

Dearest Ruth, I've just finished William Morris.

I am delighted - much moved. We owe that great man a vast amount. Nothing is more ennobling than to read the life of a noble man. It makes me think ^{of} highly of mankind & stimulates one's generosity. Of course I always connect you & yours very much with W.M. Incidentally Brock's book contains a very nice reference to your father's work for Anti-Slavery. I'll keep the book for a day or two as I want to look at some things in it again - & then I'll send it on. I don't suppose you are in a desperate hurry. I must read at once some more of W.M.'s poetry; I know very little of it & some quotations have whetted my appetite.

I have been rather the part myself since yesterday morning - my mind constantly recurring to that need - - I would have made an effort to write something yesterday after tea if only I hadn't thought it necessary to turn up at the Headmaster's - wh. it clearly wasn't - because if ever one begins serious) to talk to anyone it is time to play tennis again - & tennis most certainly visitates me at present because I feel very vigorous & yet if I hit the ball hard it always goes out. Sociability is purchased too dear at this price. And now I'm condemned to another after run of it - at the Osmonds - but with some boys - wh. redeems the situation - Raymond one of them; he always makes me feel better.

Sweet Ruth, I'm inarticulate when

I think of you. I now think that my last letter - I don't count the note I wrote yesterday - must have been quite ridiculous. And yet I don't mind being ridiculous with you. It will be a good thing for you to have something to laugh at. And yet, O my darling you are, or appear, deliciously solemn at moments. I wasn't for one moment in the tiniest degree serious about the cricket - I'm much too concerted (find a better word if you can!) ever to envy a cricketer. And what would be the use - you wouldn't play cricket with me. I only envy the poets - because you make me want to create beautiful things. I'm glad my sonnet means something to you - as it seems that it does. I'm doubtful of the phrase about 'quivering light'. Anyway I want to make poetry much more beautiful than that. Now I must go - change. I hope I shan't be cross afterwards; I feel in the best form now. -----

No - far from cross still - because the train has come & given me an extra hour or so. The boys were as jolly as possible; and Miss Pollock - Venetia! - if she is not one of those ladies of whom it is likely to be said that she stimulates the imagination or even has the capacity to provoke easily ~~any~~ in the minds of the more refined & ~~sensitive~~ people any more delicate sentiment than the profane emotion, escapes, however, though not entirely, the weaknesses of the cultured and lacks the flat insipidity of the quite stupid. [Forgive me for practising a literary parody upon you - I doubt if it will amuse you unless you know the work of Henry James - but I'll hope for the best.]

We had a most remarkable thunder storm last night. The most sustained efforts of tempestuous nature that I remember -

be very irritating to many people. My profound respect for his intellect & for a sort of passion with which he holds the doctrine of freedom, besides much love for him as a man of intense feeling & fine imagination, make me put up with much in him that I could hardly tolerate in any other. I haven't seen him for I don't know how long - much more than a year, I think - more like two - which for a great friend is rather a long time if you have my system with regard to correspondence.

Interval while I go to Darcombe to meet Lytton. Call in at Brock's on the way; his roses are not most glorious; he gave me a beautiful pink one. But what I really wanted was W.M.'s Poems by the Way, & I've bought it away in the fine collected edition (Miss May Morris's). My dear I think we shall have to buy that edition for a wedding present; I've received another cheque for £10; that would just cover it. Not as a wedding present unless you want it, but if you know it you probably will - it's such a joy to look at - let alone read.

Oh! my dearest - my my! I laugh. I loved what you said about it - but you know I was only about 1% serious over that. I'm afraid I have a confusing way of acting a serious part over things that seem to me comic, & just at the same time being actually a trifle serious. You would have understood how serious I was if I had been talking to you, but one can't grin & make eyes & pull one's mouth askew & practice in general the art of gravitas

the sky lit up almost continually - the thunder peeling & booming away, - sometimes crashing nearer, for a long time. It was still in my mind this morning as we read in turn the great 3rd Act of King Lear. I took Lear & really felt a bit mad. It's about the most wonderful, appalling & at the same time moving scene in Shakespeare - & consequently anywhere & in any time. Oh! what a weak, innocent child I am! Even to read like that it fills me with such deep pity & yet so fearless that a real wound is made that wants healing. What must it be with Lear Edgar & the fool all well acted! You know the part I mean don't you? First on the Heath with Lear's imprecations, "Blow, wind, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!" etc - & then outside the Edgar's hovel, - finally in the farm house where Lear tries to hold the mock trial of Goneril & Regan. It's a thing to read & read & read again & wonder more each time. By the bye I do hope you'll read some of the Keats letters. You may find it necessary to skip some, but almost all to his Sister Fanny are beautiful.

I hope I'm not being very tiresome. It will amuse you to know that Raymond has discovered, with great delight, one convention for which I have a profound respect - that an engaged couple write to each other every day.

I am expecting a friend to arrive shortly to stay the night - one Lytton Strachey. He is very, very queer - not to me of course because I know him as a friend - but to the world. He must

- all on paper. Money's always, partly comic, sometimes wholly so - or at least wholly irrelevant, to me - but after all it can have a very serious side. Perhaps after a time we may have to think a bit more about it - but never I hope ^{so} to cramp existence - most happily & luckily.

Lyttan's next train will be due shortly. I wonder if I shall go to meet him again? - probably not. How many many letters I ought to write!

My dear - I feel in a comic mood to-night. If I ~~think~~ you were here I think I should make you laugh. What fun it wd. be to make up a sham list of the wedding presents we want - all the right things. I've had several inquiries - quite unanswerable. I don't know what I want. The idea of possessions doesn't interest me unless I have some part in producing a beautiful whole with them according to a preconceived idea - at least it doesn't seem to at this moment. Mary told me the other day that Aric had 3 or 4 wedding presents & said she wd. probably get more as her Ralph must have far more friends than Aric's Harry. I said she might safely speculate

on 500. How many will you expect?

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'OH! OH! OH! STRANGE' 'BUS.

This is a horrible topic - fit for many many nightmares. I asked Mary whether she wouldn't, rather than a present from me, compound to have all the presents we didn't want. I thought it would have been a good bargain, but she wouldn't do it - so I shall have to think very seriously how nice a present I can procure in this world for her. Did I tell you how much I liked her - Ralph the other day?

I said Good Night as it were sometime ago in spirit since when it's been most sweetly long-drawn-out - for me. No - I can't be so silly as to solemnly

put down all the names for you that come into my head - chiefly because I suspect they're all out of books - half of them sound as though you were a superior toy - so I'll just call you sweet, sweet, sweetest Ruth, with a kiss each time, and so Good Night Oh! most rightfully at last.

Jr. Irving George.