

**WHILE CHARLIE  
WAS AWAY**

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While Charlie Was Away by Mrs. Poultney Bigelow

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**MRS. POULTNEY BIGELOW**

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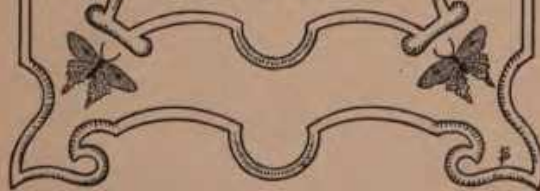


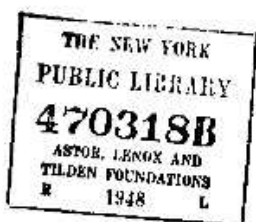
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By  
**Mrs. Poultney Bigelow**



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# While Charlie Was Away

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Mrs. March to Lord Darraway

LETTER I

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*My dear Bill,*

48X732 Why did you go and bury yourself in Ireland, and thus deprive me of my only safety-valve? To be sure I still talk a great deal, but when I seem to be most loquacious I'm always keeping something back. With you I told everything. Perhaps that is why you went to Ireland. You thought that "the price of peace" was to put that stormy bit of water between us! Lately I have wondered why we gave up corresponding, and I've begun to feel the want of it terribly. Can't we begin again? Do you know, Bill, I've got to a time in my life

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when I need support—not only financial (which I can't accept even from you), but a kind of moral prop, which only my cousin Bill can supply. The time of life I've got to is horrid ; people don't talk about it much ; I call it the pepper-and-salt stage—that is, the age when one's front hair begins not to match one's back hair. I still look young in the back ; my waist goes in beautifully, thanks to a resolute meat diet during a portion of every year. My toque (which is always a smart one—you remember my taste in hats ?) shows warm chestnut locks at the back ; but in front—isn't it disgusting ? Nature has crimped my hair, but the early snow of premature middle age has begun to powder the waves. Men tell me it is “ fetching ”—the sort of men who swear they love a pug nose unless they're talking to a woman with a Grecian one ! Thank Heaven you are all liars ! What should we do if you told us the truth ? Yes, Bill, I

### Mrs. March to Lord Darraway

who was once Early English have become medieval. Of course, in my case inconvenient milestones are lacking—I have no children. I often wish I had had a baby or two—to *snoodle*—their heads are so nice to browse on. The softest things in the world are horses' noses, the soles of new boots, and babies' heads. Borrow a baby, and see if I'm not right ; you've got horses and boots.

What is so tiresome about me is that, as my face grows older my heart grows younger. All the blows which I've sustained during my earthly pilgrimage have left my powers of credulity unimpaired. I am always meeting somebody whom I think I could love. The somebody always has a previous attachment ; or else he sails for South Africa, or India, or the North Pole, a day or two after I meet him. Charlie doesn't count. What *is* the good of a husband who's a sailor, and who lives principally on