

Address as usual
& letters will be
forwarded, I

am not here
about our lake
address

Oberlin, Ohio,

Aug. 10, 1902.

My dear Willie:-

I have just written an eight page letter to Evelina, of general news, & I asked her to send it on to you as I had not time to write the same things over again. Ever since receiving your letter in answer to mine I have wanted to reply, but for the first couple of days I was very busy putting the house in order, sewing, & a host of other things.

As I felt pretty well I thought I must make the most of the time, + accomplish all I could. For the last two or three days the weather or some thing has taken all my vitality so that I have just had to drive myself to do what I knew must be done. But I must not longer delay writing you, for you will be anxious to hear, + tomorrow will be a busy day, for Tuesday AM at 5 1/2 or 6 we must be ready to pack our goods in the wagon for the Lake.

No one has seen nor heard your letters to me, + they have been too polite to ask, + I have said nothing. I sympathize with your feelings of reticence, for it is like myself at your age, yet I think frankness with one's own family is better, at least with your sisters who are perfectly trustworthy. Selden has not always judgment, being naturally too frank. + then he is young. I have not seen either

Miss Burroughs nor Miss Ward since you asked me to find out about your work, for I have not felt the strength to go to them. Perhaps I can write notes to them. But how will you find time to make up any work now? I wrote you that Miss Stebbins said your botany could be made up if you would get your specimens all in.

You had better wait till you get home to have your watch fixed both on account of expense & because a poor watchmender may ruin it. I know the works, jewels &c. are as good as those in a gold case, better than many gold cases.

I am glad you are so careful about accounts. Won't your company do anything for you if you spend your full time working, & don't sell books?

Certainly you can send my letter to Helen. I don't care who sees it, if you don't. I haven't said anything about your corresponding with Helen because I saw that you intended to do it anyhow, & to say any thing about it would only make

"all hands" unhappy, myself included, + do no good. I do not mean that you would deliberately set out to act contrary to my wishes, or were really yourself conscious of your intentions.

I doubt if it is possible for you + Helen to look upon each other simply as friends, I do not think that your regarding yourselves as more than friends is in itself wrong. (You see I am answering all questions in the order of your asking them). It is more for

Helen's sake than for yours
that I think it a pity to
enter upon what must be
a long engagement, unless
you marry before you are
in a position to assume
such responsibilities, which
would be a worse pity than
the first one. I'm ask if
I think Helen "fickle". All
I know in that line is what
Emily told me. Emily said to
me when I spoke to her about
Helen's relations to you - "Oh
she will soon get over that,
I've seen her before." She gave

me the idea that Helen was
more susceptible than con-
stant toward young men.

My objections to long engage-
ments briefly stated are:-
Putting one's mind on love
affairs when it should be
concentrated on preparing
for a life work. Writing long
letters, + visiting are dissipa-
ting to such energies. Danger
of misunderstandings caus-
ing many heartaches. These
occur after marriage of
course, but are much easier
then to make up, for things
can be talked over as they can't
before. Then there is always the

danger of one person's affection cooling to the possible life wreck of the other. The age difference is an objection but not a great one. That is a mere physical reason, & so in a real true soul life union has an inferior place in my mind. But I will say, for Helen at the most charming age of young womanhood to wait for a boy to grow up to marry her, seems a little hard, doesn't it?

Of course I hope you will marry some time, and as young in years as you are all around fit to marry - mentally, physically, financially.

G

~~Walter~~ not wait till all your fortune is made. It is pleasant to struggle up the hill together, but I haven't much respect for a man, & I know you have it, who has it something ahead before he marries, & to me it seems — perhaps I am extreme — that he should have prospects at least before becoming engaged.

I think Helen would make a lovely wife. She is — or was when here — a little spoiled, which did

not seem strange when I
saw how her father petted
her, showing such a marked
partiality to her above Emily.

But nevertheless she is a
sweet + charming character.

You have been some spoiled
too. People tell me ~~if~~ ^{you} have
over-indulged you. It is
one of my sorrows that it
is so, although I never
meant to, + I suppose Helen's
father did not mean to, either.

I see that it was unjust
to Emily - other people see
my faults the same way.

Well, I am sorry. Never

copy your mother's faults,
Millie boy, copy her virtues
if you find any there. Any
way, she loves you, truly,
deeply, + in spite of every
thing.

You ask me
to tell you what true love
is. It is hard to define,
but I think the 13th Chap.
of 1st Corinthians is a
definitive which should
be fulfilled joyfully between
two souls who may unite.

To me a test was this: Can
I be just as happy or even
comfortably happy without
this companion? When it was

your father in question, I felt
that my happiness was incomplete
without him. It was not that
I wanted companionship of some
confidential person - that is a
common feeling - but he was
the one. Yet nothing would have
induced me to marry him if
I had not been sure that my
doing so was his happiness.
True love must be unselfish.

But one cannot analyse
the love which unites two souls.
It is God given, + can be only
known to those who experience
it. I could only say "What
God joins together let not
man put asunder," only be
sure that it is God's joining, +
true love can wait + work + learn
unselfishness. It is very late +



Mr. William H. Belden,
~~Newfield~~, Milford Center
Ohio.

Union Co



WESTFIELD
AUG 12
10-11 AM
RECD

MILFORD CENTER
AUG 16
5 PM
RECD

ASHLEY, OHIO
AUG 10
10-11 AM
RECD

OHIO
AUG 12
RECD