



Chelsea
January 31

My Dear! My Dear! I want to put my arms round your neck, and give you - oh! such a good kiss! And then, - if you can stand that sort of thing, once in a way, - I should like to lay my head on your shoulder and take a good cry! That is how nature prompts me to acknowledge your dear letter, and dear new year's tokens, - with a good kiss and a good cry, rather than with any written sentence that my poor nearly extinct Brain can cobble together in these Hard Times! [I am so worn out and disheartened with long illness and confinement to two rooms!] But alas Dear! The "gods", however entreated, will not annihilate Time and Space, to make two lovers happy! That has been clearly ascertained some time since! And so, faute de mieux, I must have recourse to writing "under difficulties", and that without further delay, on penalty of passing for both fickle and ungrateful, when - God bless you! - I am as far as possible from being either! and as unwilling as possible that such an idea should be entertained of me - by you!

My Dear! My Dear! I want to put my arms round your neck, and give you - oh! such a good kiss! And then, - if you can stand that sort of thing, once in a way, - I should like to lay my head on your shoulder and take a good cry! That is how nature prompts me to acknowledge your dear letter, and dear new year's tokens, - with a good kiss and a good cry, rather than with any written sentence that my poor nearly extinct Brain can cobble together in these Hard Times! [I am so worn out and disheartened with long illness and confinement to two rooms!] But alas Dear! The "gods", however entreated, will not annihilate Time and Space, to make two lovers happy! That has been clearly ascertained some time since! And so, faute de mieux, I must have recourse to writing "under difficulties", and that without further delay, on penalty of passing for both fickle and ungrateful, when - God bless you! - I am as far as possible from being either! and as unwilling as possible that such an idea should be entertained of me - by you!

Mrs Devereux, being the present and faithfullest of dear little "goods", would do infallibly what she promised, nay volunteered to do, namely, "explain to Miss Cushman all about it" - "It" meaning my happiness at having a letter from you, - my true Scotch woman impatience to make "a suitable return", - and then my illness - the extreme weakness and nervousness which

made any - the least use of my head substantially irksome
besides being especially prohibited by my Doctor; - all
that the little good was to "explain"; and trusting that she
did so with her accustomed accuracy and lucidity, I will
not go back upon the causes of my long silence.
It is enough to have been four months ill and
shut up in two rooms; without "renewing grief" by
details of one's fit-for-nothingness; so soon as ever one
has recovered a certain use of one's tongue and pen!

But if I shut down the lid and turn the key
on my sick room tribulations. What is there left out
of these weary four months to tell you? This - first
and foremost; that I am not a bit cooled on the
sudden affection I took for you; and believe it to be
one of those Elective Affinities on which one does not
cool - ever! I have seen you twice - that's all! and
already you are mixed up with my life like an old
friend! Something new and good in my life - not
outside it! I look forward with pleasure to seeing
you again; but, without seeing you without interchang-
-ing words with you, it is a pleasure to know of
you in the same world with me. The influence of
a strong, brave looking true woman may be felt at
any distance, I firmly believe, without outward
visible sign. And then Dear, you are come to me
just at the right time - to be a consolation as well
as a peepshow! For of late years it had been
all loss, loss with me! never gain! One friend
after another out of dear old Long Ago" that had
cared for one and that I had cared for all my life

had gone to their rest, leaving me so lonely on the Earth! Playing at Friendship with the new people I was thrown amongst; and so discouraged in my secret heart that I despaired of both my chances and my ability to ever make myself a new real friend! — My heavens! when I went to Barnsbury Park that day to see you, how very very little I dreamt of jumping into your arms! and "swearing eternal friendship" like any boarding-school girl! But it was all right! after so many months and after a severe fit of illness (which I take to be the best possible test of realities and shams) I feel no misgivings about that somewhat German-looking transaction! rather complement myself on having so much life left in me (after all! and on having borne it to such account!

My leg has been making another pronouncement with which I could throw you into fits of laughter if I had you beside me! My Dear! I have had a big-yeared row with Geraldine Jewsbury! which has made "jigs and whistles" of that everlasting friendship! and "like clips that have been rent asunder and a dreary sea now flows between!"

I should be more overpowered with grief than I am. In fact I have shown an insensibility unexampled had the clips been rent by one explosion, but the rent has been the gradual work of many years. and the clips were only of sand or some very loose material to begin with! I do think that sort of emotional woman, all "finer sensibilities" and so feeling,

all smoke and no flame is one of the most intolerable inventions of civilization, should be put down by act of Parliament, and prayed against in all Churches.

You asked for Mrs Howard's (Madame Venturi's) address. After the 1st of January [she wrote to me] I was to address Emilia Venturi nota bahunt poste restante Milano - She had been living up to that date in some rooms of an

Are not you glad that you are not to be Madame Venturi's? It would have been so absurd that you would be remembered! When will you come? and how long will you stay? I cannot put my words now for I was by your writing tonight, and the little things I got from you not only so below my own but so moving to & I should like to see you. Had a letter from you and was so glad to see you for a good night!



paid
 Mrs Chapman
 38 Ma. Gregorie Lane
 This is a letter from me about!

1862-

old Chateau near Brescia, dismantled and ungrumbled in the midst of all sorts of inconveniences and discomfort. (as Mr Carlyle would say) "Significative of much!" But caring for none of these things, very fond of her new husband, which was very happy with him - happy as a young girl, and with a touching air of consciousness that not being a young girl she has no claim to that sort of happiness and no sine qua non of it! She writes to me "I am so glad you like Charlotte Cushman she is a dear good noble soul!"