

Purdue
Jan 11th [18]85.

My Dearest Effie

You will get this letter on St. Valentines Day _ St Valentine who from time out of mind has been the patron Saint of lovers. It has long been the custom of lovers to send love messages on that day. Valentines they call them and shall not my love have a valentine too? I can't send you a gaudy card painted in many colors that will fade & surrounded by a fringe that will become soiled & ragged because I can't find anything that suits me & the occasion. So I will write you a valentine[,] a bran[d] new one all your own & one that no one has ever seen or ever will see. And Darling the color of this valentine will not fade and the fringe will not get ragged & soiled for the valentine is a wish from my heart & a feeling. I Don't send it to you. I only tell you about it. It stays in my heart all the time. I will show it to you since it is St Valentines day. You may look at it but not even you can take it away from me. And now let us go up together into the inner sanctuary & do you look while I take away the veil & let you see. Do you see it[,] the wish & the feeling[?] Do you recognize it[?] Do you know it is for you? The wish is for your happiness[,] the feeling is one of perfect love & trust of you_ O my love I do not know how it got in there it got in so quietly.

"I was a gem concealed

Me my burning ray revealed"

I do not know why I could not cast it out. I tried at first a little but it had gotten too deeply fixed before I found it & finally it cast out every thing else. I do not know. Sometimes I feel that my wish for your happiness & my feeling are not so deep as I suppose for I find myself doing things that make you unhappy but when I reflect that I don't do them to make you unhappy I go over to a feeling of shame at my own weakness. Lovers are notoriously selfish, I wouldn't give much for them if they were not. That is the position I am forced to take or else admit that I have no possible excuse for my conduct. I realize that it would be the beautiful & noble thing for me to give you up without a murmur & sit in patience & I go & do the ignoble thing & excuse it by saying "I can't help it." Sometimes I think that a sound thrashing would do me good[,] whimpering & whining for what I can't have. If I didn't care[,] if I were only one of those fortunate people who do not feel & are always happy[,] then what virtue would there be in giving up things you I want[?] We admire their characters[,] sunny souls always happy[,] & we despise the weak whimpering ones who are always unhappy when they can't have what they want. We never think what it costs them to give up nor how little it has cost the sunny character to be sunny_ Some people are born lucky. They have few wants[,] are easily satisfied & if they cant have what they want they are content. I knew a man in college & know him yet[,] he was always happy. He stood well at the tail end of his class & was content with a mark that passed him in his studies. He was a universal favorite. Every one liked him & the professors feared they couldn't quiet their consciences & let him graduate but they did all the same tho his marks hardly sufficed to squeeze him through. After this he studied for his profession & rolled along comfortably[,] married the girl he loved or more properly perhaps who loved him and so he goes along. Nothing ever troubles him. Well nothing bothers the Hippopotamus any very much. The mosquito punctures his pachydermatous hide to no purpose & we admire this equal temperament[,] no sudden changes in their moral barometer indicative of unseen but no less sensible changes in the moral atmosphere[,] sunshine there or awful storms. I knew another

man in college at the same time. He was not a popular man for he was too mercurial in his temperament. He had a mischievous love to do his work well & so he couldn't find time to spend with the boys. He had now & then a great fall in his moral barometer & was in a predicament known as the dumps. He had a thin skin & a mosquito could make him dance with genuine torture & very often men would say things that did not seem to affect him but this sensitive chap would really suffer_ We didn't generally like him. His temper was too uneven & we demeaned it as a weakness but some of the boys seemed to get into him a bit & they reported to us that he really wasn't so bad after all & I finally found him out & came to like him better than the good natured fellow for I found out that he had a finer nature and that he had things to contend with that caused the moral storms which gave him the turns we knew as the dumps that came to him with peculiar force because he was so sensitive and so I learned Darling from studying those two fellows to conclude that tho the one seemed the pleasanter[,] his pleasantness wasn't any virtue. It was only dullness of nature but the pleasantness of the other was some thing quite different. Now I don't mean to compare myself with this latter fellow but only to point out that I am more like him than the former_ And when the moral barometer falls & I am in the dumps it does not necessarily imply that I am destitute of virtue but only that I feel_ If you put a load in the balance pan it goes down & some chemical balances are so delicately adjusted & hung so sensitively that a ray of light falling on one pan & not on the other will cause it to go down or a pencil mark on a piece of paper_ I honestly think that these characters are unfortunate & we do not make allowance enough for them. Maggie is this way & often we think that she is merely sulky when she is really very much hurt & can't at once throw it aside & seem cheerful. We call it a weakness sometimes & blame people for it & say they ought to overcome it. Some do & thus blunt their finest feeling_ Others seek truer way to avoid the occasion by surrounding themselves with circumstances that will not subject themselves to the chance of the hurt and these follow the true course for they thus avoid blunting this finer nature & yet escape the danger of wounding it. I suppose that you don't see what all this is coming to Darling so let me tell you. You know how I have given way time after time since last September when I longed for you beyond all endurance & you have I think at heart the feeling that I ought to be stronger & that such out breaks are unjustifiable. They are unjustifiable so far as you are concerned & if I said no more of course I should be convicted of unjustifiable conduct but tho I haven't ever said a great deal about it the real justification is to be found in my peculiar temperament_ I am afraid I shall have to own that I am peculiar as people ordinarily call it. I do not think that you can fully appreciate what this year has been to me. You will I think never be able to do so. I seem selfish & unreasonable to you at times. I know very well that I do & you think that I ought to make allowances better when you see how I performed last Saturday night. You will be disgusted at any such doings. "I might know you had had some interruptions[,] hadn't it always turned out so." Well Dearest don't you see it wasn't that I felt you were to blame but this that troubled me. I had been longing & longing for a real genuine letter that let me right in to you where I could feel that we were alone by ourselves. On Wednesday the letter I had was so full of others peoples troubles that tho' it told me what you were doing it treated that most summarily & the whole letter was necessarily pervaded with your own nervous feeling & wasn't the thing to satisfy my longing tho it helped_ Thus I looked for something soon & day after day went along & I felt o all the time that you were kept away but the other feeling[,] the longing[,] just got away with me & by Saturday

night I was completely miserable. Well on Sunday I was better[,] on Monday better yet. Indeed on Monday I felt really happy & tonight your Sundays letter came_ Effie my own Darling you say my letters have helped you. If they have done you half the good this letter has been done me I thank God from the bottom of my heart that he ever gave me such power to help you_ O Effie it is almost the first real letter I have had since Minnie died. I know that you do not realize this but I have felt it so. It was so as I read it and it seems more so now as I think it over & think over the others. There were parts of the others that did me O so much good but then there would be long parts where you told me so much about Rem & his character etc & I felt that it was too bad to have you spend so much time on those matters & then in the end be shut off by something & leave out things about your own self that I was dying so to hear. I liked to hear about him and I was glad you wrote but I wanted to hear about you still worse & wanted you to answer my letters_ Now Darling don't think I am finding fault with you. I am only trying to tell you faithfully my own condition_ When a letter like the one on Sunday comes it is like a visit with you. I do not see how I have gone so long without it & I do not wonder at my own self knowing myself as I do. My wonder is that I have not been ten times as bad. O Darling I can see that you have suffered. The character of your letters shows this & I do not want you to keep from coming to me for help in your troubles for I shall be only too happy to help you in every way that I possible can_ Dearest I know you suffer & must suffer in this trial. Had you written me happy jubilant letters what should I have tho't of you. I have not a single word of complaint over your telling me all your trials. I want to know them & to be allowed to help you_ O Effie do you not see how great a happiness it is to me to be allowed to help you in them. You must not feel that you are to shut them out. Dont I give you the full benefit of mine? I should think so. There are some things in your letter I wanted to write about but I will leave them till tomorrow night when I hope to write again_ You will think this letter rather an odd valentine after all won't you? I got off on the second head & so didn't tell you anything about the wish there to make you happy. Tell me Effie[,] Darling Effie[,] how can I make you happy. I will do it O so gladly for I do want you to be happy above all things tho sometimes it hasn't seemed as tho I tried very hard but I was trying only I got the worst of it myself. Instead of conquering I was thoroughly licked. Now I will go to work for I must work or school can't keep. So goodbye my own Darling Effie. Dont forget to tell me how I can make you happy & I will do it & you shall be happy__ With dearest love

Your own Harry_

Thursday morning before breakfast

My Darling Darling Girl I have just a moment to spare & I can't let this letter go without telling you once more how very much your sundays letter has been to me. O Darling you will never know what a comfortable letter it was_ You know I do not doubt your love but O my own it is such a consolation to have you write about it & tell of it afresh. The reassurance it gives is not needed to put a stop to doubts but to hear from your own lips that you do love me & think of me all the time is so very so unspeakably precious to me. Darling I did not mean last night to be fault finding with the other letters tho it seems so by contrast but I wanted you to see & realize all this particular one is to me. Dearest if you could write a letter like this every Sunday then short ones thro the week would keep me straight. I don't suppose it is really so but it always seems to me when I get this sort of a letter that when you wrote it you were feeling particularly

unusually near to me. I suppose that I am wrong & you feel the same at other times but all through this letter you made me feel that we were indeed alone together & very near & dear to one another. And it is for that reason that I feel such a longing for this sort of a letter. Your letters are so sometimes very specially, some at Christmas time[,] some during our trouble just before Minnie's death[,] the one you wrote while at Madison & others have been letters of this sort. You haven't raved or gone wild or anything of that sort in them but all through[,] without any break almost[,] there has seemed to flow a strain of tenderness that just seemed to water the thirsty land_ That is why this letter was so welcome yesterday & why I love to read it over & over again. At best it is poor comfort to me. I yearn so for your personal presence but it is a wonderful substitute for what I can't have[,] a wonderful help when I get so hungry to have such letters. I was glad you did not sit up to write on Thursday night & don't want you to try sitting up late to write any more for darling your health will not stand it. I wish you could get well & strong. It seems in part my fault for I think I brought on some of your trouble my self & now I don't want you to write if you have to sit up after twelve_ If you can't write from ten to twelve on Tuesday evening write all you can find time for on Wednesday morning & send it & I won't say one word. But O Darling dont let me go again as you had to last week_ Now goodbye my own. This goes at once to the PO so that you will be sure of it on Saturday. With fondest deepest love for my own Darling treasure my Effie.

Always her own loving Harry.