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Letter, Jane Grey Swisshelm to Mary Mitchell [May 23, 1883]

Jane Grey Swisshelm

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Jane Grey Swisshelm to Mary A. Mitchell, May 23, 1883.

[Mitchell MSS. -- A.L.S.]

Chicago May 23, 83

My Dear Niece

I wish you w'd get your photo taken in the dress you intended to wear last New Years -- get it taken life size -- two copies unfinished unmounted to be painted in oil. I have been painting some the last summer & winter & have succeeded so well that Zo insists I must do a picture for your Mother. No other one would please her so well as one of yours in that dress & I want one for myself. Do not be affraid [sic] I shall make a caricature or daub, for if it is not good Zo will burn it. I am finishing an English Millais, the little maiden with her hands between her knees, had done the face & hair before Zo left & she thought it beautiful. That [is] if I colored without spoiling it. The position was doubtful & I set her down for certain. I want your portrait in color & can only get it by painting it. An artist will know how to take it & I can mount it. Do not disappoint me & get one for your mother. Earnest had business in Denver & took Zo with him. They started Tuesday week stopped over in Kansas City, Topeka & Atchison & reached Denver on Sunday evening. I have been kept in my room since Monday by an attempt to ride old Boreas without a broom. He resented the omission, grew obstreperous & dropped me on the bosom of Mother Earth at a point where it is covered with a plank-sidewalk corset & I was rather shaken up. i.e. going to the next door neighbor's late Monday evening, just as I reached the top step the wind lifted me carried several feet & dropped me on the side walk. Dr. Kelly, my old hospital friend,

has been tending me. Mrs Rodman & Mrs Buller were here yesterday
 Had a postal from Zo this morning, they expected to leave Denver
 on the 23 for Georgetown had seen Alexander's Mrs A & 2 of the
 boys expect to come East & live in Harrisburg where she has a rich
 brother-in-law. If Jen goes to St. Cloud this summer Zo will go
 too & will not come to Swissvale. I's agreed, beefsteak is high
 at Swissvale & Zo wants "to be with Charlie & Uncle Harry." Then
 if I am alone I can work. Do get those photos for me. For sea
 travel you ought to get a long close ulster of cotton canvass such
 as sailors wear have it made with a hood, nothing else turns the
 oceanwind & enables one to stay on deck. To sit at the stern &
 watch the waves made by the ship is the one thing for which it is
 worth while to cross, & to be driven in by the cold & spray is an
 agrevation [sic]. Nothing but canvass will keep out the July
 cold & it enables sailors to brave all weather. Can you not
 ar[r]ange to come to Swissvale on your way by stopping from one
 day to another? If not I might be at the Pittsburg[h] depot & see
 you for half an hour.

Love & congratulations to Henry & be sure to get the photos
 life size.

With all best wishes for your wellfare [sic]

I am your

Aunt

Jane Grey Swisshelm

[Addressed:] Miss Mary Mitchell
 Care Gen. H. Z. Mitchell
 St. Cloud Minn.