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The fourth of eight books of the correspondence of George Santayana. George Santayana published The Realm of Matter (1930) and The Genteel Tradition at Bay (1931). He continued work on Book Three of Realms of Being, The Realm of Truth, and on his novel, The Last Puritan. Citing his commitment to his writing and his intention to retire from academia, he declined offers from Harvard University for the Norton Chair of Poetry and for a position as William James Professor of Philosophy, as well as offers for positions at the New School for Social Research and Brown University. The deaths of his half sisters, Susan Sturgis de Sastre and Josephine Sturgis, in 1928 and 1930, respectively, were extremely distressing to him. Santayana and Charles Strong continued their epistolary debate over the nature and perception of reality and the problem of knowledge. The book also includes letters to Robert Bridges, Cyril Clemens, Morris R. Cohen, Curt John Ducasse, Sydney Hook, Horace Meyer Kallen, Walter Lippmann, Ralph Barton Perry, William Lyon Phelps, and Herbert W. Schneider. Santayana sent many letters with articles and reviews to journalists Wendell T. Bush. Henry Seidel Canby, Wilbur Cross, and John Middleton Murry.

Discussion of his novel and continuing work on Realms of Being took place with Otto Kyllmann and John Hall Wheelock, his editors at Constable and Scribner's. Although Santayana now made the Hotel Bristol in Rome his permanent residence, he continued to travel in England, France, and Italy.