;

And so, across the empty miles
 Light from my star shines. Is it, dear,
 Your love has never gone away?
 I said farewell--and kept you here.

(Memories of a Hostess 282-283)

12. In The Gentle American, her biography of her father, Helen Howe wrote: "There were, in my parents' circle of friends in Boston, several households consisting of two ladies, living sweetly and devotedly together. Such an alliance I was brought up to hear called a 'Boston Marriage'" (83).

Among the Boston Marriages at that time, in addition to Fields and Jewett, were Alice James and Katharine Loring, Charlotte Cushman and Emma Stebbins, Louise Imogene Guiney and Alice Brown,

Anne Whitney and Abby Manning, Lissie Adams (Annie's sister) and Miss Burnap.

13. Fields, Annie. "Canticles of Married Love." ms. Fields Addenda, Box 2, Env. 1. The Huntington Museum, San Marino.

14. Annie Fields, letter to Sarah Orne Jewett, No Date 1887, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

15. Annie Fields, letter to Sarah Orne Jewett, no date, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

16. Annie Fields, letter to Sarah Orne Jewett, No Date, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

17. Annie Fields, letter to Sarah Orne Jewett, No Date, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

18. Annie Fields, letter to Sarah Orne Jewett, No Date, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

19. Referring to Ellen Glasgow and Edith Wharton, Linda Wagner-Martin observes that both women had problems with their families over their "professional authorship (for women of their social position, work for pay was unsuitable)" (76).

20. Sarah Orne Jewett, letter to Willa Cather, 27 November 1908, Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett, p. 246-247.

21. Sarah Orne Jewett, letter to Annie Fields, March 1882, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

22. Sarah Orne Jewett, letter to Annie Fields, June 1882, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

23. Sarah Orne Jewett, letter to Annie Fields, 6 October 1882, Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett, ed. Annie Fields. This is the most romantic letter quoted in this book.

24. Annie Fields, letter to Sarah Orne Jewett, No Date, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

25. Annie Fields, letter to Sarah Orne Jewett, No Date 1887, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

26. Annie Fields, letter to Sarah Orne Jewett, 1887, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

27. Van Wyck Brooks describes her as "the beautiful, generous creature who had appeared in Boston suddenly" (Indian Summer 434).

28. In one letter Annie writes: "I'm glad the package arrived promptly from the beef man and may it be as tender as the one you liked."

Annie Fields, letter to Sarah Orne Jewett, No Date, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

Chapter Four: Annie Fields' Circle of Women Friends

Women must turn to one another for stories;
 they must share the stories of their lives
 and their hopes and their unacceptable fantasies.
 (Heilbrun, Writing a Woman's Life 44)

The Chinese-American writer Sui Sin Far has written a parable which tells the story of a Chinese princess, who, despite her wealth and beauty, was unhappy. She was given a mother, a father, a brother, and still she was sad. Finally she said: "Trouble not your minds. I will find my own heart's ease." She then found a poor peasant girl, whom she summoned to the palace. When she arrived, Li Chung O'Yam greeted her:

How beautifully you are robed! In the same colors as I. And behold, your dolls and your cats, are they not much like mine?"...Then she called her people together and said to them: "Behold, I have found my heart's desire--a little sister." And forever after O'Yam and Ku Yum lived happily together. (111)

In this story, Li Chung O'Yam's deepest desire can be satisfied only by a friendship of her own choice with another girl, whose background was unimportant. The parable evokes a comparison with Annie Fields, who also valued friendships with women and who displayed the same insistence on choice and diversity. In examining the lives of the many women with whom she had relationships--literary, social, and philanthropic--what is most impressive is how consistently

her friendships crossed class, political, and educational lines.

Annie Fields' friends held a variety of political beliefs. Anne Whitney, Lucy Larcom, and Lydia Maria Child were in the forefront of liberal causes; Margaret Deland was a conservative writer who opposed the ideas of the New Woman.¹ These women also came from different religious backgrounds. Annie was a Unitarian, although in later years she became disenchanted with the church; poet Louise Guiney and author Agnes Repplier were devout Catholics; social reformer Catharine Maria Sedgwick converted from Calvinism to Unitarianism; Harriet Livermore was a fervent Evangelist; Alice Goldmark Brandeis was Jewish. Her closest women friends were upper middle class New Englanders, such as Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary Greenwood Lodge, and women from prominent families, like Harriet Beecher Stowe and Sara Norton. Nevertheless, her relationships with Willa Cather, Celia Thaxter, and Rebecca Harding Davis are indicative of her ability to form strong bonds with women from other backgrounds. Ultimately the benchmark for Annie Fields' choice of friends was a sense of connection, the sharing of a gift of sympathy. The bond between her many circles of friends was empathy, the unique ability to enter another person's life unobtrusively, understanding her problems and sharing her joys.

Annie Fields became acquainted with these women in a variety of ways. Through her editorial duties for the Atlantic, she met numerous female authors including Rebecca Harding Davis, Gail Hamilton, Helen Hunt Jackson, Elizabeth Phelps Ward, Lucy Larcom, Celia Thaxter, and Elizabeth McCracken. During her travels with her husband, she became acquainted with a variety of interesting women with whom she exchanged letters for years, including George Eliot, Marie Therese de Solms Blanc, author and admirer of Sarah Orne Jewett, Georgina Hogarth, Dickens' sister-in-law, Adelaide Ristori, an Italian actress, and Anne Thackery Ritchie, a writer and Thackery's oldest daughter.

Through her friendship with John Greenleaf Whittier and her association with the Atlantic Monthly, Annie met abolitionists Lucy Larcom, Lydia Maria Child, and Charlotte Forten Grimké. As she became involved in the political and social issues of her day, other friendships developed, such as those with advocates of women's higher education, including Elizabeth Agassiz, first president of Radcliffe College, and Agnes Irwin, educator and first dean of Radcliffe, and with women who worked for social change, such as Mary Greenwood Lodge, co-founder of the Associated Charities of Boston. She supported the causes of Abby Morton Diaz, a social reformer who "boasted that although she was a confirmed 'strong-minded woman' and suffragist she still could sew, do housework, and care for the sick"

(Blair 78) and Ednah Dow Cheney, abolitionist, reformer, and advocate of women's medical education. Southern writer Grace King, poet and sculptor Anne Whitney, Polish actress Modjeska, singer Christine Nilsson, Edith Wharton's friend Violet Paget (writer Vernon Lee), painter and sculptor Emma Stebbins, juvenile author Sarah Chauncey Woolsey, New England writer Alice Brown, journalist Kate Field, grande dame of Boston's artistic community Isabelle Gardner, all were Annie Fields' friends.

Boston Marriages were not uncommon among Annie's friends. Emma Stebbins' lifelong partner was the actress Charlotte Cushman; Anne Whitney and Adeline Manning were companions; Alice Brown lived with Maria G. Reed for over fifty years; Alice James and Katharine Loring were together until Alice's death in 1892. Annie and Sarah enjoyed the friendship of all these couples; her relationship with Jewett was not unusual--it became simply another dimension of her life.

In one journal entry Annie quotes George Sands: "Dis-moi qui tu aimes, et je te dirai qui tu es."² These words help to describe Annie's relationships with her friends. As a self-sufficient, confident woman, she was able to empathize with others without sacrificing her identity and privacy. Her diaries and vast correspondence reveal how connected she felt to her many friends, interested in their families, their writing, their accomplishments, their

sorrows. Many of these letters involve the giving of presents of flowers, food, and trinkets, gifts associated with women and reflective of the gift of sympathy. As Carolyn Heilbrun writes: "it is women who have long understood and embodied the essential qualities for friendship: intimacy, admission of vulnerability, the openness of the loving gesture" (Writing a Woman's Life 102).

Of course, not all of these friendships were equally intense, nor were they of equal importance to Annie. Since her primary loyalty was always to James Fields, any affront (real or imagined) to him resulted in the loss of her friendship. Furthermore, there are indications that at times she was imperious. In "148 Charles Street" Willa Cather suggests that she could be overbearing, and Ballou implies a certain haughtiness in her phrase "the widow of Charles Street." Also, like anyone else's, Annie's interests changed, resulting in greater or lesser intimacy with her friends. Nevertheless, many of her relationships spanned most of her adult life.

Most of Annie Fields' closest friends were writers. Although never a successful author herself, she had an intuitive understanding of women writers' aspirations and problems. She knew, as Tillie Olsen explains:

How much it takes to become a writer.
Bent (far more common than we assume),
circumstances, time, development of
craft--but beyond that: how much

conviction as to the importance of what one has to say, one's right to say it. And the will, the measureless store of belief in oneself to be able to come to, cleave to, find the form for one's own life comprehensions.

(Silences 27)

I have selected Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896), Celia Thaxter (1835-94), Laura Winthrop Johnson (1825-1889), Willa Cather (1873-1947), and George Eliot (1819-1880) as case studies because each of these women illustrates Olsen's thesis that becoming a writer, particularly for women, requires talent, conviction, and self-confidence. In addition, I have chosen these authors because each one benefitted from Annie Field's empathetic understanding during her pursuit of her career.

In her discussion of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Judith Roman writes that she was "one of the women who most inspired, influenced, and, surely, frustrated Annie Fields" (49). It is easy to understand why this was so. Lincoln's oft quoted remark: "Is this the little woman who made this great war?" has helped to mask "the little woman's" complexity and determination. Annie Fields knew her originally as a writer eager to become a member of James Fields' coterie of authors; gradually she became a close, albeit demanding, friend.

In her book Private Woman: Public Stage, Mary Kelly describes nineteenth-century women authors such as Stowe as "literary domestics." She writes:.

Conscious of the accomplished males in their families' past and present, they pondered the mystery of their silent foremothers. Stimulated by the broadened educational opportunities offered elite daughters of the nineteenth century, they were confused by the contradiction of an unavoidable domestic destiny. When as secret writers they were suddenly transformed into public figures, when as dependent women they gained economic power, and when, suffering from a sense of their intellectual inferiority, they became creators of culture, they were forced to confront and grapple with conflict, ambivalence and guilt. (xii)

These women were faced with more than the usual "anxiety of influence;" they were born into prominent families and educated for achievement; they accomplished significant goals, but still had to overcome the traditional domestic problems of all women. For Harriet Beecher Stowe this was especially true. Her mother died when she was only three. Her father, Lyman Beecher, and her brother, Henry Beecher, were noted clergymen; her sister, Catharine Beecher, a famous educator. When she married Calvin Beecher, a theology professor who suffered from a variety of psychological problems, he depended on her to earn a living and keep the family in tact. It was he who encouraged Harriet to become an author despite their seven children and ongoing financial and emotional difficulties. He once wrote to her: "God has written it in his book that you must be a literary woman, and who are we that we should contend against God?" (Fields, Authors and Friends 162). Even when

Harriet gained fame and fortune, she continued to face the "conflict, ambivalence and guilt" to which Kelly alludes.

Annie Fields met Stowe in Italy in the spring of 1860; their friendship lasted until her death in 1896. Describing their first meeting in Authors and Friends, Fields provides a rare insight into her private feelings of insecurity:

In a moment she approached and I was presented to her, and after a brief pause she passed on. All this was natural enough, but a wave of intense disappointment swept over me. Why had I found no words to express or even indicate the feeling that had choked me? Was the fault mine? Oh, yes, I said to myself, for I could not conceive it to be otherwise...I was depressed and sorrowing over the vanishing of a presence I might perhaps never meet again, and no glamour of light, or music or pictures or friendly voices could recall any pleasure to my heart.

(165)

Harriet Beecher Stowe's reputation must have been intimidating to the younger woman; however, their subsequent meetings were so enjoyable that Stowe changed her sailing plans so that she could return to America on the same ship as the Fields. This began a relationship which was, for Stowe, "destined to be one of the most important of her career" (Hedrick 294). An important consequence of this friendship was that Ticknor & Fields secured the legal rights to most of Stowe's published works, including Uncle Tom's Cabin. Stowe soon became dependent upon James Fields, who was "the essence of reliability and punctuality. As she was neither predictable nor punctual, she valued these

qualities exceedingly in others, particularly in publishers" (Hedrick 295).

Annie's relationship with Harriet Beecher Stowe was different from her husband's. James' role as publisher was always paramount; Annie was her friend, confidant and mentor. As such she would encourage Stowe when she was tired or depressed, provide a respite at 148 Charles Street when she was on a reading tour, and intervene when her unreliable work habits irritated James:

"I must cry you mercy," she begins one of the notes to her publisher, "and explain my condition to you as well as possible." The "condition" was frequently to be explained! Proofs were not ready when they were promised, the press was stopped, and both author and publisher required all the tender regard they really had for each other and all the patience they possessed to keep in tune. (Authors and Friends 200)

Annie's admiration for Harriet Beecher Stowe is apparent in the preface to Life and Letters:

The moment has at last arrived when the story of Mrs. Stowe's life can be given in full. The cause to which she surrendered herself is not forgotten; one by one the figures of those who bore a part in the great sacrifice begin to shine like bronze after smelting, and stand, cut in imperishable forms, upon the tablets of memory. Therefore it is fitting that one who led the vanguard, one who was born nevertheless to carry neither gun nor bayonet, but to bear upon her heart the weight of a great love for suffering men, should now herself be known.

Annie always believed that Uncle Tom's Cabin was Stowe's greatest contribution to American literature. For her it was personally important because it clarified the most serious issues of the Civil War and fostered her own commitment to the cause of abolition.

In "Days with Mrs. Stowe," Annie discusses Harriet's domestic problems and explains the hardships she faced: "there had never been any respite in her life until those sweet Italian days of the winter of 1859 and '60" (160). Throughout her married life, Stowe faced overwhelming financial struggles as the mainstay of a large family and a husband "whose salary was very uncertain" (Life and Letters 109). In her usual polite and circumspect way, Annie wrote: "Her husband was not lacking in affection nor in constant endeavor, but they were neither of them far-sighted from a worldly point of view" (Life and Letters 109). Fields realized that her friend's determination to pursue her career was the only way the family could have survived.

What most endeared Stowe to Annie was her gift of sympathy: "Great human tenderness was one of her chief characteristics... She was always reaching out to the friends of her adoption and drawing them closer to her side" (Authors and Friends 172-3). One such friend was George Eliot, whom Stowe never met face to face, but with whom she

had an intimate epistolary friendship.³ One of Stowe's letters to Eliot from which Annie quotes is revealing. Referring to Henry Ward Beecher's trial for adultery, Harriet wrote:

It was very sweet and kind of you to write what you did last. I suppose it is so long ago you may have forgotten, but it was a word of tenderness and sympathy about my brother's trial; it was womanly, tender, and sweet, such as at heart you are. After all, my love of you is greater than my admiration, for I think it more and better to be really a woman worth loving than to have read Greek and German and written books.

(Authors and Friends 212)

Annie chose this letter, it must be assumed, because it demonstrates feelings of empathy, "tenderness and sympathy" between two women, emotions so important to Annie in her own relationships. It also emphasizes the human qualities which she treasured and which distinguished the nineteenth-century authors who valued connection from the intellectual, isolated male writers of that era.

Annie provides other examples of Stowe's gift of sympathy: "With heroic nature she was always ready to lead the forlorn hope. The child no one else was willing to provide for, the woman the world despised, were brought into her home and cared for as her own" (Authors and Friends 190). Stowe's "sympathy with the new impetus benevolent work in cities had received" (Authors and Friends 221) must have pleased Annie; she mentions Harriet's letters from her "grotto" in Florida where she spent her last years and a

contribution of one hundred dollars for the Firemen's Fund after the devastating 1872 Boston fire.

Annie's assessment is not entirely laudatory, however. She was uncomfortable with Stowe's religious zeal, which, unlike her own, became more pronounced as she grew older. After quoting Stowe's response to an admirer's praise of Uncle Tom's Cabin: "'I did not write it...God wrote it...I merely did his dictation'," she continues: "She always spoke and behaved as if she recognized herself to be an instrument breathed upon by the Divine Spirit" (Authors and Friends 167). Annie was disturbed when Harriet implied that her controversial exposé of Lord Byron was divinely inspired:

When we consider how this idea [of divine inspiration] absorbed her to the prejudice of what appeared to others a wholesome exercise of human will and judgement, it is not wonderful that the world was offended when she once made conclusions contrary to the opinion of the public, and thought best to publish them. (168)

Undoubtedly the attack on so famous a poet as well as the subject matter of the article made Annie uncomfortable. Even more important, as I indicated in Chapter Two, the storm of protest following its publication led to a decline in the Atlantic's subscriptions.

There were other problems in their friendship as well. Annie was frustrated by what she calls Stowe's "vanishings": "Perhaps a dinner company of invited guests were eagerly listening to her conversation, when at some suggestion of a

listening to her conversation, when at some suggestion of a new train of ideas, she would suddenly become silent and hardly speak again. Occasionally at a reception she would wander away, only to be found strolling about in the conservatory" (Authors and Friends 164). While this condition appears to be of concern to Annie, it is not to Stowe's modern biographer, Joan Hedrick, who mentions it only once: "In 1889 Stowe suffered a major decline that left her with diminished faculties" (397). Annie's discomfort with the situation discloses something about herself:

Therefore it was often a cause of surprise and *social embarrassment* [my italics] when the bearer of this name proved to be sometimes too modest, and sometimes too absent-minded, to remember that anything was expected of her or anything arranged for her special entertainment.

(Authors and Friends 169)

Annie Fields' sense of propriety permeated her life; she had little patience when others failed to live up to her standards of decorum.

Despite Annie's intense regard for propriety, in most of her biographical writing, including her observations about Harriet Beecher Stowe, she displays the restraint Leon Edel calls for in Literary Biography:

Interpretation need not become, however, moral approval or disapproval of the life itself. There enters into the process a quality of sympathy with the subject which is neither forbearance nor adulation; it is quite simply the capacity to be aware at every moment that the subject was human and therefore

fallible, and that his having been a writer does not mean that we must demand perfection of him. (89)

Overall, Annie Fields is objective in her assessment of Harriet Beecher Stowe and careful not to pass judgement. Her reference to the Lady Byron scandal, as I have said, was veiled; she reports without comment Stowe's angry remarks about Hawthorne: "Do tell me if our friend Hawthorne praises that arch traitor Pierce in his preface, and your loyal firm publishes it" (Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe 294). Although she mentions Stowe's lack of interest in classical literature, she does not criticize it. Much of Annie Fields' own writing is reflective of the literature of the past; she enjoyed poetry, especially Donne and the Romantics, and spent hours reading books in foreign languages and translating French and German poems. Nevertheless, she takes pains to explain that Harriet was not interested in the study of the literature of the past because "All her life she stimulated the activity of her pen rather by her sympathy with humanity than by studies of literature" (Authors and Friends 195).

The portrayal of Harriet Beecher Stowe that emerges from Annie Fields' writings is strikingly similar to that of modern biographers. Like Joan Hedrick, she pictures a rather eccentric person who, despite personal tragedies, her own and her husband's psychological problems, and her declining popularity as an author, somehow managed to keep

her large family together and always empathized with those in need. When Hedrick writes that Stowe: "transformed the role of the angel in the house from a purely self-denying (and ultimately fatal) script into one in which she was a facilitator of and minister to the spirits of others," (9) she is describing those attributes of Stowe which evoked the admiration of Annie Fields. Harriet Beecher Stowe's gift of sympathy extended from her home and her family to her country and her friends; no matter how diminished she became physically, in spirit she retained these traits which were so important to Annie Fields.

Celia Thaxter's life is also described in Authors and Friends. Unlike Stowe, who grew up in the "golden age" of Litchfield, Connecticut, Thaxter was raised in the isolation of the Isles of Shoals: "If it were ever intended that a desolate island in the deep sea should be inhabited by one solitary family, then indeed Celia Thaxter was the fitting daughter of such a house" (Authors and Friends 229). Her father was first a lighthouse keeper and then an inn keeper, probably the prototype for Jewett's "The King of Folly Island," the story of a family raised on an isolated island off the coast of Maine. Thomas Loughton brought his family to the barren Isles of Shoals, where they lived happily, but far from the few other inhabitants of the islands.

At sixteen Celia married Levi Thaxter, whom her father had hired to tutor his children. The marriage became

unhappy after Levi insisted upon moving to Newtonville, Massachusetts. In 1861 he was responsible, however, for sending a poem Celia had written to his cousin James Russell Lowell, then editor of the Atlantic: "without a word to the author, Mr. Lowell had given it a title and printed it exactly as it had been handed to him by Celia's husband" (Rosamond Thaxter 99). After her poem was published, Celia met Annie and James Fields, and for her, as for Harriet Beecher Stowe, this became one of the most important friendships of her life. Both James and Annie liked Celia immediately and admired her work. James' faith in her ability was well rewarded. She became the most published woman poet in the Atlantic, as well as a contributor to Scribner's, Harper's, Youth's Companion, St. Nicholas Magazine, and several other journals. Her first volume of poetry appeared in 1871, followed by eight other volumes of prose and poetry.

Thaxter's correspondence with James Fields reflects a self-confidence that was lacking in other aspiring women authors, such as Rebecca Harding Davis and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps. In 1861 she wrote:

I thank you very much for the kind things you have said about my little poem, and am grateful for the trouble you took in looking it over and making suggestions. I am sorry I could not act upon them all. I am not good at making alterations. The only merit of my small productions lies in their straightforward simplicity, and when

that bloom is rubbed off by the effort
to better them, they lose what little
good they originally possessed.

(Letters 23)

Since Annie included this letter in Letters of Celia Thaxter, which she co-edited,⁴ and since 1861 marked the beginning of a lifelong friendship, we may assume that Annie approved of Thaxter's refusal to acquiesce to James' suggestions. While she herself was always polite, Annie never appeared to be shy or deferential with famous men or women; undoubtedly she appreciated these traits in Celia and enjoyed her references to James' "dissecting knife" (Letters 29).

Although Thaxter's poetry was well regarded in the mid-nineteenth century, later critical reaction has been mixed. Perry Westbrook, while praising her juvenile verse, calls her adult poems "...second or third rate. Her popularity resulted from the fact that she represented to average Americans, particularly New Englanders, what they considered a practical and sane viewpoint and that she tussled with problems and doubts that were filling all literate minds" (143). Van Wyck Brooks depicts her poems as "literary water-colours...graceful, touching, fragile, evanescent" (54), but he, too, prefers her children's poetry and stories. Annie Fields refers to "the pure poetic gift which was in her" (Authors and Friends 241), but emphasizes her artistic ability, her energy, her gift of sympathy: "Many of her letters show her boundless sympathy, her keen

appreciation of the best in those whom she loved, and her wonderful growth in beauty and roundness of character" (Letters xi). With the recent interest in nineteenth-century women writers, Thaxter has been revalued.⁵

Josephine Donovan, without suggesting that she was equally talented, has compared her with Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton:

At times her austere, harsh imagery anticipates that of 20th Century poets such as Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath. Probably some of Thaxter's bitterness, like theirs, stemmed from the frustrations she encountered trying to play the many and conflicting roles of wife, mother, and artist. These conflicts are apparent in Thaxter's letters, published in 1895.

("Celia Thaxter" 228)

Her assessment is accurate; as with most of Annie Fields' circle of women writers, from Harriet Beecher Stowe to Laura Winthrop Johnson, the balancing of the demands of home and career was often overwhelming.

Thaxter's bitterness was caused not only by her conflicting roles, but also by a constant lack of money, her husband's insensitivity to her stressful life, and the mental retardation of her oldest son, for whom she was the primary caretaker. She found contentment only in the summers when she returned from the mainland to the Isles of Shoals to work at her family's inn, Appledore House. In 1847 her father had purchased a resort on Appeldore Island, the largest of the Shoals islands, which he completed the

next year with the help of Levi Thaxter, Celia's future husband. It became a thriving summer resort, and for years attracted major literary figures, artists, and musicians, including Hawthorne, Thoreau, Whittier, Lowell, Mark Twain, Ole Bull, Childe Hassam, Sarah Orne Jewett, and the Fields. It was there that Annie and Sarah first became acquainted in 1880. According to Annie, Celia's " 'parlor,' as it was called, was a *milieu* quite as interesting as any of the 'salons' of the past" (Letters xvi). In contrast to her life in Newtonville, "all summer Celia Thaxter, the successful authoress, was looked up to and admired by a host of friends and made the center of a life which had outgrown 'the trinity of the soapkettle, the ashcan and the cook stove' to which her husband somewhat jealously seemed to wish to condemn her" (Rosamond Thaxter 195). In her letters and her conversations Celia often referred to this conflict with her husband, which did not abate until he began lecturing and traveling on scientific expeditions of his own.

Despite the emotional and physical hardships of her life, Celia continued to write. Her book, Among the Isles of Shoals (1873), demonstrates that she was more skillful as a prose writer than as a poet. Perry Westbrook calls it "her only truly first-rate literary production" (124), and Van Wyck Brooks describes it as a "hooked rug in prose...woven of pure materials in harmonious colours"

(Indian Summer 54). It is a description of her life on the islands, which she compares with Melville's "Encantadas":

But their dark volcanic crags and melancholy beaches can hardly seem more desolate than do the low bleached rocks of the Isles of Shoals to eyes that behold them for the first time. Very sad they look, stern, bleak, and unpromising, yet are they enchanted islands in a better sense of the word than are the great Galapagos of which Mr. Melville discourses so delightfully.

(7)

Her descriptions have a poetic cadence that captures the imagination of the reader. It is easy to understand James Fields' desire to publish Among the Isles of Shoals and Annie's enthusiasm for her prose. Thaxter has the ability to transport her readers into her stark and lonely world: "for there are not even trees to whisper with familiar voices,--nothing but sky and sea and rocks. But the very wildness and desolation reveal a strange beauty to him" (Isles of Shoals 14). For Thaxter, and to some extent for Jewett as well, these coastal islands were both symbols of loneliness and a source of peace.

In 1894 An Island Garden, written by Celia Thaxter and illustrated by her friend Childe Hassam, the American impressionist painter, was published. Here Thaxter describes her garden: what she grew, how she tended to it, what it meant to her metaphysically. Perry Westbrook writes:

The garden symbolized to her the duality of nature, the constant encroachment of evil and cruelty upon goodness and beauty. Over this spot of nature she had control. If she fought hard enough, the forces of evil could be beaten back from this square of ground. In time the garden became the great passion of her life--greater even than literature...

(138)

Thaxter saw her garden in anthropomorphic terms and, through her relationship with it, found the peace for which she longed. Annie, Sarah, and many of their other friends shared this love of gardening, but, because of the richness of their lives, their attachment to gardens lacked the intensity of Celia's.

Thaxter was also an accomplished water-colorist; in 1874 she wrote to Annie on stationery decorated with a red leaf:

Within a few days I have taken to "art" as you will see by the top of the page-- don't laugh, it is my first effort at a woodbine leaf and I drew it from nature as nearly as I could, without any instruction whatever. I feel it is my bonus. I shall be able to do it by and by, & it gives me such delight...We are cut off from the world even more: the steamer has stopped running a few weeks ago & we depend on the occasional trips of the yacht--about twenty people remain yet...With love to J.T. F. and no end for yourself, Ever your loving C.T.⁶

This letter conveys the affection that had grown between them, the simple sharing of pleasures they enjoyed, and the continual loneliness Celia faced. For Celia Thaxter, Annie's friendship was important as a substitute not only

for love, but for the small acts of kindness which meant so much to her. In return, her years of loneliness made her sensitive to Annie's feelings after James' death. She was one of Annie's few visitors after he died and even came to stay with her for a time.

After Levi's death in 1884, Celia returned to Appeldore and lived there contentedly until her own death ten years later. By this time she had become interested in spiritualism, hoping to establish communication with her mother, whose death had affected her deeply. Sarah Orne Jewett's short story "The Foreigner" (1900) may have been based on her observation of Thaxter. In this Dunnet Landing story, published four years after The Country of the Pointed Firs, Mrs. Todd tells the narrator the touching account of the young French widow rescued in Jamaica by four Maine sea captains, including Mrs. Todd's husband. She marries one of the men, Captain Tolland, and lives with him in the tiny Maine village. While most of the local women distrust "the foreigner," Mrs. Todd, at her mother's urging, befriends her. The villagers' suspicions are based on jealousy of Mrs. Tolland's creativity and imagination, as well as her Catholicism. When Captain Tolland is lost at sea, Mrs. Todd and her uncle must tell her. When she hears the news, she collapses and for several days hovers between life and death. Just before she dies, she sees an apparition in the doorway which both she and Mrs. Todd recognize as

her mother:

"'You saw her, did n't you?' she says to me, speakin' perfectly reasonable. ' 'Tis my mother,' she says again..." 'You saw her, did n't you?' she said the second time, an' I says, 'Yes, dear, I did; you ain't never goin' to feel strange an' lonesome no more.' An' then in a few minutes 't was all over. I felt they'd gone away together...

(Best Short Stories 279)

Sarah, who for many years had an interest in spiritualism, could easily have been influenced by Celia's claim to have seen her mother before her death. She recreated Thaxter's account of the event in one of her most complex short stories.

During her last years at Appledore, Celia charmed her many visitors. Paula Blanchard's description of her at this time helps to explain her appeal:

By now she was a stout, silver-haired grandmother with a fine profile, of which she was rather vain. She always dressed in white or gray, with a white fichu over her shoulders and a silver crescent in her hair. She was, in short, a deliberately composed portrait of herself, just as her parlor--with its two or three vases of flowers on each table...created an illusion of a life lived as art, in which no hint intruded of the day she had spent doing hotel accounts or killing slugs in the garden. No doubt some people found all this affected, but even they would have to grant there was a certain gallantry in the way she fought back at the chaos of her life and created her peace where and how she could. (181)

Celia's artistic lifestyle appealed to Annie. Like her two sisters, artist Lissie Adams and translator Sarah Holland

Adams, and her friends journalist Kate Fields and sculptor Anne Whitney, Thaxter led an unconventional life. Although she herself was always restrained by her sense of propriety, Annie seemed to enjoy women who were able to pursue iconoclastic lives.

After Sarah Jewett, I believe that Celia Thaxter was Annie Fields' most intimate friend. One reason for this friendship was that they were the same age and lived near one another. Both shared a desire to excel; Annie wrote: "It may easily be said of her that one of the finest lessons she unconsciously taught was not only the value of labor, but the joy of doing things well" (Letters xix). Annie often asked for Celia's professional opinion about her writing; one of Celia's buoyant replies, written in 1888, demonstrates her cheerfulness during her last decade at the Isles of Shoals: "Dear, did you think I was extravagant in saying I liked your poem better than anything you ever did? Because it just fitted my particular idiosyncrasies, you know!" (Letters 155).

Ultimately, however, it was the gift of sympathy more than anything else which bound the two friends. In her introduction to The Letters of Celia Thaxter, Annie wrote: "She was always helping to make a bright spot around her; to give of herself in some way" (xx). And, in a letter to Annie, Celia said: "I thank you for all your kindness; it is your kindness that touches and consoles me" (Letters 87).

Their correspondence is marked by deep tenderness and empathy. Annie was a touchstone for Celia during the difficult early years of her married life, and Celia was a thoughtful and caring friend for Annie, not only after James' death, but during all the years of their friendship.

Laura Winthrop Johnson was Annie Fields' lifelong friend. Except for her family members and her teacher George Emerson, Laura is the only link I have found to Annie's childhood acquaintance. According to Judith Roman, "Laura remained the friend to whom Annie spoke most freely and with the least need of professional tact until her intimate friendship with Sarah Orne Jewett began" (47). Throughout Laura and Annie's lives they corresponded frequently and visited one another at least once each year.

Laura Winthrop's family had close connections with Connecticut; her father was a descendent of Governor Winthrop and her mother, a sister of President Woolsey of Yale. Her brother, Theodore, was an author and poet who was killed in the Civil War at the age of thirty-two.⁷ She married a New Yorker, William Templeton Johnson, and moved to Staten Island, where she lived for forty years. Although she had a large family, she published books of poetry and non-fiction and was active in social work, undoubtedly influenced, as was Annie, by George Emerson. Like Harriet Beecher Stowe and Celia Thaxter, her letters show the

conviction as to the importance of what one has to say, one's right to say it. And the will, the measureless store of belief in oneself to be able to come to, cleave to, find the form for one's own life comprehensions.

(Silences 27)

I have selected Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896), Celia Thaxter (1835-94), Laura Winthrop Johnson (1825-1889), Willa Cather (1873-1947), and George Eliot (1819-1880) as case studies because each of these women illustrates Olsen's thesis that becoming a writer, particularly for women, requires talent, conviction, and self-confidence. In addition, I have chosen these authors because each one benefitted from Annie Field's empathetic understanding during her pursuit of her career.

In her discussion of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Judith Roman writes that she was "one of the women who most inspired, influenced, and, surely, frustrated Annie Fields" (49). It is easy to understand why this was so. Lincoln's oft quoted remark: "Is this the little woman who made this great war?" has helped to mask "the little woman's" complexity and determination. Annie Fields knew her originally as a writer eager to become a member of James Fields' coterie of authors; gradually she became a close, albeit demanding, friend.

In her book Private Woman: Public Stage, Mary Kelly describes nineteenth-century women authors such as Stowe as "literary domestics." She writes:.

Conscious of the accomplished males in their families' past and present, they pondered the mystery of their silent foremothers. Stimulated by the broadened educational opportunities offered elite daughters of the nineteenth century, they were confused by the contradiction of an unavoidable domestic destiny. When as secret writers they were suddenly transformed into public figures, when as dependent women they gained economic power, and when, suffering from a sense of their intellectual inferiority, they became creators of culture, they were forced to confront and grapple with conflict, ambivalence and guilt. (xii)

These women were faced with more than the usual "anxiety of influence;" they were born into prominent families and educated for achievement; they accomplished significant goals, but still had to overcome the traditional domestic problems of all women. For Harriet Beecher Stowe this was especially true. Her mother died when she was only three. Her father, Lyman Beecher, and her brother, Henry Beecher, were noted clergymen; her sister, Catharine Beecher, a famous educator. When she married Calvin Beecher, a theology professor who suffered from a variety of psychological problems, he depended on her to earn a living and keep the family in tact. It was he who encouraged Harriet to become an author despite their seven children and ongoing financial and emotional difficulties. He once wrote to her: "God has written it in his book that you must be a literary woman, and who are we that we should contend against God?" (Fields, Authors and Friends 162). Even when

Harriet gained fame and fortune, she continued to face the "conflict, ambivalence and guilt" to which Kelly alludes.

Annie Fields met Stowe in Italy in the spring of 1860; their friendship lasted until her death in 1896. Describing their first meeting in Authors and Friends, Fields provides a rare insight into her private feelings of insecurity:

In a moment she approached and I was presented to her, and after a brief pause she passed on. All this was natural enough, but a wave of intense disappointment swept over me. Why had I found no words to express or even indicate the feeling that had choked me? Was the fault mine? Oh, yes, I said to myself, for I could not conceive it to be otherwise...I was depressed and sorrowing over the vanishing of a presence I might perhaps never meet again, and no glamour of light, or music or pictures or friendly voices could recall any pleasure to my heart.

(165)

Harriet Beecher Stowe's reputation must have been intimidating to the younger woman; however, their subsequent meetings were so enjoyable that Stowe changed her sailing plans so that she could return to America on the same ship as the Fields. This began a relationship which was, for Stowe, "destined to be one of the most important of her career" (Hedrick 294). An important consequence of this friendship was that Ticknor & Fields secured the legal rights to most of Stowe's published works, including Uncle Tom's Cabin. Stowe soon became dependent upon James Fields, who was "the essence of reliability and punctuality. As she was neither predictable nor punctual, she valued these

qualities exceedingly in others, particularly in publishers" (Hedrick 295).

Annie's relationship with Harriet Beecher Stowe was different from her husband's. James' role as publisher was always paramount; Annie was her friend, confidant and mentor. As such she would encourage Stowe when she was tired or depressed, provide a respite at 148 Charles Street when she was on a reading tour, and intervene when her unreliable work habits irritated James:

"I must cry you mercy," she begins one of the notes to her publisher, "and explain my condition to you as well as possible." The "condition" was frequently to be explained! Proofs were not ready when they were promised, the press was stopped, and both author and publisher required all the tender regard they really had for each other and all the patience they possessed to keep in tune. (Authors and Friends 200)

Annie's admiration for Harriet Beecher Stowe is apparent in the preface to Life and Letters:

The moment has at last arrived when the story of Mrs. Stowe's life can be given in full. The cause to which she surrendered herself is not forgotten; one by one the figures of those who bore a part in the great sacrifice begin to shine like bronze after smelting, and stand, cut in imperishable forms, upon the tablets of memory. Therefore it is fitting that one who led the vanguard, one who was born nevertheless to carry neither gun nor bayonet, but to bear upon her heart the weight of a great love for suffering men, should now herself be known.

Annie always believed that Uncle Tom's Cabin was Stowe's greatest contribution to American literature. For her it was personally important because it clarified the most serious issues of the Civil War and fostered her own commitment to the cause of abolition.

In "Days with Mrs. Stowe," Annie discusses Harriet's domestic problems and explains the hardships she faced: "there had never been any respite in her life until those sweet Italian days of the winter of 1859 and '60" (160). Throughout her married life, Stowe faced overwhelming financial struggles as the mainstay of a large family and a husband "whose salary was very uncertain" (Life and Letters 109). In her usual polite and circumspect way, Annie wrote: "Her husband was not lacking in affection nor in constant endeavor, but they were neither of them far-sighted from a worldly point of view" (Life and Letters 109). Fields realized that her friend's determination to pursue her career was the only way the family could have survived,

What most endeared Stowe to Annie was her gift of sympathy: "Great human tenderness was one of her chief characteristics... She was always reaching out to the friends of her adoption and drawing them closer to her side" (Authors and Friends 172-3). One such friend was George Eliot, whom Stowe never met face to face, but with whom she

had an intimate epistolary friendship.³ One of Stowe's letters to Eliot from which Annie quotes is revealing. Referring to Henry Ward Beecher's trial for adultery, Harriet wrote:

It was very sweet and kind of you to write what you did last. I suppose it is so long ago you may have forgotten, but it was a word of tenderness and sympathy about my brother's trial; it was womanly, tender, and sweet, such as at heart you are. After all, my love of you is greater than my admiration, for I think it more and better to be really a woman worth loving than to have read Greek and German and written books.

(Authors and Friends 212)

Annie chose this letter, it must be assumed, because it demonstrates feelings of empathy, "tenderness and sympathy" between two women, emotions so important to Annie in her own relationships. It also emphasizes the human qualities which she treasured and which distinguished the nineteenth-century authors who valued connection from the intellectual, isolated male writers of that era.

Annie provides other examples of Stowe's gift of sympathy: "With heroic nature she was always ready to lead the forlorn hope. The child no one else was willing to provide for, the woman the world despised, were brought into her home and cared for as her own" (Authors and Friends 190). Stowe's "sympathy with the new impetus benevolent work in cities had received" (Authors and Friends 221) must have pleased Annie; she mentions Harriet's letters from her "grotto" in Florida where she spent her last years and a

contribution of one hundred dollars for the Firemen's Fund after the devastating 1872 Boston fire.

Annie's assessment is not entirely laudatory, however. She was uncomfortable with Stowe's religious zeal, which, unlike her own, became more pronounced as she grew older. After quoting Stowe's response to an admirer's praise of Uncle Tom's Cabin: "'I did not write it...God wrote it...I merely did his dictation'," she continues: "She always spoke and behaved as if she recognized herself to be an instrument breathed upon by the Divine Spirit" (Authors and Friends 167). Annie was disturbed when Harriet implied that her controversial exposé of Lord Byron was divinely inspired:

When we consider how this idea [of divine inspiration] absorbed her to the prejudice of what appeared to others a wholesome exercise of human will and judgement, it is not wonderful that the world was offended when she once made conclusions contrary to the opinion of the public, and thought best to publish them. (168)

Undoubtedly the attack on so famous a poet as well as the subject matter of the article made Annie uncomfortable. Even more important, as I indicated in Chapter Two, the storm of protest following its publication led to a decline in the Atlantic's subscriptions.

There were other problems in their friendship as well. Annie was frustrated by what she calls Stowe's "vanishings": "Perhaps a dinner company of invited guests were eagerly listening to her conversation, when at some suggestion of a

listening to her conversation, when at some suggestion of a new train of ideas, she would suddenly become silent and hardly speak again. Occasionally at a reception she would wander away, only to be found strolling about in the conservatory" (Authors and Friends 164). While this condition appears to be of concern to Annie, it is not to Stowe's modern biographer, Joan Hedrick, who mentions it only once: "In 1889 Stowe suffered a major decline that left her with diminished faculties" (397). Annie's discomfort with the situation discloses something about herself:

Therefore it was often a cause of surprise and *social embarrassment* [my italics] when the bearer of this name proved to be sometimes too modest, and sometimes too absent-minded, to remember that anything was expected of her or anything arranged for her special entertainment.

(Authors and Friends 169)

Annie Fields' sense of propriety permeated her life; she had little patience when others failed to live up to her standards of decorum.

Despite Annie's intense regard for propriety, in most of her biographical writing, including her observations about Harriet Beecher Stowe, she displays the restraint Leon Edel calls for in Literary Biography:

Interpretation need not become, however, moral approval or disapproval of the life itself. There enters into the process a quality of sympathy with the subject which is neither forbearance nor adulation; it is quite simply the capacity to be aware at every moment that the subject was human and therefore

fallible, and that his having been a writer does not mean that we must demand perfection of him. (89)

Overall, Annie Fields is objective in her assessment of Harriet Beecher Stowe and careful not to pass judgement. Her reference to the Lady Byron scandal, as I have said, was veiled; she reports without comment Stowe's angry remarks about Hawthorne: "Do tell me if our friend Hawthorne praises that arch traitor Pierce in his preface, and your loyal firm publishes it" (Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe 294). Although she mentions Stowe's lack of interest in classical literature, she does not criticize it. Much of Annie Fields' own writing is reflective of the literature of the past; she enjoyed poetry, especially Donne and the Romantics, and spent hours reading books in foreign languages and translating French and German poems. Nevertheless, she takes pains to explain that Harriet was not interested in the study of the literature of the past because "All her life she stimulated the activity of her pen rather by her sympathy with humanity than by studies of literature" (Authors and Friends 195).

The portrayal of Harriet Beecher Stowe that emerges from Annie Fields' writings is strikingly similar to that of modern biographers. Like Joan Hedrick, she pictures a rather eccentric person who, despite personal tragedies, her own and her husband's psychological problems, and her declining popularity as an author, somehow managed to keep

her large family together and always empathized with those in need. When Hedrick writes that Stowe: "transformed the role of the angel in the house from a purely self-denying (and ultimately fatal) script into one in which she was a facilitator of and minister to the spirits of others," (9) she is describing those attributes of Stowe which evoked the admiration of Annie Fields. Harriet Beecher Stowe's gift of sympathy extended from her home and her family to her country and her friends; no matter how diminished she became physically, in spirit she retained these traits which were so important to Annie Fields.

Celia Thaxter's life is also described in Authors and Friends. Unlike Stowe, who grew up in the "golden age" of Litchfield, Connecticut, Thaxter was raised in the isolation of the Isles of Shoals: "If it were ever intended that a desolate island in the deep sea should be inhabited by one solitary family, then indeed Celia Thaxter was the fitting daughter of such a house" (Authors and Friends 229). Her father was first a lighthouse keeper and then an inn keeper, probably the prototype for Jewett's "The King of Folly Island," the story of a family raised on an isolated island off the coast of Maine. Thomas Loughton brought his family to the barren Isles of Shoals, where they lived happily, but far from the few other inhabitants of the islands.

At sixteen Celia married Levi Thaxter, whom her father had hired to tutor his children. The marriage became

unhappy after Levi insisted upon moving to Newtonville, Massachusetts. In 1861 he was responsible, however, for sending a poem Celia had written to his cousin James Russell Lowell, then editor of the Atlantic: "without a word to the author, Mr. Lowell had given it a title and printed it exactly as it had been handed to him by Celia's husband" (Rosamond Thaxter 99). After her poem was published, Celia met Annie and James Fields, and for her, as for Harriet Beecher Stowe, this became one of the most important friendships of her life. Both James and Annie liked Celia immediately and admired her work. James' faith in her ability was well rewarded. She became the most published woman poet in the Atlantic, as well as a contributor to Scribner's, Harper's, Youth's Companion, St. Nicholas Magazine, and several other journals. Her first volume of poetry appeared in 1871, followed by eight other volumes of prose and poetry.

Thaxter's correspondence with James Fields reflects a self-confidence that was lacking in other aspiring women authors, such as Rebecca Harding Davis and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps. In 1861 she wrote:

I thank you very much for the kind things you have said about my little poem, and am grateful for the trouble you took in looking it over and making suggestions. I am sorry I could not act upon them all. I am not good at making alterations. The only merit of my small productions lies in their straightforward simplicity, and when

that bloom is rubbed off by the effort
to better them, they lose what little
good they originally possessed.

(Letters 23)

Since Annie included this letter in Letters of Celia Thaxter, which she co-edited,⁴ and since 1861 marked the beginning of a lifelong friendship, we may assume that Annie approved of Thaxter's refusal to acquiesce to James' suggestions. While she herself was always polite, Annie never appeared to be shy or deferential with famous men or women; undoubtedly she appreciated these traits in Celia and enjoyed her references to James' "dissecting knife" (Letters 29).

Although Thaxter's poetry was well regarded in the mid-nineteenth century, later critical reaction has been mixed. Perry Westbrook, while praising her juvenile verse, calls her adult poems "...second or third rate. Her popularity resulted from the fact that she represented to average Americans, particularly New Englanders, what they considered a practical and sane viewpoint and that she tussled with problems and doubts that were filling all literate minds" (143). Van Wyck Brooks depicts her poems as "literary water-colours...graceful, touching, fragile, evanescent" (54), but he, too, prefers her children's poetry and stories. Annie Fields refers to "the pure poetic gift which was in her" (Authors and Friends 241), but emphasizes her artistic ability, her energy, her gift of sympathy: "Many of her letters show her boundless sympathy, her keen

appreciation of the best in those whom she loved, and her wonderful growth in beauty and roundness of character" (Letters xi). With the recent interest in nineteenth-century women writers, Thaxter has been revalued.⁵

Josephine Donovan, without suggesting that she was equally talented, has compared her with Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton:

At times her austere, harsh imagery anticipates that of 20th Century poets such as Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath. Probably some of Thaxter's bitterness, like theirs, stemmed from the frustrations she encountered trying to play the many and conflicting roles of wife, mother, and artist. These conflicts are apparent in Thaxter's letters, published in 1895.

("Celia Thaxter" 228)

Her assessment is accurate; as with most of Annie Fields' circle of women writers, from Harriet Beecher Stowe to Laura Winthrop Johnson, the balancing of the demands of home and career was often overwhelming.

Thaxter's bitterness was caused not only by her conflicting roles, but also by a constant lack of money, her husband's insensitivity to her stressful life, and the mental retardation of her oldest son, for whom she was the primary caretaker. She found contentment only in the summers when she returned from the mainland to the Isles of Shoals to work at her family's inn, Appledore House. In 1847 her father had purchased a resort on Appeldore Island, the largest of the Shoals islands, which he completed the

next year with the help of Levi Thaxter, Celia's future husband. It became a thriving summer resort, and for years attracted major literary figures, artists, and musicians, including Hawthorne, Thoreau, Whittier, Lowell, Mark Twain, Ole Bull, Childe Hassam, Sarah Orne Jewett, and the Fields. It was there that Annie and Sarah first became acquainted in 1880. According to Annie, Celia's " 'parlor,' as it was called, was a *milieu* quite as interesting as any of the 'salons' of the past" (Letters xvi). In contrast to her life in Newtonville, "all summer Celia Thaxter, the successful authoress, was looked up to and admired by a host of friends and made the center of a life which had outgrown 'the trinity of the soapkettle, the ashcan and the cook stove' to which her husband somewhat jealously seemed to wish to condemn her" (Rosamond Thaxter 195). In her letters and her conversations Celia often referred to this conflict with her husband, which did not abate until he began lecturing and traveling on scientific expeditions of his own.

Despite the emotional and physical hardships of her life, Celia continued to write. Her book, Among the Isles of Shoals (1873), demonstrates that she was more skillful as a prose writer than as a poet. Perry Westbrook calls it "her only truly first-rate literary production" (124), and Van Wyck Brooks describes it as a "hooked rug in prose...woven of pure materials in harmonious colours"

(Indian Summer 54). It is a description of her life on the islands, which she compares with Melville's "Encantadas":

But their dark volcanic crags and melancholy beaches can hardly seem more desolate than do the low bleached rocks of the Isles of Shoals to eyes that behold them for the first time. Very sad they look, stern, bleak, and unpromising, yet are they enchanted islands in a better sense of the word than are the great Galapagos of which Mr. Melville discourses so delightfully.

(7)

Her descriptions have a poetic cadence that captures the imagination of the reader. It is easy to understand James Fields' desire to publish Among the Isles of Shoals and Annie's enthusiasm for her prose. Thaxter has the ability to transport her readers into her stark and lonely world: "for there are not even trees to whisper with familiar voices,--nothing but sky and sea and rocks. But the very wildness and desolation reveal a strange beauty to him" (Isles of Shoals 14). For Thaxter, and to some extent for Jewett as well, these coastal islands were both symbols of loneliness and a source of peace.

In 1894 An Island Garden, written by Celia Thaxter and illustrated by her friend Childe Hassam, the American impressionist painter, was published. Here Thaxter describes her garden: what she grew, how she tended to it, what it meant to her metaphysically. Perry Westbrook writes:

The garden symbolized to her the duality of nature, the constant encroachment of evil and cruelty upon goodness and beauty. Over this spot of nature she had control. If she fought hard enough, the forces of evil could be beaten back from this square of ground. In time the garden became the great passion of her life--greater even than literature...

(138)

Thaxter saw her garden in anthropomorphic terms and, through her relationship with it, found the peace for which she longed. Annie, Sarah, and many of their other friends shared this love of gardening, but, because of the richness of their lives, their attachment to gardens lacked the intensity of Celia's.

Thaxter was also an accomplished water-colorist; in 1874 she wrote to Annie on stationery decorated with a red leaf:

Within a few days I have taken to "art" as you will see by the top of the page-- don't laugh, it is my first effort at a woodbine leaf and I drew it from nature as nearly as I could, without any instruction whatever. I feel it is my bonus. I shall be able to do it by and by, & it gives me such delight...We are cut off from the world even more: the steamer has stopped running a few weeks ago & we depend on the occasional trips of the yacht--about twenty people remain yet...With love to J.T. F. and no end for yourself, Ever your loving C.T.⁶

This letter conveys the affection that had grown between them, the simple sharing of pleasures they enjoyed, and the continual loneliness Celia faced. For Celia Thaxter, Annie's friendship was important as a substitute not only

for love, but for the small acts of kindness which meant so much to her. In return, her years of loneliness made her sensitive to Annie's feelings after James' death. She was one of Annie's few visitors after he died and even came to stay with her for a time.

After Levi's death in 1884, Celia returned to Appeldore and lived there contentedly until her own death ten years later. By this time she had become interested in spiritualism, hoping to establish communication with her mother, whose death had affected her deeply. Sarah Orne Jewett's short story "The Foreigner" (1900) may have been based on her observation of Thaxter. In this Dunnet Landing story, published four years after The Country of the Pointed Firs, Mrs. Todd tells the narrator the touching account of the young French widow rescued in Jamaica by four Maine sea captains, including Mrs. Todd's husband. She marries one of the men, Captain Tolland, and lives with him in the tiny Maine village. While most of the local women distrust "the foreigner," Mrs. Todd, at her mother's urging, befriends her. The villagers' suspicions are based on jealousy of Mrs. Tolland's creativity and imagination, as well as her Catholicism. When Captain Tolland is lost at sea, Mrs. Todd and her uncle must tell her. When she hears the news, she collapses and for several days hovers between life and death. Just before she dies, she sees an apparition in the doorway which both she and Mrs. Todd recognize as

her mother:

"'You saw her, did n't you?' she says to me, speakin' perfectly reasonable. ' 'Tis my mother,' she says again..." 'You saw her, did n't you?' she said the second time, an' I says, 'Yes, dear, I did; you ain't never goin' to feel strange an' lonesome no more.' An' then in a few minutes 't was all over. I felt they'd gone away together...

(Best Short Stories 279)

Sarah, who for many years had an interest in spiritualism, could easily have been influenced by Celia's claim to have seen her mother before her death. She recreated Thaxter's account of the event in one of her most complex short stories.

During her last years at Appledore, Celia charmed her many visitors. Paula Blanchard's description of her at this time helps to explain her appeal:

By now she was a stout, silver-haired grandmother with a fine profile, of which she was rather vain. She always dressed in white or gray, with a white fichu over her shoulders and a silver crescent in her hair. She was, in short, a deliberately composed portrait of herself, just as her parlor--with its two or three vases of flowers on each table...created an illusion of a life lived as art, in which no hint intruded of the day she had spent doing hotel accounts or killing slugs in the garden. No doubt some people found all this affected, but even they would have to grant there was a certain gallantry in the way she fought back at the chaos of her life and created her peace where and how she could. (181)

Celia's artistic lifestyle appealed to Annie. Like her two sisters, artist Lissie Adams and translator Sarah Holland

Adams, and her friends journalist Kate Fields and sculptor Anne Whitney, Thaxter led an unconventional life. Although she herself was always restrained by her sense of propriety, Annie seemed to enjoy women who were able to pursue iconoclastic lives.

After Sarah Jewett, I believe that Celia Thaxter was Annie Fields' most intimate friend. One reason for this friendship was that they were the same age and lived near one another. Both shared a desire to excel; Annie wrote: "It may easily be said of her that one of the finest lessons she unconsciously taught was not only the value of labor, but the joy of doing things well" (Letters xix). Annie often asked for Celia's professional opinion about her writing; one of Celia's buoyant replies, written in 1888, demonstrates her cheerfulness during her last decade at the Isles of Shoals: "Dear, did you think I was extravagant in saying I liked your poem better than anything you ever did? Because it just fitted my particular idiosyncrasies, you know!" (Letters 155).

Ultimately, however, it was the gift of sympathy more than anything else which bound the two friends. In her introduction to The Letters of Celia Thaxter, Annie wrote: "She was always helping to make a bright spot around her; to give of herself in some way" (xx). And, in a letter to Annie, Celia said: "I thank you for all your kindness; it is your kindness that touches and consoles me" (Letters 87).

Their correspondence is marked by deep tenderness and empathy. Annie was a touchstone for Celia during the difficult early years of her married life, and Celia was a thoughtful and caring friend for Annie, not only after James' death, but during all the years of their friendship.

Laura Winthrop Johnson was Annie Fields' lifelong friend. Except for her family members and her teacher George Emerson, Laura is the only link I have found to Annie's childhood acquaintance. According to Judith Roman, "Laura remained the friend to whom Annie spoke most freely and with the least need of professional tact until her intimate friendship with Sarah Orne Jewett began" (47). Throughout Laura and Annie's lives they corresponded frequently and visited one another at least once each year.

Laura Winthrop's family had close connections with Connecticut; her father was a descendent of Governor Winthrop and her mother, a sister of President Woolsey of Yale. Her brother, Theodore, was an author and poet who was killed in the Civil War at the age of thirty-two.⁷ She married a New Yorker, William Templeton Johnson, and moved to Staten Island, where she lived for forty years. Although she had a large family, she published books of poetry and non-fiction and was active in social work, undoubtedly influenced, as was Annie, by George Emerson. Like Harriet Beecher Stowe and Celia Thaxter, her letters show the

conflicts generated by the difficult roles of mother, wife, and author. She wrote to her friend George Curtis:⁸

Many thanks for your beautiful poem...Next to poetry, I delight in (good) books of travel but yours is both...But then such books almost break my heart, for I have the soul of a gypsy under a calm and civilized exterior, and they make me long too much for vagrancy. That darling kettle on two sticks is always bubbling and boiling away in a corner of my heart; I have often heard it while darning stockings... Yet I have never been anywhere, and perhaps never shall see any more than the old lady, who had once been to Harlem.⁹

Although her words are lighthearted, between the lines the frustration and disappointment that plagued nineteenth-century women writers is evident.

While the letters from Annie to Laura Johnson are often overly sentimental, they are engaging because they contain both personal news and discussions of authors and writing. Except for her letters to Sarah Jewett, Annie expressed more private concerns to Laura than to any other correspondent. For example, in 1870, referring to one of James' depressions, she wrote:

Jamie is not altogether well and you who have been through everything will understand my anxieties. I dare say they are ill-founded enough but he does not seem like himself. I try to keep the house as bright as I can and never a week passes without some cheerful fireside talk with invited friends--but--You will not remotely whisper a word of this to Lissie Adams not anyone [sic],

please, but I could not quite go on writing to you as usual without putting down a little of the weight.¹⁰

The letters do not get more personal than this; as usual Annie's sense of propriety and her need for privacy preclude any confidences of a more intimate nature. In a note written to Laura after James' death she shows the depth of her love for her friend:

Your letter full of unspeakable feeling in spite of all the kind things which were expressed in it reached me a few days ago. I enclose a photograph which I think you will be glad to see sometimes in your far away lands with my love and thanks. I feel as if it were impossible for me to write to anyone just now & I see no one. I am packed up for Manchester whither I go on this my birthday! My tender care to you all.¹¹

Like Annie, Laura was a sentimental poet. In 1864 she submitted a book to James for publication; Annie was assigned the task of rejecting it. Tactfully she wrote: "You understand about the little book...How glad JTF would be to print it if were possible. But the expense of making a book now-a-days is something *frightful* (what a word that is to use but the price acts as a bar to keep publishers from the path of book making) therefore we stop in a degree."¹² Eventually Laura found a publisher in New York; a book of poetry, Poems of Twenty Years, was published in 1874, and The Life and Poems of Theodore Winthrop: Edited by His Sister appeared in 1884.

Unlike her poetry, Laura Johnson's book Eight Hundred Miles in an Ambulance is well written; it is an unsentimental, lively, and imaginative story of a trip through the Indian territory of Wyoming. It was privately printed after her death by her sister Elizabeth; in the introduction George Curtis wrote:

She was a woman of singular sweetness and serenity of nature, of the most catholic sympathy, of high intelligence and of varied and generous accomplishment...Her tastes and the training of her childhood made her familiar with the best of literature...In this community she was always in the van of good works, and her comprehensive sympathy enlarged continually the circle of her friends.

(7-9)

In these words we can find the reasons for Laura's lifelong friendship with Annie Fields. She embodied all the traits Annie admired: serenity, intelligence, love of literature, commitment to "good works," and, most of all, sympathy encompassing a circle of friends.

Annie Fields's friendship with Willa Cather was very different from her relationships with Johnson, Stowe, and Thaxter since it was of relatively short duration: from 1908 until her death in 1914. Because it occurred at the end of Fields' life, there was an intensity to it which does not appear in other relationships. Annie recognized the literary talent of her new acquaintance and took seriously her role as mentor, although in her anxiety to guide Cather,

Cather, she often appeared overbearing. She formed a deep attachment to the young writer as evidenced by her will:

To my dear Willa Sibert Cather, the bust of Keats, the original marble of which is in the Hempstead Church, Hempstead, England, and the copy of Severn's full length portrait which hangs on the bookcase next to the street.¹³

Except to members of her own family and to Mary Jewett, Annie left very few personal bequests. That Willa Cather should receive the bust of Keats and the Severn portrait is a significant reminder of the affection that existed between the two women as well as an acknowledgement of the bond between Cather and Sarah Orne Jewett.

Alice Goldmark Brandeis, wife of Judge Louis Brandeis and a neighbor of Annie Fields, brought Willa Cather to tea at 148 Charles Street late in the winter of 1908. This visit, Cather's first meeting with both Fields and Jewett, is memorialized in her essay "148 Charles Street."¹⁴ Cather's sketch of Fields is less flattering, but more realistic, than other views we have of her. In addition, it confirms Cather's attachment to the past and suggests a basic insecurity about her Nebraska roots.

There is a decided difference between Willa Cather's relationship with Annie Fields and her friendship with Sarah Orne Jewett; that this distinction is often blurred is understandable. She met the two women at the same moment and, until Jewett's death sixteen months after they met, often visited with them both. Moreover, since Fields and

Jewett spent so much time together, it is sometimes difficult to recognize the variations in their female friendships. Yet each had special bonds with other women and, most of all, with Willa Cather. Annie Fields took Cather "under her wing," and taught her about the world of the Boston Brahmin--a world of erudition, social grace, and tradition. But her relationship with Jewett, as Sharon O'Brien observes: "was characterized by reciprocity, not hierarchy. Unlike Mrs. Fields, Jewett was a mother and mentor who used her powers of persuasion and affection to encourage Cather to find literary independence" (335). Although they knew one another for only a short time, Sarah Orne Jewett became Cather's most important literary advisor. One reason was that Cather realized that her background was similar to Jewett's: American, rural, feminine. As a result, she was able to turn to her for advice; as Paula Blanchard writes: "Through Jewett's sponsorship Cather was able to authenticate herself and claim her own traditions, so that she could write from who she was rather than who she thought she ought to be" (357). Their frequent correspondence shows how frankly Cather was able to confide in Jewett and how her career was influenced by her new friend. It was Sarah Jewett who urged her to leave McClure's, to draw on her Virginia childhood and Nebraska youth for inspiration and, above all, to speak in her own voice. The dedication to O Pioneers! declares her lasting

affection: "To the memory of Sarah Orne Jewett in whose beautiful and delicate work there is the perfection that endures."

"148 Charles Street" recounts a different and more complex relationship with Annie Fields. It is significant that Willa met Annie at a time when she was struggling to find her identity as a journalist, but she did not write "148 Charles Street" until twenty-eight years later, when she had completed almost all her major works. This essay, therefore, is written through the lens of her mature years; it is not a first impression, but rather an informed consideration of their relationship, the culmination of many years of reflection.

In the opening paragraphs Cather sketches a picture of her first visit in 1908 to the famous salon:

At five o'clock in the afternoon the river was silvery from a half-hidden sun; over the great open space of water the western sky was dove-coloured with little ripples of rose. The air was full of soft moisture and the hint of approaching spring. Against this screen of pale winter light were the two ladies: Mrs. Fields reclining on a green sofa, directly under the youthful portrait of Charles Dickens ... Miss Jewett seated, the low tea-table between them. (Not Under Forty 54)

Cather's initial impression is of two figures in a painting; she carefully describes each one: Mrs. Fields in widow's lavender, "slight and fragile in figure...a delicate flush of pink on her cheeks; Miss Jewett, looking like her picture

in the game of 'Authors'" (54). This is one of the loveliest images of the two friends ever recorded.

But, as the essay continues, an interesting undercurrent develops, which Sharon O'Brien characterizes as "the maternal imagery." It "hints at--far behind the scenes--the presence of Cather's mother, the woman she loved, feared, and tried to propitiate" (320). Some of these emotions are indeed apparent in Cather's relationship with Annie. She portrays her as a strong, sophisticated, and at times, controlling woman. This is the most significant aspect of the essay. In most contemporary descriptions, Annie is depicted as the quintessential Boston matron: beautiful, sensitive, kind, and intelligent. Henry James depicts "the personal beauty of her younger years long retained" and "the signal sweetness of temper and lightness of tact" (22). Cather would not disagree with James; nevertheless, her interpretation is less flattering. Although she portrays Annie as "slight and fragile in figure" (54) and "in her own person flower-like" (58), she emerges as a woman very different from James' "charming link with the past" (22).

A jarring note, barely disguised by the flattering descriptions, appears early in the essay when Cather writes: "I had seldom heard so young, so merry, so musical a laugh; a laugh with countless shades of relish and appreciation and kindness in it. And, on occasion, a short laugh from that

same fragile source could positively do police duty!"

(57-8). She sees her hostess as both delicate and strong, an elderly woman capable of "policing" her guests with her laugh. She continues:

No woman could have been so great a hostess, could have made so many highly developed personalities happy under her roof, could have blended so many strongly specialized and keenly sensitive people in her drawing-room, without having a great power to control and organize...Nobody can cherish the flower of social intercourse, can give it sun and sustenance and a tempered clime, without also being able very completely to dispose of anything that threatens it--not only the slug, but even the cold draught that ruffles its petals. (58)

Today the suggestion that a woman has "the power to control and organize" can be a compliment, but it was not in the 1930's. Moreover, the metaphors of the slug and the cold draught in the garden are disconcerting, suggesting that Annie Fields was able to eliminate anyone or anything that threatened her world.

Later in the essay Cather recalls that when she does not recognize a quotation from "The Relic," Annie says: "Surely ...that would be Dr. Donne." Cather writes:

I never pretended to Mrs. Fields--I would have had to pretend too much. "And who, I brazenly asked, "was Dr. Donne?" I knew before morning. She had a beautiful patience with Boeotian ignorance, but I was strongly encouraged to take two fat volumes of Dr. Donne to bed with me that night. (65)

This tactless expression of intellectual superiority has not been recorded by any of Annie's other biographers.

During the later years of their friendship, Cather's need to please Annie became more evident. It arose in her attitude toward their correspondence: she refused to have her letters reprinted in Memories of a Hostess and directed that they be destroyed. In response to a letter from Mark Howe, she explained her reasons:

In the first place, those letters are entirely artificial and unrepresentative of me...Mrs. Fields was so new a type in my experience that I was never at ease in writing to her. I was always afraid of touching upon one of her prejudices, or in some way letting the noisy modern world in upon her. So I always tried to write her long sentences that meant nothing...Of course, when I was with Mrs. Fields herself, I never felt any constraint...That was because she was the soloist and I the accompanist...But there was none of this genuineness and spontaneous pleasure in my letters to Mrs. Fields. They were written from a sense of duty...So if you will just put them in the furnace, I shall be greatly obliged to you.¹⁵

This letter reveals the depth of Cather's insecurity: her fear of angering Annie, her determination to be her subordinate, her self-consciousness when writing to her. She could never forget that she was not from Boston, that she lacked Annie's family connections, education, and sophistication. Despite her years in Pittsburgh and New York, her extensive travels, her literary success, in her presence she was an "American of the Apache period and

territory" trying to "inherit a Colonial past" (Not Under Forty 57).¹⁶ Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant, in her description of her own introduction to Annie Fields in 1911, confirms that Cather had reasons to feel ill at ease: "What struck me was how the delicious, fragile, faded hostess... received my friend as a sort of Midwest grandchild, a creature of zestful surprises who still needed a little toning down" (65). She discloses that "Willa's way of chiming in with all this--with the gently superior manner of the hostess, the old, old, Boston flavor, the Smoky Souchong tea...was one of tender homage" (65). In a revealing impression she writes: "Now, on the day of our visit, she stepped right out of her dominant personality and melted into the warm light of our hostess' coal fire" (65).

It was important for Willa Cather to have Annie Fields' approval because her acceptance by Fields (and Jewett) would mark her entrance into a world "which extended its hospitality to the aristocracy of letters and art" (Not Under Forty 56), a world to which she had long aspired. There is a scene in Song of the Lark where Thea is seated near a family "from the East": "they spoke in that quick sure staccato, which Thea, like Ray Kennedy, pretended to scorn and secretly admired. People who could use words in that confident way, and who spoke them elegantly, had a great advantage in life" (275). Cather constantly sought this security bestowed by language: "Language was like

clothes; it could be a help to one, or it could give one away" (275).

What also attracted her was the serenity that seemed to surround Annie Fields: "there was never an hour in the day when the order and calm of the drawing-room were not such that one might have sat down to write a sonnet or a sonata" ("148 Charles Street" 60) and the sense of history that pervaded her home: "when one was staying at that house the past lay in wait for one in all the corners" (61). As Paula Blanchard has indicated: "Annie was the medium by which the young westerner could place herself within the context of a revered, and mostly male, literary tradition. The fact that Annie, as a woman, had the power to give access to that tradition gave Cather, as spiritual daughter, the power to belong to it" (365). Through her association with Fields, Cather was given entrée into a world which had always intrigued her.

By the turn of the century, many writers had moved from Boston to New York, including Annie's friend William Dean Howells, and Willa's friend, Elizabeth Sergeant. For Willa, who had grown up with the Ticknor and Fields' blue-bound editions of the classics, Boston never lost its importance as the literary capital of the world.¹⁷ In referring to Annie Fields as the "exquisite survivor of the Golden Age of American Literature" (Sergeant 41), she displays her

affection not only for her friend, but for the era she represented.

This affection is obvious in early stories like "The Sculptor's Funeral" and "A Wagner Matinee" in which Boston is still the center of culture. It appears again in her first novel Alexander's Bridge (1912) where Cather evokes the spirit of 148 Charles Street in Bartley Alexander's study: "the harmony of beautiful things that have lived together without obtrusions of ugliness or change" (9) and where Mrs. Alexander's great-aunt resembles Annie Fields:

When I knew her she was little and fragile, very pink and white, with a splendid head and a face like fine old lace...She had such a flavor of life about her. She had known Gordon and Livingstone and Beaconsfield when she was young,--every one. She was the first woman of that sort I'd ever known.

(11)

Soon after the publication of Alexander's Bridge Cather found a different voice. In "The Bohemian Girl," she turned from the influence of Henry James back to her mid-Western roots. The story tells of Nils Ericson, who had escaped the confinement of Nebraska, returning to elope with his brother's Bohemian wife, Clara Vavrika. The characters are not pale Jamesian imitations, but full-bodied emotional and passionate figures. Annie found the story distasteful, preferring the gentility of Cather's earlier works. Yet Cather never returned to her early style, although her admiration for Boston and the traditions it represented

endured. Her affection for Annie Fields also remained. In a poignant letter written upon Sarah Orne Jewett's death, she reveals the depth of her love for both women; it concludes:

Dear Mrs. Fields, one cannot speak or write what I want to say to you, for nobody's heart can ever speak. Let me love and sorrow with you, and think of me sometimes when you are thinking of Miss Jewett. I could never tell you, I cannot even tell myself, how dear you both are to me.¹⁸

The relationship between Annie Fields and Willa Cather was by no means one-sided; Fields' affection for Cather transcended her loyalty to Sarah Orne Jewett's memory and her desire to be a mentor. It is evinced by the bequest in her will and the bedroom specifically for Willa in her summer home, Manchester-By-The-Sea. During Jewett's final illness, Annie encouraged Cather's visits and wrote to her immediately upon her death. One reason for Fields' affection was the sincerity of Cather's devotion. Another was that the gift of sympathy, so prized by Annie, was equally important to Cather. In her Preface to The Best Short Stories of Sarah Orne Jewett, she had written:

If he [the writer] achieves anything noble, anything enduring, it must be by giving himself absolutely to his material. And this gift of sympathy is his great gift; it is the fine thing in him that alone can make his work fine. He fades away into the land and people of his heart, he dies of love only to be born again.

(Willa Cather on Writing 51)

Annie recognized this ability to empathize as a link between the three friends.

Elizabeth Sergeant provides another clue to the attraction between Cather and Fields; she refers to the "two prime donne who resembled one another in no way save their love of great books and their interest in genius" (65). This is a valuable insight: Annie Fields, who had urged her husband to publish women authors including Alcott, Phelps, Davis, Thaxter, and Larcom appreciated Cather's literary talent and was determined to encourage her. That her way of encouraging her was not as palatable to the modern reader as Jewett's does not detract from the fact that she appreciated Cather's ability and fostered it. By introducing her not only to the social world of literature but also to the female world of women helping women, Annie Fields assisted Willa Cather immensely.

At the end of her life Annie was still doing what she most enjoyed: preserving tradition, encouraging new talent, fostering the love of writing. With her vitality and enthusiasm, she belied the image of the Boston matron resting on her laurels and projected, instead, the impression of a spirited woman who remained interested in the world of the twentieth-century.

George Eliot was Annie's most famous epistolary friend. They met at the home of Eliot and George Lewes during the Fields' 1869 trip to Europe. Annie had read and enjoyed

Eliot's novels for many years and from them had developed an admiration for the author; she was attracted by Eliot's "sense of perfectness in her presentation of any scene or subject" (Fields, "George Eliot" 444). For Annie, who was a perfectionist in her own life, this was a quality worthy of esteem. She was also pleased with Eliot's praise for Harriet Beecher Stowe: "The affectionate generosity with which she poured out her unbounded admiration for Mrs. Stowe, and her love for her work, is never to be forgotten" (Fields, "George Eliot" 444). Annie's laudatory essay in The Century Magazine, written thirty years after their first meeting, confirms that her opinion never changed. In this article she praises Eliot as:

the most extraordinary and interesting woman known to the world as George Eliot. Her portrait is before the reader. It is not the picture of a beautiful woman and yet when we remember how the sunshine of affection, deep affection, can glorify any face, the world must believe, as they who knew her truly felt, that the light of her great nature inundated the lines of her strong countenance and made it beautiful to those who loved her.¹⁹ (442)

Annie appeared undaunted by Eliot's relationship with George Lewes.²⁰ She wrote: "She was his chief topic of conversation, the pride and joy of his life, and it was quite evident that she returned his ardent devotion with a true love" (Fields, "George Eliot" 444). Although Annie never saw George Eliot again after the 1869 meeting, she corresponded with her and invited her to visit America. In

her response, Eliot assured Annie of her and Lewes' desire to come, of their affection for her and James, and their sorrow at their inability to visit. Her words convey the sadness and loneliness which existed throughout her adult life. The letter concludes:

I confess invitations from such people as you and Mr. Fields are very pleasant to have, though one may be obliged to do without accepting them; and both M. Lewes and I value the assurance that you would be glad to see us.²¹

Considering the differences in age, upbringing, and way of life, the friendship between Annie Fields and George Eliot is remarkable. It can be explained only by describing it through the lens of empathy. Rachel Brownstein defines the meaning of the gift of sympathy in George Eliot's life:

She was widely read; she was looked up to as a fecund creator, the repository of emotional strength. Sympathy and understanding, she preached, are the ties that bind. Dispensing and dispersing these, she connected with people who were not connected to her by blood, the readers who were in effect her children, as Lewes's children were. She made herself a mother in name, by naming. (Becoming a Heroine 238)

The "sympathy and understanding" she "dispersed and dispensed" were directed not only to her readers, but to her friends. Even in her response to Annie's condolence note when George Lewes died, Eliot's concern for others, her "mothering" was apparent: "Thank you, dear Mrs. Fields, for your tender sympathy. I trust you and your husband are well & happy. That is the best that is left to me--to know that

others are leading a life of loving union."²² In the same note, she also refers to her gratefulness to the Stowes: "You would help me very much if you happen to be writing to our friend Mrs. Stowe, and would tell her, with my love, that her goodness has not been thrown away upon me...I feel affectionately grateful to her--to Mrs. Stowe and her husband, for their generous, warm-hearted sympathy, a gift now of many years from them." Here George Eliot, using the word *sympathy* and describing it as "a gift," emphasizes both the giving and receiving components of empathy, those elements which were equally important to Annie Fields.

For Annie and her many friends who read Eliot's novels, she was a role model, "a mother in name." By defying convention in her personal life and by presenting strong women characters in her books, she helped to introduce the New Woman to the nineteenth century; yet in her private life, she confirmed that sympathy and understanding were still the ties that bound.

George Eliot captured Annie's imagination in her novels and won her friendship through her correspondence. Eliot was drawn to Annie because she realized that Annie's vision was never limited by her sense of propriety; empathy always transcended other considerations and became the most important element in her relationships. In short, George Eliot recognized Annie Fields as a woman who shared her gift of sympathy.

Many common threads run through the lives of Annie Fields and her friends. One is a strong ethical sense. Frederick Karl's observation that George Eliot "had a functional view of society or community which encouraged individuality at the same time that it enforced moral commitment" (xix) applied to Annie and to her other friends. They were moral not because of their religious views, but because of their dedication to improving society and protecting the rights of the individual. This philosophy is especially apparent in the writing of Eliot and Stowe and in Annie Fields' philanthropic work.

A desire for independence from traditional roles is another thread running through these women's lives--none can be characterized as a typical nineteenth-century Angel in the House. Cather and Eliot were not housewives in any sense of the word, and Thaxter, Johnson, and Stowe were frustrated in their situations. Although Annie was willing to put her obligations to James and to her family first, a diary entry indicates a dissatisfaction with this aspect of her life. In 1868 she wrote that she had "a heart of a singer hidden in me and I long sometimes to break loose-but on the whole I sincerely prefer to make others comfortable and happy and say fie! to my genius if it does not sing to me from the sauce-pan" (22 October 1868). Later her strong commitment to her charitable work, even when it meant being separated from Sarah, enabled her to put her own needs

first. Eventually each of these women managed to overcome her domestic ties to some extent and to forge an independent life for herself.

Most of Annie's literary friends also possessed the desire to excel, not only as wives and/or mothers, but as authors as well. The words of encouragement which flowed from one to another attest to this aspiration. Although Harriet Beecher Stowe was hindered by her memory disorder, Cather, Thaxter and Fields were productive year after year. They continued working until the end of their lives, undoubtedly believing, as Carolyn Heilbrun does, that death should not "be allowed to find us seated comfortably in our tenured positions" (Writing a Woman's Life 131).

But most important, each woman displayed the gift of sympathy, enriching each others' lives through letters, visits, and acts of kindness. The feelings of empathy which radiated from Annie Fields to and from her closest friends were responsible for the sincerity and longevity of their friendships.

Notes

1. Cecelia Tichi writes: "The novelist and short-story writer Margaret Deland...exploited new-woman themes essentially to argue against them and to ratify the conservative status quo. Personal fulfillment, Deland emphasized, is a dangerous goal. Her women characters who pursue it, one a suffragist and the other an industrialist, are grotesques. The higher, authentic fulfillment, Deland argues, lies in commitment to marital, parental, societal duties that sustain traditional institutions" (594-5).
2. Fields, Annie. "Journal of Literary Events and Glimpses of People." Diary 30 December 1868. Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
3. In Authors and Friends Annie writes: "Here it was that George Eliot told us of her admiration and deep regard, her affection, for Mrs. Stowe. Her reverence and love were expressed with such tremulous sincerity that the speaker won our hearts by her love for our friend" (210).
4. The other editor of Letters of Celia Thaxter was the artist Rose Lamb.
5. Within the last two years, biographies of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Sarah Orne Jewett, Louisa May Alcott, the Brontes, and Lydia Maria Child have been written.
6. Celia Thaxter, letter to Annie Fields, 21 September 1874, Houghton Library, Cambridge.
7. After Theodore's death, James Fields had his published manuscripts bound for his mother.
8. George William Curtis (1824-1892) was a writer and reporter who became an editor of Harper's Weekly in 1863. He traveled widely as a reporter for the New York Tribune and was well known as a lyceum lecturer, active in many of the reform movements of the mid nineteenth century.
9. Laura Winthrop Johnson, letter to George William Curtis, 27 March 1860, The Houghton Library, Cambridge.
10. Annie Fields, to Laura Winthrop Johnson, 31 January 1870, The Huntington Library, San Marino.
11. Annie Fields to Laura Winthrop Johnson, 6 June 1881, The Huntington Library, San Marino.
12. Annie Fields, letter to Laura Winthrop Johnson, 24 May 1864, The Huntington Library, San Marino.

13. From the Will of Annie Fields, 13 July 1897, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

14. "148 Charles Street" is included in Willa Cather's book of essays Not Under Forty.

15. Willa Cather, letter to Mark De Wolfe Howe, 11 November 1931, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

16. In a letter from Willa Cather to Annie Fields after Sarah Orne Jewett's death, she acknowledges the depth of her affection for both women; this is one letter written without her usual apprehension. It concludes:

Dear Mrs. Fields, one cannot speak or write what I want to say to you, for nobody's heart can ever speak. Let me love and sorrow with you, and think of me sometimes when you are thinking of Miss Jewett. I could never tell you, I cannot even tell myself, how dear you both are to me. (Willa Cather, letter to Annie Fields, 27 June 1909, Houghton Library, Cambridge.)

17. Cather wrote: "In my father's bookcase there were little volumes of Longfellow and Hawthorne with that imprint" ("148 Charles Street" 53).

18. Willa Cather, letter to Annie Fields, 27 June 1909, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

19. If, in addition to her admiration for Eliot, Annie appears to be defensive of her appearance, it is because of abundant references to her homeliness. Arthur Adrian, describing Georgina Hogarth's letter to Annie about Eliot's marriage to John Cross, says:

In an exclamatory sputter she gave Annie Fields the sensational details of the recent match: "London--or rather I should say literary London! has been much convulsed by the extraordinary marriage of "George Eliot" aged 61, and supposed to be quite inconsolable for the death of G.H. Lewes, with a Mr. Cross, a stock broker, aged 35--tall, fair and good looking...Wonders will never cease! especially in the matrimonial line!...Did you ever see her? She is a singularly ugly woman--as ugly for a woman as G. H. Lewes was for a man..."

There is no record of Annie's response, but it can be assumed that, with her usual sense of propriety, she would have made none. In her references to a face "beautiful to those who loved her," she is revealing once again that empathy, not superficial characteristics, were most important to her.

20. In 1854 George Eliot and George Lewes entered into a union that lasted until his death. They were unable to marry because he could not obtain a divorce from his wife.

21. George Eliot, letter to Annie Fields, 16 May 1872, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

22. George Eliot, letter to Annie Fields, February 1879, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

Chapter Five: The Fireside Poets, Charles Dickens and
Annie Fields

Only when the masculine and feminine elements are present in equal strength, only when the genders collaborate rather than compete, only when they come fully abreast or flush of each other, can the artifact or culture involved be...both gender-doubled and beyond gender and so satisfy the deepest needs of the human heart, mind, and psyche.

(Douglas, Terrible Honesty 446)

In his farewell speech to his students, George Emerson, Annie Fields' teacher and mentor, spoke of the art of conversation. "None but a lady," he said "can show all the charms of conversation." He suggested that men monopolize conversation, while women are more apt to listen, to display "the disinterested generosity which is willing to sacrifice an opportunity to shine to the pleasure of seeing others shine" (21). By following Emerson's dicta, Annie was able to delight her many male admirers. This was not a feminine ploy on her part; it was the outcome of her nineteenth-century background and education. As a result, she captivated many of the men with whom she came in contact, and she soon had a devoted following of James Fields' closest friends.¹

The first men with whom Annie became acquainted after her marriage were authors whose works Ticknor & Fields had published: among them, John Greenleaf Whittier, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Ralph Waldo

Emerson, and Nathaniel Hawthorne.² Whittier, Longfellow, and Holmes were among her closest friends, but Emerson and Hawthorne remained outside her innermost circle. Although she saw Emerson often, helped James to arrange lecture tours for him in 1871, and included an essay about him in Authors and Friends, she seemed in awe of him in her private correspondence. Emerson's fame might have been intimidating, and his increasing forgetfulness made communication awkward and difficult.³ She was uncomfortable with Nathaniel Hawthorne, but for other reasons. He was one of the few people whom she had trouble engaging in conversation:

Words--speech--did not seem to matter much: he understood, as it were, in spite of the unsatisfactory medium of the tongue; and I never heard him talk but once during four years of intimate intercourse, when he really seemed to lay aside his own painful self-consciousness and speak because it was a pleasure to communicate what lay in him to be spoken.

(Nathaniel Hawthorne 124)

Although he and James remained close friends, Annie was more at ease with his wife Sophia.⁴ Ultimately, Whittier, Holmes, and Longfellow comprised her most intimate circle of male friends.

It is not surprising that Annie was attracted to these three poets, and they, to her. Aptly called the Fireside Poets because their writing celebrated the virtues of home and hearth, their lives and their poems embodied the values

in which she believed most deeply. To them, she personified the culture and empathy they sought in a world that had been disrupted first by the Civil War and then by the Industrial Revolution. Together, Annie, Whittier, Longfellow, and Holmes, embody those traits that in nineteenth-century Boston were synonymous with gentility. In his discussion of the Fireside Poets Thomas Wortham observes:

Their song was neither the bardic yawp of Whitman nor the Orphic riddle of Emerson, but rather an embodiment in verse of ancient, hearthside truths...For the Fireside Poets, such truths were not so much to be found in some splendid, mysterious moment of enlightenment as to be achieved through a reliance on tradition and culture...there were, they insisted, [the] permanent elements of human nature; the successful human life is that which embodies a decorous, harmonious relation to this unchanging human center and manifests in its words and deeds the virtues of moderation and poise. (286-7)

Within this Circle, Annie found security and happiness. Like the Fireside poets, she believed that poetry transmitted values between the empathetic author and reader. She also did not explore new forms in her own poetry, but turned instead to the traditions of the past. While her poems were never as skillfully realized as theirs, she felt comfortable sharing her work with them, and they often asked for her comments on their submissions to the Atlantic.

Although today Whittier, Longfellow, and Holmes' works have largely disappeared from the canon, these poets cannot

be ignored. Their poems endorse values that were integral to the life of many Americans, not only in Boston, but throughout the United States during the nineteenth century. Furthermore, they were not writing from ivory towers; they had a keen perception of their corner of the globe. As Samuel Eliot Morison comments: "Energy was a binding quality of New England men of letters... These writers were in a sense provincial, but they were intensely aware of what was going on in the world" (286). Each was engaged in another occupation in addition to poetry: Whittier was an editor, an abolitionist, and a champion of the rights of women; Longfellow was a college professor; Holmes, a doctor. Insights gained from these other pursuits expanded and enriched each man's writing. During Annie Fields' lifetime there was no question of the greatness of the Fireside Poets; they were among the major American writers, read by thousands of people here and abroad. Today "the echo of the Fireside poets has somehow survived the benign neglect and active assault that has too commonly been their common share" (Wortham 279); it is time for their writing to be evaluated in the construct of nineteenth-century literary history.

In his poem "The Tent on the Beach," John Greenleaf Whittier describes himself as "A silent, shy, peace-loving man" (Poetical Works 242).⁵ Vernon Parrington wrote

that "Among many lovable men he was perhaps the most lovable" (361). These comments only partially describe Whittier. He was also an active abolitionist from his earliest days when he published his anti-slavery manifesto, Justice and Expediency, and he worked as an editor for William Lloyd Garrison at the Newburyport Free Press. Before and during the War he was a political activist, risking physical danger for the cause in which he believed so ardently. As Robert Penn Warren reminds us: "He came to know contumely, the odor of rotten eggs, mob violence, and the struggle against physical fear" (251). Nor did his concern for African Americans end when the War was over; he helped former slaves find jobs and became one of the supporters of the Hampton Institute. In addition, he showed his commitment to equal rights for women by supporting women's suffrage and working for higher education for women (he helped found Wellesley and Pembroke Colleges). Throughout his life he fought for freedom of speech and the press and opposed capital punishment. His novel, Margaret Smith's Journal (1849), reflects his humane attitude toward Native Americans.⁶ Despite a lifetime of ill health, he diligently pursued these causes through his writing and through contributions of time and money. He remained loyal always to his Quaker principles; as Edward Wagenknecht notes:

Though he once told Howells that he sympathized with Tolstoy's non-resistance principles, Whittier was never, by any proper definition, a non-resistant, for he was a lifelong crusader against social evil, but he did differentiate clearly between those weapons which were lawful for a Christian's handling and those that were not.

(John Greenleaf Whittier 145)

Whittier's social activism and his poetic nature appealed to Annie; his devotion to his political and social beliefs rivaled hers. They were often interested in the same causes, their choices reflecting their sensitivity to the needs and the rights of others. Their social philosophy rejected the radical individualism espoused by Thoreau and endorsed the belief that "man is, among other things, a member of society" (Warren 251).

In many of their letters Annie and Whittier discuss their shared concerns. She was aware of Whittier's stand on women's education and on the education of young African Americans; in 1890 she wrote to Whittier observing:

Women in Boston are just now interested in helping to establish a first rate Medical School in connection with the famous Johns Hopkins Hospital and University in Baltimore; the opportunity opens for a school good enough to make a sojourn to Europe no longer a necessity for every well-educated woman-doctor. I hope we can get the dirty dollars!...Mr. Booker Washington's school at Tuskegee is coming on bravely. It is Hampton's child.⁷

She also discussed the humanitarian work of Dorothea Dix: "I have been reading the Life of Mrs. Dix which will give you

pleasure I think to look over. Her work reminds one of that of Saint Theresa. It seems to me they had strong points in common."⁸

Their letters indicate how much Annie respected Whittier's opinions and shared his ideals; his praise of her philanthropic work must have been a source of great pride to her. In 1888 he told her:

The report of the Associated Charities gives me a fuller comprehension of the magnitude as well as the need of the great work you have undertaken. It is the very science of charity; no longer blind instinct of indiscriminate pity, making the poverty it seeks to relieve, but a clear-eyed and wise benevolence, which helps the poor and suffering by aiding them to help themselves.

Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier 733)

Whittier, who came from strong New England stock, was eighty-one years old when he wrote this letter. Until his death at age eighty-five, his enthusiasm for new ideas never abated.

The frequency of Whittier's visits to 148 Charles Street proves that his and Annie's friendship was not only epistolary. "Whittier came to breakfast today" is a recurrent entry in her diary.⁹ He had many reasons to come to call, both when James was alive and during the years Annie lived with Sarah Orne Jewett. James Fields was his editor and his friend. Once Whittier began publishing in the Atlantic, his financial worries were over.¹⁰ Jewett knew Whittier since her childhood; for her he was a

"literary aid and model, fellow moralist and spiritualist, country boy and surrogate father" (Blanchard 185). The relationship between Annie Fields, Jewett, and Whittier was marked by its affection and devotion. As John Pollard explains:

It remained for Annie Fields...and Sarah Orne Jewett to give Whittier what was, in many ways, his most nearly perfect friendship with women... With them he was altogether relaxed. They were gifted cosmopolitans, well aware of the humor in life...the two women called up in him a joy of life quite unlike any other that he knew. The same spirit breathed through their correspondence which lasted to the day of Whittier's death. (412)

This ability to find "the joy in life" is a part of the gift of sympathy that transcends gender and often appears in the relationship between Annie and Whittier. They experienced a feeling of contentment when they were together. It was a serenity they did not find in other connections, even in Whittier's relationship with his sister Elizabeth and Annie's with James and Sarah.

Their feelings are revealed in their correspondence. For example, in February 1882 Annie wrote to Whittier: "This is not a letter to be answered! It is only a "good morning" and to tell you how I miss the thought of your being nearby and the happy chances of seeing you!..Dear friend! How glad I shall be to have you and our dear Sarah Jewett again in Boston..."¹¹ At the end of his life, Annie and Sarah invited him to live with them, but Whittier

refused, fearing that he would not like city life and would be uncomfortable because of his deafness; he explained: "It would be like having a waif from Barnum's Museum shut up in your library, and people coming to see what it looks like."¹²

Whittier was friendly with other female members of the Fields/Jewett circles. One reason for his popularity with Annie, Sarah, and their friends was his belief in the equality of women. As Pollard notes:

The best and truest aspect of Whittier as a man among women was that in practice he held scrupulously to the Quaker precept that the sexes are equal. He published his belief as early as 1827, and he held fast to it always.

(414)

Of particular significance to Annie was Whittier's grasp of the problems these authors faced: "His sympathy with the difficulties of a literary life, particularly for women, was very keen. There seem to be few women writers of his time who have failed to receive from his pen some token of recognition" (Authors and Friends 272). She herself turned to him for support; in one letter she refers to an essay she had sent to him: "Thank you too about the Emerson. It is a weight off my mind to think you like it, because one may so easily make a slip in such a paper."¹³

Celia Thaxter, Lydia Child, Lucy Larcom, and Harriet Beecher Stowe were among other authors Whittier befriended and encouraged. These women were also friends of Annie and

James, providing another example of how often the various circles overlapped. This mutuality of friends led to what today would be called a support system, providing both material and psychological help to a number of people. It also produced a fertile basis from which the gift of sympathy grew.

Thaxter was a special favorite of Whittier; the two had much in common: their rural backgrounds, a love of nature, an interest in spiritualism. As Rosamond Thaxter writes: "their correspondence shows an understanding sympathy which gave comfort and happiness to both" (296). He often visited Appledore, where, Annie mentions, "Occasionally he would pass whole days in Celia Thaxter's parlor, watching her at her painting in the window, and listening to the talk around him" (Authors and Friends 314). While he was usually uncommunicative in large groups, he enjoyed being with Celia and her friends; he was content to be an observer at the summer salon with its constant flow of artists, authors, and musicians.

Harriet Beecher Stowe's dedication to the abolitionist cause immediately aroused Whittier's admiration. As Edward Wagenknecht observes: "Whittier's hatred of slavery and his relish for a good story being what they were, it was inevitable that he should be enthralled by Uncle Tom's Cabin" (John Greenleaf Whittier 117). He helped publicize

the book by writing a poem about Little Eva and became a life-long friend and supporter of Stowe. G. King Lewis commented that Stowe and Whittier: "would sometimes sit till the small hours of the morning talking of the political horizon, the prospects of emancipation, psychical mysteries and ghost stories" (159).

Among the women abolitionists, Lydia Maria Child was Whittier's favorite.¹⁴ She was the founding editor of the children's magazine Juvenile Miscellany and the popular author of two well-received historical novels. She sacrificed her career when she married David Lee Child, who was always heavily in debt. The Childs became isolated because of their lack of money; later they were ostracized by many of Lydia's former friends when she published An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans in 1833.¹⁵ The Childs developed a new group of friends, including Whittier, when they became active Abolitionists, but soon they moved to Northampton, where she endured years of hard work and loneliness. In 1841 she went to New York alone to edit the National Anti-Slavery Standard; there "she cultivated an astonishing number of friendships with writers, artists, reformers...fugitive slaves, and a host of unfortunates she helped in various ways" (Karcher 5). In 1849 she returned to her husband in Wayland, Massachusetts, where she lived in "domestic drudgery and isolation" (Karcher 6) until her death in 1880. During this time both

Annie and James, as well as Whittier, tried to help her, but she refused, becoming more and more reclusive. In a poignant letter she told the Fields:

You are always strewing flowers in the pathway of your fellow pilgrims. I thank you for the roses you have dropped for me. Whether their beauty and fragrance will charm away the rheumatism, I know not; but the kindly attention has certainly done good to my solitary old heart.¹⁶

After her death, her surviving abolitionist friends--Harriet Winslow Sewall, Wendall Phillips, and Whittier--published a selection of her letters, together with a biographical sketch.

Whittier's friendship with another abolitionist, poet and editor, Lucy Larcom, is an example of a more complicated relationship. As Shirley Marchalonis observes:

He [Whittier] liked women, was comfortable in their company, and enjoyed their admiration. His biographers often claim that his Quaker upbringing taught him to see women as equals; in reality, he treated his protégées as daughters over whom he had some parental control...That attitude hardly reflects equality, but it is more enlightened than the then-prevailing patriarchal attitudes toward women writers. Whittier never told talented women that their real work was to marry and produce young.¹⁷ (95)

Larcom needed and desired Whittier's help more than most of his women friends and benefitted from being having him as her mentor. But, as the final outcome of their friendship

demonstrates, such relationships are not without difficulties.

Whittier and Lucy Larcom first met in Lowell, Massachusetts, in 1844. She was twenty years old and a contributor to the Lowell Offering. Larcom had gone to work in a textile mill at the age of eleven and consequently was largely self educated.¹⁸ In 1846 she moved with her sister to Illinois, where she graduated from Monticello Seminary. After returning to Massachusetts in 1852, her real friendship with Whittier and his sister Elizabeth began. As Marchalonis notes: "his interest in her writing made it more valuable in her eyes, for it never occurred to her to doubt his judgement" (98). In 1854 she took a teaching position at Wheaton Seminary in Norton, Massachusetts, and remained there for nine years. During this time, despite emotional problems caused by her dissatisfaction with her job and a lack of time to devote to her poetry and friends, Larcom was able to continue writing. Throughout this period she received support and encouragement from Elizabeth and John Greenleaf Whittier. In June 1861, her poem "The Rose Enthroned" was published in the Atlantic, bringing her to the attention of the Fields. In 1864, having left Wheaton, she became one of the editors of Our Young Folks, a juvenile magazine James launched as he expanded his publishing career.¹⁹ Soon her circle of friends expanded to include many of Annie's friends: Harriet

Beecher Stowe, Lydia Maria Child, Sara Lippincott, and Abby Morton Diaz, among others. Larcom's financial situation became more secure as well. As she gained in confidence, her relationship with Whittier changed, and she became less dependent upon his advice. Although she no longer needed him as her mentor, they remained friends, and he continued to be supportive of her work.

After James' retirement from publishing in 1873, Our Young Folks was sold and Larcom faced financial problems. Since 1870 she and Whittier had been collaborating on three children's poetry anthologies which produced a small source of income; however, as Marchalonis points out:

Whittier, whose name was given as editor, made the final choice of poems, wrote the preface, was paid for his work, and received all the royalties; Larcom read, found poems, copied them out, discussed the choice with Whittier, then made copies of the poems, dealt with the publisher, and read and corrected proof. For this she was paid a flat sum, either three or five hundred dollars. . (Marchalonis 108-109)

This arrangement did not disturb Larcom at first, but eventually she came to resent that her hard work was neither acknowledged nor rewarded. By the publication of the third book in 1875, she made her dissatisfaction known. Whittier recognized her editorial contributions, and she received half the copyright and royalty fees. Despite this reconciliation, their friendship never regained its former warmth.²⁰

In 1883 Larcom became seriously ill, and Annie and Whittier quietly began raising money for her. In one letter to Whittier, Annie said:

I have been waiting a day or two in order to send to Boston and get a clear idea of what I had just now to pay my way with and I find I can spare five hundred dollars...Will this [including contributions from some other women] make up the required amount to buy the annuity giving her...an income of one hundred dollars. Of course you will arrange it in your own wise way so that she will know nothing of my part or of these other ladies; for I think it would pain Lucy inconceivably.²¹

Although she recovered from this illness, Larcom's delicate health was strained by her financial worries. She died of heart disease in April 1893, acclaimed by the Boston Globe as "The Best of Our Minor Poets." Despite her lack of recognition today, her fame as a poet during her life time owed much to Whittier's encouragement. Marchalonis believes:

Whittier made her a writer, not so much by editing her work and submitting it to publishers as by building up her confidence in herself and her abilities, by giving his approval to the image of Lucy Larcom as a writer, by forcing her to act as a professional. In that way he was the most important figure in Larcom's life, and she never stopped being faithful to him...(117)

When Whittier dedicated his poem "Among the Hills" to "Mrs. Fields in grateful acknowledgement of the strength and inspiration I have found in her friendship and sympathy" (Pollard 414), he recognized the essence of their

relationship. His correlation of "friendship" with "sympathy" affirms that friendship cannot exist without a gift of sympathy to enrich it.

Another of Annie's frequent visitors among the Fireside Poets was her neighbor, Oliver Wendell Holmes.²² Vernon Parrington describes him as "The Authentic Brahmin:"

For upwards of half a century,
throughout the prime and past the Indian
Summer of the New England renaissance,
Holmes was Boston's own wit,
inexhaustible in clever sayings,
bubbling over with satire and sentiment,
the autocrat of her social gatherings,
the acknowledged head of her mutual
admiration society. (451-2)

Dining at 148 Charles Street provided the perfect forum for Holmes' wit and wisdom, for here he was certain to meet the members of the "mutual admiration society" as well as visitors from across the literary world.²³ But, Holmes, like Whittier, was a complex man. Although he wrote and spoke in the homespun style of the quintessential Fireside poet, he was a vehement and vocal critic of Calvinism.²⁴ By rebelling against his ancestors' faith, he became "the best hated of Boston Unitarians amongst the orthodox":

In his own special way, then, as a
Brahmin of the Brahmins, Holmes was a
rebel, a puller-down of worm-eaten
structures, a freethinker rejoicing when
free thought tossed a cargo of obsolete
dogma into Boston Bay, or drew out a
linchpin of some respectable social
coach. (Parrington 455)

Holmes proclaimed his views not only at the Fields' dining table but also at the meetings of the Saturday Club and in his writing.²⁵ His poem "The Deacon's Masterpiece or The Wonderful 'One-Hoss Shay'" is a parable of the breakdown of Calvinism.²⁶ It tells of a deacon who wanted a carriage that would never break down, so he built one in which all the parts were of equal strength. Exactly one hundred years after the construction of this masterpiece, it completely fell apart: "There are traces of age in the one-hoss-shay/ A general flavor of mild decay/ But nothing local as one might say" (Complete Poetical Works 135-7). His novel Elsie Venner (1861) also challenged the orthodox point of view; it is the story of a young woman whose snake-like nature was traced to the prenatal influence of a snakebite her mother received. Holmes called it "a medicated novel," reflecting his interest in psychology and medicine. Through the use of scientific analysis of character and heredity, he questioned the doctrine of original sin and examined the limits of human responsibility for our actions.

Although Holmes wrote three "medicated" novels and many poems, he is best remembered as the author of "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," his long running and extraordinarily popular column in the Atlantic. In these essays he depicts himself seated at the breakfast table in a boarding house, providing amusement and erudition for those around him. But even in these seemingly benign articles,

Holmes attacks the "one-hoss shay." Van Wyck Brooks praises him for using his writing to destroy the "great American evil" of the Calvinists, the "morbid introspection" about which Hawthorne also wrote:

What was his mission? It was very simple: the mission of conversation. Was it not very bad to have thoughts and feelings which ought to come out in talk, *strike in*, as people said of certain diseases? There was the great American evil, morbid introspection, class-distinctions that were unconfessed, scruples of conscience ...forms of speech and phrases, ugly and distorted, the outward and visible signs of the twisted life within...Out with them, and talk them over! The boarders knew they could trust a family doctor who...without hurting their feelings, could give them the right prescription to set them on the road of mental health. (487-8)

Holmes' attacks on religion did not go unnoticed by Annie Fields. While religion had always played an important role in her life, she became "increasingly disillusioned with the spiritual leadership of ministers, the average quality of sermons, and churchgoing in general" (Roman, 6). Although she had been raised as a Unitarian and did not share Holmes' vehemence against Calvinism, her interest in Spiritualism, Swedenborgianism, the Shakers, and various Eastern religions indicates that she, too, questioned the religion of her childhood.²⁷

Annie appreciated Holmes' attitude toward women's education, but undoubtedly she would have preferred that he

were more assertive in his endorsement. In Eleanor Tilton's words:

He was himself not opposed to teaching women, and his recommendation to the overseers that Harriet K. Hunt be admitted [to Harvard Medical School] was unequivocal. The overseers remained consistently opposed to admitting women. The medical faculty fluctuated from time to time, but usually Holmes was the solitary advocate for women. He was not prepared, however, to fight for their rights. (192)

In truth, Holmes displayed a degree of paternalism which prevented his full support for New Women. As Tilton explains: "Although he admired some of his feminine fellow-authors, Holmes could not help thinking that women who were not aggressively literary made the most charming companions. His neighbor Mrs. James T. Fields satisfied his tastes and furthermore provided the means for indulging his sociability" (276). With her refined social skills, Annie would never have appeared aggressive; she had the ability to express her opinions in such a manner that the listener was often unaware that she might be disagreeing. Her combination of wit, sensitivity, beauty, and intelligence made her shine in Holmes' estimation.

One of the female authors of whom Holmes approved was Harriet Beecher Stowe. His response to the proof sheets of her Lady Byron article in the Atlantic indicates his respect for her as a writer (although his correction of her grammar suggests his paternalistic side). Joan Hedrick says that

Holmes returned her manuscript with a careful critique of grammar and style, but also with praise for the article as a whole:

I need not say that the story is one of surpassing interest, and that you have told it in a clear and admirable manner. If I had found any fault which seemed to me serious, I would have told you unsparingly, for the world will settle on this paper like three clouds of pigeons that break the haunches of the trees. When has anything every appeared in any periodical so likely to attract universal attention and comment?

(357)

His response is an indication of his professional attitude toward writing; unlike Annie's, it was not colored by a concern for the financial interests of the Atlantic.

Because they lived near one another, contact between Annie and Oliver Wendell Holmes was primarily social, with notes, not letters, passing between them. During the years when James was alive, Holmes was often a mealtime guest; he continued his visits after his friend's death. However, the ties between the two were more than social. Annie admired Holmes' ability to empathize with his patients, his readers, and his friends. She wrote that his understanding of human nature was responsible for his "power of sympathy;" and his "sensitiveness...made his greatest charm" (Authors and Friends 111). William Dean Howells agreed, saying: "The secret of the man who is universally interesting is that he is universally interested, and this was, above all, the secret of the charm that Doctor Holmes had for every one"

(Literary Friends and Acquaintance 150). The use of the word "charm" by both Howells and Annie to describe Oliver Wendell Holmes emphasizes his attraction for those who knew him.

In later years Annie was a source of comfort to Holmes, as she had been to Whittier²⁸:

When the time came that writing was a burden, and indeed, except for limited periods, impossible, Dr. Holmes lived more and more in his affections. Often, as I entered his room on a dull afternoon, he would say, 'Ah, now let's sit up by the fire and talk of all our friends.' Then would begin a series of opinions, witty and tender by turns and interspersed with tears and smiles.

(Authors and Friends 152)

It is touching to think of Annie sitting with the aging doctor and author, whose wife and daughter had both died, reminiscing about the great men and women whom they had known and agreeing that "Boston is the hub of the universe" (Howe, Memories of a Hostess 47).

Another friendship which Annie Fields prized was her relationship with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Like Whittier and Holmes, he was the quintessential Fireside Poet. As Alfred Kazin explains: "the century's most popular poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, domesticated Nature, made it comfy in all weathers, captured it for the fireside" (67). Much of his poetry is so nostalgic and so didactic that it is hard for the modern reader to appreciate. Parrington discusses the problem:

In his work the romantic, the sentimental, and the moralistic, blended in such just proportions, and expressed themselves with such homely simplicity as to hit exactly the current taste and establish a reputation that later generations have difficulty in understanding. (439)

For Annie, and most nineteenth and early twentieth-century readers, however, he was the American romantic whose poems informed every aspect of their lives: their childhood memories, their patriotism, their devotion to their families, their love of home and hearth. Even for today's audience, there are memorable lines: "There is a mountain in the distant West/ That, sun-defying, in its deep ravines/ Displays a cross of snow upon its side" ("The Cross of Snow" 440) and "Hermit of Amesbury! thou too hast heard/ Voices and melodies from beyond the gates/ And speakest only when thy soul is stirred!" ("The Three Silences of Molinos: To John Greenleaf Whittier" 444).

While the modern scholar may have difficulty valuing Longfellow as a poet, his skill as a linguist and translator is beyond dispute. He was Professor of Modern Languages at Bowdoin College from 1829 to 1835, and then succeeded George Ticknor as Professor of French and Spanish at Harvard, where he taught for eighteen years. After the tragic loss of his second wife, Fanny Appleton, who was burned to death in 1861, he turned for solace to translating Dante's Divine Comedy. His work was published in the years from 1865 to 1867, although he had actually begun this project two years

earlier when he would begin each day by translating two or three lines "to arouse his mind." After his wife's death in 1861, he began meeting at his home in Cambridge, Craigie House, with other scholars who were interested in Dante. His circle included, among others, his brother-in-law Thomas Appleton, Harvard Professors Charles Eliot Norton and James Russell Lowell, author Richard Dana, and Rhode Island author George Greene. Van Wyck Brooks describes how "each of the visitors, ten or twelve, held in his hand an Italian version [of Dante], while Longfellow read aloud a canto from his proof-sheets, first discussing the canto of the previous evening" (Indian Summer 26-27).²⁹ During the years from 1864 to 1867 Longfellow published what is considered to be his most significant work, Divina Commedia, a sequence of six Petrarchan sonnets which were written to precede and follow each of the three parts of his translation of the Divine Comedy.

Although Longfellow received many invitations to 148 Charles Street, the demands of his family life and his scholarly work prevented him from becoming as frequent a guest as Whittier and Holmes. James welcomed him as a friend and as one of Ticknor & Fields' most successful authors. Annie was attracted by his gentleness and serenity; as his son said: "He was not a rushing river, boiling and tumbling over rocks, but the placid stream flowing through the quiet meadows" (Wagenknecht, Henry

Wadsworth Longfellow 22). Longfellow was quiet, kind, even-tempered; Van Wyck Brooks refers to his "magnanimous mildness" (509) and Parrington writes: "However one might question his poetry, none could question that he was a gentleman amongst gentlemen" (440). That Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was an anti-slavery man, but not an abolitionist, is a telling explanation of his nature. It was not that he was without principles, but that he shied away from confrontation. A comparison of his "The Slave in the Dismal Swamp" with Whittier's "Ichabod" illustrates the difference between the two men. The vehemence of Whittier's attack on Daniel Webster: "Oh, dumb be passion's stormy rage/ When he who might/ Have lighted up and led his age/ Falls back in night" (186) contrasts sharply with Longfellow's maudlin description of the fugitive slave: "A poor old slave, infirm and lame/ Great scars deformed his face; On his forehead he bore the brand of shame; And the rags, that his mangled frame, were the livery of disgrace" (155).³⁰

For Annie Fields, Longfellow's calmness and restraint were appealing, a welcome contrast to some of her more high spirited friends. Their correspondence illuminates the affection and respect they had for one another. In one letter Longfellow writes: "What a charming poem this is, which you have written for the Atlantic. I have just read it in the Evening Transcript, and liked it extremely, and wondered who wrote it; when in another column of the paper,

I found the secret revealed. I congratulate you. It is a beautiful poem."³¹ Referring to Tales of the Wayside Inn, Annie wrote Longfellow:

This last volume has the old bewitching qualities. I sit half [crooning?] the stanzas in my mind, forgetting I am reading, as in my early school days when on Saturday afternoons I would sit in a high backed rocking chair of enormous dimensions and make the rockers keep time with the rhythms of your verses until I knew them, page after page, by heart. The "Wayside Inn" is an enchanted carpet to transport us wherever you will...³²

Their letters disclose a friendship that transcended their age difference and document a personal relationship more intimate than the one Longfellow had with James Fields. In his business arrangements with his editor, William Tryon reports, "Longfellow, though he was a poet, was also a Yankee. He dickered over royalties like an unabashed salesman, and at Craigie House he kept a careful account of the size of every edition sold and the amounts of money due him" (169). With Annie, he was a caring friend and mentor.

In Authors and Friends Annie describes Longfellow as "a tender father, a devoted friend, and a faithful citizen, and yet something apart and different from all these" (4). The quality to which she alludes was his gift of sympathy. For her, not only his writing, but his whole life, gave voice to his gift of sympathy. In her essay, she tells of Longfellow's joy in his encounters with children, the kindnesses he dispensed to friends and strangers, and the

courage he displayed despite the tragedies in his life.³³

What is of special interest is Annie's praise for:

one grace which was almost peculiar to himself in the time in which he lived-- his tenderness toward the undeveloped artist, the man or woman, youth or maid, whose heart was set upon by some form of ideal expression, and who was living for that. Whether they possessed the power to distinguish themselves or not, to such persons he addressed himself with a sense of personal regard and kinship.

(32)

This was the same "grace" which distinguished Annie's life not only during the years when she was James' editorial assistant, but in later years when she took so keen an interest in Willa Cather's career. The empathy for young writers that she and Longfellow shared was unusual; then, as now, there was envy and rivalry within the profession.

William Dean Howells relates another example of Longfellow's kindness in Literary Friends and Acquaintance:

I fancy he was somewhat shy of his fellow-men, as the scholar seems always to be...; but I think Longfellow was incapable of marking any difference between himself and them. I never heard from him anything that was *de haut en bas*, when he spoke of people, and in Cambridge, where there was a good deal of contempt for the less lettered, and we liked to smile though we did not like to sneer, and to analyze if we did not censure, Longfellow and Longfellow's house were free of all that.

(206-7)

If Annie was not as completely free of social pretense as Longfellow, it was nevertheless a trait she would have admired and sought to emulate in her relationships,

especially as she became a "Visitor" for the Associated Charities of Boston.

Longfellow appealed to that side of Annie which she often suppressed: her scholarly interest in reading and translating European literature and her desire to write poetry. As Judith Roman observes:

Annie both admired and envied Longfellow's knowledge, in particular "his power of acquiring language [which was] most unusual." Throughout her life she struggled to acquire a limited mastery of languages and was awed by the man who could still speak fluent Spanish thirty years after learning it.

(133) .

Annie, who had always wanted to be a scholar, set a difficult agenda for herself reading and translating poems into English, usually from German, French or Greek. During the 1870's she belonged to a group of women, patterned after the Dante Club, who read translations to one another. Unfortunately, she never had the time to develop the skills she needed to become a fluent translator. She did, however, continue to write poetry, sometimes fashioning her work after Longfellow's. For her, Longfellow was all a true poet should be: appreciative of nature and sensitive to ordinary people. While she recognized the limitations of her own ability, she never ceased to look to him for inspiration.

In a letter to Longfellow, written just two weeks after James Fields' death, Annie said:

Your poem has already been sent to me
 and I feel in every line that you are
 speaking for me and to me and I
 understand it as no one else can,
 exactly, simple and universal as it
 is.³⁴

The poem to which Annie refers was "Auf Wiedersehen," which James Austin calls "the outstanding tribute among many to the deceased publisher" (85). Longfellow was doubly affected by James' death: he lost a long-time friend, and he was also reminded of the sorrow of losing a spouse. The empathy he communicated through his poem must have been a great source of comfort for Annie.

Robert Penn Warren's praise of John Greenleaf Whittier applies to all the Fireside Poets and enlarges our understanding of their literary merit:

Whittier, though without the scale and power of Cooper, Hawthorne, Melville, and Faulkner, and though he was singularly lacking in their historical and philosophic irony, yet shared their deep intuition of what it meant to be an American. Further, he shared their intuitive capacity to see personal fate as an image for a general cultural and philosophic situation. His star belongs in their constellation. If is less commanding than theirs, it yet shines with a clear and authentic light. (281)

The strength of the Fireside poets lay not only in their descriptions of nineteenth-century America but in their ability to use the past as a key to the present. As America was transformed from an agrarian society into an industrialized nation, their poems assured their readers that the ideals of the country could survive. While much of

their poetry lacked technical skill, the insights into the nature of the nineteenth century compensated for this weakness. For Annie Fields and for many others, the poems were a link with the past that was more than nostalgia: they provided a message of hope. One such poem was Whittier's "The Garrison of Cape Ann": "The great eventful Present hides the Past; but through the din/ Of its loud life hints and echoes from the life behind steal in/ And the lore of home and fireside, and the legendary rhyme/ Make the task of duty lighter which the true man owes his time" (163).

Another of Whittier's poems, "Snowbound" (1866), was an immediate success.³⁵ His portrayal of the spinster aunt, the schoolmaster, and the eccentric young woman Harriet Livermore³⁶ snowbound in their farmhouse caught the imagination of the public and assured the lasting reputation of its author.

However, as Robert Penn Warren points out, "the poem is not simple, and it is likely that the appeals would have been far less strong and permanent if Whittier had not set the 'idyl' in certain 'perspectives' of deeper interpretation" (271). The first "perspective" to which he refers is the repetition of life patterns of time and change as seen through the portraits Whittier presents of the individuals sitting around the fire. The second "perspective" is the sorrow over Elizabeth Whittier's recent death and what the future will hold for Whittier without

her. The poem ends with the third "perspective," an examination of the continuity of the past with the future: "Sit with me by the homestead hearth/ And stretch the hands of memory forth/ To warm them at the wood-fire's blaze!" (406). Warren's interpretation suggests underlying meanings which explain "Snowbound's" popularity even today.

Annie Fields not only enjoyed the poetry of the Fireside Poets, but she developed a deep attachment to the men themselves. Her affection for them can be explained in part by her relationship with her father, which fostered her sense of self-confidence and enabled her to seek an equally satisfying filial relationship with these men. They embodied the positive influence of Dr. Adams and of her teacher George Emerson and preserved a way of life with which she was familiar. As she matured, the Fireside Poets provided the companionship she would have received from her father. And, as these men grew older, she cared for them as she would have cared for him, had he lived.

Annie Fields' relationship with the Fireside Poets was not only filial; they were connected by other bonds, such as their association with James Fields and their collegiality as writers. They had a gift of sympathy that grew out of shared memories and analogous values. As a result, their friendship filled all their needs for relationships that were enriching, uncomplicated, and, above all, empathetic.

Annie's relationship with Charles Dickens stands in sharp contrast to these sedate, traditional, American friendships. Their days together were characterized by excitement, emotional turmoil, and physical exhaustion.³⁷ With Dickens' visit, as William Tryon relates:

The most dazzling experience in Fields' life had begun, the beginning of a cult of adoration by the Fieldses who were otherwise perfectly sober and sane people.

James and Annie Fields gathered Charles Dickens in as one of their very own. The attentions, the honors, the deference, the pride, the appreciation, which all their lives they had bestowed on all the literary figures they knew, now faded to nothingness in the concentration of their efforts toward Dickens. It would have taken a Thoreau to resist such blandishments and Dickens was no Thoreau. (312).

James had been introduced to Dickens in 1852 on his second trip to Europe; Annie met him in 1859, shortly after he had separated from his wife. Although James had been urging Dickens to make a lecture tour since 1858, it wasn't until 1867 that he succeeded in convincing him to come to America. One reason Fields was able to do so was that he had gained a reputation for paying English authors fairly and had joined with Dickens in fighting for an international copyright agreement. It was also a propitious time for Dickens to come: he needed the money; he enjoyed appearing on the stage; and he was depressed by the problems of his failed marriage. Only the separation from his secret love, Ellen Ternan, and his physical problems with his lame left

foot were deterrents. During his visit to America, the reception he received from both James and Annie nearly compensated for his physical and emotional problems.

When Dickens arrived in Boston on November 19th (after an arduous sea voyage), he was treated royally. Annie had decorated his rooms at the Parker House with fresh flowers; the next day he was visited by Longfellow, Emerson, Holmes, and Agassiz (Kaplan 516). The following evening he was welcomed with a party at 148 Charles Street and on December 2 made his American debut, reading A Christmas Carol and the trial scene from Pickwick to a sold out audience. Annie's description of the event was rapturous: "The first great reading! How we listened till we seemed turned into one eyeball! How we all loved him! How we longed to tell him all kinds of confidences! How Jamie and he did hug in the anteroom afterward!" (Diary, 2 December 1867)

After his triumphant appearance in Boston, he went on to equally acclaimed appearances in New York. Unfortunately, his success had an adverse effect on his health. According to Fred Kaplan:

Snow, thaw, snow again, constant travel, sleepless nights, four readings a week, the excitement of unexpectedly high profits, the anxiety of planning to keep tickets out of the hands of speculators, all contributed to his being noticeably off-balance, slightly feverish. (521)

Despite his American catarrh, "depression, sleeplessness, and a sore leg, Dickens continued his readings, travelling

to Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington. Throughout the winter the Fields' affection for him grew; they attended all his lectures in Boston and travelled to many of the out-of-town ones as well. Their dinner parties in his honor became the social events of the season. As William Tryon observes: "it became a matter of distinction and social prestige to be invited, like a presentation at Court, and there were heart-burnings and even ill feeling from those who were not" (313). In addition to entertaining Dickens at home, James spent hours walking and talking with him, favorite pastimes of both men.³⁸

As spring approached, Dickens went to upstate New York: Albany, Syracuse, Utica, Rochester and Buffalo. By his final American performance in New York on April 20th, he was exhausted. He sailed two days later, leaving behind a heartbroken James and Annie Fields. In her diary entry for Wednesday, April 22, 1868, two days before Dickens' departure, Annie wrote: "Rose at six this morning sleep being out of the question--I must confess to sitting down in my night-dress in a flood of tears." Not only Annie had an excessive reaction. On 24 April, she described James' return from saying good-bye to Dickens at the steamer: "when he came back we put our arms around each other and then for the first time his grief gave vent to itself in tears."

This extreme concern which Annie displayed for Dickens, her anxiety to fulfill his every need, was unusual for her.

While her relationship with both the Fireside Poets and Dickens was filial, with them she was a self-confident, loving daughter; with him, she was an anxious, doting child. Annie acknowledged her feelings in her diary entry of 6 March 1868: "I have written to Mrs. White, wife of the President of Cornell University, to try to make him comfortable at the hotel. I feel somehow like one of his daughters, and as if I could not take too great care of him." The care she took of him included extending constant invitations to 148 Charles Street, providing flowers for his hotel room, hostessing his dinner parties--in other words, attending to his every need.³⁹

For Annie, her emotional involvement with Dickens was uncharacteristic of her usual restraint. Her words and actions showed an intensity that is not evident at any other time. She was protective of Dickens to the point of possessiveness: "It is odd how prejudiced people have allowed themselves to become about Dickens. I seldom make a call where his name is introduced that I do not feel the injustice done to him personally, as if mankind resented the fact that he had excited more love than most men" (Diary, 26 January 1868). Later (18 February 1868) she wrote: "Whatever unpleasant is said of Charles Dickens I take almost as if said against myself. It is so hard to help this when you love a friend." As the time for his departure

from America approached, her diary entries became longer and even more emotional:

All the time I am attempting to set down scraps of talk. I feel how futile such efforts are to reproduce in the smallest degree the feeling of his presence or the value of contact with him. Something far, far, beyond the worth of words comes to me from his presence, the flashing eye which loses nothing, the kind strong hand, the face so worn by all the fires of the spirit act powerfully upon me. (Diary, 12 April 1868)

Dickens not only let Annie cater to his every whim, but encouraged her to become involved in his private life. He disclosed to her that he was a "sad man," despite his popularity. This was a time when his heart and mind were divided between his family at Gad's Hill and his young mistress who was with her mother in Florence. There is no doubt that Annie was sensitive to his predicament, but how much she actually knew is a question Dickens' scholars have raised and, according to George Curry, have been unable to answer satisfactorily. There is evidence that she was aware of his relationship with Ellen Ternan; writing of Dickens' return to England, she said: "I can't help rehearsing in my mind the intense joy of his beloved--It is too much to face, even in one's imagination and too sacred" (Diary, 2 May 1868). Annie's first direct reference to "Nell" came on 8 June, when she wrote: "C.D. told J. that when he was ill in his reading only Nelly observed that he staggered and his eye failed, only she dared to tell him." Two years later

she noted that "J. told Longfellow, as was quite right, about E.L.T." (Diary, 12 August 1870), but what James told him about Dickens and his mistress, no one knows. As George Curry concludes: "For her part, Mrs. Fields knew that he [Dickens] had made "mistakes" and that all his needs ("his lonely couch") could not be satisfied by his family circle. But the likelihood remains that her knowledge of his private life was largely speculative, second-hand, and, like our own, incomplete" (59). In any case, this situation provided another opportunity for Annie to sympathize with Dickens and provide him the comfort for which he longed.

Annie Fields' relationship with Charles Dickens typifies the many roles she played in her lifetime: hostess, mentor, friend. It also reminds us of a very human side of her nature--the need to be admired and to enjoy the company of her admirers. Further, it indicates an emotional side of her personality that was rarely visible. While it is difficult to define the extent of Annie's feelings for Charles Dickens, there can be no doubt that she was absorbed with him as she had been with no other man except James. Her excessive concern for his welfare, her defense of him against any criticism, real or imagined, her sorrow at his parting, all suggest the intensity of her feelings. In fact, Mark Howe excluded some of Annie's references to Dickens in Memories of A Hostess because of their highly personal nature. Howe wrote: "the diary goes on to express

the genuine sorrow of Mrs. Fields and her husband at parting from a friend [Dickens] who had so completely absorbed their affection, but in terms which the diarist herself would have been the first to regard as more suitable for manuscript than for print" (Memories of a Hostess 187). Knowing how carefully Annie guarded her feelings, the fact that she displayed them with what Howe felt to be impropriety, is an indication of their depth.

Despite all these examples of Annie's affection for Dickens, there is no evidence that she was in love with him, or even that she was flirting with him. As George Curry observed: "If there had been a flirtatious element in their relationship, it was not on her part--for her worship of him was ever serious" (59). Annie's sense of decorum would never have allowed her to flirt with anyone, even Dickens. Besides, as I have noted, James had an equally strong attachment to their guest. On 7 June 1868 Annie wrote in her diary: "...But as J. and I confessed to each other this morning, we both dream of dear C.D. by night, and by day our thoughts wander to Gad's Hill, or to his haunts in town and all other things gather new hues from this love of ours which nobody else here can understand." By admitting their mutual infatuation with Dickens, Annie and James were also reaffirming their love for one another. Finally, although Annie might have compared Dickens with James in her mind, her love for James was too fulfilling to allow for any other

man; there was never any question that he might be replaced by anyone: "Thinking of Dickens just now while I was dressing in the yellow sunshine...how like heaven it is to know two such men, men whose sympathies stand ready to receive and love and forgive yet with minds to comprehend the difficulties of the way" (Diary, 23 January 1869).

From June 1868 to April 1869 Annie and James corresponded with Dickens; they saw him once again in May 1869 during their European tour of that year. They returned to Gad's Hill again in October; although Annie was saddened when she left, her farewell was not "her almost hysterical outpourings of grief when Dickens had left America the previous year" (Curry 50).⁴⁰ Upon their return to America, Annie continued to correspond with Dickens until his death on June 6, 1870. Discussing Annie and James' reaction to Dickens' death, George Curry notes: "For the Fields the loss of Dickens was not only intensely personal but apparently recognized by others as such" (55). A letter dated August 14, 1870, to Mrs. Lippincott, (Sara Jane Clarke Lippincott), shows how comforted Annie was by her friends' recognition of their sorrow when Dickens died:

We were much touched by your tribute letter of reminiscences and we preserve it carefully. It was altogether unlike anything else, being so true and close a picture of what he was to you. Indeed his human relations were so wide and deep that we could never tire of hearing them recounted, but Alas! so many of us

forget or are unmindful when we walk with gods! Thank you for remembering so much."⁴¹

And on 9 June, her diary entry reads: "It is touching dear J says to be stopped in the street as he is."

Although aspects of Annie's relationship with Dickens were unique, upon closer examination an important similarity with other friendships becomes evident. For Annie and Dickens, as with her other friends, feelings of empathy led to compassion and sympathy. As George Adrian writes:

The only [other] woman who was sufficiently undazzled by the love and admiration she felt for him to see more deeply than others into the complexities of Dickens's character and personality was the beloved American friend of his last years, Annie Fields. She it was who recorded the following perceptive and haunting comment on him in her diary: 'wonderful, the flow of spirits C. D. has for a sad man.' (126)

Adrian defines the essence of the Fields/ Dickens relationship; Annie was not merely, as Fred Kaplan suggests, "one his platonic female favorites" (509), but someone who identified with him and in whom he could confide. Because of her sympathy for Dickens, Annie was able to find the kindness hidden beneath his often volatile nature. Her understanding is apparent in this diary entry: "He is swift, restless, impatient, with moods of fire, but he is also and above all, tender, loving, strong for right, charitable and patient by moral force" (Diary, 25 April 1868). Dickens had many public admirers, but he also needed empathetic friends

at this time of his life, and Annie (and James) filled that need. As Dickens departed from America, he was reported to have embraced James and said: "You will never know how I loved you both; or what you have been to me in America, and will always be to me...or how fervently I thank you" (Kaplan 529).

During the Fields' visit to England in May 1869, Dickens introduced Annie to the social problems which deeply concerned him. Two days after they arrived, he took her to the little hospital in Stepney, which he had described in his essay, "A Small Star in the East." They also visited a home in a nearby slum and later went with his sister-in-law Georgina Hogarth to the Foundling Hospital. These visits helped to kindle Annie's interest in social welfare reform. As Judith Roman observes:

Although Dickens's effect on Annie was unplanned and perhaps even unconscious, his few well-timed and well-chosen remarks turned marginal interest into a career just at the moment when urban immigration, and population growth, industrialism were necessitating a worldwide change from private philanthropy to large-scale organized charity. (75)

Early in the 1870s Annie began implementing many of the ideas she had gathered during her visit with Charles Dickens. She became a volunteer visitor among the poor and eventually helped found the Associated Charities of Boston, an influential and forward thinking philanthropic organization. In Annie's association with Dickens, as in

all of her important relationships, she managed to learn, to garner from her friends' experiences ideas which she could use to enrich her own or others' lives. It was a trait which was flattering to the giver, enriching to the receiver.

The significance of Annie Fields' friendship with Charles Dickens must be kept in perspective. Undoubtedly it was a landmark in both her and James' lives, but the fervor abated once Dickens returned to England. Even in her diary entry on the day he departed, 22 April 1868, she wrote: "I can never see him again under the same conditions." The excitement, the romance, of his American tour lingered, but it was supplanted by the reality of day to day living. The most lasting effect was Annie's heightened sensitivity to the plight of the poor in post Civil War America, engendered by Dickens' words and deeds.

Emerson wrote: "Friendship requires that rare mean betwixt likeness and unlikeness that piques each with the presence of power and of consent in the other party" (232). His emphasis on the importance of disparity and of power and consent in a relationship provides an effective rationale for Annie's male friendships. In addition to the sexual difference, the variations of age, religion, and background between Annie and the men whom I have discussed enriched rather than diminished the bonds between them. The issues of power and consent, considerations that were significant

in Annie's female friendships, were also important here. Although at first it appeared that Dickens was the controlling voice in their friendship, ultimately the power of his personality over Annie diminished, and he became a significant, but not overwhelming, friend. With the Fireside Poets, power and consent, viewed in the light of filial devotion, were healthy components of their relationship. Because Annie was able to balance these aspects of friendship, she could, as Emerson suggested, "recognize the deep identity which beneath these disparities, unites them" (232).

Notes

1. In nothing I have read is there any indication that Annie was patronized by the many great male authors whom she met; they all respected her opinions and enjoyed her company. Furthermore, these friendships continued uninterrupted after James' death.

2. In addition to these New England writers, Annie had many other male friends. She knew most of the leading nineteenth-century American and British authors, including Tennyson, Thackeray, Charles Reade, Mark Twain, Charles Dudley Warner, and Bret Harte. They were guests at 148 Charles Street and she visited with them at their homes here and abroad. Among the younger men with whom she was friendly were Mark DeWolf Howe, who became her literary executor, Henry James, who wrote admiringly about her, William Dean Howells, who became editor of the Atlantic after James retired, and Thomas Bailey Aldrich, who succeeded Howells at the Atlantic.

Annie developed other male friendships when she became involved in philanthropic work. She worked very closely with Robert Treat Paine II, president of the Associated Charities of Boston, and developed an unusual friendship with Booker T. Washington.

3. Annie was friendly with Emerson's daughters Ellen and Edith, who were much nearer her age.

4. Annie's opinion of Hawthorne was confirmed by Oliver Wendell Holmes. William Dean Howells wrote: "Doctor Holmes asked if I had met Hawthorne yet, and when I confessed that I had hardly yet even hoped for such a thing, he smiled his winning smile, and said: 'Ah, well! I don't know that you will ever feel you have really met him. He is like a dim room with a little taper of personality burning on the corner of the mantel.'" (Literary Friends and Acquaintance 38)

5. "The Tent on the Beach," written when Whittier was sixty, is largely autobiographical. It is the narrative of trip made by three friends: Whittier, Bayard Taylor, and James Fields, whom he describes as "A lettered magnate, lording o'er/ An ever-widening realm of books" (242).

6. This book, published in 1849, was the first volume to have Fields' name on the imprint.

7. Annie Fields, letter to John Greenleaf Whittier, April 1890 (?), Houghton Library, Cambridge.

8. Annie Fields, letter to John Greenleaf Whittier, 1891(?), Houghton Library, Cambridge.

9. In Authors and Friends Annie wrote: "The choice of the early breakfast hour for his visits was his own idea. He was glad to hit upon a moment which was not subject to interruptions, one when he could talk at his ease of books and men. These visits were always a surprise...Occasionally, with the various evening engagements of a city, we were not altogether fit to receive him, but it was a pleasure to hear his footstep in the morning, and to know that we should find him in the library by the fire..." (313)

10. Writing about the publication of "Snowbound", Robert Penn Warren says: "The first edition earned Whittier \$10,000--a sum to be multiplied many times over if translated into present values. The poor man was, overnight, modestly rich" (271).

11. Annie Fields, letter to John Greenleaf Whittier, 24 February 1882, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

12. John Greenleaf Whittier, letter to Annie Fields, 2 October 1885, quoted in The Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier.

13. Annie Fields, letter to John Greenleaf Whittier, 26 January 1884, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

14. John Pollard agrees that none "enjoyed the esteem and affection that Whittier had for Lydia Maria Child. They worked together from as early as 1834, when in Boston Mrs. Child edited The Oasis and included in it Whittier's 'The Slave Ships'" (401).

15. An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans called Africans had been published by Allen and Ticknor when James was an apprentice.

16. Lydia Maria Child, letter to Annie and James Fields, 14 April 1880, Colby College Library, Waterville.

17. Marchalonis is referring to biographers like Pollard, who wrote: "The best and truest aspect of Whittier as a man among women was that in practice he held scrupulously to the Quaker precept that the sexes are equal. He published his belief as early as 1827, and he held fast to it always" (414).

18. The experiences of her early childhood are described in her autobiography, A New England Girlhood, Outlined from Memory (1892).

19. Gail Hamilton and John Townsend Trowbridge were the other editors, but Trowbridge spent most of his time travelling in the South writing about the Civil War, and Hamilton left when her argument with Fields, which I described in Chapter Two, erupted.

20. In the dedication of one of her last books, The Unseen Friend (1891), Larcom calls Whittier: "Most beloved and most spiritual of American poets whose friendship has been to me almost a life-long blessing" (Marchalonis 112). She served as an honorary pallbearer at his funeral, and in his will he left her five hundred dollars and the copyrights to their three books.

21. Annie Fields, letter to John Greenleaf Whittier, 19 September 1883, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

22. Annie reports: "Soon after Dr, Holmes's removal to Charles Street began a long series of early morning breakfasts at his publisher's house--feasts of the simplest kind" (Authors and Friends 130).

23. In her description of Holmes' visits to 148 Charles Street, Annie captures the essence of his personality: "He was king of the dinner-table during a large part of the century. He loved to talk, but he was excited and quickened by the conversation of others, for reverence was never absent from his nature...It was not that he was wiser, or wittier, or more profound, or more radiant with humor, than some other distinguished men...but with Dr. Holmes sunshine and gaiety came into the room..."(Authors and Friends 111)

24. It was the Unitarians, especially William Ellery Channing, who launched the initial New England attack on Calvinism. Holmes followed in their footsteps.

25. The Saturday Club was formed in Boston in 1857 for the purpose of conviviality and informal literary discussions. It grew out of a dinner club which had begun in 1855 and was responsible for founding the Atlantic Monthly. Its members included James T. Fields, Holmes, Emerson, Lowell, Longfellow, Dana. Whittier, C.E. Norton, Howells, Henry James, and other well known New England authors.

26. The poem was first published in the Atlantic Monthly in September 1858 in "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table."

27. William Dean Howells writes: "In the last talk I had with him [Holmes] he appeared to have no grudge left, except for the puritanic orthodoxy in which he had been bred as a child. This he was not able to forgive, though its tradition was interwoven with what was tenderest and dearest in his recollections of childhood" (Literary Friends and Acquaintance 172).

28. As I have mentioned, Whittier and Holmes were also close friends. In 1885 he wrote to Annie: "I had a rare good visit from Dr. Holmes and his wife the other day. We two old boys wandered about in the woods, talking of many things--half merry, half sad.

We were stranded mariners, the survivors of a lost crew, warming ourselves at a fire kindled from the wreck of our vessel."

John Greenleaf Whittier, letter to Annie Fields, 2 October 1885, Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier.

29. In a footnote Van Wyck Brooks writes: "Strictly speaking, the Dante Society was not organized until 1880. It has published a long series of work connected with the poet. Longfellow's blank-verse translation follows the original line for line, and almost word for word" (Indian Summer 26)

30. Robert Penn Warren calls "Ichabod" "one of the most telling poems of personal attack in English" (256).

31. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, letter to Annie Fields, 16 May 1872, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

32. Annie Fields, letter to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 14 January 1864, Houghton Library, San Marino.

33. In addition to his second wife's death, Longfellow's first wife died after a miscarriage, and a son was injured in the Civil War.

34. Annie Fields, letter to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 7 May 1881, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow National Historical Site, Cambridge.

35. According to Robert Penn Warren: "...in April, J.T. Fields, the publisher wrote Whittier: 'We can't keep the plaguey thing quiet. It goes and goes, and now, today, we are bankrupt again, not a one being in crib'" (271).

36. Whittier identifies Harriet Livermore as the "daughter of Judge Livermore, of New Hampshire, a young woman of fine natural ability, enthusiastic, eccentric, with slight control over her violent temper, which sometimes made her religious profession doubtful" (The Poems of John Greenleaf Whittier 90).

37. Not only was Dickens tired by the tour, but Annie and James were as well. On 1 March Annie wrote in her diary: "What a week we have had! I feel utterly weary this morning..." and on 8 April: "We dread to leave home and would only do it for *him*."

38. To boost Dickens' spirits in February, George Dolby, his agent and companion, organized the famous Great International Walking Match between himself and James Osgood, Fields' junior partner. Dickens wrote the rules for the match, and Fields and Dickens acted as trainers for Dolby and Osgood, who walked thirteen miles from the Parker House in Boston to Newton Center on a cold, snowy Massachusetts day. With Annie's help, Dickens hosted a gala dinner at the Parker House at the conclusion of the race.

39. Annie's diary entry for November 19, 1867, reads: Yesterday I adorned Mr. Dickens's room with flowers, which seemed to please him.

40. Annie's diary entry reads:

Up very early having slept but little, our whole thoughts absorbed in the farewell which was yet to come. Found C.D. at the station where we walked and talked until the last. He in his cheery way making us look at and think of other things until the signal came. A crowd had collected to see him...but he did not seem to see it and the blood rushed all over his face as the tears came to ours, and we were off. (Diary, 15 October 1869)

41. Annie Fields, letter to Mrs. Lippincott, 14 August, 1870, Barrett-Fields Collection, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville.

Chapter Six: Bridging Two Worlds

From her own conservative and genteel point of view, however, she was above all a beloved wife. She never wanted or expected fame, though she did require and receive appreciation. She was content with her reputation as a witness rather than a wielder of literary power. Like most women of her class and her time, she would never risk seeming unwomanly. Yet, as a gifted woman in a position of power, she managed to develop her talents and exert her influence without violating propriety.

(Gollin, "Subordinated Power" 157)

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, the traditional role of angel in the house was being challenged not only by the New Woman, but by social and cultural forces which affected almost the entire female population.¹

Political and social changes in the 1860s, such as movements for welfare reform, the establishment of utopian communities, the growth of westward migration, the expansion of missionary activity, the burgeoning Industrial Revolution, and most especially the Civil War, introduced new perceptions of women's roles. Annie Fields was aware of these changes, some of which she rejected and others which she accepted enthusiastically. Ultimately she was able to bridge the two worlds, that of beloved wife and that of New Woman, and make significant contributions to both.

Both Barbara Welter in Dimity Convictions and Sheila Rothman in Roots of Bitterness discuss the evolution of the

twentieth-century woman. Welter writes: "Somehow through this mixture of challenge and acceptance, of change and continuity, the True Woman evolved into the New Woman--a transformation as startling in its way as the abolition of slavery or the coming of the machine age." (41). And Rothman states:

The fact that many women's club activities and social reform endeavors grew out of, rather than in direct opposition to, the cult of true womanhood is testimony to the power of that ideology. Interest in public health, social welfare work, employment conditions for females, and particularly, child labor, was consciously seen and justified as an extension of woman's traditional role as moral and physical nurturer. Since pure motives, self-sacrifice, and benevolent intentions had been granted to the true woman to exercise inside the family circle, these attributes framed the popular justification for the wider extension of woman's influence. (26)

Annie Fields exemplifies the women to whom Welter and Rothman refer. As she moved outside the world of the Atlantic Monthly and Charles Street, she integrated these social and cultural changes into her life. She did this without denigrating her relationship either with James Fields or Sarah Jewett. Moreover, she remained the proper Bostonian. Paula Blanchard, referring to Jewett's style in her first novel, Deephaven, says: "It is the voice of one who would rather die than split an infinitive" (89); that was Annie Fields' style as well. She accomplished twentieth-century deeds in a nineteenth-century voice.

Annie's acceptance of these new ideas was not surprising. During her marriage to James Fields, she always displayed a certain measure of independence from Victorian traditions without ever sacrificing the love of her husband or the security of those traditions. As Rita Gollin suggests:

In assessing the partnership that was her marriage, one of the greatest paradoxes that emerges is that as her husband's wife and as his widow, always subordinating her identity to his, Annie Fields managed to attain both self-extension and self-fulfillment. As an advocate of the examined life, a woman who valued literature and those who wrote it as guides to self-fulfillment, she had to deal with herself as herself. But as Mrs. James T. Fields, she found herself.

("Subordinated Power" 157)

Examining the process of Annie Fields' "finding herself" is engrossing because it is not only her personal story, but it is the story of the political and social changes that were occurring throughout the United States at the same time.

As Annie matured, her sensitivity to political and social issues grew. The Civil War aroused her deepest feelings, particularly when Theodore Winthrop, Laura Johnson's brother, and her friend Robert Gould Shaw, Commander of the Negro Fifty-fourth Regiment, were killed. Although not an outspoken abolitionist, she always opposed slavery. During the War Annie wrote several poems with anti-slavery themes and, in a diary entry, referred to John Brown's death as murder (4 Nov. 1859). She also helped

several African-American women, friends of John Greenleaf Whittier and his sister Elizabeth, among them Mary Felton, who started an industrial school for Freedpeople, and Charlotte Forten Grimké, a contributor to the Atlantic.

James' retirement from the Atlantic in 1871 was a turning point in both Annie's and his life because they were finally able to devote time to interests outside the realm of the Atlantic. They embarked on several cultural and civic ventures together, but they also pursued separate interests. While James was on most of his lecturing trips, Annie stayed in Boston where she devoted less time to writing and translating and more to her charitable activities. There are several reasons why she turned to these other occupations. One is that wealthy nineteenth-century matrons often became involved in charitable causes, and Annie Fields was no exception. She knew that the Sanitary Commission, established during the Civil War, "backed by its women's branches, furnished food, clothing, and nurses for the nation's first 'modern' war" (Ginzberg 134). The work of the Commission, which proved that women could take an active role in areas other than the traditional church sponsored charitable organizations, introduced Annie to expanded possibilities for philanthropy.

Another reason Annie turned to philanthropy was that she had been influenced by Charles Dickens. On Christmas Day 1868 she wrote:

As for literature and that difficult thing knowledge whose glorious pursuit fires even my unworthy heart, the cares of the world have pushed lately out of my way every possibility of such delightful occupations. The truth is I have been truly fired by Dickens's last paper about the Children's Hospital [.] I lay awake at night to ponder of it and if I ever go to England I shall go there--In the meantime while I live here such children are my own--God help me!--

This journal entry suggests that she suspected that her desire to be a poet was unrealistic and that she should seek a new outlet for her creativity. She had expressed this realization even more vividly the previous year: "I am eager, eager to do something--a dangerous eagerness which analyzed may only show ambition in covert form--I can live the poem I would write--let me do it then and thank God!" (18 Feb. 1868).²

One more reason philanthropy was an appropriate vocation for Annie was that she inherited a tradition of volunteerism from her New England ancestors. In the early years of the nineteenth century, Protestant humanitarians believed that "the establishment of effective systems of education, where young and old could learn republican virtues such as civic responsibility, personal simplicity and charity" were one means of achieving "the millennial utopia which Protestant thought envisioned" (Banner 38). These early reformers turned to voluntary associations:

Many reformers came to view the voluntary society as the perfect means whereby benevolence could be institutionalized without granting additional and potentially dangerous powers to the central government. It was, moreover, a way of involving citizens with their government and thus insuring that democracy would actually function within the republican framework, of bringing together in harmony people of the various competing classes and sections, and of providing stable organizations and a sense of community within a society in continual flux. (Banner 39-40)

These theories, prevalent in Boston during Annie's youth, were central to her education. In The Last Farewell to His Pupils George Emerson wrote:

It is a woman's office to charm and to win by charming. She must not be content with being merely useful. She must aim also to be beautiful in her life and to win by her beauty. While the beauty is external, it must not be external only. She must have the charm of grace, of intelligence, of manner, of feeling and of heart... (10)

He urged his graduates to prepare themselves for a life of dispensing charity and helping the poor: "[A charitable woman] visits the poor, feels for them, becomes acquainted with them, ministers to their wants, is a friend and advisor...teaches them to respect themselves and resist evil" (20). In years to come, Annie would quote him: "My old schoolmaster George B. Emerson ...used to say 'Take care girls what you wish for, because if you wish long enough and hard enough you are sure to get it!'"³ Annie's father

agreed with Emerson that community service was an appropriate role for women. Although Annie did not become active in charitable causes until the 1860s, the seeds had been planted much earlier by these two men whom she loved and respected.

Annie's interest in philanthropic work was influenced by her gift of sympathy as well as by her education. In the words of the Associated Charities Board of Directors, written upon her death:

It is a witness to her wide sympathy that her home, associated for many years with men and women of letters, has been always open to other men and women at work at a different side of the human problem. By her fireside all people who were in earnest in their work, whatever it might be, and who loved their fellowmen, were welcomed into an atmosphere in which the interests of each helped and illuminated the others.'

Over the years, Annie developed a broad range of charitable interests: the elderly, the young, the disenfranchised, the African American community. Her sense of empathy increased her devotion to the causes she espoused.

Annie entered this phase of her life with characteristic enthusiasm; she joined the world of philanthropy as she would any profession, bringing intelligence, organizational skills, and family connections to her work. Beginning in the early 1870's, she volunteered once or twice a week at "missions" in the North End of Boston which had been established by the Protestant churches

to help working girls (usually Irish immigrants) gain an education. She taught French and enlisted the help of her husband, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and John Greenleaf Whittier for Friday night lectures to larger audiences of men and women. As her work progressed, Annie overcame her prejudice against Catholics. Like many Protestant New Englanders, she expressly looked down upon Irish Catholics: "...the beggary of the Irish is almost overwhelming to the inexperienced... The children are seldom hopeless, however. Decency and self-respect may be frequently taught to them, and in this way we may get a hold upon the parents."⁵ Through her friendship with two Catholic poets, Alice Meynell and Louise Imogen Guiney, and through her direct contacts with Irish immigrants in the course of her "visiting," she eventually overcame this bias.

Annie and other forward thinking philanthropists realized that the post-Civil War era of urban immigration, industrialization, and population growth called for new ways of dealing with social problems. In particular, Annie objected to an established policy of public welfare called "out-door relief," which was impersonal and ignored the root causes of poverty. Under this system, money was given to needy people without regard for how the recipients spent it. In a letter to the Boston Herald, which she signed "A Friend of the Poor," Annie asked: "Who wants to throw away \$60,000 if he can help it--the sum that Boston raises by taxation

every year to be given away to the poor in sums ranging from \$2 to \$3 at a time to \$10 per month?" She suggests that private societies investigate individual cases and offer help rather than simply handing out small sums of money or admitting indigent people to poorhouses.⁶

Annie maintained that America had outgrown the Lady Bountiful School of Charity. In "Systematic Visiting Among the Poor," she argued that "The easy pleasure of giving to the poor without going to them, or seeing how gifts are applied is now universally conceded to be a harm rather than a good" (1). Annie and the women with whom she worked did not envision themselves as the female "do-gooders" of earlier days, but entered the field ready to embrace new ideas and modern approaches to solving problems of poverty. The role these women played was significant. In her book Women and the Work of Benevolence, Lori Ginzberg discusses gender issues in the history of benevolence in America:

The conflation of femininity with benevolence had constituted an ideological given among antebellum Protestants. By the 1850s the radical possibilities of that ideology had already been weakened as women and men sought, in electoral and institutional strategies, the moral transformation of society. The generation that undertook the enormous task of providing Civil War relief went even further, replacing the language of gender identity--and of female moral superiority--with that of war. Civil War philanthropy aspired to a more "masculine" ideal," as the new generation of benevolent women and men

proposed that scientific rather than moral principles characterize social welfare. (134)

Annie Fields espoused this new, male inspired, scientific philosophy which analyzed the sources of poverty and explored ways to alleviate or eradicate it. Ginzberg cites Annie as an example of a woman who promoted professionalism in social work:

In the postwar urban society characterized by the growing rigidity and seeming permanence of class boundaries, many of the women who had launched their careers during the Civil War almost never used an imagery of gender in their public work. In fact, the new administrators of charity denied that women were better suited for benevolent work: they demanded professional--not gender--standards. ...Annie Fields of the Boston Charity Organization Society agreed, explaining that in charity, as in government, expertise should carry greater weight than simple willingness to do the work. (Ginzberg 200-201)

The advocates of this newer approach explored the sources of poverty, assessed the needs of applicants, and set long-range goals. They made a distinction made between the treatment of poverty and pauperism, the former being considered an unfortunate condition of human experience; the latter, an evil resulting from immorality and ignorance. They also reevaluated sources for funding. In the past private philanthropies and churches had provided money for the poor; but, with the influx of Irish immigrants, more funds were needed than could be provided by the existing

Catholic churches and private gifts were not forthcoming. New organizations and methods were sought. As a result of their experience with the Sanitary Commission, volunteers and social workers advocated the change from small, private charities to larger and better organized philanthropic agencies. Annie Fields agreed with these new strategies and worked tirelessly toward implementing them. In one of her speeches she said:

I should like to say a few words about what may be called the reform which marks this century, a reform which we are all asked to bear a part, one that is equally humanizing and valuable to the poor and to the rich. Indeed these words poor and rich hardly mark the distinctions we wish to point out, we should say to the well-to-do and the dependent.⁷

This speech exemplifies the influence of Annie's gift of sympathy on her approach to philanthropy. Her emphasis is on the reciprocity of charitable work, that it is "equally humanizing and valuable" to both the giver and the receiver. Moreover, while today the distinction between "rich and poor" and "well-to-do and dependent" may be a matter of semantics, her words underscore a sensitivity, unusual in her era, to the language of class distinction.

By 1875 Annie became frustrated with the existing organizations which gave poor people money without requiring any responsibility on the part of the recipients. She joined with her friend and co-worker, Mary Greenwood Lodge, to establish a new group called the Cooperative Society of

Visitors.⁸ Annie had become interested in the work of Octavia Hill, an English woman who had recently established a visiting system and housing project in the East London slums. In How to Help the Poor, Annie quotes Miss Hill, who had written: "I do believe that our almsgiving has been cruel in its kindness... For the sake of the energy of the poor, the loss of which is so fatal to them, for the sake of that intercourse with them--happy, friendly, human intercourse--which dependence renders impossible, seek to your utmost for better ways of 'helping them'" (11). The "better way," which both Hill and Annie endorsed, was the Eberfield Plan, which originated in Cologne, Germany, and advocated home visits by volunteers to poor families. As Annie explains in "Systematic Visiting Among the Poor":

All the charitable labor of the place is brought by this plan into entire unity. The best men and women of the city consider voluntary service an honor as well as a duty. No visitor has more than three or four families under his or her care, nor does the visitor give to them without careful canvassing of the cases. There is a central office where all applications are finally recorded, and there are district offices from whence relief is sent....During the past twenty years, while that city has increased one third in population, the number of pauper has decreased from nearly six thousand in the beginning to less than one thousand in the last report.

(1-2)

The Cooperative Society in Boston, as in London and Cologne, depended upon volunteer "visitors," who were assigned

indigent clients to visit and counsel. They reported their findings to a central committee, the Committee of Relief, directed by a paid worker. The Society worked with other charities and schools to provide help. The Visitors' Rules made their goals clear:

The Visitors object is to raise the standard of life in the families of his (or her) section, by visiting them as often as possible--at least once a week; by showing an interest in their welfare; by inducing them to send their children to school and to the Sunday School of the Church, to which they belong; by procuring work for them, &c., &c. The two principle things, upon which the Visitor should insist, are *temperance* and *cleanliness*.'⁹

Another rule said "The Visitor may not grant any relief on his (or her) account, except in very urgent cases, and then only enough to cover the time till the Relieving Committee may take charge of the case. In no case should money be given by the Visitor." This stipulation that personal money not be disbursed appears in all aspects of Annie Fields' charitable endeavors.

The Cooperative Society lasted from 1875 to 1879, and then was absorbed into the Associated Charities of Boston, a central organization for all the public and private charitable organizations in Boston. The memorial to Annie written at her death by the Directors of the Associated Charities praises her leadership and commitment to this organization. The praise of the Directors for Annie's ability to change with the times reenforces the fact that

she had a unique capacity to move effectively from one era to another:

From the beginning Mrs. Fields has been on the governing board of the Associated Charities-as Director till 1894-as Vice President from 1894 to 1906-since then as Honorary Vice President, while during many years she was a guiding and active member of the executive committee of District 7, and its corresponding secretary till her death. Throughout these five and thirty years the principles on which the Society is founded have been near to Mrs. Fields' heart and its methods constantly in her thoughts, with the hope always of adapting them more and more closely to human needs with the changing times ...Her thoughts and her hopes alike kept step with the younger generation and with the new century. Unlike many older people she was living in the world of today-its sufferings and its ideals-although more than to most people the world of the past was open to her and full of significance.¹⁰

Robert Treat Paine (1835-1910), a Boston philanthropist and friend of James and Annie, was another founder of the Associated Charities; he served actively as its president from 1879-1907. He suggested the motto: "Not Alms but a Friend" (Malone 158-159). Many of the letters from Annie to Paine illustrate the extent of her involvement in the day to day working of the organization and her aggressiveness in pursuing her ideas.¹¹ In March 1884 she wrote:

It seems to me our "Associated Charities" needs some radical changes to make the work efficient. The newspaper critics are not so far wrong! I have been visiting the outlying districts and I find the work petty and not at all a controlling force...In my own ward I

find Miss Frances Smith very tired and nervous under the constant strain to which she subjects herself....The work dwindles under such petty treatment as it is getting in many directions...All these problems present themselves but I think we must face them because we certainly are not growing the right direction just now...¹²

Another letter is particularly meaningful in our consideration of Annie Fields and the changing roles of women.¹³ In December 1894, Mr. Paine had received a note from a Dr. E. Gould of Johns Hopkins University saying that he was presently editing a work on Women's Work Status in leading countries of the world and asking Paine for an article of four to five thousand words on "The Work of Women in Philanthropy and Charity in Boston." He wrote that he was "unable to offer any compensation but will be happy to give the writer full credit by mentioning his or her name." He wanted the article to include, along with other information, a list of women donors of large gifts for philanthropic purposes, information about "the extent to which women occupy places on boards of charitable institutions," "provisions of convalescent homes for working women," and "rescue work amongst fallen women." He ended his letter with a plea for an early reply.¹⁴ Annie's indignant reply to Robert Paine illustrates her feminist approach to philanthropy and would be as appropriate today as it was in 1894:

As one of my aims in life is not to have "my name mentioned" I do not seem eligible for this work!! My idea would be to send to Miss Helen W. Winslow, Prest.[sic] of the Womens' Press Association and to let her select the right woman and pay her fifty dollars for it. It is important work which should be well done by a specialist. I do not wonder that foreigners are lost in wonder at our lack of proper statistics! We never shall get on until we pay for good work. I am amazed that Dr. Gould should suggest that such a variety of questions could be properly answered by anyone except by devoting a great deal of time to it...it would be far better done (I believe) by some woman who makes it her business to report on such questions for the Press. I wish Dr. Gould could know how strongly I am opposed to any woman's trying to do this without remuneration. "Nothing for nothing" still holds good, beside I know too many struggling writers to tolerate the idea.¹⁵

To publicize her work with the Associated Charities, Annie wrote a series of articles which appeared in several magazines, including Harper's. However, her most important publication was her book How to Help the Poor (1883); over twenty-two thousand copies were sold within two years. The Note at the beginning defines its purpose:

This little manual does not propose to deal with public questions. It aims to give a few suggestions to visitors among the poor, and to lead all such visitors to attend the conferences which now are held weekly in almost every district of our large cities. In these meetings, they will reap advantage from the experience and knowledge of others who are endeavoring, like themselves, to lighten the burden of the unfortunate. Especially, we believe that such meetings will awaken a wider interest in

the hearts of well-to-do people,--an interest strong enough to increase the number of visitors to the homes of the poor.

Every page of this book is a prayer for more helpers, and aims to show that such labor is neither too difficult for us, nor one from which any household can feel itself altogether exempted.

The book begins on a religious theme: since "Give to him that asketh" is one of the most direct commands in the Christian Scriptures, Annie suggests that it "should be the true motto for this revival in benevolent work which we call organized or associated charity" (5). The first chapter provides inspirational accounts of ways charity can be dispensed through volunteers who actually became acquainted the poor members of a community.

Because How to Help the Poor was meant to be a handbook, Annie devotes the subsequent chapters to an explanation of the structure of the Associated Charities. She describes the Registration Bureau, where the "private history of individuals" is kept on cards "which are kept strictly from the public eye" (14), the Board of Directors, a "board of twenty-two directors, ladies and gentlemen, who meet always once a month, and more frequently in emergencies" (17), the District Office, where the managing agent can be found, and the Volunteer Visitors, who work approximately two hours a week. In terms quintessentially her own, Annie writes:

It is the first duty of the Central Board of any organization...that persons of ability be sedulously informed of the need of assistance, and constantly beckoned to the front. Not as figure-heads, nor to lend their names, but to give such time as they can spare to strict performance of weekly duties; this being far more important to our advance than any gift of money. Without underrating what money can do, we have learned from the past, as well as the present, that *if the gifts of sympathy and energy are withheld from the work of the Associated Charities, wealth may be pronounced useless to perform the service* (italics mine). (26)

District Conferences, coordinating committees within the various areas being serviced, were the foundation for the work of the Associated Charities. Annie explains: "the simple idea of the Conferences is that various individuals come together for the purpose of getting each other's advice and knowledge" (32). These Conferences were composed of the District Committee, representatives of various societies and other workers among the poor in the area, and the visitors. During the Conference meetings, the participants discussed new cases requiring immediate investigation as well as outstanding cases.

One of the most immediate concerns for the visitors was improving the lot of children and young persons. While some of these problems were peculiar to the nineteenth century, such as "the neglect of the babies of wet nurses," (46) others still exist today: homeless women, "street-boys," and neglected children. Annie suggests "taking children from

miserable homes in tenement houses during the summer and sending them away for a week or two" (48). Other recommendations are equally forward thinking, for example "individual guardianship" (50) rather than institutionalization for "unmanageable girls." She continues: "Such girls need friends; and without them, they are seen to sink down into the great 'criminal sea,' which has been largely made up of graduates of public institutions" (51).

The attitude of the Associated Charities was extraordinarily humane toward children. Visitors were told that "The only reason for taking the children from their natural homes is to lift them out of moral poverty. Material poverty alone is not a sufficient cause" (58). Even when children were removed from their homes and placed in institutions, they were not to be left there too long, but returned home or, if that was not possible, to a family. The Visitors were warned that: "In selecting a home in a private family, great care should be taken to find one where the children will be taken in a measure for their own sake, not as servants merely. If possible, brothers and sisters should be placed so near that their attachment for each other will be cherished" (58-9). When neglect was suspected, hearings were held: "The hearing in neglect cases is not public, and no lady need hesitate to appear. It is given in a private room; and as hearsay evidence is never

received,--if the visitors really wish to help the children, it will largely depend upon themselves to get what is required. All complaints are confidential" (65). This chapter ends with a rather xenophobic observation that suggests that Annie had not quite rid herself of her bias against the Irish: "Do not feel this case is finished until each of those children is in a fair way to make industrious and useful members of society. The inherited paupers of Europe must die and be crushed out on our soil; their children should become our useful and busy compatriots" (65).

The aged as well as the children were treated with concern. Among the suggestions for improving the care of the elderly was to study each case individually and present a plan through which "some fit occupation can often be found which shall bring both happiness and profit" (75). If the person could not support himself or herself, then "the relatives should be sought out, and persuaded to bear the burden" (75). If all else failed, private financial assistance should be given to those worthy of it. (Of course, those who had been "intemperate" must go to the almshouse.) As she does throughout the book, Annie provides suggestions for the future:

What can be done to prevent old people
from becoming dependent upon strangers?
We can encourage thrift, and foster
family affection and the sense of
responsibility in children for their
parents, in brothers for their

sisters...and often in counsel with those we know in other relations, we can use our forethought to make sure that as many as possible are put in the way of providing not only money, but friends, for their own old age... (76-7)

The condition of "intemperance," as I indicated in Chapter One, was one that always bothered Annie. In How to Help the Poor she declares: "Drunkenness lies at the root of a very large proportion of the suffering of the poor in the cities of America. Therefore, this is the chief problem with which the volunteer visitor as well as the political economist must deal" (93). Among the solutions to problems caused by drinking were removing a drunken parent from the household, complaining to the police, and trying to bring "healthy and kindly influences" into the home.

The final chapter, "Visitors and Visited," summarizes many of Annie's ideas. Although her style is Victorian, her ideas ring true today. She reminds her readers that "Many of the poor who most deeply need visitors are lonely persons, and the fact of finding a friend at last is encouragement to them" (118). Her commitment to improving the condition of the impoverished is evident in her concluding words: "When we are told that certain evils cannot be helped, that we may as well let things alone, we must remember that experience has taught differently. Evils can be helped, and to let things alone is to lend ourselves to wrong" (125).

How to Help the Poor is Annie Fields' letter to the world, explaining her dedication to improving the lives of the less fortunate. Using Victorian and religious language she urges others to assume the role she had taken for herself. There is little indication that her literary friends, including Jewett, responded, but Annie extended her circles of friends to include the men and women she met in her philanthropic activities, and they became important allies in her work.

The Associated Charities of Boston was Annie Fields' main interest during these years, but it did not preclude volunteering with other charities such as Lucy Larcom's Lend-A-Hand Society. She also helped Abby Morton Diaz in her work with women and children and contributed to Ednah Cheney's efforts in behalf of the New England Hospital for Women and Children. She devoted her time, energy, money, and influence to each of these causes. Where Annie Fields differed from many of her contemporaries was in the depth and breadth of her commitment. Thanks to her intelligence, social position, poise, and organizational skills, she held leadership positions which led to tangible results. Her success not only enhanced her status among her peers but also extended her sphere of influence.

Annie Fields' friendship with Booker T. Washington and her interest in Tuskegee Institute has not been as well known as her involvement with Boston charities. However, I

have discovered new evidence about their relationship. Washington was a mulatto slave, born on a small Virginia farm. He spent his early years of freedom working in salt furnaces and coal mines. Eventually he attended a Freedmen's Bureau School and at age sixteen entered Hampton Institute, which at that time was a secondary normal and industrial school. In 1892, when he was twenty-eight years old, he founded Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Louis Harlan observes that:

During the next fifteen years he was engrossed in building his institution, mollifying the local whites and raising money in the North...A single speech in 1895 catapulted Washington into national fame and recognition as a black spokesman. In what became known as the Atlanta Compromise Address...he proposed a triple alliance between northern capitalists, the New South white leadership class, and blacks.

(Harlan vii-viii)

It is not certain when Annie Fields met Washington, but her growing admiration for him was unmistakable. In a charming reminiscence in her biography, Memories of a Southern Woman of Letters, Grace King describes the visit of a friend of hers, a Tulane professor, to 148 Charles Street:

... He was an Englishman, and I persuaded him that he could not know Boston without calling on the queen of its literary world. He accepted my note of introduction, and after presenting it, was duly invited to tea. He was impressed to awe by the majestic hostess, but terms of sociability did not fail to succeed the first stiff moments of conversation, when, as he related to me, in her beautiful voice,

with its precise tones, "she asked me what the people of New Orleans thought of Mr. Washington. I myself had never thought about him, but I answered truthfully that I had never heard a word against him. I was very glad to hear that she responded with warmth in her voice and even went on to eulogize Mr. Washington in the way I had become accustomed to hear in America. And she was still talking about him when I made my adieux. It was not until I was outside on the pavement that I realized that she was talking about Booker, and not the father of his country, to whom her words of praise were admirably adapted." (93)

I have discovered several letters from Booker T. Washington to Annie which indicate more than a passing acquaintance. In 1897 he wrote acknowledging her letter and contribution to his school and agreeing to serve on a [unnamed] committee.¹⁶ Another letter tells of his appreciation of her donation and suggests dates when he will be able to go to Manchester.¹⁷ A third mentions her contribution of five hundred dollars to be applied to the Endowment fund and adds: "Please express my sincere thanks to your friend for her remembrance," perhaps referring to Miss Jewett.¹⁸ In June of 1901 he asks "whether or not it would be possible of a [sic] parlor meeting to be gotten up at Manchester...where I could speak of our work."¹⁹ And in July 1902 he thanks her for inviting him to be her guest while he is in Manchester and tells her: "I shall be very glad to accept your kind offer of entertainment in your home while I am there."²⁰

What is interesting historically is the role, albeit small, Annie Fields played in Booker T. Washington's fund raising efforts among the powerful men of his time. In the opinion of Louis Harlan:

The typical donor sent his check rather than his advice...Washington's efforts at Tuskegee Institute were to train students to become independent small businessmen, farmers, and teachers rather than wage earners or servants of white employers. At the same time, it is clear that Washington flattered and cajoled the very rich and never challenged the appropriateness of their status at the peak of the American success pyramid. The wealthy loved Washington because he seemed rather like one of them, a self-made man with a big physical plant to prove it. But for his color, he could have belonged to their club. (142)

Booker T. Washington's concept of educating "the head, the hand and the heart" appealed to the wealthy white community. However, his theory angered the Harvard educated black leader W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963), who favored direct, militant action to improve the lot of African Americans. In contrast to Washington's "separate but equal" philosophy, Du Bois advocated immediate social and political integration and higher education for a "Talented Tenth" of the black population.

Annie never mentions Du Bois, so I can only speculate that his ideas were too radical for her. But she worked tirelessly for Washington. On his behalf, she contacted several industrialists whom she knew and received a variety

of responses. The rejection she received from George Bartol, General Manager of The Otis Steel Company in Cleveland, defies today's rules of political correctness. He wrote that his company had received over thirty charitable appeals and "while corporations sometimes give to such objects, it is really not proper for their officers or even for their Directors to do more than a very limited amount in this way as the business is supposed to be administered by them strictly in the interest of the stockholders and not for charitable purposes."²¹ Philip W. Moen, Third Vice President of American Steel in Worcester, also refused her appeal saying: "I have known for years, and contributed to the work, of the Tuskegee School. I realize fully what a[sic] splendid work has been done under the leadership of Booker Washington, but the demand on me for contributions from many directions will make it impossible for me to think of contributing to the endowment fund."²² Fortunately the response from H. Phipps, written from his cottage at The Breakers in Palm Beach, Florida, was not only positive, but helpful as well:

I was sorry to learn by your recent letter that Mr. Washington was ill. I do hope for his speedy recovery.

Soon after the receipt of yours I received a letter from the Secretary of the Armstrong Society, stating that a public meeting would be held in New York on Monday next, and I thought under the circumstances it was better to send my check for \$1,000.00 to that meeting, as the aggregate of the collection would no doubt be announced, and this would give

the object a good advertisement.

I wrote if this were not done to send the check to you, so that it might go through the usual channel of collection...P.S.I am glad to hear that Boston is doing liberally for so good a work.²³

The handwritten comment at the bottom of the page was "First rate!"

In February and March of 1901 Annie found herself at the center of a dispute between Booker T. Washington and Henry Wick, Chairman of the National Steel Company in New York. In February Wick wrote to her saying that for several years, when he lived in Youngstown, Ohio, he had contributed to Tuskegee. He said that he had been told by a "clever, young mulatto man" that at Tuskegee "among other things they were training servants for usefulness, and as I found servants were very difficult to obtain at Youngstown, I attempted to open correspondence with Booker T. Washington to supply me with female servants." When he did not hear from Washington and when he did not get any satisfaction from the man soliciting money, he decided against ever contributing to Tuskegee again.²⁴ Annie must have sent the letter to Booker T. Washington because in March he replied that he was aware of the situation, that "no letter requiring an answer comes to Tuskegee that is not answered, and I have tried to make it plain to all that we do not make any attempt or claim to send out our students as domestic servants."²⁵ He followed this letter with another which

clearly reveals his skill in dealing with the businessmen of his day:

I have just had a conference with Mr. Wick, whose letter you sent me, and I have explained matters to him and I think he is now in a somewhat different frame of mind in regard to Tuskegee. In some way he had gotten the impression that we made it a point of sending out servants and when he wrote for one and failed to secure one he became rather vexed.²⁶

Although Annie's letters in this matter are unavailable, it is clear that she did not shrink from the controversy and, in the same way that she followed through her commitment to other charities, she pursued her interest in Tuskegee.²⁷ She used her social connections and her administrative ability not only to raise money but to solve problems which arose.

Although Annie did not know her well, Charlotte Forten Grimké (1837-1914) was another African American acquaintance. Grimké was a fifth generation free black woman, who had been born into an upper middle class family in Philadelphia. Like Annie's father, Dr. Adams, James Forten wanted his daughter to be well educated; after providing her with tutors at home, he sent her to Salem, Massachusetts, to prepare for a career in teaching at the integrated public schools there. From 1853 to 1857 she lived in the home of Charles Remond, a noted black abolitionist. She graduated from Higginson Grammar School and Salem Normal School. While she lived in Salem,

Charlotte joined the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and, in addition to abolitionist meetings, attended lectures given by Emerson, Lowell, Theodore Parker, and Henry Ward Beecher.

Between 1857 and 1862 Charlotte taught at schools in Salem and in Philadelphia, but she was incapacitated intermittently with severe headaches and respiratory problems. Nevertheless, when her friend John Greenleaf Whittier suggested that she take part in an experiment for educating freed slaves on Saint Helena Island off the coast of South Carolina, she agreed to go.²⁸ According to Nellie McKay, Charlotte Forten "was one of the first black teachers to arrive in the South in the wake of the Civil War, and the only one on Saint Helena Island during her stay there [from October 1862 to May 1864]" (361).²⁹

Unfortunately, since Grimké was unable to reconcile her middle class standards with the realities of the impoverished lives of the slaves, her experience at Port Royal on Saint Helena Island was disappointing. As McKay observes:

Her early months on the island were especially difficult...In spite of her good intentions, Forten's background, upbringing and temperament did not help her to mediate her difficulties. She never developed social relationships with the former slaves...she was often repelled by their crudeness and to her, their unusual social and religious practices...she believed that the behavior of all blacks needed to be transformed to meet the standards of

northern white middle-class mores before
 the group would be accepted on equal
 terms with the dominant society
 (361-2)

Nevertheless, Charlotte did become friendly with others who had gone there to help, including Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, an abolitionist from Massachusetts and mentor of Emily Dickinson, and Colonel Robert Gould Shaw. She also renewed her acquaintance with Seth Rogers, a white doctor, whom she had met a few years before when she was a patient at his hydropathic clinic in Worcester. He was an abolitionist who had volunteered to work as a surgeon in Higginson's all black regiment, the First South Carolina volunteers. Her journal entries show her attachment to him although she was aware that he was married:

At St. Helena Island in 1863: Who sh'd walk into school today but my good and dear Dr. R.[ogers]. Wasn't I glad to see him!...He came home to dine with us, and then we--just he and I--had the loveliest horseback ride to Mr. Thorpe's place. Dear A. [the diary] I can give you no idea of the ride homeward. I know only that it was the most delightful ride I ever had in my life ...There is a magnetism about him impossible to resist. I can never be thankful enough that he came here...
 (454-5)

Other diary entries imply that Rogers returned, and even encouraged, her affection. The relationship eventually ended and in 1878 she married Reverend Francis Grimké, minister of a Presbyterian Church in Washington D.C., where she spent the remainder of her life.

Nellie McKay describes Charlotte Grimké as an "essayist, educator, translator and diarist" (358). In some ways her career was similar to Annie Fields': her literary ambitions were never fulfilled, but her journals provide valuable descriptions of the mid and late nineteenth century. Several of her poems were published in anti-slavery magazines, including The Liberator, and one short story appeared in the Ladies' Home Journal in 1857. The Atlantic Monthly published accounts of her experiences on the Sea Islands in 1864, and "Personal Recollections of Whittier" appeared in the New England Magazine in 1893.³⁰

When and where Charlotte and Annie met is not known, but undoubtedly one of the friends they had in common-- Whittier, Colonels Shaw and Higginson, Lydia Maria Child-- introduced them. Annie may also have known Charlotte as a result of her contribution to the Atlantic. It is intriguing to speculate how Annie's friendship with this African-American woman, whose lifetime spanned the same years as her own and with whom she had much in common, might have evolved if they had become better acquainted. However, I found only one diary entry in which Annie mentions her. On 30 December 1868 Annie mistakenly writes that Charlotte and a white man have become engaged and then comments:

...Poor child! She must feel how fruitful of discomfort and petty shame such a marriage must often be. Even Mr. Whittier thinks it a pity and wishes she might find somebody of her own color...I cannot however help feeling that the man

does not quite love her as he ought...Charlotte is very sweet and attractive and unusually intelligent.

While Annie's and Whittier's concern for Charlotte may have been related to the prejudices of the time, I believe that the real problem was their own bias. Although they both displayed the gift of sympathy abundantly, they seem to have reached a limit on their empathy when it involved interracial marriage.

In the course of my research, I became interested in exploring Annie's relationship with other men and women from minority groups. I discovered that Annie was a friend and neighbor of Alice Goldmark Brandeis, wife of Chief Justice Louis Brandeis. In fact, it was Mrs. Brandeis who introduced Willa Cather to Annie and Sarah. What, I wondered, was Annie Fields' contact with other members of the Jewish community in Boston? My conclusion, based on the small amount of information available, is that while she did not know many Jews, this was not the result of anti-Semitism.³¹ She certainly never implies the questionable attitudes of her friends Henry James and Willa Cather.³²

A Jewish community was not established in Boston until 1842, and "it was not until the influx of East European Jews in the 1880s and 1890s that there were substantial numbers, resulting in social clubs, literary programs, settlement house, self-help societies and landsmanschaften" (Fischel and Pinsker 70). These immigrants, unlike the Irish, found

work in New England's textile industry; many European Jews had been involved in the garment trades so they had the skills necessary to work in factories, sweatshops or at home. They formed charitable institutions to care for their own people; in 1895 the Federated Jewish Charities was founded. In How to Help the Poor, Annie discusses the need to cooperate with religious groups and quotes from "the excellent Hand-book for the Friendly Visitors among the poor of New York":

It should be remembered that all religious bodies recognize their obligations to provide for the poor of their own parishes, and often possess the most intimate and intelligent knowledge of an applicant's circumstances.

Therefore, great care should be taken not to interfere with their treatment of any case belong to them...

All Hebrews should be referred to the Society of the United Hebrew Charities, which society dispenses all synagogical charity... (16)

Primarily among Jewish immigrants who had suffered from centuries of persecution in Europe, the necessity of caring for their own needy families was crucial.

In Leonard Baker's biography of Brandeis and Frankfurter, he helps to clarify the relationship between the Jewish and Christian communities in Boston during Annie Fields' adult life:

Although Brandeis was not observant, among non-Jewish Bostonians there was no question of his background. A non-Jewish friend [Bess Evans] described the

situation this way: "Here the homes of Boston's best 'Brahmins' were flung wide open to one of his rare social attractions...By all indications Brandeis was living in a community free from anti-semitism. Generally this was true for much of the U.S. during the nineteenth century. But there were few Jews in the United States during that century and most were, like the Brandeis family, of German descent--educated, cultured, thriving business or professional men, persons who fit in well with the mainstream of American life, almost disappearing into it.

(71-72)

It would be reasonable to assume that Annie thought of Alice and Louis Brandeis as socially acceptable friends, that she was aware of their religion, and it was not a factor in their relationship. Her attitude reflects both the nineteenth-century aspect of her personality and her gift of sympathy.

During these years the political face of Boston changed radically as a new wave of politicians took over the city. Although Annie was angered with the way welfare services were administered in Boston, she never appeared to have any contact with these men, typified by Mayor "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald. During their leadership, corruption became so widespread that in 1908 Edward Filene and his Good Government Association recruited Lincoln Steffens to investigate and recommend solutions.³³ Justin Kaplan, Steffen's biographer, described the reaction of the Boston Brahmins:

Frightened and outnumbered by the Irish, who were already so established at city hall that they could afford to feud among themselves for power, the Yankees found comfort in fitful reform movements and in a cultural life that had become merely Hubbish. The official culture professed classical Christian ideals; politics and business were something else together. "Boston has carried the practice of hypocrisy to the nth degree of refinement, grace and failure," Steffens was to write. "New England is dying of hypocrisy." (167)

This charge of hypocrisy should not be levelled against Annie Fields. While she was not involved in grass roots aspects of Boston politics, she often wrote letters to the editors of the newspapers and published articles in journals criticizing government policies regarding help for the poor. Contrary to Justin Kaplan's opinion, Annie not only *professed*, but sincerely *believed* in those Christian ideals which applied to her charitable endeavors. As Judith Roman posits, one of the reasons Annie opposed out-door relief was "the widespread belief that it was the Christian--not civic--duty of each person who could afford to do so to give money for those less fortunate" (86). A charge of hypocrisy is unfair to people like Annie Fields, Robert Treat Paine, Mary Greenwood Lodge, and the other Bostonians who were devoted to philanthropy. Their reform movement was not "fitful"; it reflected time, energy, and money given with sincerity.

Van Wyck Brooks, whose understanding of New England was far greater than Steffens', also described New England as dying in the nineties, but not of hypocrisy: "The impulse

that had characterized it seemed to be exhausted, and its mood was sad, relaxed and reminiscent" (Indian Summer 408).

He continues:

The Boston mind appeared to have lost its force. It was yielding, inch by inch, to the Catholic Irish; and the time was approaching when a Catholic Irish mayor of Boston was to say that the New England of the Puritans was as dead as Caesar...It was in the nature of things that the Yankees resented the Irish, but they resented their own impuissance more. They could present no equal counterforce; they could not hold up their end any longer. They saw their glory vanishing before the invaders.

(412-413)

Nevertheless, Brooks did not view the situation as completely hopeless, particularly among the old aristocrats: "the older were the bolder in Boston, as elsewhere; and the older and bolder they were the less inclined to think the world was going to the dogs. They were tough enough to know that the good was tough; and, like all true aristocrats, they believed in their country, if only because their country included themselves" (410). Brooks provides a rationale for the way Annie lived in the face of the changes which were occurring around her. If she appeared dissociated from the nitty-gritty of city politics, including the rise of the Irish to power, it was because the world of politics was not a traditional involvement for women in her position. In this she demonstrates her nineteenth-century self: "Like most women of her class and her time, she would never risk seeming unwomanly"

(Gollin 157). Instead of politics, she chose a career dedicated to philanthropy, accomplishing her goals in ways in which she was comfortable. Her methods, which included writing a constant stream of letters to Robert Paine about the management of the Associated Charities, submitting numerous articles to the press about the value of visiting among the poor, using her influence with her moneyed friends on the East coast in raising money for Tuskegee, proved to be rewarding and effective.

Despite her sadness over the lingering illness of Sarah Orne Jewett, Annie Fields' enthusiasm for her life and her work never faltered nor did her gift of sympathy ever diminish. Her involvement with the Associated Charities and other philanthropies endured until her death. In Manchester-by-the-Sea and at 148 Charles Street she continued to welcome aspiring authors as well as old friends. Correspondence from Annie to Bliss Perry, editor of Atlantic from 1899 to 1909, shows her lasting interest in young authors and her delight in retaining her reputation as a literary hostess:

A young lady and a writer of stories, Miss Anne Douglas Sedgwick of London, has brought letters to me. She is coming for a cup of tea tomorrow at five o'clock. Pray come to my assistance if possible! She has written the "Confounding of Camelia" which readers call very good; also "The Rescue" in the Century. I wish Mrs. Perry were near enough, but you can make your "visite de digestion" for both! When young ladies hope to see "literary Boston" we

remember that only re-incarnation could answer their demand: nevertheless we may be social enough together and Cambridge offers much!³⁴

Although Annie became frail physically, her mind remained alert. The language of her will and the specificity of her bequests indicate that in a time when widows often left the management of business affairs to lawyers or male relatives, she was determined to retain a position of power. In legal papers pertaining to her estate, she made specific bequests of money, property, and personal items which indicate how her empathy for her friends never waned. In addition to the forty thousand dollars she left to the Associated Charities, she made provisions for personal gifts such as the bust of Keats for her "dear friend Willa Seibert Cather," a bust of Tennyson for William Dean Howells and a photograph of Mrs. Siddons for Mildred Howells "in token of our life long friendship." The trust fund for one of her servants and a gift of four thousand dollars to Louise Guiney, who was ill and living in Italy, betoken her generosity. Not surprisingly, she also included instructions for her funeral: "If I die in Charles Street, let the last services be called a few moments before sunsetting while there is still light enough to read from the great poets on death and immortality as well as from the Bible--no singing."³⁵

Henry James observed: "Mrs. Fields was to survive her husband for many years and was to flourish as a copious

second volume" (Mr. and Mrs. James T. Fields 29). His judgment was correct. The years from 1870 to her death in 1915 were the years in which Annie Fields matured and grew, the years in which she bridged two worlds. Her life at this time was characterized, as always, by her gift of sympathy, but it also reflected a growing spirit of independence, a new emphasis in her writing career as an author of memoirs, and a continuing commitment to philanthropy. She was a woman with the power to mold her own life and pursue her interests, a woman who honored the traditions of the Victorian Age but also went beyond them. She was successful in her dual role of beloved wife and New Woman because she was so responsive to the changing social climate of her time. Earlier she had been James' partner; then Sarah Jewett's, but gradually she became responsible to and for herself alone. Although, in her mind, she was always Mrs. James T. Fields, that perception only enhanced her confidence; it did not prevent her from establishing and pursuing her own goals and becoming, in many ways, a New Woman.

Notes

1. Although 1820 to 1865 has been described as the years when the "cult of true womanhood" flourished (Welter 21), the short stories of Rose Terry Cooke (1827-92) and Mary Wilkins Freeman (1852-1930) indicate that there were women who were questioning their status even during those years.

2. Judith Roman has written that Annie "could mask her disappointment at the indifferent reception her poetry had received by telling herself that philanthropy was intrinsically suitable for a woman and more worthy of her energy" (75).

3. Address by Annie Fields. No date. Fields Addenda Box 1. Huntington Library, San Marino.

4. Memorial to Annie Fields by the Board of Directors of the Associated Charities, 1915. Houghton Library, Cambridge.

5. Annie Fields. "Systematic Visiting Among the Poor." Fields Addenda, Box 5, Huntington Library, San Marino.

No author is given, but the article ends: "The names of any persons who wish to become co-operative visitors will be gratefully received at 129 Vernon Street, 148 Charles Street, or at Room 48 Chardon Street Bureau, every Tuesday." Since it is in the Fields Addenda and since her address is included, I am assuming it was written by Annie Fields.

6. Letter to the Editor: "Out-door Aid For The Poor." Boston Herald. 14 August 1888. From Fields' Addenda Box 11, Huntington Library, San Marino.

7. Fields, Annie. Speech for Charity. Fields Addenda Box 5. Huntington Library, San Marino.

8. The obituary notice (31 December 31 1889) of Mary Greenwood Lodge reads:

"...When both her little children had died, leaving her childless and alone, and her cup of sorrow brimmed over, she caused it to flow ever afterward in channels of love and healing for all those who suffer and are bereaved...Her easy and generous nature made her wise labors for the Associated Charities the more remarkable...A touch of the warm South was in her veins, inherited from her mother, and also an inheritance of Hebrew blood, the parent of much greatness in every age. These two elements, crossed by the lofty piety of New England Unitarianism of the time of her father and of Dr. Channing gave a peculiar grace and impulse to her character."

Fields Addenda Box 11. The Huntington Library, San Marino.

9. "Visitors' Rules". Fields Addenda, Box 5. The Huntington Library, San Marino.
10. Memorial to Annie Fields by The Associated Charities of Boston, 1915. Houghton Library, Cambridge.
11. Here are just two examples of Annie's letters to Robert Treat Paine. In February 1894 she said: "I am sure all the relief of this winter will be a dead loss unless a new light and new methods are evolved from it; but I do not wish to try to say this or to name it said in public any further than has already been tried unsuccessfully." (Annie Fields, letter to Robert Treat Paine, 5 February 1894, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston)
In March she wrote: "I want to make a strong plea that an attempt may be made to cause the overseers work to be changed and to cover the ground...If the directors will not move, if they are not willing even to try to see what a change will effect, why then we must have a new understanding." (Annie Fields, letter to Robert Treat Paine, March 1894, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston)
12. Annie Fields, letter to Robert Treat Paine, 28 March 1884, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
13. A letter to Mr. [S.S.] McClure, also implies Annie's feminist sentiments: "Thank you for your kind letter but I fear I have nothing for your syndicate column for women."
Annie Fields, letter to Mr. Mc Clure, 5 September N.D., University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville.
14. Dr. E. Gould, letter to Robert Treat Paine, 16 December 1894. Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
15. Annie Fields, letter to Robert Treat Paine, 8 December 1894, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
16. Booker T. Washington, letter to Annie Fields, 30 September 1897, Huntington Library, San Marino.
17. Booker T. Washington, letter to Annie Fields, 28 August 189?, Huntington Library, San Marino.
18. Booker T. Washington, letter to Annie Fields, 2 March 1901, Huntington Library, San Marino.
19. Booker T. Washington, letter to Annie Fields, 25 June 1901, Huntington Library, San Marino.
20. Booker T. Washington, letter to Annie Fields, 6 July 1902, Huntington Library, San Marino.
21. George Bartol, letter to Annie Fields, 25 February 1901, Huntington Library, San Marino.

22. Philip W. Moen, letter to Annie Fields, 25 February 1901, Huntington Library, San Marino.
23. H. Phipps, letter to Annie Fields, 16 March 1901, Huntington Library, San Marino.
24. Henry Wick, letter to Annie Fields, 26 February 1901, Huntington Library, San Marino.
25. Booker T. Washington, letter to Annie Fields, 11 March 1901, Huntington Library, San Marino.
26. Booker T. Washington, letter to Annie Fields, 23 March 1901, Colby College, Waterville, Maine.
27. I wrote to Tuskegee Institute twice asking if they had any correspondence between Annie Fields and Booker T. Washington, and I did not receive a reply.
28. Ray Billington writes: "Late in 1861 Union forces occupied a group of coastal islands, including Port Royal and St. Helena, strategically situated between Charleston and Savannah. Left behind by the fleeing plantation masters were rich cotton fields and thousands of illiterate and helpless slaves. To government officials and Northern reformers this seemed a golden opportunity to demonstrate that ex-slaves could function as free citizens...the plantations were placed under Northern superintendents, and an extensive program of educational, medical, and material aid to the freedmen was inaugurated (Notable American Women 96).
29. Nellie McKay notes: "Interestingly, although by November 1862, hundreds of white teachers from the North, many of them women, were in the South to begin the work of preparing the former slaves for their roles as free people, the Boston Educational Commission denied Forten permission to participate in the project on the basis of her sex. Fortunately, the Philadelphia Port Royal Relief Association accepted her application." (361)
30. Nellie McKay, "Charlotte L. Forten Grimké (1837-1914): Essayist, educator, translator, diarist," Notable Black American Women, ed. Jessie Smith (Detroit: Gale Research, 1992) 358-364.
31. In an effort to find out about Jewish life in Boston during the nineteenth-century I contacted the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, Ohio, Brandeis University, and the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. I also referred to Jewish American History and Culture: An Encyclopedia and several biographies of Louis Brandeis (see Bibliography). I have discovered that there is not much information on this subject.
32. Both these authors have been accused of portraying Jewish characters in their novels in unflattering ways.

33. Interestingly, I found no references to Annie Fields' acquaintance with Steffens, although he knew her friends William James and President Eliot of Harvard.

34. Annie Fields, letter to Bliss Perry, N.D. (probably 1905), Houghton Library, Cambridge.

In another letter she said:

My dear Mr. Perry: You will receive a manuscript (unheard of today!) from a young lady, Miss Ladd; I hope you may see her in person. She wants your opinion of her book! I leave her to your judgement--not messy--you will observe! She is an ambitious young creature and believes in herself as a sculptor, so the book is not her only tentacle towards fame. But it will be a true kindness to let her get a peek at her book from your point of view.

I wish I could take your time to half tell you how absolutely excellent your magazine seems to me. I have read almost every word.

Annie Fields, letter to Bliss Perry, 25 September 1905, Houghton Library, Cambridge.

35. Fields, Annie. A.N.s., Boston 191?. Houghton Library, Cambridge.

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