

No. 54 West 46th St.
N.Y. Dec. 28th 1884.

My own dearest Harry,

Have you had the blues all today and yesterday? You have no idea how terribly I feel about your having no letter today. I wonder if you have forgiven me or if you are blaming me & thinking all kinds of hard tho'ts about me. I cant blame you if you do. To have a letter fail after you had been doing so much for my happiness was — oh! it was too much. I cant get over it at all. If you are more unhappy about it today than I am, I'm sorry for you. I have no excuse for the letter being delayed, no one to blame but myself, & my stupidity. Oh! it makes me so provoked. I was feeling so badly because I didn't get my Xmas Eve letter in in time to reach you Sat, & then because I hadn't a chance to write you a whole vol. on Xmas, for that was what I wanted to do, tho' I couldn't find a quiet place, but I kept up a wonderful thinking about you all day and evening, & no one could cheat me out of that, but to think that after all, the letter shouldn't get in on Friday in time for you to get it Sunday, was the last straw. I think the letter was fated, and I half think it will be lost and you'll never receive it, and then I shall have a double fit. I am so glad I sent the telegram. I should have been utterly wretched if it hadn't been for that. I know it didn't comfort you yesterday, but it warned you to keep away from the Post Office today. I felt that I couldn't let you go over today in full expectation of a letter and find none. I felt, under the circumstances, that it would upset you terribly. Friday I was just sick over it and it has worried me ever since. This Sunday, of all times was the very worst one to fail on, & you will be justified in going for me, tho' goodness knows I'm sick enough over it without that. I mailed (pen has another fit) a letter to you today and enclosed letters from Sue & Carrie & Mag. Harry dearest is Mag right about your picture? Are you thinner than ever before and very very sad? It looks to me so much better than you did the last few times I saw you. Your expression during the last few days we spent together, I couldn't understand then, but I know now why you used to look so unspeakably sad and troubled at times. Several times at Madison I noticed it, but that afternoon on the hill was the worst time while I was at Madison. Were you particularly full that day? I have often wondered since Sept. 8th, if you didn't have a harder time than usual to keep from speaking then. Didn't you come very near ending our misery that day? It seems to me now, as I remember it. There were other times during my visit, but that seems to me to have been about your weakest time, and your hardest fight, as I look back at it. Then during most of your visit here, your face puzzled me. Whenever you spoke of going West a terribly sad expression took possession of your face, and it wasn't a mere passing shadow. It used to stay for some time, & when you came to the last day of your visit, that "black Thurs" I saw it again, (that was one of my very worst days, and I wouldn't have cared to repeat it,) but the very worst expression I ever saw on your face, was the 8th of Sept. Just after we left the house together, we spoke of your going so far away, and of how long it would be before you could come home. We didn't say much, for we both felt too badly to talk, but just before we reached the corner, you said in a peculiar & unnatural voice "Oh! Effie this breaks me all up." I looked up at you, and you had an expression on your face, that I hope I'll never see again. I tried to cover up my own feelings, & I remember I tried to force a laugh. It sounded forced, and I was afraid I had overdone the thing and had given my self away, but you didn't notice that it was unnatural, and I was so glad you didn't know it from a real one. You said "How can you laugh?" I couldn't believe that I was the cause of your sadness; tho' I couldn't fail to notice your

expression etc and tho' I know that you hated to go, ~~but~~ I couldn't believe that I made it hard. I tho't when you reproached me for laughing, that it was because you tho't me unsympathetic because I didn't realize how hard it was for you to go so far away from your home & family. I did think it was hard, but you see I had to appear to be cold and unfeeling, for if I had given my feelings the least chance, or least start, they would take advantage of me. I knew this, and knew the only way I could manage them was to keep every spark of them smothered, for the least thing would set them ablaze and if they once got a start nothing would stop them, and you looked as tho' you tho't me a heartless unfeeling wretch, but that was better than to let you guess my real state. Your expression I'll never forget, and your picture has none of that, and I tho't you were looking better than when you left. ~~And~~ It seems to me the most wonderful picture I ever saw. It almost seems to have a life, and the expressions actually seems to change. Sometimes you look at me in the most loving way, & it doesn't strike me as being sad, but at other times you look so sad & unhappy. Friday when I came home from the P.O. you looked at me so reproachfully, that it made me feel worse than before I looked at you. You didn't look cross or angry, but so so sad & hurt, and do you know I could not look at you. I never saw such a picture. It seems to me that it shows you in all your moods. Perhaps it is because I know your face & all its expressions so perfectly, that I can imagine you in every mood, but mamma says that to her, it ~~see~~ is so natural, that it seems to be alive some times. Jule thinks as Mag does and said so at once, and this worries me. I fear I judge it too much by the way you looked toward the last of your visit, and in your picture you look so much better than you did then, that I dont see it as Mag & Jule do. They haven't seen all the other expressions, and judge more by what you are when you are yourself, and perhaps they can judge more correctly on that account. What Mag says about your reproachful look, & your displeased look, & about having to turn your face down is very good. I can understand that. Harry you promised to be careful, & I almost know you haven't been so. You also promised to let me know just how you felt, & also that you would rest during the holidays. I hear all kinds of plans for work — work — work, and dont know where the play & rest is going to come in. It isn't right & isn't fair. You said sometime ago that during the vacation you intended to spend a couple of days in Chicago. You haven't mentioned it lately, but I hope you have not given it up. Dont give it up, for you'd enjoy it. It would be a change and I know it would do you good. Go next Thurs. & stay till Saturday. It would be a nice little trip and I'm sure you need it. I have a feeling that you are not up to the mark. You are worked out, and wont own it, but I have found out about you in spite of your efforts to keep it from me. Never mind how I found it out. I wont tell you who told me, but I know it & you cant deny it. You know you cant say honestly that you are fully up to the mark and perfectly well, or that you are not in need of rest. Never mind Kingsley. You've got to take care of yourself, & if you dont I'll carry out my threat, and if I have any more such reports about you I'll take desperate measures to make you behave. I have a way now of knowing, and I'm not going to have any more nonsense, for you cant overwork without my knowing about it, and I'll never tell who keeps me informed. I have suspected for some time that you were not well, and were not doing just all you promised, and now I find out that my suspicions were correct, and you have been overworking. I give you fair warning, and I'm not going to say any more, but if you dont live up to all you promised me, I'll __well never mind. I will do something dreadful. I'll lie awake nights and think of all the worst things, and how I can best bring you to terms. Now remember I mean all this for if you are going to kill yourself, I might as well follow your

example and see if I cant do that as quickly and well as you can. I haven't begun yet, but will soon if you dont mend your evil ways. Do please Harry behave yourself and stop all this rashness. Mail a letter to me Thurs. night from Chicago, and dont do a bit of work for the two days you are there. Go sight seeing and have a good time, for you need it. You really worry me very much, for you only put me off, & wont do what I ask you when I beg you not to work so hard, but I'm not going to be put off any more and if I cant manage you one way I will another. Tell me honestly in your next whether I have been misinformed. Bother! An interruption. Monday. I hadn't a chance to finish this last evening so I must just add a few lines and send this at once. Will try and write tonight again. Your two letters of Dec. 25th rec'd this A.M., also your letter to mamma came in the same mail. Your letters lovely, & mamma delighted with her's. My darling I must go to my lesson & mail this on the way.

With unbounded love

your own, & always yours, &

yours alone.

Effie.