

Grand Central Hotel.

S. TULLIS,  Proprietor.

—•Rates: \$2.00 per. Day. •—

Great Bend Kansas Nov. 14. 1887.

My dear daughter:

I am at a new hotel in a little Kansas town just on the edge of the gap which is all there is left of the plains. It is a beautiful day warm and bright as only a western day can be with that colorless light which seems to make of the sky and eternal distances and an eternal placidity. The desire which always gets into my veins, when I am at the west to get away into the solitude and the silence which I am sure must be somewhere near though I have never found it, is very strong upon me. It seems as if I would give the world to be away alone in the desert — on the mountains — anywhere the world could not come for a few weeks or a few months — not alone, but with you and your Mamma. not merely to listen but also to write. I am sure I would see clearer, think better, have a deeper insight into the world's heart and do better words than I have ever done before.

Do you know why I like to write so? I am sure I don't. It gave me a great wrench the other day when you spoke about my works lasting like Dickens. Somehow I have

never thought much of fame and really do not know
what I would care to forego today's dinner for to-mor-
row's praise. Indeed I have never thought much of praise
or commendation of my work. Yet I do believe that
I have the true artistic instincts. I am fond of giving
utterance to any thought form and shape to my ideal. The idea
of carrying out a grand purpose a noble character of impress-
ing one's self on the human race — is so
strong with me that I find myself absolutely absorbed
by it. This and my ambition for the happiness of those I
love is about all there is of me. I am afraid neither
will be realized.

Why do I write to you about these things? I hardly know.
There has never been any curtain hung before my heart. Perhaps
your eyes have not consciously looked into it but sometime
you will know that you have. How I shall then appear
to you I know not. Shabby enough, I do not doubt and
yet I think this very impulse has done much to shape your
nature. It is quite possible that your artistic insight
may be keener than mine as I think your power of
execution is likely to be finer. Your touches will be
firmer and nicer and I think more easily made. It
is evident that the artist life is before you — its
joys and sorrows, woes and aspirations! I pity you
— I love you. I am glad and I am sorry. Because

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I love you I would have been glad to spare you the pain that comes from a failure to reach the ideal, But cause I love you, I look forward to your success and only hope and pray that I it may come without too much of agony.

I have thought very much of you for the last few days as I have noted the untouched possibilities of this western life and world. The wide horizons with the low-lying sun indented with curious forms. Last night I was upon the train when the sun was setting and a scattered tower came between me and the exquisitely tinted sky. I never understood before what made its impressions so much grander and deeper here than at the east. There was no broken grounds of shadow, no dark wood on hill, nor any thing to lift the fading light off the earth and throw it down on objects in the foreground. In the houses and the hedges "stood" close against the sky, the creaking windmills towered over them and the horizon line cut through them all. There was no perspective - all

even at the same distance, all projected on the same plane. This is evidently the reason which the sunsets and distances here have always reminded me so much of the horizons of the Dutch or Flemish painters. The simple truth is that here are great stormy artistic effects ~~and~~ are to be found. The painter who catches the power and distance of these level horizons will be the greatest of American artists. It is a thing unique — the type for a school. I wonder if you will ever do it? I wonder if we will ever be in the great sky bounded solitude alone — loitering, dreaming, growing, each one working out an ideal.

What do you think?

Yours

W. W. Torrington