



# The Complete Letters of Constance Fenimore Woolson

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“Meticulously edited and contextualized, Dean’s edition of Woolson’s complete letters opens the door to an extraordinarily gifted writer’s world. It offers depth to Woolson studies, but it also connects Woolson to the nineteenth-century literary marketplace in new and fascinating ways. We see Woolson the tough but astute literary critic, the precise businesswoman, and the keen cultural critic of the North, the South, and Europe. Perhaps most importantly, Woolson’s letters counter many false impressions of an isolated woman. This was a life *lived*.”—Sharon M. Harris, University of Connecticut

“Uncovers the complex, witty, cosmopolitan, imaginative Woolson, who appears more obliquely in her prose and poetry. Peopled by the famous, the infamous, and the unknown, the letters sparkle with intelligence and energy, providing insight into contemporary attitudes that Woolson sometimes shared, sometimes satirized, and sometimes defied, while they reveal an ample sensibility that anticipates today’s concerns for the environment, regional and national identity, and global citizenship.”—Karen L. Kilcup, author of *Robert Frost and Feminine Literary Tradition*

“*The Complete Letters of Constance Fenimore Woolson* vibrate with the intelligence and sensitivity of an immensely private woman who reached out through her correspondence in search of like-minded souls. She found comrades among some of the most accomplished writers of her era as well as among men of science. Ultimately, these letters reveal the broad scope of a well-traveled life and the depth of an intensely observant artist. Every reader interested in the lives of nineteenth-century authors or women should savor every one of this extraordinary writer’s letters.”—Anne Boyd Rioux, president, Constance Fenimore Woolson Society

Constance Fenimore Woolson (1840–1894) led a colorful life, travelling throughout the U.S. and Europe, becoming a literary star, whose work was published in the premier magazines of her day. She wrote critically acclaimed novels, short stories, and poetry before her mysterious and untimely death in Venice at age fifty-three.

Sharon Dean has recompiled, dated, and, in many cases, physically reassembled Woolson’s extant correspondence from nearly forty sources. A trenchant critic of the customs and mores of her age, Woolson, in her letters, offers rich personal detail alongside nuanced ruminations on contemporary political and social conditions.

Sharon L. Dean is professor emerita of English at Rivier College in New Hampshire. One of the foremost experts on Constance Fenimore Woolson, her most recent publication is *Constance Fenimore Woolson: Selected Stories and Travel Narratives*.

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