

8

Accommodation

In January of 1888 Alice Palmer opened a new chapter in her life. She was no longer a college president, nor was she ever again to be. But marriage did not change her position as the leading woman in American higher education, a position that was not to be challenged until late in the century by M. Carey Thomas, who became president of Bryn Mawr in 1894. Nor was her visibility dimmed in the world of the professions. Quite possibly Alice Freeman Palmer's stature as an educator was enhanced rather than diminished by her marriage.

Media attention to the wedding and the new aura that came with joining the Cambridge establishment contributed to her prestige. She was a well-known, attractive lady who was watched by the press. She did not disappear from view. As William Gardner Hale stated at her memorial service, "Alice Freeman Palmer was greater than Alice Freeman . . . no more perfect realization of the true accord of spirit, and of accordant aims in the service of others, can ever have been seen." And without marriage Wellesley's princess "would not have become all that she was." ¹ She herself was not quite so certain of her position, especially in the early years of her marriage. The immediate reality of her life was that the priorities between marriage and professional interests posed serious questions.

1

For almost all middle-class women of Alice Freeman Palmer's generation, combining marriage and a career was an impossibility. Women could pursue careers as long as they were single. Once married, although their interests and contributions, as for Palmer, changed little, they could no longer accept a salary in exchange for their professional services because that implied unacceptable priorities in terms of obligations, that job rather than husband and home came first. ² In theory the Palmers saw themselves as free of such hidebound Victorian constraints, and after her marriage Alice continued to exchange professional services for money with considerable consistency. What is more, her earnings provided an important component in the Palmers' standard of living. In this Palmer foreshadowed the next generation of professional women, several of whom, including her surrogate daughter, Lucy Sprague Mitchell, managed, with difficulty, to combine professional careers, marriage, and motherhood. ³ For the Palmers, however, the true determinant of Alice's priorities was psychological rather than financial. She needed a professional outlet, and George was unable to accept any arrangement other than that husband and home come first.

For Alice this ordering of her life at first was easy. She was exhausted. Her professional responsibilities had literally left her with no physical reserves, and she needed a rest. Also she had never before had a home of her own, and nest building had its attractions; putting together pretty new wedding presents and old favorites in an environment that she could control was a seductive process. A glamorous new social world, Cambridge and Boston at their most glittering,

opened for her, and Alice was always a social animal. She and George also were planning his sabbatical year in Europe, her first trip to the continent and her first extended stay abroad. She was content with her new lot and was more than enough occupied.

The Palmer's first home was a small furnished house on the corner of Broadway and Prescott Streets in Cambridge just a block from the Harvard Yard. The rent was a princely \$1,000 a year, nearly a third of their income, but apparently not considered high for Cambridge. [4](#) They kept a single servant who came with the house, and according to George, "Study was thrown to the winds; we devoted ourselves to resting, to becoming better acquainted with each other and with neighbors." [5](#) He described a busy social life of dinners and teas, inaugurated by President Eliot's gala faculty reception, afternoon calls (George recorded 341 in the course of a single season), and Monday open houses at which the Wellesley community was invited to join Alice Palmer's new Cambridge friends. [6](#) However, the details of their lives as chronicled in their letters, while confirming their rich social life, show that George continued to devote much of his time to professional duties, and that there was little time for "resting."

George Palmer avidly pursued his professional concerns, but he also shared management of the household. Although he described Alice as "the skillful mistress of her household," and credited her with finding servants, managing the budget, planning interesting delicious meals, and decorating their rooms, their correspondence belies him. [7](#) He was the one who more closely applied himself to these tasks. He was as capable as Alice of running their ménage, perhaps more so, and he probably had higher standards, at least when it came to food. Also she was absent a great deal, especially during the first years of their marriage. He filled the gap, but he also shared responsibility when she was home. He arranged for repair of the furnaces, had the double windows removed and put on, and managed to acquire a supply of fresh butter from the Boxford farm. He wrote on one occasion: "My domestic report today is 13 tumblers of grape jelly-- with a very fair prospect of hardness--and five quart bottles of whole peaches. . . . You sometimes run a college and I a kitchen, and again I appear as a director of youth and you of servants. It makes our partnership a rich one that each can comprehend and even perform the other's tasks." [8](#)

Housekeeping chores cannot have been onerous for Alice, but the Palmers, not immune to the usual Boston prejudices, saw their Irish servant Annie as a trial, requiring constant vigilance to get her to listen carefully for the bell and "attend to the door in a tidy dress." [9](#) She more "steadily looked like a scarecrow" and "cooked in the middling manner that destroys appetite." [10](#) The Palmers eventually employed servants directly from Scotland, an arrangement they found much more satisfactory, although they also engaged an African- American couple in the late 1890s. But Irish Annie's shortcomings did not destroy Alice's new-found joy in housewifery. She referred constantly to our "pretty house." She seemed truly to enjoy being mistress in her own domain rather than trying to carve for herself a tiny semi-private niche while juggling the myriad demands of the Wellesley community.

George was busy with academic responsibilities and receiving increasing attention as a significant force on the larger academic scene. G. Stanley Hall, putting together his new and innovative Clark University at Worcester, Massachusetts, consulted him over staffing and programs. George was offered the chancellorship of Kansas State College, easily refused. And he was an influential voice at faculty meetings of Harvard College and frequently consulted by

President Eliot. There were also disappointments. His new translation of the *Odyssey* failed to find a publisher that year. He confided in Alice about his work, and she felt that she shared it with him.

2

During the first six months of their marriage, Alice Palmer had few new professional responsibilities, but she observed and assisted the progress of the women's Annex (eventually to become Radcliffe College), then an anomalous adjunct to Harvard College where a few women struggled to obtain instruction. [11](#) George, who had always taken an interest in the Annex, taught there, and the welfare of Annex women became one of Alice's ongoing, self-assumed responsibilities. She continued active in Collegiate Alumnae circles, and she gave a great many informal talks before women's groups, mostly church-related.

But it was Wellesley that provided the greatest challenge to her new attachment to home and husband. She continued to watch over Wellesley and its progress with the attention and concern of a devoted mother. She was nominated to the board of trustees at the same meeting at which her resignation as president was accepted. [12](#) On February 21st when a member of the executive committee submitted his resignation, it was accepted immediately "in order to secure the services of Mrs. Palmer on that body." [13](#)

The trustees and their business were familiar territory. Ever since her elevation to the presidency in 1881, she had been attending their meetings, and the board was accustomed to her leadership and advice. President Shafer continued the practice President Freeman had initiated, participating in all board meetings. But no one, including Alice Palmer, seems to have been concerned that Alice Freeman Palmer's presence on the board presented any conflict of interest or possible interference with Shafer's prerogatives. Instead, Palmer saw it as her duty to be as active as possible. Although she would leave the country in a few months, she continued to shape the composition of the board itself, urging the election of Horace Scudder, one of her champions, as a trustee, and serving as a nominating committee member in the spring. [14](#) Against Pauline Durant's strong opposition, she favored a tuition increase to help combat the growing financial crisis. [15](#) Even routine matters like the recruitment of Wellesley graduates as teachers by secondary school administrators were carefully scrutinized by Alice Palmer. [16](#) And in June she was the speaker at the commencement dinner. Alice Palmer was a hands-on ex-president.

She kept in close touch with both her former faculty colleagues and with members of the board of trustees. Both Palmers eagerly solicited news of college affairs and assessments of the college, and they were not above making use of gossip and student informants. Both manipulated and used every influence they could garner to control Wellesley and propel it in the directions they felt it should develop.



Alice Palmer soon after her marriage. (Courtesy of Wellesley College Archives.)

3

Alice Palmer also had leisure. Perhaps for the first time in years she had time to read novels. Train journeys, formerly devoted to Wellesley business correspondence, now were enriched by careful attention to the works of Robert Lewis Stevenson, Jane Austen, and Charlotte Brontë. *Shirley* delighted her and inspired her to wish she could write. [17](#) But other than letters, Alice was not much for writing. That ladylike occupation could never for her be a substitute for the active life. Paying the price of past neglect, she also spent long hours with the dentist. Their dog, Rex, Eben Horsford's gift, was much a part of their lives, joining them at the fireside and accompanying them on walks. Even his depredations to the spring flowers were accepted with amused tolerance.

Despite the relaxed pace and the simple satisfactions brought by playing a new, less demanding role, Alice Palmer's health was slow to mend. Her cough would not go away, interrupting her sleep, making it almost impossible for her to read aloud, a favorite Palmer pastime, and probably contributing to her failure to gain weight. Months more would pass before she felt really well.

In the spring of 1888, when Alice went to Saginaw for an extended visit with her family, she and George were first parted for any length of time since their marriage. Once he was Alice's husband, George seldom went to Saginaw. Most of her family visits were combined with speaking trips and in any case undertaken alone. George Palmer always professed both affection and respect for Alice's parents and family. He wrote: "I do not specifically send my love to your father and mother . . . because they are so generally in my thoughts. I believe I have a very genuine fondness for them, quite apart from what I feel for you." [18](#) But George protested too much. The Freemans clearly tried his patience. Their enthusiasms and causes and her father's politics, their constant ill health, and especially their endless demands on Alice's affections and attentions (especially during the early years of their marriage) irritated George Palmer in spite of himself. The Freemans demanded and got from Alice services that he felt he could not ask for himself, and he resented this. In the spring of 1888, despite Alice's persistent cough, her mother repeatedly asked her to read aloud to her. George was clearly angry and forbade it. [19](#) During her Saginaw visits, Alice would plant flowers, groom the garden, and even wallpapered the house, tasks her mother was no longer able to do, and that George believed Alice had not the strength to do either. [20](#)

This 1888 visit, however, found the Freeman family prosperous and in better health than they had been in many years. Her father was working regularly and looking much better, and the two doctors Freeman had acquired new offices. "The practice," she reported "is consistently good, and money matters grow easier daily. If they keep well, they will soon have the mortgages off." [21](#) This new Freeman prosperity was important to both George and Alice. With only one salary, their own budget was tight. Expenses had been and were to be heavy, and they watched every penny. For example, Alice had her dental work done in Saginaw, rather than Cambridge or Boston, because it would be cheaper. [22](#) Nonetheless they continued to be generous with family

members in real need, especially the two ministers, Fred Palmer and Charles Talmadge, who frequently received "luxury money" or help with insurance premiums. [23](#) George always felt himself fortunate to be able to live in a comfortable upper-class style and felt obligated to share his good fortune. As he once wrote to Alice, "I realize what joy wealth would bring me when I think how I could then put them, Fred and Mary and Ella, above want." [24](#)

Charles Talmadge, Ella's husband, was as restless as his father-in-law. His midlife decision to train for the ministry was followed later by a decision to pursue graduate studies and still later to transfer his denominational allegiance from the Methodists to the Congregationalists. This meant the Talmadges always needed money and frequently lived in the Palmer's Quincy Street house. They were not the only recipients of Palmer generosity. Several young relatives were educated by the Palmers, and as she left for Europe in 1888, Alice continued to worry about her family despite their being "much more contented and prosperous than in the old days. If only all will go well while we are so far away!" [25](#)

George's failure to accompany Alice to Saginaw was initially attributed to the tightness of money, and Alice's family felt bereft at his absence. "They all speak of you with so much affection and interest and longing that it quite goes to my heart to think we cannot come here together. We will, George, when we come home again [from Europe]." [26](#) They did not and the Freemans were never satisfied with the length of Alice's visits. "There is mourning every day in the family, because they [the remaining days] are so few. Poor father! I feel sorriest of all for him. He takes the absence very much to heart." [27](#) But her family had expressed similar feelings of deprivation when Alice was single and burdened with professional responsibilities. It was a continual tug, and one that no one, George or her family, made easier for her.

4

In many ways the relationship between George and Alice Palmer took shape during these first months of their marriage. George Palmer admired Alice Palmer in more than one way. He was much impressed with her reputation as an educator and certainly did not want marriage to jeopardize that reputation. He cherished her public position. He deeply appreciated her skills with people, even her oratorical gifts, which he shared, but rivalry over forensic talents was never at issue between them. And Alice admired George. He had read more widely, he was a better classical scholar by far, he was a Harvard professor, and most important, he was her protector. George looked after Alice, and Alice had never been looked after before. Her family, her students, and her trustees had all made demands on her. George made demands, but he cloaked them in tender concern for her welfare, and he saved her daily from one petty annoyance after another. George loved to manage, and in 1888 Alice had had managing up to the hilt. She was happy to relinquish decision-making for awhile.

Ever since the Palmers first met George had acted as Alice's protector, probably the first really adequate protector she had known in her life. Her father had often failed her. Her mother took more often than she gave. George looked after her, watched over her. This tells us much about why Alice was attracted to George, but it also tells us much about the expectations of the

Victorian female. Myth had it that women and children lived in the secure, nurturing environment of the sacrosanct protective home. But real life was not always that way. Fathers died or went off to medical school. The ancestral farm was exchanged for a series of temporary rented houses, the income that had seemed unfailing suddenly evaporated. The nineteenth-century American economy, while generally expanding, was highly volatile, and social and political protections against its ravages almost nil. The secure Victorian home was often its victim. Nonetheless middle-class nineteenth-century American females believed in the safe harbor of domesticity. They expected to find this haven somewhere, and Alice eventually found it with George.

It was not that Alice was incapable of taking charge of her own life. She could and did. Nor was it that she failed to enjoy the independence and authority that being her own woman had given her. But like all Victorian women the expectation of a protected, protective sanctuary was embedded in her very being, however overlaid by the capabilities and expectations of the New Woman. George also supervised her intellectual concerns. Many of the books Alice read were selected by George. All her life he would feel that her general education had been somewhat spotty and in need of nourishment. While he respected her administrative talents and her skill at interpersonal relations, he saw himself as the imposer of culture, the man of learning, who could introduce her to the deeper riches of western civilization.

After their marriage, George Palmer was the primary force that shaped the course of Alice Freeman's life, but she too made subtle changes in his life, even in his work. When they returned from Europe in 1889, she was quick to discover Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. When published in 1887 Bellamy's book was almost literally devoured by educated, concerned women who found in its utopian, if highly controlled, society an answer to the myriad and distressing problems of urbanization, industrialization, and rampant capitalism they saw growing uncontrolled around them. [28](#) Although usually she was not much concerned with politics, Alice read *Looking Backward* on a train trip to Saginaw and was much taken with it. Doubting a positive reaction from George, she wrote, "You will think the book a mere dreamer's fancy, but it is much more." [29](#)

George read it almost immediately, partly because he found his brother Fred and his wife also much impressed with the book. But as Alice had predicted, his initial reaction was contemptuous. "This is the form in which fairy stories still appeal to the people of our day. . . . I do not distrust the old order as much as this writer, nor have quite his confidence in the new. There seems to me too something cowardly in a novel's form as a method of appeal." [30](#) But he changed his mind as he read further, and he wrote the next day, "Perhaps my criticism of him for using the form of a novel was unjust," but, he added, "My fundamental doubts however about the whole system are not yet removed." [31](#) When he had finished the book, he willingly admitted, "It is a great book and will deservedly create quite a stir." [32](#) He gave Bellamy's ideas a prominent place in his ethics course that fall.

In late June 1888, the Palmers sailed for England on the *Ethiopia*. They spent the summer in England and the fall in Paris, where they lived simply, avoiding tourist resorts, staying in hotels only briefly before renting small furnished lodgings. Usually there were three bedrooms, parlor, dining room and kitchen, and they engaged a local, non-English speaking servant who did the cooking and marketing. George was the house hunter and arranger who tapped the concierge's connections to find domestic help. [33](#) This was a quiet, economical, non-stressful interlude, replete with the kind of comfortable leisure Alice had never experienced before. The Palmers walked a great deal, perfected their French, and spent many hours in museums, exploring the bookstalls, or taking brief excursions into the countryside, a pattern they were to follow on subsequent trips abroad.

Katharine Coman, one of Alice's young Wellesley colleagues, joined them for part of their Paris stay on December 10th, and the three set out together for Germany. They stopped first at Tübingen where George had been a student, and then spent Christmas in a Munich pension where their landlady had a "great, gorgeous Christmas tree" and "had baked Christmas cakes by the thousand literally, and gave us each great platefuls to carry to our rooms." [34](#) But Bavarian coziness could not banish the damp, dark German winter. Alice's health, still precarious, rapidly deteriorated, and George decided they must head south for Venice's milder climate.

Alice fell in love with Venice. She longed "to stay here in beautiful Venice so much that I hope the salt air will be warm enough, and that we may live here a couple of months." [35](#) They stayed in a palazzo with sunny windows overlooking the sea and "the curious careless life of the narrow streets." [36](#) She saw Venice as "a kind of dream." [37](#) She loved the gondolas, and she and George would "float and dream up and down in the warm sun." [38](#) They reviewed Italian, read Dante, and followed the poet in his wanderings about the Lombard plain, enjoying what she saw as "a lovely feast," and she found herself daily growing stronger in mind and body. [39](#) Despite her hope that they could stay in Venice a couple of months, after four weeks they moved on to Florence, Rome, and then Naples. In Rome, they met a Cornell Latin professor, William G. Hale, and his wife, also on sabbatical and traveling with their two small children and an English nurse. They arranged to accompany the Hales to Greece in the spring. [40](#) Thus began a friendship that was to last many years. But meanwhile they explored Naples where once more they lodged near the water "with the uproar of the rain and wind and sea just under our windows." [41](#) The southern metropolis proved too disorderly for them, however. Instead Alice was entranced with "wandering up and down the deserted streets" of Pompeii, "in and out of the pathetic empty houses with their pretty colors and graceful figures and the feeling everywhere of a recent disaster demanding fresh mourning." [42](#)

They sailed for Greece from Brindisi on April 14th, stopping at Patras for an excursion to Olympia, then on to Sparta, Argos, Mycenae, Corinth, and Delphi. On the Greek excursion Hale and Palmer took several strenuous side trips without the women and children. And in early May the Palmers headed north via Constantinople for Vienna and then to Berlin. [43](#) At this point, George pursued his professional studies more vigilantly. They also spent several days in Leipsig buying books for his library. Allowing themselves a month for further shopping and final sightseeing in London and Paris, they sailed on the Cunard Line's *Caphalonia* on August 15th.

[44](#)

The glorious journey was over. Eben Horsford's generous wedding gift had been put to very good use indeed. George had relieved Alice of most responsibility while traveling and made all living and travel arrangements. They seldom went out in the evening and usually spent their mornings at home writing letters. It was a leisurely trip. Despite her exposure to a European wonderland, Alice had had time to rest, and her health had improved as the spring unfolded. She returned to Cambridge more robust than she had been since her early undergraduate days and she had gained weight at last. Her family was delighted. "Aunt Sarah said she never had expected to see me looking so strong in all my life, and Father thinks his highest ambitions are fulfilled. Mother laughs at me, and threatens me with enormous size when I am fifty. I am afraid she thinks this state less becoming than the former. Certainly, I cannot be said to `look delicate.'" [45](#)

Years later George reminisced about the first European trip, as they planned a second continental tour.

Oh the luxury of the long days together on the Grand Canal, the Rue Galilee and Munich! We trained ourselves there in love, and the busy years since have shown that we learned our lesson well. That we might wake tomorrow at nine, in our parallel coffin beds, and hear the water slapping on the house and the gondoliers quarrelling! And then we would lie and talk of plans for the future and perhaps I would cross into your bed, and by and by the coffee and the little maid, and then the morning letters, the black book, and walk across the piazza, and perhaps the supper at Eumans in the Trinita. Golden days! which while surrounding us with outward splendors perpetually revealed the sufficiency of the twin life within. Some day we will renew them. Once more before we die we will buy nougat cones at the corner of the Rue Galilee. [46](#)

And they did!

This interlude between Alice Freeman Palmer's Wellesley presidency, and the Palmers' return from Europe was a happy period in Alice Freeman Palmer's life. George Palmer painted an idyllic picture: "whoever saw her . . . remarked in her new buoyancy and her wider power." [47](#) And she certainly was content. Her daily cares and responsibilities had been substantially reduced, her health slowly improved, she was busy, but not too busy, with pleasant and interesting pursuits. And she was in love, deeply in love, with a man she found intellectually stimulating who shared his concerns, his work, his friends with her in a very real way and was equally eager to share her professional interests and tasks. Theirs was in every sense a shared, companionable life.

6

The Palmer marriage was going well, but the dilemma had not really been resolved, and tensions were inevitable. Not until their return from Europe, when they faced life in earnest as a married couple, would they seriously attempt to find a resolution.

The plan must have been devised during the European months or just after the Palmers' return to the United States. The solution was straightforward. Alice was to ensure her place in the wider educational world, not by returning to college administration, although very soon she did just that, but by continuing to expand her active contributions to Wellesley, Collegiate Alumnae, and other volunteer educational activities. She was to supplement this more or less normal pattern for married women through a paid lecture series and writing for popular consumption on educational policy.

Although the Palmers were not yet as prosperous as they would become a few years hence, George's salary was raised to \$4,500 as of September of 1888, and they had returned from Europe with no debts. [48](#) Additional income, although welcome and frequently needed, was not the primary motive for what proved to be an exhausting undertaking. Instead the plan was clearly designed to ensure Alice Freeman Palmer's public position in the professional world, despite the loss of her institutional connection; in short, her career as a leading educator would continue.

George wrote to Alice at the end of her first year on the road: "I do not regret your year, though I believe since Oct. 1 just a quarter of it has been spent away from Cambridge, mostly without me. . . . It was of consequence to make a public place for yourself now that the old eminence of Wellesley is removed. This place has been won." And he added that "I do not approve of your becoming a mere housebody; only of making that first." [49](#)

A career plan for Alice was carefully laid out, a conscious strategy designed to preserve her presence on the national educational stage when she no longer retained an obvious institutional base. This was not the strategy of a reformer taking to the hustings to further her crusade. She was not simply lending her talents to a good cause, as her mother had always done. She was finding a proper paid niche for her professional skills, and pursuing her career in women's higher education. Although he continued to stipulate that home come first, George Palmer had made a substantial concession, and I suspect it was George's strategy, designed and planned to disrupt his life as little as possible. She did not protest. Alice Palmer did not profess an ideology around which she could shape her life. Her commitments were to people and pragmatic goals rather than to abstract principles. Because she had not embraced feminist aims or clearly thought them through, it was easier for George to shape the pattern her life would take.

Alice Freeman Palmer was an old hand at speech-making, but she had never spoken for money before her spring lecture tour in 1890. In her diary she recorded that she was "to speak at Indianapolis and elsewhere for money. *First Time!*" [50](#) Rather than attach herself to a professional lecture bureau, she arranged her engagements herself. As she was to do frequently, she combined her first tour with a visit to her family in Saginaw, Michigan, and a stay of several days at her alma mater in Ann Arbor to attend the meetings of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae. At both places, just as she had been doing all her adult life, she spoke a number of times without charge.

Her Ann Arbor sojourn was a sentimental orgy, as well as a chance to practice one of her planned lectures. "Eight `Wellesley girls' were at the station to meet me and brought me to this charming old house where old friends were standing on the wide porch to meet me. . . . How those blessed girls do wrap my world in with their thoughtful love!" She continued: "The

Alumnae were in session all the morning with business relating to Fellowships, and College Endowments, I had to speak often, being appealed to at every turn." [51](#) In the afternoon she made the major address, "Social Life in Colleges." She "was glad to speak on a subject of so much importance, and I was received with the greatest warmth. . . . I do not take any two successive meals in the same house, but vibrate from one Professor's table to another." [52](#)

Adored, honored, feted, and she loved every minute of it, but she reassured George: "I love this place, but I keep thinking how poor I should be if I couldn't go away from it all to your arms. I am *so glad* that I wasn't persuaded to marry anybody until you asked me." [53](#) Throughout the tour Alice Palmer bounced back and forth between sheer joy at being the center of public attention, important again in her own right, and her loyalty to her marital commitments. One time when she was in Saginaw, she spoke at the opening exercises of the high school, and told George: "Though it would be great fun to try it all over again. I'd rather be your wife . . . than any other dignitary I can think of." [54](#) And the previous September when she passed through Wellesley, she had written him:

I would not go back to the old days, sweetheart. As I passed along the familiar way last week, just when, ordinarily, I should have gone to the waiting work, and my train at last dashed by the station and the college towers in the distance, my sensations were too mixed for analysis. Yet there was no place in them for regret that my train did not leave me there. You are better dear than any college, to be your wife, a higher place than "The Princess" held in the days before you came, and made her a queen. [55](#)

All through the year that presumably produced a resolution to the dilemma, she was torn in two directions. She found the applause, the receptions, and being constantly asked for advice on substantive matters very heady stuff, but at the same time she had to believe that her marriage was more important to her. She eagerly reestablished ties with the women's network that had sustained her when she was single, the college friends, the Wellesley graduates, the former colleagues that warmly welcomed her wherever she went. Part of her resisted letting these journeys on her own come to an end. Part of her wished to be home in Massachusetts with her husband.

George Palmer experienced his own ambivalences. Part of the time he was fully cognizant of the sacrifices she had made. "How much you have given up for me! I vowed when I took you you should never regret it; but I don't keep my vows very well or at least not show that I meant to." [56](#) But on other occasions he thought the sacrifice he was making to permit her to realize herself professionally was too great. When informed she had accepted still another speaking engagement he complained: "You said you were to be at home on June 7. . . . Of course I have been calculating on a happy Sunday together after this barbaric absence. It cannot be you have agreed to prolong it three days in order that these persons may make money and renown out of you." [57](#)

Actually she did not return home until June 10th, prolonging her stay in the New York area. [58](#) She did not give in to his protests, but when the end of her tour was in sight, she wrote her husband: "One thing is certain--this year ends my public speaking career." [59](#) It did not. Both Palmers had speaking engagements at Chautauqua that summer, and she went off on another

extended speaking tour the following winter. They quarreled occasionally about her obligations. George wrote: "You seem very near me today because I see now where I was wrong in our little clash--when I could have saved its beginning." [60](#) And he continued to complain: "You are very busy; and I am not unused to waiting for those fragments of you which others leave." [61](#) But at least twice a year she continued to set out on an extended lecture circuit and meanwhile took engagements closer to home.

Alice Freeman Palmer was very successful as a public speaker. She was much in demand for commencement addresses and other educational commemorations. By present day standards, the fees she received were not generous, but in June of 1891 she earned \$150, "that important substance for which I came," for an address in St. Louis, [62](#) and ten speeches on her 1892 spring tour realized over \$800. [63](#) A series of lectures at Chautauqua in the summer, where George also lectured, was usually one part of the year's work. Her addresses were always received enthusiastically. One observer suggested that only Phillip Brooks rivalled her as a speech maker. J. Laurence Laughlin commented on her "flexible, endearing voice," "her tactful, persuasive, brilliant" presentation. [64](#) Wherever she spoke on her lecture tours she was acclaimed. In Minneapolis, "eight different societies have sent me boxes of flowers today" and "the paper here had sketches of me in every morning's issue for a week." [65](#) While she usually spoke about women's education, for example "Phases of College Life" or "Why Go to College," she broadened her repertoire in the late 1890s. In 1901 she offered lectures on "The Education of Nature" and "Whittier's Homes and Haunts." [66](#)

The publications projected as another avenue of public exposure went less well. Alice Freeman Palmer managed during her lifetime to publish only a few articles and one brief educational pamphlet, *Why Go to College*, a distillation of her addresses on the education of women. [67](#) Published in 1897, it sold well enough, but sitting at a desk, putting her thoughts on paper, was not Alice Freeman Palmer's professional style, and she could never force herself to concentrate on producing the written word. Perhaps she liked applause too much.

Despite this failure, the campaign to retain Alice Freeman Palmer's position as a leader in higher education was a success. George Palmer believed that "the shelter of a home had enlarged her scope. From special labor in a particular field she advanced to general influence in the whole field of girls' education." [68](#) The "shelter of the home" was important in achieving this result only in that it undoubtedly was a major factor in restoring her health and may well have saved her life. But Palmer correctly assessed what happened to Alice Freeman Palmer's position in American education. Certainly it was enlarged and broadened after her marriage.

Perhaps symbolic of the end of one professional career for Alice Freeman and the beginning of another for Alice Palmer was the casting of a bronze bust and the commissioning of her portrait. Both Palmers took these commemorative efforts very seriously. Anne Whitney, prominent American sculptor and fellow Bostonian, was chosen to do the bust and everyone was pleased with the result, especially George who saw it as "a fresh and true impression of the face I love." [69](#) Abbott Henderson Thayer, born in Boston and trained in Paris and one of the foremost painters of women of his day, was chosen to execute the portrait, a gift of Eben Horsford to Wellesley College. The sittings were tedious and trying for Alice; the trips they required to Thayer's New York studio were a nuisance.

As the portrait took shape Alice was acutely disappointed. She wrote George, who had not seen it, that: "I hope that I have more strength of character and more moral purpose than anyone can infer from the picture . . . I am afraid he is going to present the college a pensively smiling young woman, rolling her eyes of light brown away from the audience in front of her, and leaving the spectators to surmise what she was like, or was interested in." [70](#) Her assessment was not far wrong. Abbott Henderson Thayer was true to his style in his portrait of Alice. His paintings invariably portrayed women in an idealized, ethereal, angelic, virginal mode. Lucy Sprague Mitchell reported that Thayer painted Alice's eyes blue. When George Palmer protested, he replied, "Her soul has blue eyes." [71](#) The portrait hangs in the Wellesley Library and does fail to convey the vigor with which she lived her life. Her disappointment sufficiently disturbed George that he came to New York to have a look for himself. He did not find the work displeasing, and Alice herself was eventually more satisfied. Eliza Mosher and Alice's cousin Electa saw it when nearly complete. They liked it and thought Wellesley would be pleased. [72](#)

Wellesley was pleased! In early June of 1890 a gala gathering was held in the new art building on campus for a "most agreeable purpose--the unveiling of the painting we had longed for months to see. Could Professor Horsford have pleased any college girl better than with this gift of the picture of Mrs. Palmer." [73](#) With her image now hanging on a wall, Alice Freeman's career as president of Wellesley College was firmly placed in the past tense.

7

Although lecturing for money established the continuity of Alice Palmer's professional career, volunteer service in the cause of women's education became an increasingly important part of her resolution to the ongoing dilemma. Palmer pioneered in a kind of accommodation that many married, educated, professionally trained women developed at the turn of the century and continued to use well past World War II: creative volunteering. These women used their professional skills in unpaid policy-making positions as members of boards and commissions, sometimes governmental and sometimes private, but all having a visible effect on some part of the larger society. Unlike mid-nineteenth-century reformers these women had received a formal education preparing them for their careers. Frequently they had worked in those careers at least briefly, then married, but continued to use their skills as volunteers. When Palmer was in Cambridge her days were routinely filled with meetings, interviews, appointments, and the business of the many groups in which she participated. She was a major participant in the Annex's struggle to acquire status within Harvard University. She was an advisor to the infant Barnard College. She accepted a position as a member of the Massachusetts State Board of Education in the fall of 1889 that she held the rest of her life. She played an active if informal role in placing women in academic positions in coeducational institutions as well as women's colleges all over the country. She served on the Board of the Corporation of the International Institute for Girls in Spain, was president of the Home Missionary Association, continued to be a mainstay of Collegiate Alumnae, and was Massachusetts's Lady Manager for the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893.

First and foremost came her devoted attention to Wellesley College. She had experienced no difficulty continuing her connection with the college as a recent president and key member of the board of trustees during the months immediately following her marriage, but she found it painful to reengage herself with Wellesley when she returned from Europe. She wrote George, "I find myself dreading the first going back." She thought it best she have as little to do with the college as possible and would make her first visit for the dedication of the Art Building or the occasion of George Palmer's fall lecture on Homer. [74](#) Whatever the reason for her reluctance (she probably feared feeling a true outsider after her long absence), it was not long before she was again comfortably and fully engaged with Wellesley affairs. Wellesley welcomed her back. "Mrs. Palmer will again be so near the college that she can grant it the happiness of frequent glimpses of her bright face, made brighter now by the months of rest and pleasure abroad." [75](#)

The most recent study of Wellesley College suggests that the Academic Council, the faculty governing body established by Alice Freeman, became the center of the college under President Shafer. [76](#) Certainly the Academic Council continued to gain in influence and power, and Alice Palmer consistently used her influence with its members to have an effect on its decisions, but the real center of power became the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees. Much as Alice Freeman as president had used the board of trustees and its committees to increase her power as president and control the direction of policy, she now used the prestige and power of the board to continue this control. Earlier she had assumed this power, although never used when Henry Durant was alive, did exist and she carefully nourished and manipulated it during her presidency. The earlier precedent served her well now. In 1890-91, for example, it was she who presented the requests for faculty leaves, the report of the committee on faculty duties and rights, the policy concerning Bible study, and the status and role of the music school.

Alice Freeman chose Helen Shafer to be her successor, and she chose her because Shafer shared goals dear to the liberal and more progressive faculty that Alice Freeman had encouraged, supported, and hired. Shafer was also an able administrator, well organized, task oriented, and devoted to both the college and Alice Freeman Palmer. But during her tenure the executive committee exercised very detailed administrative functions, determining many purely administrative decisions on curriculum, class size, and faculty appointments. Alice Palmer's guiding hand was clearly evident in all of them.

Palmer consistently took the initiative on faculty appointments. At her first executive committee meeting after returning from Europe, Palmer reported she "had heard criticism of the management of the French department" that she was unable to ignore. [77](#) Both faculty and students served as her informants. As chairman of a subcommittee to investigate, by November Palmer had resolved the French department crisis. The general dissatisfaction had been documented, the need for change confirmed, and the offender removed but paid half salary until the end of the academic year when she would resign. [78](#) Palmer and Pauline Durant were appointed to a committee to seek a new head for the department of French. [79](#) Palmer was also a moving force in transferring Mary Calkins, who in 1891 was to establish one of the first psychology laboratories in the United States, from instructor in Greek to the new discipline of psychology which was, however, still part of the department of philosophy. [80](#)

Palmer did her best to resolve peaceably a nasty conflict in the Greek department. As she wrote George, "Miss Shafer must go on with the weeding process. It is by far the most pressing demand." [81](#) Alice's old friend, Angie Chapin, hired in the first years of the college by Henry Durant and who had since made no effort to acquire further training, was among those she felt needed to be weeded. Sensing her vulnerability, Chapin was reluctant even to go on leave. Although Angie Chapin remained on Wellesley's faculty until she retired in 1920, Palmer was successful in curbing Chapin's power over the Greek department, and she spent the rest of her career teaching Greek New Testament to freshmen. [82](#)

On occasion Alice Palmer ensured new appointments she wanted by raising the money herself. She first raised the funds and then maneuvered the appointment of Marion Talbot to a new chair of domestic economy. [83](#) Talbot had been Palmer's colleague in Collegiate Alumnae and had received early professional training at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the new science of sanitation. Talbot's and Palmer's careers were to be interwoven for the rest of Palmer's life. Enlarging and properly staffing the inadequate gym was another of Palmer's projects. First she received the promise of a gift toward enlarging the gymnasium, then asked for board authorization to solicit further funds, and later raised money for increased instruction in gymnastics. [84](#)

New faculty appointments continued to be women. The pattern was threatened in the spring of 1891 when a Harvard man was strongly urged by several board members including Palmer as instructor of freshman composition. Despite Pauline Durant's opposition he was offered the post, but he declined when Harvard made a counteroffer. [85](#) Although of more concern to Durant, the conservative, than Palmer, women continued a monopoly on faculty positions.

Alice Palmer's active intervention in Wellesley's affairs was not confined to faculty appointments. It was she who took the lead in defining the duties and powers of various levels of faculty. When well-trained, ambitious women were added to Durant's original group, conflict over who was to teach what and how, and who was to make these decisions at the departmental level, was inevitable. In the fall of 1890 the executive committee adopted a formal statement proposed by Palmer defining the relationship and duties of the teaching staff. The senior professor was to be responsible for the content and methods of the work of the annually appointed instructors. The junior professors were to be solely responsible for the content, methods, and examinations and grades in their own courses. The distribution and assignment of courses was to be the joint responsibility of a department's junior and senior professors and the president. [86](#) Earlier department heads had exercised total control. Now it was shared with faculty. However, this decision did not solve all curricular problems, and a faculty committee was appointed to rethink the full program of course offerings. The result was a two-year struggle within the faculty including delays that frequently left the more "progressive" members frustrated and restless. In 1893 a new curriculum was finally adopted that broadened electives, increased program flexibility, and decreased the emphasis on classical languages. [87](#)

Alice Palmer played a crucial role in effecting an acceptable resolution to the many conflicting faculty interests. She met often and long with Helen Shafer and used her many faculty contacts to advantage. [88](#) By the end of 1893 new academic patterns had been firmly established. Not only had the curriculum been modernized, the faculty now moved through various levels:

instructor, assistant professor, professor, in normal progression, and the practice of junior faculty leaves to pursue graduate training was well established. [89](#)

When Helen Shafer died in January of 1894 pressure was put on Alice Palmer to resume the presidency. She resisted even considering it seriously. She was so sure of her decision that it was unnecessary for George to raise his usual objections. [90](#) By the mid-1890s she was more than content to guide Wellesley in the directions she believed it must go without having to live on campus and face the myriad petty details of academic housekeeping.

Next to Alice Palmer's devotion to Wellesley College, the young women who struggled in the 1890s to obtain a sound education from a begrudging and uncommitted Harvard College made the largest claim on Alice Palmer's interest and energies. The Harvard Annex, as this group was informally called, had been organized in 1879-80, the year Alice Freeman came to Wellesley, to provide private collegiate instruction for women. Thirty-seven Harvard faculty repeated their courses of lectures to 27 women that first year and were paid small additional salaries by the women's group. In 1882 the Annex was incorporated as the Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women, and slowly a few buildings, largely old houses, were added to its facilities. By 1893, 255 students were taught by sixty-nine Harvard faculty. The Annex was informally becoming a woman's college of some size, but it had no legal connections with Harvard College or the corporation despite the fact that almost all its instruction was provided by Harvard faculty. Annex women were denied use of Harvard's library, were barred from Harvard lectures, and were not awarded academic degrees, only certificates. [91](#)

George Palmer, having taught at the Annex from its beginning, was one of its most enthusiastic supporters, but Harvard alumni in general were scornful of the Annex and fearful of its potential for contaminating their sacred male bastion with bonnets and petticoats. Many members of the Harvard faculty and President Eliot were more sympathetic, although Eliot was always an uncertain friend. For some faculty it meant a welcome supplement to their incomes. Others, like Palmer, were genuinely committed to educating women. Before 1888 Alice was aware of and sympathetic to the Annex and its problems. Her good friend Lillian Horsford was on its board, but it was not until she moved to Cambridge in 1888 that she participated actively in its affairs. She spoke often to the Emmanuel Club, a student religious and social organization, invited Annex women to her home to tea, and as one student described interaction with her, brought to them "the radiance of her beautiful life." [92](#) Unlike Smith or Wellesley girls, Annex students had no women faculty with whom to identify. Their instructors were all Harvard men, and Alice provided a convenient role model. She had not only taught in but been president of a college. For Alice the Annex association worked much as George had promised her during their courtship: that helping Annex girls fulfill themselves would be one of the rewards of her life in Cambridge.

Although the Annex had been proposing legal affiliation with Harvard since 1880, it was not until 1892 that the possibility became a realistic hope. By then Columbia and Brown had accepted formal affiliation with their women's annexes. Eliot seemed sympathetic, promising, the Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women thought, that if they raised a \$250,000 endowment to prove their financial self-sufficiency the Corporation would take over responsibility for the women on its fringes and grant them the right to earn Harvard degrees. Alice Palmer had been active in fund-raising for the Annex as early as 1888, and when she

visited her parents in Saginaw that year, she carried the account books with her so she could answer any queries the mail might bring. [93](#) Her involvement was to increase greatly when the big push came in 1892 and the Women's Education Association (WEA) was chosen as the fund-raising instrument. Founded in 1872 for the betterment of women's education, the Women's Education Association was particularly active in promoting opportunities for the scientific training of women. [94](#) At the time the association committed itself to secure an endowment for the Annex, Alice Palmer was its president. Although she accepted a position at the new University of Chicago that year, she stayed on as president of the Women's Education Association specifically to insure a successful outcome of the fund-raising drive. [95](#)

The endowment was raised, in large measure, under Alice Palmer's leadership. Although the women who subscribed did not want a separate college, the eventual agreement hammered out by the Annex leadership under Elizabeth Agassiz with President Eliot and the overseers provided otherwise. Radcliffe, separately incorporated, would grant its own degrees, although Harvard had agreed to countersign them. Harvard was also to oversee Radcliffe, approve its faculty, and describe its offerings in the Harvard catalog. This was not the incorporation of the Annex into Harvard that Alice Palmer and the women of the association had envisioned when the money was raised. Palmer protested that she could keep none of this money unless Harvard accepted women (albeit in a separate department) and granted their degrees. [96](#) Who was to control the subscribed money was also at issue. Did the Harvard establishment assume this responsibility? Or did the women retain control? Elizabeth Agassiz argued before the association that the compromise was acceptable. The donors to the fund and Palmer were unconvinced. All subscribed money was returned. [97](#)

During much of this struggle Alice Palmer was in Chicago, and George acted as her informal proxy in Cambridge. On at least two occasions during the negotiations, Eliot indicated to George that he wished for Alice's speedy return in order to "to talk of the Annex." [98](#) Although unsuccessful this time, both George and Alice continued to hope for a closer connection of Radcliffe with Harvard. For example, they were fearful of providing adequate but separate quarters for Radcliffe because they wished "eventually to see the [Harvard] College provide for its girls on the same terms as its boys." [99](#) Despite her long association with women's colleges, Alice never wavered in her belief that coeducation was the better way.

Alice Palmer consistently exerted her influence wherever she could in women's higher education. She was closely involved when Columbia's Collegiate Course for Women was transformed into Barnard College in 1889. When sitting for her portrait in New York, she was frequently consulted by the women leading the campaign, and she worked hard to convince them that their conception of a president as "a sort of upper housekeeper, a lady who will be nice with the girls," was hardly adequate. [100](#) She urged Marion Talbot for dean of Barnard in 1891 despite the fact that Palmer also wanted Talbot on the Wellesley faculty at that time. [101](#) In 1894 she aided the appointment of Emily James Smith, whom she knew well because of her University of Chicago connections, to head Barnard. [102](#) She acted as an advisor when the Women's College (later Pembroke) of Brown University was being planned and helped choose its first dean. [103](#) She kept a wary eye on President David Starr Jordan's appointment of women to Stanford and hoped unsuccessfully to see her old classmate, Lucy Maynard Salmon, on its faculty. [104](#)

In the fall of 1889, just after the Palmers' return from Europe, Governor Ames appointed Alice to the Massachusetts State Board of Education. This board had been established in 1840 to care for the educational interests of the state and by 1889 had responsibility for the state normal schools, Boston Art Normal, the institutions for the deaf and blind, and supervised the district schools. In short, it controlled the education of teachers for the public schools, the training of the handicapped, and supervised the rural schools. At the first meeting Alice Palmer attended she was appointed visitor to Bridgewater Normal and Boston Art Normal and to the committee that was to consider establishing a higher grade of normal instruction for high schools. [105](#) Bridgewater continued to be her special responsibility throughout her tenure on the board, which ended only with her death. She also led the fight to raise admission standards and presided over a major revision in the teacher training curriculum in 1893. [106](#) On occasion she was chosen to prepare the board's annual reports, and she frequently lobbied for the normal school cause before the legislature, "showing such gifts as a pleader . . . that her colleagues on the board . . . spontaneously turned to her for service as a `voice' more persistent and potent, perhaps than any other." [107](#) Although a moderate temperance advocate she fought successfully against a compulsory temperance education bill that placed onerous and unreasonable restrictions on teachers. [108](#)

She did good work for the state board. She had no axes, political or otherwise, to grind, and no doubt the training of teachers benefitted from her long service. Harvard's president, Charles Eliot, the Palmers' next door neighbor, would buttonhole George on Alice's absences from Cambridge to pass on his concerns with the education of secondary school teachers. [109](#) George would also relay to Alice in his letters concerns that Massachusetts governors had expressed to him as Alice's deputy about educational policy matters that were before the legislature. [110](#) Palmer herself was frequently distressed when she neglected her duties to the state board. "You can think how sorry I am to be away when this morning comes a note from Mr. Adams, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee . . . asking me to see him about the bills on education. Isn't it sad that I am away, for I might do some good if I could see him alone." [111](#) Nonetheless Alice Palmer missed many State Board of Education meetings. If she was in Cambridge, Boxford, or the Boston area and sufficiently well to travel by trolley or sit in a chair, she never missed a Wellesley appointment. Her record for the state board is less exemplary, but her influence for professionalism and excellence was there nonetheless.

Alice Palmer's other opportunity to work with and influence public education, occurred when she was dean at the University of Chicago. She was offered the position of supervisor of the Boston public schools. She seems to have considered the offer seriously for awhile. The salary was \$4,000, she would no longer face frequent separations from George. [112](#) In the end, however, she refused the job. She wrote George when the offer was made that the board itself was hopeless, and that to fully rouse public opinion the "Boston schools will have to be worse before they are better. No one woman can do it alone." [113](#)

In the early 1890s Alice Freeman Palmer's watchful eye and willing advice were everywhere in women's education. But her focus moved more and more toward the expanding opportunities in coeducation provided by the new universities and coeducation's half sisters, the affiliate colleges at Brown, Columbia, and Harvard. Very soon the new University of Chicago was to provide her with a stunning opportunity to promote coeducation at what was designed from the beginning to

be one of the world's great research universities. From 1892 to 1895 she divided her physical presence and her intellectual and organizational gifts between Chicago in the heartland of her beloved trans-Appalachian West and the Northeast corridor that had received most of her attention for the past fifteen years.

Chapter Eight Notes

[1](#) William Gardner Hale's remarks at the Alice Freeman Palmer Memorial Service, University of Chicago, 1903, as printed in *A Memorial to Alice Freeman Palmer*, 19.

[2](#) At about the same time that the Palmers were attempting to resolve their dilemma, Carrie Chapman Catt and her husband reached a different solution. Both were deeply concerned with reform causes, and agreed that George Catt would provide the couple's income, and Carrie would contribute her time and skills to reform. See Robert Booth Fowler, *Carrie Catt: Feminist Politician* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986), 15-16. Of course this meant Catt had no status as a professional, only as a volunteer. Helen Magill, the first woman to receive a Ph.D. in the United States, was unable to continue her career after her marriage to Andrew Dickson White in 1890. See Altschuler, *Better than Second Best*. Magill White gave birth to three children in the early years of her marriage and White was much less tolerant than Palmer of any professional aspirations by his wife.

[3](#) Mitchell, *Two Lives; Antler, Lucy Sprague Mitchell*. Dorothy Reed Mendenhall and Anne Walter Fearn, physicians who received their training in the 1890s and practiced in the early twentieth century also were able to combine marriage with professional careers. (Glazer and Slater, *Unequal Colleagues*, chap. 3).

[4](#) *Diary*, December 23, 1887.

[5](#) Palmer, *Life*, 190.

[6](#) *Ibid.*, 190-91.

[7](#) *Ibid.*, 224.

[8](#) George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, September 23, 1892. Wellesley Typescripts.

[9](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, April 30, 1888. Wellesley Typescripts.

[10](#) George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, May 1, 1888. Wellesley Typescripts.

[11](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, April 26, 1888. Wellesley Typescripts.

[12](#) Minutes of the Board of Trustees, September 30, 1887, February 2, 1888. Wellesley College Archives.

[13](#) Minutes of the Executive Committee, Board of Trustees, February 21, 1888. Wellesley College Archives.

[14](#) Minutes of the Board of Trustees, February 2, and June 7, 1888. Wellesley College Archives.

[15](#) Ibid.

[16](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, April 26, 1888. Wellesley Typescripts.

[17](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, April 26, 1888. Wellesley Typescripts.

[18](#) George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, May 2, 1889. Wellesley Typescripts.

[19](#) Correspondence of Alice Freeman Palmer and George Herbert Palmer, April 1888. Wellesley Typescripts.

[20](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, May 2, 1888. Wellesley Typescripts.

[21](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, April 28, May 2, 1888. Wellesley Typescripts.

[22](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, May 3, 1888. Wellesley Typescripts.

[23](#) George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, May 3, 1888. Wellesley Typescripts.

[24](#) George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, September 1, 1889. Wellesley Typescripts.

[25](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, May 6, 1888. Wellesley Typescripts.

[26](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, May 5, 1888. Wellesley Typescripts.

[27](#) Ibid.

[28](#) The most recent study of Bellamy's influence is to be found in *Looking Backward, 1888-1888: Essays on Edward Bellamy*, Daphne Patai, ed. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).

[29](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, September 1, 1889. Wellesley Typescripts.

[30](#) George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, September 2, 1889. Wellesley Typescripts.

[31](#) George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, September 3, 1889. Wellesley Typescripts.

[32](#) George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, September 4, 1889. Wellesley Typescripts.

[33](#) Palmer, *Life*, 193-96.

[34](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to Carla Wenckebach, January 6, 1889.

[35](#) Ibid.

[36](#) Ibid.

[37](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to friend, January 27, 1889.

[38](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to Carla Wenckebach, January 6, 1889.

[39](#) Ibid.

[40](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to Marion Talbot, April 9, 1889.

[41](#) Ibid.

[42](#) Ibid.

[43](#) Ibid.

[44](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to K. Coman, June 28, 1889.

[45](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, September 4, 1889. Wellesley Typescripts.

[46](#) George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, April 17, 1894. Wellesley Typescripts.

[47](#) Palmer, *Life*, 221.

[48](#) *Diary*, 1888.

[49](#) George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, June 2, 1890. Wellesley Typescripts.

[50](#) *Diary*, 1890.

[51](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, May 30, 1890. Wellesley Typescripts.

[52](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, May 31, 1890. Wellesley Typescripts.

[53](#) Ibid.

[54](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, May 27, 1890. Wellesley Typescripts.

[55](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, September 7, 1889. Wellesley Typescripts.

[56](#) George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, May 24, 1890. Wellesley Typescripts.

- [57](#) George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, May 30, 1890. Wellesley Typescripts.
- [58](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, June 4, 1890. Wellesley Typescripts.
- [59](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, June 5, 1890. Wellesley Typescripts.
- [60](#) George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, June 17, 1891. Wellesley Typescripts.
- [61](#) George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, February 11, 1892. Wellesley Typescripts.
- [62](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, June 3, 1891. Wellesley Typescripts.
- [63](#) *Diary*, 1892.
- [64](#) J. Laurence Laughlin's remarks at the Alice Freeman Palmer Memorial Service, University of Chicago, 1903, as printed in *A Memorial to Alice Freeman Palmer*, 7.
- [65](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, April 26, 27, 1892. Wellesley Typescripts.
- [66](#) George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, June 20, 1901. Wellesley Typescripts.
- [67](#) A. F. Palmer, *Why Go to College*,
- [68](#) Palmer, *Life*, 221.
- [69](#) George Herbert Palmer to Anne Whitney, October 7, 1891. Alice Freeman Palmer Papers, Wellesley College Archives.
- [70](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, December 14, 1889. Wellesley Typescripts.
- [71](#) Mitchell, *Two Lives*, 122-23; for an assessment of Thayer see Ann Uhry Abrams, "Frozen Goddess: The Image of Woman in Turn of the Century American Art" in *Women's Being, Women's Place*, ed. Mary Kelley, 95-101. See also Banta, *Imaging American Women*.
- [72](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, February 25, 1890. Wellesley Typescripts.
- [73](#) *Wellesley Annals*, 1889-90, 5.
- [74](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, September 7, 1889. Wellesley Typescripts.
- [75](#) *Wellesley Annals*, 1889-90, 12.
- [76](#) Palmieri, "Adamless Eden," 147.
- [77](#) Minutes of the Executive Committee, October 3, 1889. Wellesley College Archives.

- [78](#) Minutes of the Executive Committee, November 16, 1889. Wellesley College Archives.
- [79](#) Minutes of the Board of Trustees, February 5, 1891. Wellesley College Archives.
- [80](#) Minutes of the Board of Trustees, February 6, 1890. Wellesley College Archives.
- [81](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, September 7, 1889. Wellesley Typescripts.
- [82](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, May 22, June 5, 1890; George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, May 30, 1890. Wellesley Typescripts.
- [83](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to Marion Talbot, August 16, 1890 [misdated, really August 23]. Minutes of the Board of Trustees, June 2, 1892, Wellesley College Archives.
- [84](#) Minutes of the Board of Trustees, November 6, 1890, June 2, 1892. Wellesley College Archives.
- [85](#) Minutes of the Executive Committee, May 8, 1891. Wellesley College Archives.
- [86](#) Minutes of the Executive Committee, November 13, 1890. Wellesley College Archives.
- [87](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to Marion Talbot, November 15, 1892. Marion Talbot Papers, University of Chicago Archives. Glasscock, *Wellesley*, 137-38.
- [88](#) See especially her correspondence with George Herbert Palmer for the period, and Alice Freeman Palmer to Marion Talbot, November 15, 1892. Marion Talbot Papers, University of Chicago Archives.
- [89](#) President's Report, 1893, Wellesley College Archives.
- [90](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, April 2, 1894. Wellesley Typescripts.
- [91](#) For the origins of Radcliffe College and its relationship to Harvard University see Solomon, *Educated Women*, 54-55; Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 95- 104; Sally Schwager, "Harvard Women" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard School of Education, 1982); *Report of the Special Committee of the Board of Overseers*, June 1898; Barrett Wendell, "The Relations of Radcliffe College with Harvard," *Harvard Monthly* 29 (October 1899): 1-9.
- [92](#) Nadine Crump as quoted in Schwager, "Harvard Women," 266-67; *Diary*, 1888-92.
- [93](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, April 26, 1888. Wellesley Typescripts.
- [94](#) Final Report, 1929, Women's Education Association Papers, Radcliffe College Archives.
- [95](#) Report, 1893. Women's Education Association Papers, Radcliffe College Archives.

[96](#) Schwager, "Harvard Women," 332; Alice Freeman Palmer to friend, Thanksgiving, 1892. Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, April 3, 1893. Wellesley Typescripts.

[97](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, April 3, 1893. Wellesley Typescripts; Schwager, "Harvard Women," 341-48.

[98](#) George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, January 12, 16, 1894. Wellesley Typescripts.

[99](#) George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, January 6, 1895. Wellesley Typescripts.

[100](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, December 16, 1889. Wellesley Typescripts.

[101](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to Marion Talbot, August 16, 1890; Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, March 1891. Wellesley Typescripts.

[102](#) Marian Churchill White, *A History of Barnard College* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), 26.

[103](#) *Alice Freeman Palmer: In Memoriam*, 37. Pamphlet in the Alice Freeman Palmer Papers, Bentley Historical Library.

[104](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, undated 1892. Wellesley Typescripts.

[105](#) Minutes of the State Board of Education, November 7, 1889. Massachusetts State Archives.

[106](#) Minutes of the State Board of Education, March 2,; May 4, 18,; June 1, 1893. Massachusetts State Archives.

[107](#) George Perry Morris, "Alice Freeman Palmer," *American Monthly Review of Reviews*, February 1903, 170.

[108](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, February 1900. George Herbert Palmer Papers. Houghton Library, Harvard University. George Herbert Palmer discusses Alice Freeman Palmer's Board of Education service in his *Life*, 243-48.

[109](#) See George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, May 22, 23, 1890. Wellesley Typescripts.

[110](#) George Herbert Palmer to Alice Freeman Palmer, June 7, 1891. Wellesley Typescripts.

[111](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, April 19, 1902. Wellesley Typescripts.

[112](#) George Herbert Palmer to William Rainey Harper, May 11, 1894. William Rainey Harper Papers, University of Chicago Archives. Hereafter cited as Harper Papers.

[113](#) Alice Freeman Palmer to George Herbert Palmer, April 2, 1894. Wellesley Typescripts.