

Purdue  
Thursday evg  
7 PM.

[cross]mas [18]84\_

My Darling Effie

Darling is too feeble but I use it because I cant find anything that quite suits me so well as that. Don't think that if I use it often it don't mean anything for to me it means very very much indeed \_ Well then my own precious Darling I am back with you again & before I go ahead with what I was writing about when I stopped (as that topic & answering your letters seems an eternal occupation when I once start upon it) let me tell you about my Christmas & other adventures for the past day or so. On Tuesday I received two packages by mail from home. One contained a beautiful table cover for my study table & the other a screen mounted upon a brass standard to shade the light out of my eyes. You may perhaps remember that I am slightly particular about my lights. Then on Tuesday night I also received your beautiful gift which is so very very welcome. Today I found at the American Express office a package. On opening it found therein a beautiful album for photographs & your mothers & Jules pictures. It was so kind & thoughtful to send the pictures. I had wanted them very much but really hadn't the cheek to ask for them after all the pictures I have already. The album is beautiful & I appreciate it very very much. I went to dinner at Smarts[,] got there at 1:30[,] left at 5:30 or so. We had a quiet family time but I enjoyed it very much[,] not quite so much tho as if I could have stayed here with you & kept on till I finished my letter. But I must not lose any chance to be with Dr Smart for he is a big card. He likes me & I like him. He is the most thoroughly alive man I have ever seen. I do not think that you will think that I mean that I don't want to lose any chance to toady to him or to play the Becky Sharp games. I am not that sort of a man & cannot lower myself to do anything purely for the effect but I want to know Dr Smart & I want him to know me & am willing to stand wholly upon my own merits if he does know me. Dr Smart is the most influential educational man in the state of Indiana & I want to have him thoroughly know me because[,] tho I may not want his influence here in Purdue[,] I may want it in seeking positions elsewhere. But I do not mean that I went to his house today for any other purpose than to accept an invitation that was given from the kindest of motives for Dr Smart understood that I was alone here & he invited me today I know in part because he felt that he would be giving me a real pleasure \_ I did have a very pleasant time. I had a long talk with him about school business & about the struggle in the legislature that is drawing nearer day by day \_ I had a pleasant time with the children & a nice visit with Miss Lizzie Swan[,] his wifes sister who lives there, & who is a very impressionable young lady of 25 or so years\_ She knows that I am a goner. Dr Smart was remarking to confuse me upon the significance of the anxiety of these young fellows to have the mail so often & so regularly & why they insisted so upon regular & frequent postal arrangements between the university & the post office. Of course I didn't mind his banter for it was so pleasant & good natured & I don't mind being thought engaged for I do believe that sweet tho it be to keep the secret there are also counter balancing advantages in not having it a secret. I kept thinking about you all the time darling & bye & bye the longing got too strong for me & so I excused myself & came home to be with you some more. This morning I took my first meal at my new boarding place \_ Mrs Chisholm or whatever she spells it went back on me so I found another place \_ I don't know whether to tell you much about it or not

because it ~~will~~ may seem to you that it is too poor[,] mean & unlovely to be endurable. I guess it would rather stagger you & it did me at first for it was by far the poorest place I had ever struck on shore. As I contrast it with your breakfast room I wonder at my adaptability in that I can eat in either & enjoy my breakfast & thank God for the food set before me \_ I didn't know until I was really in for it how it was for you know I am comparatively new to this western country. As I look the thing over I am on the whole rather glad to have been cast there for it will be a good thing for me in several ways \_ In the first place I can have my breakfast just when ever I want it \_\_ That is an advantage that one ought not to forget. I knew that Mrs Smith was the mother of two of our students[,] that Troop[,] one of the instructors[,] & seven girl students board there so I thought it must be a fine place & asked Troop to speak to Mrs Smith for me. I got there at about nine o'clock & got some breakfast[,] buckwheat cakes[,] fried meat of some sort[,] its individuality had been completely surrendered by it during its sojourn in the frying pan[,] but the room was not heated & was cold as a barn\_ I made out a tolerable breakfast however & mean while pumped Mrs S. & learned the following facts. She is a widow[,] has a large farm up in the interior somewhere which she has left in the care & charge of a nephew while she has taken a house in Chauncey so as to bring her girls down to Purdue where they may get an education. This interested me in the woman at once for in spite of her not particularly attractive exterior there was grit and an appreciation of the value of an education which is the right thing. She has two daughters & a foster child, a [ill.] little thing with a lot of yellow unkempt hair[,] a girl four years old[,] ~~whom~~ is her sisters child whom Mrs S took "to raise" when she was a year old. The youngster is bright & very affectionate and she brought me her wax doll[,] her christmas gift[,] to hold. She was so proud & gratified about it. One of the daughters had had a very cheap edition of Owen Merediths poems for her gift & they all seemed happy & pleasant & grateful for what they have tho we should consider it little enough. And Troop has now gone off to be married & is going to bring his bride to that home and Troop is supremely happy because he has never had any home at all & to have a wife to love & care for him seems heaven \_ I shouldn't quite have wanted you to see me entertaining these squalid youngsters this morning. Yes I would Darling for I know that you are too sensible not to see that it is the heart & not the exterior that counts. You know that I could not endure any thing like that if there were discontent & brawling but where I see that there is contentment & a mothers love for her children & struggle to give them opportunities that were never given her \_ I think a week or so there will do me good. I am too ready to complain sometimes when I have a thousand times more than I ever deserved. I wouldn't for a whole world show those people that I felt their humble home too mean for me \_ And I am not afraid to show it to you for I know you are too noble a spirit to despise either them or me. I prefer a few creature comforts all the same [and] shan't stay there after Mrs Stockton begins to run up here again \_\_ I have one good chance here. This is a regular hoosier family & I expect a week among them to show me some things I did not know before. I do not feel very lonely for all my spare time is filled up with thinking about a certain little girl some hundreds of miles away from here in an easterly direction & I am busy a good many hours every day over my Limulus eggs. I want to get that Limulus matter worked out as soon as I can so as to publish my account before Kingsley comes out with his full paper. There are many almost insurmountable difficulties in the way & I should be glad to spend another summer upon it. But I mean to publish all I have

gotten & then I may possibly do some finishing touches at Barnegat Bay or somewhere down that way next Summer.

And now I will return to the sweet task of answering your last three letters. It seems almost utterly impossible to do this, for there are so very many things I want to say & they come all at once. But I will first finish what I was saying about the last squall & who is to be forgiven \_ I cant splice it over as prettily as Capt Cummings would splice a rope for I havent the other end that is sliding rapidly toward New York & I can't remember perfectly clearly just where I left off \_ I think you must see darling that if you let in the thought that I have begun to tire of you or to find you less than I thought it will be a rank poison & will alter every thing you look at by affecting your moral vision. I may have erred by telling you part of all I thought you for it must I suppose seem to you that I am wrong & will sooner or later think so. But Darling it is not so. I am not wrong. I am not a deluded man. You may say you are selfish. You may call your love for me a selfish passion but if you will examine your self you will find that you are happiest when you feel that you have made me happiest in your love. The philosophers call this altruism. No matter what they call it[,] you hunt yourself over & see if you don't find that I am right. The thought that I am happy gives you your wildest pleasure. I am not a deluded man. I have not lived to be twenty seven years of age & seen you & known you as I have all this time to be a dupe[,] the victim of a spasmodic feeling to ~~tell you~~ mistake as love a more sporadic impulse that was to be laid aside in a month or so \_ No Darling you may feel sure that my nature is too serious to permit me to do so wicked a thing as to make a confession of love unless I knew that I was already for a like confession from you with all its consequences & the word that there was no hope for me & then to go & get over my feeling as best I could \_ Darling you do not understand why I love you. No more do I understand why you love me \_ It is a mystery how you can love me & I hunt my self over in vain for attractions in me for a person like you & I think I know you tolerably well. I can't see how you can like my picture. I hate to look at it but darling I know you do like to look at it. I know you do love me[,] that your heart quickens its beat every time you think of me & every time you realize afresh that my feeling for you is all love. It does so at this moment does it not[?] I cant understand this but now more than ever I believe it. Perhaps sometime we shall whisper to one another why we love each other so but for now we believe it \_ And so you must never let in the thought that I can change toward you except to love you more & more all the time. I cannot do so[,] indeed I cannot[,] tho you don't understand it. And now don't let us talk any more about forgiving & who is to blame. I shall never be able to help longing for your letters & may sometimes when they don't come complain but Darling remember that I am weak & that I do not complain because you dont love me but only at hard luck if I do complain again. I can't help wanting the letters & I may be weak enough to say something that will look as tho I distrusted your love. This is my terribly weak spot but I do not think I will say or feel so again \_ I do think it is best to say what we feel rather than to let it stay inside our hearts to do mischief & so I mean to follow up the old plan of complete candor. Now Darling do you understand me perfectly[?] Do you see that I love you & can't change[,] that my whole heart & all the love of which it is capable is yours utterly & completely in spite of all appearances \_ Keep that in mind when I seem worrying & exasperating & it will help you to endure when I make you suffer as I have been bad enough to do alas! so recently. But I only use this as a precaution in case of a danger which I do not consider a real danger. I do not think that there will be any more trouble. I think we are

through the hardest times & that everything will after this go well \_ And now ~~Dare~~ dare I leave this subject[?] Do you surely understand me[?] Do you see fully that you must not feel any fear that I shall grow sick of you. O Effie grow sick of you. Grow sick for you yes but the other O no. Darling you don't know how precious to me your love is. You can't understand it or you could never have any fear that I should grow sick of you \_\_ Well let us leave this topic. It is an important one for from it subject matter has come all the suffering. When we have been under the clouds we are neither of us to blame or we are both to blame as you please. How could we at once believe in this wonderful new possession[?] We must have been wild when even imagining dangers [ill.] us in our new possession. But do we not now feel & understand this whole matter[?] Who shall say that after all our separation may not be teaching us lessons that we shall do well to have learned early in our engagement. Do not think that all this was called out by the "it" for I have felt it all since reading the noble letters you wrote while still under the cloud. O Effie. Selfish are you? My own Darling \_

I do not think I deserve any praise for sending a few little remembrances to the folks. It was pure selfishness for I enjoyed it so much myself that I should have deprived myself of a great treat \_ Do you recognize that argument Darling[?] It might almost be in quotation marks the argument sounds so natural. There is a dreadful fallacy in it however all the same \_ I didn't really tho think of its appealing to you as it has \_ I wanted to send some little thing to each one of the family for I love them all & I felt that they would have not more false feeling about the value of the gifts than I had of course. Solid old gold card cases & other little things are not too good for my simple tastes but they wouldn't express my feeling a bit more than some more simple remembrance \_\_ I am very glad that your mother felt in that way. ~~because~~ I don't mean be cause I am + a handsome album for it at all but because it shows me her love for me & her feeling toward me. Any gift would have been received with the same hearty welcome \_\_ As for what you say of Lottie I knew it all by a sort of instinct. Lottie is one of those unfortunate creatures who are born to be always slighted & also born with a disposition of the keenest sensitiveness. I haven't seen much of Lottie but I have always been interested in her because I do feel very sorry for her & have always by inquiry kept track of her & what she is doing. I saw quite a good deal of her at German Valley one Summer[,] the summer before we were there together my darling & then I saw into her disposition somewhat. Such people are unfortunate & not blamable for the[y] see & suffer from lots of imaginary slights. They grow morbid upon the subject. Our Mag has this quality to some extent & has to be "handled with care." I had hard work to select something for her but at last happened upon the book which I thought she would like. I unfortunately do not know her tastes very well nor do I know how many books she has. I had to go it blind but this was new so I tho't it was as safe as anything. Darling you have by today the Groves\_Dictionary. I suppose if not you have written in this. I so hope that there was no hitch. I waited till the last moment hoping the fourth volume would be ready & want you to understand that it is included in your [cross]mas gift & you shall have it to match these as soon as it is out. Let me know the color of the cloth of these. I ordered black. I so hope you are pleased but I know you are. The idea of your preferring my homely phiz to this. Are you not now ready to change your mind \_ I wonder what you expected from Scribners. Was it something you wanted very much[?] Wont you tell me what it was so I shall have no trouble next Christmas or possibly you had a birth day. Is that so & do you have an annual recurrence of it. Isn't it humiliating for me to have to ask when it is[?] I have a sort of washed

out recollection that it is in July & that you are twenty five this next July. Am I wrong and are you both younger & born in some other month. I guess it is 25 next summer for I seemed to remember that you are three years behind me & were 18 in 1878 \_ Now dont be too hard upon me if I am wrong\_\_ I am so pleased that you like my photograph. I was extremely particular with the photographer[,] insisted upon getting the thing as large as was consistent with a picture to put in a stand or bureau[,] insisted upon my own idea of position & then made him give me a look at the negative & a print so that I could prevent him from touching all the individuality out of it. I felt that it was an eminent success tho it is a frightfully homely & unflattering picture. I shall not have any more of them made. I want you[,] my hearts own Darling[,] & papa & mamma to own the only copies. I should be glad break the film if I ~~if~~ could get hold of the negative but the photographer drew the line there. Darling I am glad you are so pleased. It makes me very happy to read your own words about it. I should like to change places with the picture for a while but I suppose that my place is here just now. I wish that face contained some of the love I feel for you but that cant be. I have a very immobile or an expressionable face I think when it is quiet. As for being tired & overworked how quick you take the alarm. I guess I have you on that line for you have broken down already & here am I as ready for my work as ever \_\_ I am not growling Darling. Your solicitude is very dear to me & I promise you again that I will not over do. I know what I can do and I will not go beyond the limit. You may trust me. I ought to have guarded you by ~~th~~ explaining that I have an inconvenient trick of looking worse that I am & far more worn out than I ought to look. Don't I pray you let me have any excuse for indulging laziness by making me think I am overworking \_ And I hold you to your promise not to overdo. You must not be a baby of course but I will risk that & think that you had to be checked rather than urged. When you feel as badly as you did last week on Wednesday & Thursday you have no right to go out in the bad weather & give your lessons. Darling you must not do it. I know you wont stay in for small things & when you are all right you ought not to do so but when you have to stagger around the room for five m minutes when you get up in the morning the best thing you can do is to keep quiet for a while. When my eyes troubled me the other night I had sense enough to go to bed and not try to use them. Now Effie you must be careful for you know that I shall suffer dreadfully if I should feel that there was any danger of a real serious illness in store for you & wet feet & wet clothes drying on you & tramping about to give music lessons when you have headache & heartache alas! combined will tear you to pieces rapidly. I am not worrying about you Darling because I believe you when you promise to be careful but I want to have you sure that you are as careful as you can reasonably be. I feel guilty for a large share in that trouble which was in large part nervous. I think that it cannot be an active cause of any more trouble. O Darling it is dreadful to read two or three of those letters. I so appreciated the one you wrote on Wednesday night in spite of your sickness for it was anxiously looked for I can tell you. And now I must stop tho I havent quite gotten through answering your letters yet but I will save up those matters for my next letter. I am going to give you a sound lecture for going so for me for looking at your dear face the [~~th~~] afternoon we were "up on the hill" just as tho I could help looking at your face tho I suppose it did embarrass you but I did not think of it then. You ought to be more charitable toward me when you know now how utterly I was in your power. Do you suppose I could help it? I should have looked had the penalty been decapitation I actually believe \_\_ O you may

look out for a lecture for being so very wicked as to call me so many bad names. But I shall also forgive you. I shall assure you of that too.

Well the [cross]mas is nearly at an end. It has not been lonely at all. You fortified me against that by all your precious letters of the last few days\_ It has been incomplete. It was bound to be so & would have been wherever I had been except I had been at your side. My darling the longing is bad enough all the time but today I did want to go to you so very badly. But I am so glad that all our troubles are now over & before Christmas & that we may be just as happy as we can be while still apart. Goodnight my own Darling Effie. I am all yours. I love you so very very much\_\_ Good night\_\_ With fondest love & affection,

Your own loving

Harry \_\_\_\_