THE FANNY WARD PAPERS

The Oskar Diethelm Library
DeWitt Wallace Institute for the History of Psychiatry
Weill Cornell Medical College
525 East 68th Street
New York, New York 10065

Arranged and described by:
Janice Quinter
November 1988

Provenance

The Fanny Ward Papers were purchased from the Old Hickory Bookshop in Brinklow, Maryland in 1967 with funds donated by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Blatt.

Names of individuals may not be used in publications.

The collection is comprised of .8 cubic ft. housed in two .4 cubic ft. boxes.

Biography

Frances Margaret Ward, known to her family, doctors and attendants as Fanny Ward, was dismissed from a girl’s school in England in the 19th century at age 15 due to mental illness. She blamed this situation on the death of her father, which had left her an orphan. The letters in this collection take Fanny up to age 29, at which time it appears that there was a slight possibility that she would be paroled if her exemplary behavior continued.

Scope and Content

The Fanny Ward Papers date from 1878 to 1895, with the bulk of the letters dating from 1879 to 1893. The collection consists of well over 100 letters discussing the mental illness of this young woman and showing the development and range of her illness over a period of fourteen years. The letters were written by her brother Alexander Ward (who was primarily responsible for her care), her aunt, Dr. John W. Fry (who housed and cared for her), and her nurse Harriet Farnell. Some are written by Fanny herself. In addition to the letters, the collection includes medical reports, commitment papers, and official letters from the Lord Chancellor’s Visitors Office. The
letters and documents show that many had hopes for Fanny’s recovery. There are graphic
descriptions of Fanny’s relapses, which necessitated confinement and restraint. Letters tell of
Fanny writing lucid but extravagant letters to Queen Victoria or to philanthropists asking for
donations to found a hospital in Madras, India. There is a reference to a Dr. Maudesley [sic] as
having seen Fanny at the onset of her illness, probably referring to Dr. Henry Maudsley (1835-
1918), the son-in-law of John Conolly and the well-known founder of the Maudsley Hospital in
London. The letters provide a very personal chronicle of the pathology of a mentally ill person.
The collection also includes bills and receipts for medical services rendered and financial records
pertaining to the Ward family’s account.

A small amount of material relates to Fanny’s brother, Charles James Ward, who also suffered
from mental illness and died in 1883.

Inventory

Box # 1
Folder 1 Bills for Fanny Ward’s expenses for 1877-1878 1878

2 Letter from Fanny Ward’s sister, Madeline
Letters from her brother, Alexander, re: Fanny Ward’s care, board,
ilness and billing
Letters from C. N. Hodge 1879-1883

3 Letters written by Harriet Farnell, Fanny’s nurse, to Madeline
and Alexander Ward re: Fanny Ward’s violent attacks, diet, etc.
and Miss Farnell’s care 1881-1882

4 Letters of financial accounts and letter written by Harriet Farnell 1882

5 Monthly financial accounts for Fanny Ward’s nursing care 1882

6 Letters from Harriet Farnell to Fanny Ward’s sister 1882

7 Letters written by Fanny Ward mentioning insanity 1882

8 Letters from Fanny Ward 1883

9 Bills for Fanny Ward’s nursing services and clothing 1881-1884
10 Letters from John W. Fry (Fanny Ward’s doctor) to Alexander Ward re: Fanny Ward’s care and illness
Receipts 1884

11 Letters from John W. Fry to Alexander Ward re: Fanny Ward’s care and illness
Letter written by Fanny Ward
Receipt 1885

12 Letters from John W. Fry to Alexander Ward re: Fanny Ward’s care and illness 1-3/1886

13 Letters from John W. Fry to Alexander Ward re: Fanny Ward’s care and illness
Letters from Fanny ward complaining of treatment 8-10/1886

14 Receipts for care of Fanny Ward 1885-1886

15 Bills and receipts for care of Fanny Ward 1886

16 Receipts to pay for the care of Fanny Ward 1887-1888

17 Correspondence between John W. Fry and Alexander Ward re: Fanny Ward’s care and illness
Receipts 1887

18 Extract from order re: custody of Fanny Ward committed to her brother and sister, Alexander and Janet Ward, respectively 1887

19 Correspondence between Alexander Ward and John W. Fry and others re: Fanny Ward’s care and illness
Receipt 1888

20 Correspondence between Alexander Ward and lawyers from the Lord Chancellor’s Visitors Office
Court order re: Fanny Ward’s stock dividends 1888-1893

21 Letters from John W. Fry to Alexander Ward and letters with others re: Fanny Ward’s care and illness
Receipts 1889
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Thirteen telegrams re: Fanny Ward’s condition</td>
<td>1886-1892</td>
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<td><strong>Box # 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Folder 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Correspondence between John W. Fry and Alexander Ward re: Fanny Ward’s care and illness</td>
<td>1890</td>
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<td>Correspondence with others</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Correspondence of Alexander Ward, James Adam and John W. Fry re: condition of Fanny Ward</td>
<td>1891-1892</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Correspondence between John W. Fry and Alexander Ward and others re: Fanny Ward’s care and illness</td>
<td>1892</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Letters written by Eveline S. Collier to Fanny Ward’s sister about Fanny Ward’s condition</td>
<td>1893</td>
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<td>Letter written by Fanny Ward in reply</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Correspondence of Fanny Ward, Alexander Ward, and Eveline S. Collier</td>
<td>1893</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Letters from Eveline S. Collier to Fanny Ward’s sister re: Fanny Ward’s condition</td>
<td>1893</td>
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<td>Letter from Fanny Ward</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Statement and letter re: amount to be spent on maintenance of Fanny Ward</td>
<td>1893</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Letters from Fanny Ward re: India Hospital plans</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Letters from Fanny Ward</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Letters from Janet Ward, Fanny Ward’s sister</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Letters by Harriet Farnell re: condition of Fanny Ward</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Undated letters from C. W. Hodge, Eveline S. Collier and Fanny Ward’s sister</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Lord Chancellor’s Visitors Office Letters from lawyers to Alexander Ward re: estate, care of Fanny Ward, stocks, bonds and dividends</td>
<td>1885-1893</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Letter re: investment of 250 pounds in Amsterdam Marine Insurance Co.</td>
<td>1895</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Letters re: illness of Fanny Ward’s brother, Charles James Ward and other papers relating to him Receipts</td>
<td>1882-1883</td>
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