

Mayville N. Y.
Jan 27th 1889.

S. P. M.

My dear wife: I have been sitting in the rainy stillness all day reading the "Alfican Farm". How all the world gone crazy! And our hell, too! - Is there only left misery and suffering, with any courage or thoughts of remedy or betterment! Is humanity only one great uncomfortable yawning with simple dull unmeaning endurance!

The whole mass of these hell-words hurt me. They are simply complaining, fault-finding morbidity - not even now self-helping only foolishly self-accusatorial. Suppose the world has not made the world right - suppose there be or be not another life - suppose woman has been forever wronged - suppose there be or be not an eternal right - it is palpably evident that there is an eternal better.

Man may be better, stronger, purer and man may help his fellow to become better and by

so doing become better himself.
Of this there is no doubt. Religion
Philosophy, History, Science — every
form of knowledge, — all answer
"yes" and all point in one direction.
I do not know all the past and can
not guess all the hereafter; but, as a
whole, I cannot doubt that human life
has always been growing better, stronger,
nobler. It has been going upwards ever
since history or tradition give us any
hint of its existence. And those who have
lifted it most are not those who
have passed their lives guessing at
the end — puzzling over the infinite
or speculating about whether there is a
God or in making an overturning
creeds but but he who has stooped
to lift his fellow's burden, make
his task easier, cure his woes as
lessen his pain.

The present tendency of religious
fictitious thought is towards mere
useless, hysterical agony and silly per-

plex, shallow-minded self-indul-
gence. If we must read of suffering
for Heaven's sake let it be endured
for some practical some reasonable
purpose or let it at least be of a
natural, endurable, comprehensible
character. And if we must read of self-in-
dulgence let it be of a natural sort —
the result of temptation, the actual
desire for enjoyment — and not an un-
natural experimental sort, springing
only from a vague wild desire to
know the result of psychical experi-
ment. Shall we ever have natural
men and women painted infi-
nitely again instead of mere
morbid psychological speculations
merely tinged with sexual difference
— striving for physical purity and
clamoring for half-imagined glimpses
as of what they vainly guess to be
hints of the unknowable. Life's
joy — all the greater if cheerfully

healthfully, helpfully lived - death
and disease, ~~from~~ crime and want
are axes. Are not these enough
for man to think of? Are they
not enough for art to paint?
Until these themes are exhausted is
it not better, more beautiful, more
true, that human thought and her
man art should concern them -
selves with their phrases and leave
speculation about the infinite
to those who come closer to
infinity than we?

Well this is a dull sort of letter
but I cannot help it. Siddhartha
has interrupted me by putting his feet
on the table and mutely asking to be
petted. He hardly knew me on
yesterday: today he has about concluded
that I am not exactly a stranger
though he has not yet got back on
the old ground of absolute familiarity.
Neither has chirped up greatly

since I came home. She was lonesome
that was what ailed her - the thought
of being alone in the house, you know.
The manuscript and India's letter came
last night. The letter was very bright and
pleasant. I am sorry the poor child
cannot have all the pleasant things
she wants - sorry she is learning
the truth about that hollow sham
- society. And sorer still that
there does not seem to be anything
better or sweeter to offer her as a
substitute. She will just have to be con-
tent with our plain simple life of
much labor and moderate rewards
I am afraid. She will probably know
by the end of the year whether she
wants to give her life to the expres-
sion of ideas by pencil and brush
or not. I don't know that I am
pleased at the idea of her going
into the painting - coloring, I
mean. - I am of the impression

that she would do well to avoid
its fascination, for a time at
least. I would rather she struck
to black and white. I do not
think she will ever be a great
printer and to be a mediocre
one is to be the most unhappy
of mortals. I do think she
may become a very fertile and
fiable illustrator. Her humor
and dramatic talent will find
scope there: but as an artist merely —
a printer, I mean, I could never
bear to think of her striving for excel-
lence, fame, idols, and the like
only to win disappointment and
unhappiness. Let her master
black and white — learn to ex-
press her ideas rapidly and

forcibly in chalk and charcoal
and a thousand of
opportunities for pleasant and
profitable employment are open
to her. You see I want to save
her from unhappiness — that is
all. Her instincts are fine but
her ambition is as insatiable
as mine — she cannot hold
herself back from trying to
do great things and compel
herself to do less striking but
more creditable and useful
things. I would her art to draw
her towards life not away
from it, in order that her
own life may be happy.

I know it hurts her to see Maggie
"out" with nice things and pleas-
ant surroundings. She much re-
alize that there is a difference. We
must live in another world. We
cannot and must not think of
touching that. It is either gold or
gilding. We cannot afford the gold-
mine and we too good for pinch-
beck. Maggie may catch a rich hus-
band. Lodie must have a brass
string one - no matter how long
she waits. She could marry no
other. She will have to live and
find her life - not in the world
of fashion nor the world of art
but in the life-world. She will
not think of trying to live fashionable
life; the art-life may tempt her.
Neither is suited to her. To draw
with ease and power - express ideas
in black and white - that offers
a field that will suit her

and her probable circumstances in
life, and I think she would better
waste no time and enter into no
temptation as to the other matter. The
way is endless; the result deplorably
uncertain and the effect upon her-
self and her future almost unavoid-
able.

Pardon me for saying this. I fear
that you do not realize that Miss Emily
on any other person who advocates "art"
as the term is used, is a most un-
reliable guide. She will advise of
course, a general training - just as
a college professor advises a gen-
eral course. Her object is to train
artists not specialists. Now Lodie,
does not or should not be allow-
ed to be an artist, - in a general
sense, simply because that will
mean unhappiness. Her art-ed-
ucation is intended to be sim-
ply supplementary - an added
means of expressing thought.

Keep this in mind and don't allow her or yourself to be flattered out of it.

I will send you the rest of the story tomorrow and begin on something else ^{the} day after.

Millie will write tomorrow. I probably will not. I will write to Lodie pretty soon.

Are you going West with me? It must be decided as to know about the tickets. They have to be procured before hand.

My cold is better but I am still sipping whiskey and sugar every few minutes.

I have some more letters to write and will say Good bye. God bless both my darlings. I wish I could see you. It is very lonely here without you but I am going to work and forget that - Yours Albion -