

No. 54 West 46<sup>th</sup> St.  
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My dearest Harry,

Your letters were rec'd this evening while we were at dinner. I tried to control myself and sit thro' dessert as the table was being cleared for it when the postman came. Mamma to my utter horror opened hers then & there (she never seemed to realized what it was) & said "why who can this be from; Phil<sup>a</sup>, I cant imagine who has written me from there, oh! It must be Ed, & he has come on as far East as Phil<sup>a</sup> & has stopped there on his way here. Oh yes it is from Ed, it begins Dear Cousin Emily." Can you imagine my feelings all this time. The letters were enough to upset me without all these remarks. I was hurt & provoked to think Mamma would joke about it for of course I tho't she was trying to be funny & couldn't understand her doing such a thing, but she soon proved to me that I had been wrong, that she was not so dreadful, for in a moment her whole expression changed and the letter was quickly put in her pocket much to my relief but this little mistake didn't tend to quiet my nerves. I tried to appear calm, & sit still but it was useless, I would not stand it & finally had to leave the table and hurry to my room with your letter. Oh Harry until I read it I could not realize what had happened. If it had come at another time or in another place, it would, I think have been different, but the whole thing was so sudden & hurried, that I felt dazed & completely undone, and I have only just begun to realize that it is all true. I dont know how I acted yesterday, but imagine that it must have been like an idiot. I couldn't say anything, and have since tho't that I must have seemed like a stone to you. I am glad tho' that you understood me & didn't think me unfeeling, for I assure you I was anything but that. I had been on a strain all day trying to keep up and hide my feelings, and just after we left the house you perhaps remember that you spoke hardly a word till we had gone almost to the corner & then you said "this breaks me all up." I laughed & you asked how I could do it. I didn't suppose your feeling badly had anything to do with me, but was thankful that you didn't guess how I felt & that you didn't see that my laugh was a nervous & forced one. I tho't if you only knew my real feelings you would really wonder at my being able to laugh, but I was glad that I had succeeded in doing it naturally. All the time I was at Madison I was in constant terror lest I should show my feelings, and more than once I wished that I had never gone, but I had yielded to the temptation feeling that I could control myself perfectly. I had fought & battled desperately against my feelings toward you & hated to own even to myself that I felt anything more than warm true friendship for you, but I finally had to admit to myself (but never to any other living person) that I had become deeply involved, but how deeply I little knew till I reached Madison. I felt pretty strong till then & felt sure I could keep it under, but found to my utter dismay that I was very weak. I never knew till then how far it had gone, I had realized some time before that it couldn't be friendship & yet I deceived myself with that idea long after it had become a warmer feeling. But when I realized the true strength of my feelings, I was simply overpowered. I felt I had made a mistake in going to Madison, & knew when it was too late that it would only make me far more unhappy than I had been before & yet I couldn't help enjoying my visit, and in spite of my feelings, prolonged my stay another week. I cant describe my misery at times, but perhaps you can measure it by your own & yet I believe I suffered even more than you for aside from all the feelings you probably

had, I felt so terribly mortified & humiliated, you cant know how a woman feels under such circumstance, I hated myself thoroughly. I wished for strength to go away but yet knowing my feelings so perfectly, I was weak enough to stay another week when it was proposed. Oh how I despised myself for it, but I couldn't help it. That afternoon on the hill was terrible for do what I would I couldn't keep my attention fixed on what you were reading and I must confess that that wasn't by any means the only time my mind wandered. There were times when I hoped & tho't that you cared for me, & would have been sure of it if it had been under other circumstances, but we have known each other so long and have been such good friends, and the slight relationship has made a freedom that there could never have been had it not been that we considered ourselves cousins. There was no formality in the very start & that made a difference, we became intimate & warm friends & I believe for several years it was nothing more, but the circumstances from the very start were peculiar, and these signs you have given of late, would, under ordinary circumstances, have been unmistakable, but tho' they were not unnoticed, I felt that if when I had any suspicion that you cared for me, that it was entirely my imagination & would put it down to that. I felt if I could only know that you didn't care for me I could fight it down and control my feelings better than with the uncertainty. I knew your ideas about a man's declaring his love before he was in a position to marry. To me your ideas on that subject have always seemed wrong and absurd, even before I knew what it was to suffer from doubt for I have known of such unhappiness in other cases from that very thing. If a girl loves a man isn't it cruel to make her suffer for any such foolish reason. If a man is perfectly sure of his feelings isn't it better for both to settle all doubt? It seems to me it is far more comfortable for a man to be certain one way or the other for if there is no hope the sooner he knows it the better, & the easier it will be to fight it off, (this you know is if a man thoroughly understands himself, no man has a right to say a word until he is sure, absolutely certain of his own feelings) as to the girl there seems to me there is no questions as to what is best. I always imagined it would be so, but now I know from my experience. I cant tell you how I prayed that if you really cared for me you would declare yourself before you left, if you didn't I would take it as a sign that there was nothing in it and prayed that I might have strength & courage to bear any trial alone. I never wanted anyone to even guess that I had given my heart unasked. I felt I could bear it better if no one knew it, and I never would have admitted it to any one on Earth. I know that even Mamma & Jule are ignorant of all I have suffered. They suspected that we cared for each other, but never dreamed of what I was going thro'. Dr. Danforth told Mamma privately that my illness last Spring was brought on partly by overwork but that there was something more, he was convinced that I was worried about something that there was something on my mind. Mamma laughed at him & declared he was mistaken & told it to me afterwards as a good joke. In spite of everything he would insist that he was right & said either she knew it & wouldn't admit it, or else there was something she didn't know about. It amused Mamma very much but it made me rather shy of the man. There was so much said that I was afraid he'd go for me & I wouldn't go near him & declared that I was well long before I really was. The Thursday you left here (to return to what I meant to say, (I didn't mean to tell you the above but seem to be making a clean breast of every thing) I felt convinced that my feelings had made me imagine at times something that could never be, and gave up every hope. I feared that I had done the very thing I had tried so hard to guard against, & had been too miserably weak to control myself, & hide my feelings from you. It seemed to me my face must show what I was

going through. The night before at Coney Island was almost as bad. If our friendship had been a recent thing I might have had some reasons for thinking now & then that you felt something deeper than were friendship for me but under the circumstances it was absurd to think any thing of the sort & I had no reason for allowing my imagination to lead me away even for a moment. I was disgusted with myself & so ashamed that I should be so weak. All this and more than I can tell you I went thro'. Do you wonder after all this that when your confession came at the last moment after I had lost all hope, and at such a time & in such a place, that I was completely dazed? I think the only wonder was that I controlled myself enough to be quiet, & not make a scene (if there is any thing I have a horror of it is that) it was all like a dream. I have made so many damaging confessions already that it will not do to tell you about what I did after parting from you, it would be too much of a "give away" & I cant bring myself to tell you that part. I dreaded telling Mamma – not because I was afraid of her opposing it but it wasn't the easiest ~~think~~ thing in the world to do. However, I found the anticipation was the hardest thing. You couldn't imagine any thing sweeter or more lovely than the way in which she rec'd the news, but it was like her for all the world. I was so glad I decided to tell her all immediately without waiting for your letter for I know she felt better to have me go right to her & I felt it was no more than right. She would have had good reason for feeling hurt if I had done otherwise. I know it was easier for her & she felt better about it than if I had left it for you to tell her. It wouldn't have been fair or right to have showed such a lack of confidence (for it would have looked like a lack of confidence to her) you dont begin to know what an angel she is & if I had done anything else I could never have forgiven myself. My embarrassment was nothing compared to the remorse I should have felt all my life, and after I once got started it was easy enough but of course it was any awfully trying ordeal to begin. I felt that she & I must be alone, tho' I meant to tell Jule that night I must make the first confession to Mamma alone. There was not time for this before dinner. I had to go down to dinner tho' I hardly felt like it. I found eating was out of the question. I simply couldn't & after several attempts gave up trying & blamed the heat for my loss of appetite & it was so very warm ~~that~~ they didn't think anything of it. After dinner I followed Mamma upstairs. She struck a match intending to light the gas. I suggested that it would be so much cooler without it, & begged to sit in the dark for a little while. To my delight she acted on my suggestion. I began at once with my story and told her all. She surprised me by not showing any surprise at my news. She said she tho't there had been an understanding between us for some time and I tho't seemed a little hurt that I hadn't confided the secret to here before. I told her she was very much mistaken, & assured her that until that afternoon there had never been anything between us. I confessed that we had cared for each other ~~at~~ a long time, but there had never been an understanding or a word said before. We talked it all over and she gave her consent if we were sure of our feelings. I knew I was of mine & believed you were quite sure of yours. If I hadn't tho't so nothing could have induced me to have given you an answer at once. I told her she knew perfectly well how very seriously I looked at such things. I considered them in any but a light way. It seemed to me the most important & solemn step of my life but I had given my answer without any delay because I felt so sure of myself & my own feelings that I couldn't be mistaken. I had known you so long & so well and was sure you looked at it in as serious a light, and felt sure of yourself that you were too honorable to draw me out until you had given it a great deal of thought and had become convinced that your feelings were lasting. Under other circumstances I couldn't have given you

an immediate answer even tho' I felt sure of myself, I would have hesitated a long time, in this case it seemed hardly necessary for I have so often heard you express your ideas about such things and feel sure that you had thoroughly tested your feelings before telling me of our love for me. Can you possibly be mistaken? Now dont feel hurt & thing that it is because I haven't confidence in you for you know better after all I have written, but we cant be too careful in settling this life long matter and I am sure you must understand me & appreciate my feelings if even now you have any regret about what you have done, confess it before it goes any farther. I dont believe you have because I believe you feel sure or did when you spoke, and I do not doubt you in the least. Will you forgive me for even hinting at such at thing – dont misunderstand me. You must understand what I mean. Mamma feels the same, has perfect confidence in you & the greatest respect and admiration for you. I know she is perfectly satisfied, tho' just a trifle blue at the idea (that of course is natural & we cant wonder at it.) and says she would rather trust me to you than anyone. She doesn't act as tho' it was a trial & I am sure she dont look at it in that light, but perhaps you can understand her feelings – I think I do perfectly tho' I cant describe them. When Jule came up May was with her & came in for a half an hour or more. Jule was tired, and used up with the heat, the room was dark, and the conversation not particularly enlivening, (as you may imagine Mamma and I were hardly in the mood to enter into things very enthusiastically) and every thing was conducive to sleep, & Jule was rude enough to fall asleep. When May finally said good night, Jule came to enough to mutter good night in a suspicious way. Mamma said "now tell Jule" and then added "you'll have to congratulate Effie," Jule didn't seem to grasp her meaning till Mamma told her I was engaged. Jule was so dazed she couldn't get it thro' her \_\_ finally she said "What! engaged nonsense \_\_\_\_ I dont believe it \_\_ you are joking \_\_\_\_" and then ended by saying "who to?" and that brought down the house so to speak, for it seemed so absurd. Mamma had just been telling me that she and Jule had looked for it for a long time, & to have Jule go back on her in that style and show such surprise & finish by saying "who to" was enough to make anyone laugh. We had been in anything but a funny mood all evening but Jule took all the solemnity of the occasion away for a moment but we soon drifted back again. I told them all I could possibly tell anyone. I made them both promise never to reveal where it happened, for it would really be to bad a thing to have known, to think that even in proposing you waited till the last moment and didn't give yourself any more time than you needed to [~~it~~] make you confession & get my answer and not enough for even that if I had hesitated. If I hadn't known my feelings there wouldn't have been time for me to consider it. They could not help laughing (& I confess I couldn't) it was so very characteristic they tho't and was surely the most unromantic thing of the kind they had ever heard of. I care very little about that, but would rather it had happened before. I think we would both have felt more reconciled to the long separation if we had had time to talk it over. The separation isn't a cheerful thing to look forward to or to think of but it seems nothing in comparison to all I have been thro' the last few months. It will be so much easier now that we understand each other than if you had carried out your foolish intention and gone away as you intended. If you had done so, feeling as you did toward me, I would, (if I had discovered it at some future time) have found it hard to forgive you. If you had not felt sure about your self, or if I had been wealthy & you hadn't heard me express my opinion of such a course it might have been different, but as things were there would have been absolutely no sense at all in your doing so. If you had been sure of yourself & I had been

wealthy & you had heard me express such opinions as I have often expressed, would you have struck to your absurd feeling & because I was wealthy have made me suffer? If so I might have lost my good opinion of you for if you cared for me you ought not to let anything like money stand in the way. Still there would have been more excuse then you could find in the present circumstances and I hope that you dont think you did wrong for you know I dont & I assure you Mamma and Jule dont. You said you supposed I had not fallen asleep the moment my head touched the pillow. Indeed I didn't. I knew sleeping would be an impossibility & managed so that I could be alone. Mamma also had a restless night but finally fell asleep toward morning & got a little sleep, but I lay in the next room all night long, thinking & thinking & thinking of everything. I felt it couldn't be true, that I must be dreaming (my dreams have often seemed more real) and all day I have felt the same, but after reading your letter I know it wasn't imagination or a dream and I am very very happy. I am sorry if you expected a letter by Wednesday or Thursday, & hope you wont think strange of my not writing. I tho't of it but really couldn't write till I was convinced that I was in my right mind. Have I said too much & disgusted you? I know I have said a good deal but it seemed necessary to explain my seeming coldness yesterday. It seems rather dreadful to be writing this way, but what else is there to do? I cant hold it all in for nine long months, & you took my breath away & made me powerless to say anything. I believe I did the same for you by accepting you with so little hesitation, but tho' it was so unexpected I didn't need time to consider it, I had known my own feelings for so long, & believed all you said so implicitly that no tho't was needed for my answer, only time to get over my astonishment, & get my breath, & control over myself before speaking. I can understand that my expression could easily deceive you & lead you to believe that I was pained, for really my sudden happiness was almost painful. Then in the midst of all we reached Courtland St. & I had to call your attention to the fact. I almost wished I hadn't when the goodbye came so soon after but wished I had let you miss the train, but am glad now that I acted on my first impulse for it was better if you had agreed to meet Prof. Barnes to be on time. Besides you had put all the responsibility on me. You remember after your absent mindedness at 42<sup>nd</sup> St. Station, you said you depended on me to get you in the train. I suppose I felt the responsibility & unconsciously took a certain pride in having you there in time, and on the while I am glad you did get it, not one can accuse us of passing the station or missing the train or any other dreadful thing. ~~I~~ I think we did ~~out~~ our duty and behaved very well under the circumstances. Indeed I did thank God for our great happiness and know I ~~shall~~ will never cease to thank Him for his goodness. Now all I ask & hope for to make my happiness complete is that every member of your family will approve of this. It w'd mar my happiness very much to feel that they were not satisfied, for if they are not it will be a terrible trial for them & it would ~~feel~~ ~~it~~ be a terrible trial for me to feel they were not satisfied. If they accept it as Mamma & Jule have done I will have all my wishes gratified. And now about its being known. Of course it will leak out sooner or later, but do you not think it would be as well to keep it quiet for a time except among our dearest friends? It isn't that I'm ashamed of it. You know better than that. But such things seem to me too sacred to become public property. When it comes out I wont feel badly & would scorn to deny it as tho' I felt ashamed of it, but do you not think it as well to keep it quiet for a time as least? Of course we would both want to make a few exceptions outside of the family – Em must know of it at once & there are two or three others I know I could trust. They are very dear friends & ~~would~~ take such an interest in me. They would, I

know, feel hurt if I didn't tell them. Annie Wisner is one of these I feel I ought to tell. She has always been so very kind to me & has loved me with such devotion that it would break her heart if I should keep it from her. This isn't conceit on my part for she has proved to me so many many times how deeply and truly she loves me. I know I can trust her with it. I wont write her but will tell her when I see her. Of course you have the same right to tell anyone you care to have know it, and everyone if you choose. I only suggested this because people are so apt to make so light of such things & I feel at present as tho' I only wanted it known to those who care most for us, only those who love us best and are truly and sincerely interested in everything concerning us. Is it foolish to feel so? I dont intend to tell anyone how & where it all happened. I wonder if you will let it out. I suppose you saw Mr. Lee this morning and wonder if you told him. I suppose you did, for you spoke as tho' he knew your secret before, & if so you probably told him of the result of your visit. You began telling me something about Mr. Lee's running you last week & then the ferry boat came & we were interrupted again & didn't return to the subject. You'll have to finish in your letter. I hope for a letter very soon giving me an account of your journey and ~~your~~ your new home etc, for you know I'll be in every detail. Do you remember how I scolded you for not giving me any details on your return to Baltimore last fall? I have said a great deal, but comparatively nothing to all I feel. Perhaps you think I lack modesty in telling so plainly of my love, & it looks a little that way to me, but I have kept it to myself so long & we have misunderstood each other so long, that I have gone on writing more of my feelings than I intended when I began, and almost without realizing how much I was saying. You once said you tho't I was not at all sentimental. I was glad then that you tho't so but am afraid after this letter you will take it all back & admit that you didn't know me. I will not always give you such a dose as this for I will get better control over myself and learn to be more modest. You wont often see me in just this mood if I am successful in keeping it under as I expect. I will feel just as deeply, but wont appear so foolish, but this time you'll forgive it I hope and will not be disgusted with me for giving way to my mood. It will show you that I am given to moods after all & am not always practical & matter of fact. Will it cause any change in your opinion of me? I couldn't finish last night because Mamma insisted on my going to bed & I had to mind. I didn't & couldn't feel calm enough to sleep much. I didn't change the date for it would only need an explanation & be an interruption so I decided to wait & explain at the end. And now I must stop at once. May God bless you in your new home, and may we never have cause to regret this most important step of our lives. With deepest love

Believe me ever yours

Effie.