The relationship between W. D. Howells (1837–1920) and his boyhood friend James Harvey (or Hervey) Greene (1833–90) is treated only briefly in biographies of Howells, an understandable situation given the extensive network of professional and personal relationships that Howells cultivated throughout his life. But the two men maintained a friendly, if intermittent, correspondence until Greene’s death in 1890, and Greene was an important presence during Howells’s formative years, as Howells indicates in Years of My Youth (1916). Also supporting the idea of Greene’s importance to Howells at this time are the scarce surviving letters, “one in 1852 and seven each in 1857 and 1858 [that] provide only a sketchy account of these years” (Howells, Selected Letters 1: xiv), of which one mentions Greene and another is written to Greene and his wife Jane. In 2008, seven newly discovered and previously unpublished letters from Howells to Greene were made available for publication by John T. Narrin, Greene’s great-great-great-grandson, and William Griffing, a descendant of Greene’s sister Cassie. The rarest of these is a letter from 1854, a year for which no other letter from Howells is known to exist. The Howells-Greene letters held by Narrin include, in addition to the 1854 letter, one from the 1860s, two from the 1870s, and three from the 1880s; another letter from Howells was reprinted in Greene’s lengthy obituary in the Medina County Gazette and News in 1890 (“He Sleeps”).

The Howells-Greene letters held by Narrin not only offer glimpses of Howells’s attitudes about everything from the Young America movement to Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910) but also create a context for Howells’s fascination with the narrative of Greene’s life. In these letters and in Greene’s memoir Reminiscences of the War, a more complex picture of Howells emerges through his relationship with Greene because Howells casts Greene as a character with two different personae. The first is an idealist whose active life in the service of his principles Howells admired as a contrast to his own; for the young Howells, Greene served as role model, mentor, friend, and critic. In recounting Greene’s life in 1915 and 1916,
however, Howells writes about the later Greene as a tragic figure in a real-life drama that Howells could not stop retelling: the story of Greene’s unjust dismissal from the Army because of the prejudices of a superior officer. In *Years of My Youth*, Howells pinpoints the “defeat” of Greene’s life (Selected Letters 6: 83n3) as arising from this episode, in the process implicitly contrasting Greene’s early promise and later “defeat” with his own unpromising beginnings but later great success as a critic and author.

James Harvey Greene and W. D. Howells

The friendship between Howells and Greene began in 1847 when Greene, at age fourteen, became an apprentice at the *Hamilton [OH] Intelligencer* under Howells’s father, the publisher William Cooper Howells (1807–94). As W. D. Howells writes in *Years of My Youth*, Greene lived “with our family like one of ourselves, as brotherly as if he had been of our blood” until he “left us to live the wandering life of the journeyman printer . . . fighting and writing on the Free State side” in Kansas (122). By June 1856, Greene was working at the *Herald of Freedom*, the newspaper of the Emigrant Aid Society that had settled Lawrence, an antislavery stronghold in the contested territory of “bleeding Kansas” ([Destruction of the *Herald of Freedom Office*]). Its editor, George Washington Brown (1820–1915), may have known Greene when both lived in Jefferson, Ohio; a May 1 letter to Greene, then at the *Cleveland Leader*, from the abolitionist James Redpath (1833–91) suggests such a connection. On May 21, Lawrence was attacked, the Free State Hotel was burned, and the newspaper’s printing presses were destroyed by a force of eight hundred to one thousand proslavery Southerners. Greene reported on the destruction of the *Herald of Freedom* office in a letter published in the June 12, 1856, issue of the *New York Daily Times*, noting indignantly the arrest and imprisonment of G. W. Brown and others on charges of “high treason!” by the proslavery sheriff, Samuel J. Jones (1820–80; [Destruction of the *Herald of Freedom Office*]). Howells’s comment about Greene’s “fighting and writing” on the antislavery side is borne out by the public record, as well as by Greene’s later recollections of his days as a “border ruffian” (“He Sleeps” 1). By 1857, Greene had moved away from Lawrence, and if his activities on behalf of the abolitionist cause had slowed, his antislavery sentiments had not. From the offices of his new position at the Jefferson, Ohio–based *Ashtabula Sentinel*, he wrote on March 24 to John Brown offering aid and expressing admiration. By July, he was the editor of the *Prairie du Chien [WI] Leader*, where he was to remain for a few years, and in August, he married Jane R. Harvey (1834/35–?). Within the next three years, the couple had two daughters, Ellen I. (Nellie; 1858–?) and Sarah C. (Clara; 1860–?) (see 1860 Census and 1870 Census); yet when the Civil War broke
out, Greene volunteered. In September 1861 he was commissioned Captain of Company F of the 8th Wisconsin Infantry Volunteers, known as the "Eagle Regiment" for its mascot, a live bald eagle called Old Abe that was carried into battle on a standard bearing the Union colors (Williams 121). Greene was mustered out on February 27, 1865, settled in Ohio, and on July 1, 1869, purchased the newspaper he would publish for the rest of his career, the Medina County Gazette (Perrin et al. 292). According to Harriet Taylor Upton and Harry Gardner Cutler in their History of the Western Reserve, Greene was a popular editor who during his tenure increased the "circulation and general influence" of the Gazette; they add that he was "not only a journalist of repute but an eloquent public speaker as well" (375). His oration on the U.S. Centennial, a history of the nation, is reprinted in full in the History of Medina County "at the repeated request of friends of this enterprise" (Perrin et al. 364). He died on May 31, 1890 (Upton and Cutler 374).

Howells's Letters to Greene

The first of Howells's extant letters to Greene was written during the summer of 1854, which was one of the worst years of Howells's life (Goodman and Dawson 27).

Sunday, June 4th, 1854
Jefferson, Ash[tabula] Co., O[H]

Dear Hervey:

How naturally does one put off everything in the way of letter-writing till Sunday. My little library is filled from morning till late at night with eager and countless letter-writers: the printer-girls writing endless epistles to far off friends, Vic scratching notes to her acquaintance, and Joe answering correspondence from all quarters. Truth to tell, I look with not a little envy on the many and gilt-edged notes which Joe receives. He has a dozen she-friends when I have none, and I have often marveled that he should be so popular with them, when I find no favor in their eyes at all. I console myself, however, when I reflect that the ladies are a giddy, superficial set, and are ridiculed by some of our most eminent writers.

As I was saying, the library is besieged by scribblers all Sunday long, and I am not a little surprised, therefore, to find myself in peaceful possession of it at one o'clock. The view from the window at which I sit gazing, in the vacancy of don't-know-what-to-say-ness—is passing lovely! The most striking object in the foreground is a useful but not-to-be-named little building, embowered in the shade of the grandest of wild cherry trees. On either
hand stretches a tract of clay, facetiously up and planted with corn, from
which the heat hazes upward, like it used to do from the stove at school.
Chickens are making beds in the garden beds, and a solitary and sultry
turkey gobbler is stalking thro’ a thick growth of smart-grass, picking truculent
insects therefrom. He has not even the ambition to gobble when I
whistle at him. There is, however, an impotent old chicken cock in full
chase of a coy and virtuous pullet [sic]. I am in no pain for her honor,
however, for the old fellow is so wholly a prey to the weakness of age that
he will never harm her. He reminds me of one [of] those worn-out gallants
whom Addison describes in his Spectators, who without the power of gratifying
their licentious desires, were forever losing their self-command, and
the gravity of age in “the presence.” However, I shall not stray off into an
essay on chastity, but will come at once to your letter.

To your questions as to whether or no I am a progressive, etc., I hardly
know what to say. I fear that in most things you will deem me a conservative.
I hate Young America, brass, boots, collar and all. I eat meat. I drink coffee.
I am not a believer in socialism and place very little faith in the “good
time coming.” Slavery, however, I abhor from the bottom of my heart, as
the son of an Englishman” can and ought. I do not use tobacco, and
thoroughly mislike the puppyism which vents itself in bad cigars. I am in
favor (if you except the drinking of wine) of teetotalism. But withal, I have
a great love for whatever is old and time hallowed, and in this love, I am
more and more confirmed every day. I do not see that the world is a whit
better now than it ever was. Nor do I see how it is to be improved by the
disuse of meat-eating, and a perfection of table-tilting. However, I am
open to conviction, and I should like to see some thoughts from you on
the subject.

I am proud of the praise you bestow upon my attempts at poetizing.
There is, perhaps, no admiration which is so welcome to one as that he
receives in private from his friends, and to a young writer, you will agree
with and understand me when I say, it is doubly so.

You speak of my coming to see you. I fear that is one of the not-to-be-
dones of this life, though nothing would give me more pleasure. You,
however, who are about withdrawing from business, might easily come to
see us. What do you say to the Fourth of July as a day? I will be at the cars
in readiness, if you will but come. I think you might. We all want to see
you so much and there is to be the [illegible] kind of a blowout here on
“the anniversary of our national independence.” If you do not answer this
straightaway, I shall conclude that you are coming.

Your friend,
Will. D. Howells
At first glance, the letter shows little outward evidence of Howells’s psychological crisis that summer, which took the form of what he called "hypo-chondria," a combination of depression with a fear of dying by rabies so paralyzing that he was forced to cease work in his father’s printing office at the Ashtabula Sentinel (Goodman and Dawson 27). Instead, it mixes mildly risqué subjects (the outhouse, the impotent rooster chasing a pullet) and coy references to young women with an attempt to provide a vivid description of his surroundings. But Howells’s decisive responses to the serious contemporary questions of the day, made apparently in response to a query of Greene’s, suggest a young man determined to set down his ideas for a friend whose ethical as well as literary standards he values.

After thanking Greene for his “praise” for his “attempts at poetizing,” Howells provides a comprehensive list of his beliefs. Not surprisingly, given Greene’s fervent abolitionism, Howells asserts his abhorrence of slavery but rejects the expansionism (and what he sees as the boisterous exhibitionism) of the Young America movement. He also rejects vegetarianism, socialism, or spiritualism (“table-tilting”) as a possible solution to the world’s problems, although he would later become interested in Tolstoy’s Christian socialism and would explore the supernatural in such works as The Undiscovered Country (1880), The Shadow of a Dream: A Story (1890), and Questionable Shapes (1903). Having dismissed socialism and other schemes for reforming the world, at this point in his life Howells speaks positively only of “whatever is old and time hallowed,” a stance that discourages any possibility of social change except contemplation of the past.

In contrast, Greene believed in actively pursuing social change: even before moving to Lawrence, he had been running a literary paper, but he changed its politics to promote the Free-Soil cause. When the Kansas-Nebraska Bill passed in 1854, Greene sold the paper and “went to Kansas to help make it a free state” (“He Sleeps” 1), putting his abolitionist beliefs before practical advancement. In referring to Greene’s idealism, his “withdrawing from business” to fight for his principles, Howells may be hinting at a dissatisfaction with his own lack of action in comparison with Greene’s fiery activism.

Howells’s published letters from 1857 to 1865 further suggest the continuing friendship between Greene and the Howells family. Howells’s brother Joe, who, like Greene, was older than Howells, apparently played matchmaker for Harvey and Jane Greene: in Years of My Youth, Howells asserts that Joe encouraged a correspondence between Greene and “a young girl of the village” who later became his wife (122). As Howells reports to his sister Vic on April 20, 1857, about the romance, “I have received two letters from Harvey this week. Poor, homesick soul! he’s twice as ‘bad took’ as I—and after all the tossing about in the world that he has done, too!” (Selected Letters 1: 9). After Harvey and Jane Greene’s marriage in August
1857, Howells writes to the newlyweds in November of that year, thanking them for their “husbandandwifely and exceedingly welcome letter” and humorously bemoaning the lack of news in “our charming hamlet” (Selected Letters 1: 15). As he had done with his mention of Joseph Addison’s (1672–1719) Spectator papers in the 1854 letter, however, Howells makes it clear that this is a literary and intellectual, as well as a personal, friendship. He laments the loss of Putnam’s Magazine, which had recently ceased publication, but professes himself “charmed with the ‘Atlantic’” despite its being “a little too Bostony in its flavor” (Selected Letters 1: 17). The correspondence and friendship continued: on January 28 and 29, 1865, Howells wrote to his sister Anne from Venice, asking, “Why has Harvey Greene never a message to send me? You must remember me cordially to him” (Selected Letters 1: 208), perhaps forgetting that Captain J. H. Greene’s actions in the Vicksburg campaign, the Red River campaign, and other crucial battles over the past four years might have made him too busy to write.

By 1868, Howells was himself a little “Bostony,” since he had been for three years the assistant editor of the Atlantic Monthly, the magazine that had so charmed him in 1854.

Boston
January 29, 1868

My dear Harvey:

I got your paper, the other day, with the very kind notice of my Dall’Ongaro article, for which I thank you. After reading that, I read the whole paper, and whether it was really good, or seemed so from its relation to praise of me, I liked it very much, and felt like saying something about it in The Atlantic.

I hope that you and Jane and the little Harvies and Janes are well, and passing the winter comfortably. The winters here are a great trial to me, after Italy, and as soon as the leaves begin to fall, I feel like engaging my passage for Liverpool. However, unless Chase is elected President, and I am sent minister to Florence, I see no present chance of getting back there. Do go in for Chase, Harvey!

My wife not being very strong, we’ve shut up our house in Cambridge for a little while, and come into Boston to board—we have a lodging and dine at a restaurant. Winny enjoys this arrangement immensely, and won’t hear of going back to Cambridge.

Harvey, is there anything in your army experience or observations that would make into a poem or a small romance? I can’t get a “subject” and it’s money out of pocket every day I remain in this state.
Give Elinor’s and my own love to Jane and the little ones, and believe me as ever,

Your affectionate,

W. D. Howells.

This 1868 letter suggests both the personal bonds of friendship that the two had maintained after the war and Howells’s respect for Greene’s literary acumen. The humorous exhortation to vote for Salmon P. Chase (1808–73) so that the Howells family could return to Venice asks Greene to back a favorite son candidate over the interests of Greene’s staunchly Republican paper, the Fremont Journal. The mention of family members would be a constant in the letters exchanged between the two from this point on: Howells had married Elinor Mead (1837–1910) in Paris on Christmas Eve, 1862, and by January 1868 the couple had one child, Winifred (Winny), born on December 17, 1863. Two others would follow: John Mead on August 14, 1868, and Mildred (Pilla), on September 26, 1872.

The letter further testifies to Howells’s treatment of Greene as a professional writer and editor. Since at this stage of his career Howells sometimes worried about whether a given article would be successful, he thanks Greene for the notice of the “Dall’Ongaro” article, an essay on Francesco Dall’Ongaro (1808–73) first published in the January 1868 North American Review, but he goes on to praise Greene’s piece as something he wishes to mention in The Atlantic. The request for “subjects” from Greene’s army experiences further demonstrates that Greene is not only a friend but also a fellow writer. Although Howells did not yet depend entirely on the fiction he could write, since he would not leave The Atlantic until March 1, 1881, the pressure he felt to make money by means of his pen existed already, and he characterized himself at this time as “a mill, ceaselessly grinding” (Goodman and Dawson 129). The letter demonstrates both a parallel and a contrast between the two careers, given Howells’s recognition that Greene, as an editor, had the power to promote Howells’s writing, albeit on a smaller stage than Howells could command with a mention of Greene’s paper in The Atlantic.

Another reference to Greene’s editorial boosting of Howells’s work occurs in Howells’s letter to his father dated October 31, 1868. Howells praises Greene’s thoughtful notice about Howells’s mother’s death, which had appeared earlier that month, but he continues to be preoccupied about the success of Gnadenhütten: “Much will depend upon the success of Gnadenhütten: if that is generally liked, I shall feel encouraged to go on in the same direction” (Selected Letters 1: 303). Published in the Atlantic Monthly in January 1869, “Gnadenhütten” was hardly calculated to be a
popular choice for a nation still feeling the emotional and physical wounds of the recent war. It tells of the 1782 massacre at Gnadenhütten in eastern Ohio, in which ninety-six Christian Indians at prayer were bludgeoned to death and scalped by white militiamen. On April 12, 1869, Howells wrote to his brother Joe, “Thank you for the scrap from Harvey’s paper. It was very pleasant of him to mention my article, which hasn’t been too successful. Please give him my love when you write him” (Selected Letters 1: 322). Despite its subject matter, or perhaps because of its local historical interest, Greene apparently helped to promote the article even if it was not “too successful” elsewhere.

Howells continued to share his literary interests with Greene, sending him books of interest to both, as a November 12, 1870, letter and those from the 1880s demonstrate.

Office of the Atlantic Monthly
No. 124 Tremont Street
Boston
November 12, 1870
My dear Harvey:

I arranged your affair with Messrs. Fields, Osgood & Co. so that they should send you an advertisement by which you could pay for Bryant’s Homer without any outlay. I hope that this was to your satisfaction and that you now have the books.

We are all well, but I’m horribly busy, or I should have answered you before. Besides my Atlantic work I’ve been seeing a book through the press and giving a course of lectures in Boston.

We should have been much glad to see you last summer and if it hadn’t been so hot, I should have gone to Medina, I believe. But I had a sort of heat-stroke in New York and I thought it best to be cautious.

Are you never coming to Boston? I should like so much to have you here.

Elinor joins me in love to Jane.

Yours affectionately,

Will.

The lectures to which Howells refers are his well-attended course on “New Italian Literature” at the Lowell Institute in the fall of 1870 (Goodman and Dawson 135), and the book to which Howells refers is probably Suburban Sketches, first published in book form in 1871 but based on a collection of Atlantic articles that had appeared from 1868 to 1870. Howells’ reference to his “heat-stroke” is but one instance of his sporadic bouts of ill health, and he would fear the recurrence of his heat-stroke in 1871. His illnesses,
however, were rarely as severe as Elinor’s and Winifred’s intermittent but chronic invalidism, as mentioned in the letter of May 14, 1885.

There was apparently a slight rift between the friends in the 1870s. In an 1873 letter to his father, Howells wrote, ‘I’m sorry that Harvey bought my books—for I should [have] been so glad to send him a set, if I hadn’t rather stupidly supposed that he had them. I wrote to him last week in reply to a letter which I got a long time ago. I’m glad to hear that he feels friendly towards me, for he had some reason to feel otherwise...’ (Selected Letters 2: 14). As George Arms and Christoph K. Lohmann suggest, the reason for Howells’s speculation about Greene’s possible coolness is not known (Selected Letters 2: 14n4).

By the end of the decade, however, Howells writes warmly from his new home, Redtop, to congratulate Greene on the marriage of his daughter.

Editorial Office of
The Atlantic Monthly
Winthrop Square,
Boston
October 20, 1879

Dear Harvey:

You gave me your kind message when I was at Jefferson [Ohio] and if I had been at all master of my time while I was in Cleveland, I should have let you know my whereabouts. But I was there only a day and a half, and had to be too much at the disposal of others to make an appointment with you. Of course I could not let you come all the way from Medina and take your chances of finding me. But can’t you make all this even by coming some time to Boston, and paying us a visit? That seems much simpler, and would be [illegible] pleasanter. We have a lovely little place here in the country (5 miles out), and could make you have a good time.

Elinor joins me in congratulations to you and Jane on your daughter’s marriage. Joe told me about the wedding-feast, and what a pleasant affair it was. I wish we could have been there. Remember me to the young people, and wish them joy from me.

Our hope is to see Jane here with you. My wife joins me in cordial regards to you both.

Yours affectionately,

W. D. Howells

The “lovely little place here in the country (5 miles out)” was the Howells family’s new house in Belmont, Massachusetts, which was designed
in part by William Rutherford Mead (1846–1928; Elinor Mead Howells’s brother). Called “Redtop” for its redwood shingles and red-painted roof, it had been built with substantial input from Elinor Howells. Howells and his family had moved there on July 8, 1878, and it proved to be a good place for family life as well as for Howells’s writing (Goodman and Dawson 203–5). The “daughter” to whom Howells refers is probably Sarah C. (Clara) Greene, the younger of the Greenes’ two daughters.\textsuperscript{12} That he did not mention her by name suggests that the primary relationship existed between Howells and the two elder Greenes, rather than a family friendship in which Howells had come to know the Greene children as individuals.

When Howells next wrote to Greene, on May 14, 1885, \textit{The Rise of Silas Lapham} was appearing in serial form in \textit{Century Magazine}.

302 Beacon Street
Boston
May 14, 1885

Dear Harvey:

I don’t know how you will take the turn that the love-affairs have taken in Silas Lapham but I hope you won’t think them too recreant to tradition. You old-fashioned novel-readers will have to be treated like “offensive partizans” in the reform of fiction. I shall look to Jane to defend me, in any event.

I should like dearly to see you both, and I hope sometime soon to do so. But I am a slave to my trade, and I hardly see the hour when I can have off long enough to enjoy myself.

I am sorry to hear of your sickness. I am very well myself, but Elinor is a standard invalid, and Winifred has no health. Mildred and John are [tough?]. With our love to Jane. Yours ever,

Will

The principal “love-affair” in \textit{The Rise of Silas Lapham}, to which Howells refers, is doubly unconventional: first, Tom Corey, the young scion of an old Boston family, behaves unconventionally by wanting to go into Silas Lapham’s paint business instead of spending his days in genteel idleness; and second, he falls in love with Penelope Lapham, the less beautiful and more outspoken of Silas’s two daughters. The affectionate tone with which Howells addresses both Greenes is similar to that of his earlier letters of the 1850s; and, as he had done in the letter to Harvey and Jane Greene in 1857, Howells includes Jane as a figure with decided literary opinions of her own, since she is to “defend” his realism against what he teasingly
calls Harvey’s defense of traditional novels. As part of his humor, Howells uses the same terms for enemies in the “realism war” that had been applied to those whom Greene had fought at Vicksburg and in the Red River campaign. Perhaps inevitably, the letter returns to the topic of the Howells family’s illnesses, for at this time the mysterious nervous malady that had plagued Winifred since she was sixteen was intensifying. In 1885 and 1886, as she stubbornly refused to eat or exercise, the Howells family moved from city to city throughout the Northeast in a desperate search for a cure. Winifred ended up a patient of S. Weir Mitchell (1829-1914) in 1889, the year she died of heart failure in Mitchell’s care (Goodman and Dawson 295).

In 1886, Greene sent Howells Reminiscences of the War, a privately printed volume in an edition of fifty copies, based on letters he had written home during the Civil War. Howells had begun writing the “Editor’s Study” columns for Harper’s New Monthly Magazine in January of that year, and for the next six years he would continue to champion realism in this forum. The positions of the two as writer and critic were now clearly reversed. Instead of a young poet pleased by Greene’s praise or a tentative author hoping for a good notice of “Gnadenhütten” from his editor friend, Howells was now the most influential literary critic in the country and in a position to pass judgment on the memoir of Greene, his former critic and mentor.

302 Beacon Street
Boston, Aug. 29, 1886

Dear Harvey:

I got your book yesterday, and read it through last night. Even if it had not been yours, I should have found it intensely interesting. That long letter of Jane’s was excellent; how well she writes. I thank you heartily for the book, in which I was amused to find a bit of my own history embalmed. Do you think you could spare me a copy for the Boston Public Library?

You have done the right thing in printing your reminiscences just as they were written; they have a wonderful freshness and vitality.

I am just going to write to father who is to return to Jefferson [Ohio] in October. It’s a great relief to have him going back to be near Joe. I suppose I shall visit him before winter, and then I’ll get Joe to show me the way to Medina. Joe spent Friday with me. You never [saw?] such a change in a man. He’s actually well and making [illegible].

My own family are in the country so you both must receive my love for all. It’s a big lump. Yours ever,

Will.
Howells's praise of the book, which he reinforces with a request for a copy for the Boston Public Library, should be taken at face value, for *Reminiscences of the War* is indeed "intensely interesting." It contains sharp observations and balances the action-filled descriptions of engagements with vivid sensory evocations of the reality of war, such as the "zip" and "thug" of the bullets, by which the men know whether their comrades were safe or hit (68). Greene describes the daring of Colonel Joseph Anthony Mower (1827-70), the brigade commander, who escapes from his captors despite the bullet that hits him "in the face, going into one cheek, through his mouth, knocking out his teeth, and out on the other side" (32), as well as a grotesque moment when Greene, having slipped under a blanket next to a sleeping soldier on a bitterly cold night, finds himself huddled next to a Confederate corpse. Although Greene devotes much space to the fighting, he pauses to sketch brief, illuminating portraits of individuals, such as the rendering of Ulysses S. Grant (1822-85) before the siege of Vicksburg in his "slouch hat, a torn blouse, and an eye glass slung over his shoulder" (55) and vignettes such as the sight of "our boys [emptying] their haversacks" for the starving Confederate troops until "every rebel you see is going about munching a hard tack" (65) after the siege was over. He has a keen eye for the effects of war on civilians, which affected the "fine looking old man" who, as the Union troops set fire to his mill, "put his hand to his head and slowly walked away as if his heart" were breaking (54), as well as the "'poor cuss' standing disconsolately by a dilapidated old cabin, watching the soldiers steal his cabbage and onions" (51).

As befits Greene's antislavery politics, *Reminiscences* has much to say about the "mildew of human slavery" as a "blasting curse to a country" (16). At Bate's plantation in Mississippi, he learns that female slaves were made to line up three times a year and those who were not pregnant received twenty lashes (53). He notes frankly the ways in which treating human beings as property leads to other repellant practices, such as incest, when he observes a "young white woman," a slave, whose master was both her father and her child's father (36). When discussing the injustices of slavery, Greene wrote openly about following his strong principles rather than army regulations. He describes at length his company's helping a slave, Jimmy, to escape to Illinois in defiance of General Henry Wager Halleck's (1815-72) order that escaped slaves should not be harbored in the camps (7-8), and he rounds out this story by relating his later accidental meeting with a free and relatively prosperous Jimmy years later on a riverboat (86). Greene was equally, if injudiciously, frank when giving his opinions of those in command. He praised Grant for his steady judgment and effective tactics but called George B. McClellan (1826-85) a "great puffed up toad" (7), stated that General Nathaniel Banks (1816-94) was "totally deficient in every element of military talent" (79), and heaped
scorn on “our brilliant Lt. Col. J. W. Jefferson,” who was drunk at Vicksburg and shot himself in the finger to avoid active duty thereafter, and who “would injure me in any way he could, if he could do so stealthily” (82).11

But Greene spares time in his book for glimpses of family and home life as well, including a letter from Jane detailing her visit to the regiment’s encampment in Tennessee. On January 6, 1863, he comments on the marriage of his old friend Howells, the “bit of . . . history embalmed” mentioned in Howells’s 1886 letter:

Your news from home is delightfully interesting; not the least bit of the information is that of the marriage of our dear friend Will D. Howells. Quite a little romance, wasn’t it, his betrothed going all the way to Paris, where they were married, and then going to that paradise of lovers, Venice. How glad I am that Will got the appointment as Consul to Venice. It was the opportunity he had long wanted; and he will make good use of it in gathering materials for future literary efforts. I wonder often how he must feel, away from home while this war is going on. (40)

It was not the first time that Greene had found himself in the thick of action in pursuit of a moral cause while Howells observed from a safe distance, and the contrast between the choice of a life of action versus one of contemplation could not have been lost on Howells. Greene concludes Reminiscences with an account of his decision to leave the service after three and a half years as the war was winding down, heading north “with several other officers who had likewise been mustered out, with our honorable discharges and a record of our services inscribed on them, in our pockets” (84)—a picture at odds with one that Howells would give in Years of My Youth.

The last of the unpublished letters to Greene reflects Howells’s growing interest in Tolstoy.

Lee’s Hotel, Auburndale, Massachusetts
May 14, 1887
Dear Harvey:

I got your letter yesterday morning, and the Gazette came in the evening. I read your printed notice through to the first-rate “ad.” of the close. It made me yell, and it had the same effect on Elinor, whom I tried it on instantly. But your words about my sketch were most touching to me and I felt your kind heart in every one. It’s perfectly delightful to think of your coming with Jane to meet me at Jefferson. I start—or intend to start—tomorrow, and I shall be overjoyed to see you both.
The old Hamilton days have often commended themselves to me as extremely good material, and I suppose I shall use them yet, tho’ just how, I don’t know.

I’m glad you find Tolstoi so great. For me, he’s a test; I find that no fool or liar likes him. His books have changed my whole way of looking at life; I can’t see myself or others as I once did.

But I hope soon to talk all these things out with you, and many others.

Yours affectionately,
Will

Upset at the injustice of the legal system in the case of those accused in the Haymarket Riots of 1886, Howells sought solace in Tolstoy’s works, reading *War and Peace* (1869) in January 1887, although he found Tolstoy’s Christian socialism naive (Goodman and Dawson 286). But the “change” Howells speaks of is nonetheless genuine, and on August 12 he sent Greene other works by Tolstoy: *Anna Karenina* (1875–77), *Childhood* (1852), *Boyhood* (1854), *Youth* (1856), *My Religion* (1884), *My Confession* (1882), and *Ivan Ilyitch* (1887), with *What to Do?* (1886; also known as *What Is to Be Done?*) to follow upon its publication. The timing is significant: in March, two months before his letter to Greene, Howells had been called “the moral writer, the idealist, Howells,” at a gathering of literary celebrities in honor of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–82; see Goodman and Dawson 276). As the Haymarket prisoners were tried and sentenced in August, the month in which he sent Greene a shipment of books by Tolstoy, Howells moved from idealism to action, writing private letters to those with jurisdiction over the case and then a public appeal on behalf of those condemned to death that was printed in the *New-York Tribune* and the *Chicago Tribune*. For taking this unpopular stand, Howells found himself “demonized in the press,” as even the *New-York Tribune* tried to distance itself from his letter (Goodman and Dawson 283). Like Greene, he had acted upon his beliefs, and, like Greene, he had earned little but the satisfaction of knowing he was right for doing so.

But Howells also sounded a happier note in the letter by referring to the men’s early days in Ohio. The “printed notice through to the first-rate ‘ad.’” is Greene’s notice of Howells’s “‘My Year in a Log Cabin,’” which appeared in the May 12 *Youth’s Companion*. In the May 13, 1887, issue of the *Medina County [OH] Gazette*, Greene reviews Howells’s “bit of autobiography” and reminisces about the boyhood pastimes he enjoyed with Will and Joseph Howells:

> We remember that a spear hurled from the hands of one of the braves in a close quarter conflict struck the future poet and novelist
near one of the eyes, breaking up the battle in a panic, and the swolen [sic] face surgically treated and bound up by his dear mother. . . . Will spent many years in Venice and Italy, gathering the honey of literature, and reaching the topmost round in the ladder of fame in America as a novelist; "the oldest brother" works as hard getting out the Ashtabula "Sentinel" every Thursday as he did in getting out the Hamilton "Intelligencer" or Dayton daily before he had a beard, and the writer after two years in Kansas in "border ruffian" times and four years in Dixie, has for nearly twenty years been getting out the Medina GAZETTE every Thursday, terms $1.50 per year. ("Howells’ Autobiography")

If Greene felt any regrets that Howells had surpassed him by "gathering the honey of literature" and "reaching the topmost round in the ladder of fame" while he, despite his active service, had settled for the life of a small-town editor, the sting of the comparison is muted by the humor of the close of the "first-rate ad."

The final letter from Howells to Greene, that of May 27, 1890, appeared in the June 6, 1890, issue of the Medina County [OH] Gazette and News ("He Sleeps" 4; ellipses in original):

Boston
May 27, 1890
My Dear Harvey:

I have just got home and found your letter to Joe, which he had forwarded to me. I wish I could give you by hand and mouth some touch of the sympathy I feel with you in your trials. Life is not what we saw it when we were boys; but at least it has love in it, and love is but at times. I have glimpses of a kind of future man as much above me as I am above a "dragon of the prince," who will not always suffer in suffering, but will know that it is all to some end and what the end is. . . . I have not forgotten the talk we had in those trouser-tearing rustic chairs under father's spruce trees and your frank censure of some of my tendencies. I think that what you said helped me to get a new and true start. . . .

Your affectionate friend,

Will.

In addition to the general consolation the letter offers, Howells refers once again to their boyhood days and Greene's "frank censure" of Howells's "tendencies," those that inclined him to hypochondria and self-doubt. As he explains in Years of My Youth, Greene gave him "specific
instructions . . . for my entry into the great world; as if he would realize in
my prosperous future the triumphs which fortune had denied him in his
past,” including advice to “face the proudest down and make audacity do
the part of the courage I was lacking in” (128). In praising Greene’s giving
him a “new and true start,” Howells pays tribute to Greene and the impor-
tance of the mentoring received at his hands in those “trouser-tearing
rustic chairs,” even as he credits Greene with a degree of precognition of
their opposing fortunes in the future.

A quarter of a century later, as Howells began to write Years of My Youth,
Greene’s role was transformed from that of important (if apparently
brusque) mentor to that of a suffering innocent as Howells began to focus
on another part of Greene’s story: the tale of a man unjustly accused by a
superior officer. In a letter to his sister Aurelia dated July 21, 1915, Howells
writes of an incident he had not discussed in any of the letters to Greene:

Another thing: Did either of you know of poor Harvey Greene’s being
forced out of the army in dishonor by his superior officer who lied
against him? I used to hear of it from Joe, who said that Harvey always
meant to kill the wretch if they met. But of course this didn’t happen;
the man died. (Selected Letters 6: 83)

In their note to this passage, Arms and Lohmann explain that, “In a later
letter to Aurelia, 4 February 1916 (MH), Howells wrote that ‘Harvey was
a fine fellow, intense and brave; but his life seems to have been a defeat;
and poor Jane’s.’ ” (Selected Letters 6: 83). Howells continues in this vein
in Years of My Youth, which he was writing at the time: “H. G. was among
the first to volunteer for the great war, and quickly rose from the ranks to
be captain, but somehow he incurred the enmity of a superior officer who
was able to have him cashiered in dishonor from the army” (122). The
retelling in Years is more dramatic, since being cashiered, unlike simply
resigning from the service, involves public disgrace.

Greene’s service record provides the missing context for the circum-
stances for Howells’s story of his “defeat.” Greene had held several posi-
tions of responsibility during his tour of duty, including Acting Inspector
General for the “District of North East Louisiana” on June 19, 1863, with
duties that included inspecting the arms, clothing, and other equipment
of the regiments under his jurisdiction. Whether a misunderstanding arose
from Greene’s reporting a deficiency in a regimental commander or from
some other cause, on July 23, 1864, Special Orders No. 246, section 35,
states that Greene “is hereby dishonorably dismissed [from] the service of
the United States, with loss of all pay and allowances, for habitual drunken-
ness on duty; defrauding the government by selling public property, and
appropriating the proceeds to his own use.” That Greene, who was so
idealistic about the antislavery cause that he had given up his business and
gone to Kansas in 1854, and so earnest that he had written scathing com­
ments about those who sought to defraud the army and its soldiers in
letters home, would betray the Union cause seems highly unlikely; it is more
probable that he incurred the wrath of a superior officer who lied against
him, as Howells claimed. Further evidence that Greene had been unjustly
accused appears in the reversal of his dismissal on January 13, 1865, in
Special Orders No. 20, section 11, which states that Greene “is, upon the
recommendation of his Commanding General, hereby restored to his com­
mand, with pay from the date at which he rejoins his regiment for duty.”
Greene rejoined his company on February 26, 1865, and was “Honorable
Mustered out of U. S. Service” the next day. Of this contretemps, he men­
tions only the honorable discharge and its date in Reminiscences (84).

Despite this experience and the bitterness that might have been its logi­
cal consequence, a bitterness at which Howells hints in his late letters,
Greene remained involved with the military and veterans' affairs after the
war. He attended at least one later encampment of the regiment, in 1889
(Williams 123), and his obituary provides an extensive record of his ser­
vice.15 Upton and Cutler state that “it seems pathetically fitting that his
death should occur soon after he had officiated so tenderly in the decora­
tion of the soldier graves of the Medina veterans” (375), a circumstance
noted in his obituary, which quotes Greene as saying “I can now die more
easily” after the visit of his army comrades to his sickroom (“He Sleeps”
1). Greene remained an eminent man in his own sphere: he plays a promi­
nent role in the History of Medina County (Perrin et al.), gave the “sketch
of national history” oration at the July 1876 dedication of the Soldiers’
Monument of Medina, and was called upon to speak at local ceremonies
marking the death of General Grant (Perrin et al. 364).

Given Greene’s record, then, why did Howells see his life as a “defeat”? The
unjust treatment Greene apparently received at the hands of a dishon­
est superior does not seem to have soured him on the institution of the
Army, if public sources are to be believed, nor are there intimations in the
existing letters that he wanted a more active literary career or a wider
degree of recognition than he had as a respected small-town editor. How­
ells did not provide Greene with the extensive literary suggestions that he
regularly gave to young aspiring writers, so presumably Greene did not ask
for this kind of advice. Greene’s chronic illness, which his service record
dates from the earliest years of the war, evoked sympathy from Howells in
at least one letter, yet despite—or perhaps because of—his family’s perennial
ill health, Howells seems not to have focused on this as a cause of the
“defeat.”16 Although Howells reports that Greene wanted to kill the
“wretch” who had injured his reputation, he did not report Greene as saying
that his life had been ruined thereby, although that is the interpretation
that Howells put on the incident. Since the narrative of defeat emerges late in Howells's account of Greene's life, another possibility is that, as Howells assessed his own early life and subsequent career for *Years of My Youth*, he compared it with that of Greene: the timid young reporter writing letters about chickens and the dashing "border ruffian" fighting injustice in bleeding Kansas had fulfilled their early promise in very different ways, with one exceeding all expectations by becoming the foremost literary critic and realist novelist of his day and the other, his life blighted by an unjust accusation, confounding those early hopes by submerging himself in running a small-town newspaper, as Howells's father and brother Joseph had done.

What emerges most strongly from Howells's late account of James Harvey Greene is the portrait of a brave man unjustly accused by those in power over him. Greene was a friend; an intellectual companion; and, in an ironic reversal of the role Howells usually played for others, an editor who was able to support and promote Howells's works. He played a role hitherto unexplored in Howells's life and work: that of the impetuous man of action who sacrificed much for his intense idealism, consistently stood up for his principles, and paid the price. As Howells writes in *Years of My Youth*, "[R]omance for romance, I think their [Harvey and Jane Greene's] romance of the greatest pathos of any I have known, and it has phases of the highest tragedy" (122). The "highest tragedy" may be that, after such an auspicious beginning, Greene had been wronged by circumstances in such a way that his life never regained the momentum of his early promise. It is also possible that, in comparing the idealistic youth and wise mentor who gave Howells "a new start" with the small-town editor and memoir writer that Greene became, Howells looked back on Greene's life in *Years of My Youth* with a mixture of nostalgia for that world and relief that he had escaped from it.

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NOTES
1. Greene's name appears in various forms and spellings both in Howells's letters and in print sources. Howells usually spells the name "Harvey Green" in writing to others (see the letter to Anne T. Howells of January 28, 1865 [*Selected Letters* 1: 208]), but he addresses some envelopes to "J. H. Green" (omitting the final e) and includes the salutation "Dear Hervey" (rather than "Harvey") in his earliest letter to Greene. Greene's memoir *Reminiscences of the War: Bivouacs, Marches, Skirmishes and Battles* (1886) was published under the name J. H. Greene, the name by which he was also known as an editor; his wife's letter included in that volume identifies him as "Harvey," so presumably that was the preferred spelling. Greene's service record lists him as "Capt. James H. Greene." He is listed as "James Hervey Greene"
in William Cowsle's *Ohio Authors and Their Books: Biographical Data and Selective Bibliographies for Ohio Authors, Native and Resident, 1796–1850* and as "Harvey Green" in Goodman and Dawson's *William Dean Howells: A Writer's Life*.

2. See, for example, the sole reference to Greene in Goodman and Dawson: "A family friend, Harvey Green, cashiered for incurring the wrath of a senior officer, would, like Sam, drag out his life in one long 'defeat.'" (101).

3. James Harvey Greene was born in Middletown, Butler County, Ohio, on June 2, 1833 (Upton and Cutler 374).

4. Redpath was in Boston in the spring of 1857, and later that year he expressed similar sentiments about "free-state settlers, such as George W. Brown and others" who supported Kansas Governor Robert J. Walker (1801–69), calling them "misereble dough-faces and syco-phants" (McKivigan 85). The envelope is addressed to Greene at the *Cleveland Leader*, where Greene worked during the winter of 1856 ("He Sleeps" 1).

5. The WorldCat detailed record for the *Prairie du Chien Leader* lists Greene as an editor, with "W. Hill," from July 18, 1857, to February 12, 1859, and Greene alone as editor from March 12 to December 8, 1859. The 1860 Census lists his occupation as "Publisher." "W. Hill" is William Hill (1831–1918); he later moved to Neodesha, Kansas, and worked in a bank ("Neodesha in 1873" 243n1).

6. Although she is referred to as "Jane" in *Reminiscences* and in Howells's letters, Jane signs herself "Rachel Jane" in the letter interpolated into *Reminiscences*, and the 1890 U.S. War Department's "Special Schedule—Surviving Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines, and Widows" lists her as "Rebecca [sic] Jane."

7. See "He Sleeps in Peace" for Greene's account of his Army service.

8. Greene is listed in WorldCat as the editor of the *Fremont Journal* from October 12 to December 28, 1866, and Howells addresses the 1868 letter to "Mr. J. H. Greene, (Editor, Journal), Fremont, Sandusky County, Ohio."

9. "Vic" is Victoria, Howells's younger sister (1838–86). "Joe" is Joseph. Howells's oldest brother (1832–1912). The manuscript of the letter has double hyphens (–), a printer's mark, instead of single hyphens.

10. Howells was "the son of an Englishman" because his grandfather, Joseph Howells (1783–1858), had moved his family from Hay (Hay-on-Wye) in Wales in 1808 when William Cooper Howells was one year old (Cady 1). Strongly opposed to slavery, as was his father, W. D. Howells may have also been alluding approvingly to England's earlier abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and of slavery throughout the Empire in 1833, in contrast to the continuing support for slavery in the United States shown by the Fugitive Slave Act (1850). On May 24, 1854, a few weeks before Howells wrote this letter, a former slave named Anthony Burns (1834–62) had been arrested in Boston under this legislation, and two days later, a crowd of abolitionists tried to free him before he could be sent back into slavery, an event much in the news and possibly on Howells's mind as well.

11. A fellow Ohioan, Secretary of the Treasury under Lincoln, and (at the time of Howells’s letter) the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, Chase was among the first to invite Howells into the social circles of Columbus, Ohio, when both men lived there in 1858. Having failed to gain the Republican nomination for president in 1860, Chase switched parties for the 1868 election but was equally unsuccessful in seeking the Democratic nomination for the presidency, and Howells did not get to return to Italy as minister to Florence.

12. Sarah C. is called "Clara" in the 1870 census. That she is the daughter referred to here is suggested by the fact that the 1880 census lists the Greenes' older daughter Ellen (Nelly) as still living at home.

13. In the early 1880s, after several years as consul at Toronto, Howells's father, William C. Howells, resigned his post and bought a farm in Virginia, an ill-fated venture. Joseph Howells's illness was thought to be due to overwork, and, given William C. Howells's age,
having both family members near one another was a relief to Howells (Goodman and Dawson 265–66 and passim).

14. It is not clear from the service record whether Jefferson is the superior officer who had Greene dismissed from the Army, although this statement seems to hint at such a connection. Before the regiment advanced to Cornith, Jefferson was relieved of command on January 7, 1863, at the suggestion of Brigadier General Charles S. Hamilton and on the order of General Grant (Simon 237). However, John Melvin Williams’s “The Eagle Regiment” reproduces letters written in November 1864 from Grant and General William Starke Rosecrans (1819–98) praising Jefferson’s conduct in battle (155–56).

15. A note from T. Y. Crowell to Howells dated August 12, 1887 (and sent on to Greene with the annotation “With love, Will”), states that these books have been sent to Captain J. H. Greene at Howells’s request.

16. This letter is not at the Houghton Library as the notation “MH” suggests, according to Heather Cole, Assistant Curator of Modern Books and Manuscripts (personal communication to the author, Aug. 21, 2009).

17. Although Greene is not given a full biographical sketch in Williams’s “The Eagle Regiment,” as are the other company commanders, he is singled out for his bravery during the skirmishes at the Battle of Young’s Point in June 1863 (18).

18. Greene had suffered intermittently from “purulent cystitis, or... inflammation of the bladder” since 1861 and was intermittently in “excruciating pain” for many years with this illness, including the months before his death from it (“He Sleeps” 1).

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