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Letter, Jane Grey Swisshelm to unknown [1882]

Jane Grey Swisshelm

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I do not want Zo to know that I intend to live here. It would be a great sorrow to her & every sorrow brings on one of those dreadful spells of illness. She will gradually get used to my absence & be happier without me. Of course I know that my case is in the line of development. The daughters must educate the mothers up to new standards, & it is so sweet to feel their dear hands that we are quite willing to be beaten into shape like a pillow or kneaded & rolled & cut out like a batch of cookies. If it were my business in life to be nicer I'd enjoy my education but I dare not spend my time in the etiquette infant class. While there were but us two, it was not so much matter that I failed to get my lessons & I did not strain my attention on them; but now it is different & I'd always feel like a bull in a china shop, & be afraid to move or, for a moment, forget my surroundings, trot (MS illegible), in shaking off the flies, I might reduce someones Dresden China sensibilities to undashing (MS illegible). "Ernest is so sensitive" & all his people are so sensitive & there are so many properties & (MS illegible) that I'd tire in a care to get away from them. You know it would be too dreadful if I ever forgot that dignity & property which becomes the mother of Mrs Ernest L. Allen & it was too funny to go calling & be announced as Mrs Allen and another lady, by the servant who took the names upstairs. Yet it is all right that she should cultivate Ernest's sense of responsibility & (MS illegible) to his importance in the world. The union will be perfect without any attempt to make it three ply. He is just & generous & I am only too happy that she has such a protection, for alone she would be as defenseless as an oyster without a shell. She is well provided for & I am free to work. You will come & spend a summer or winter with me & see Mrs Hawkins if you, but I do not, want to see her or any of her family. The fewer sisters I have the better, have no time to spend with people who have no higher aim in life than to hoard money & embroider towels. I go to the city in the morning - this is Thursday 6.50 P.M. - to see if the arrangements are all right for my return on Sunday afternoon. I have written & reserved it (MS illegible) Saturday 7 P.M. am expecting Harry to stay a week.

Love to Will & Emily & Mr (MS illegible) also to Charlie. Why does not Gib go to N.C1 as he was to do. How are they & I do hope he has not met with misfortune.

Your sister-

J.G.S.