

herence. But, anyway, I stood alone in the winter twilight, and I took a deep breath of clear cold air, and I felt beautifully, wonderfully, electrically free; and then I ran and leaped and skipped down the hill and across the pastures toward our iron confines, and I sang to myself. Oh, it was a scandalous proceeding, when, according to all precedent, I should have gone trailing home with a broken wing. I never gave one thought to poor Gordon, who was carrying a broken, bruised, betrayed heart to the railroad station.

As I entered the house I was greeted by the joyous clatter of the children trooping to their supper. They were suddenly *mine*, and lately, as my doom became more and more imminent, they had seemed fading away into little strangers. I seized the three nearest and hugged them hard. I have suddenly found such new life and exuberance, I feel as though I had been released from prison and were free. I feel,—oh, I'll stop,—I just want you to know the truth. Don't show Jervis this letter, but tell him what's in it in a decently subdued and mournful fashion.

It's midnight now, and I'm going to try to go to sleep. It's wonderful not to be going to marry some one you don't want to marry. I'm glad of all these children's needs, I'm glad of Helen Brooks, and, yes, of the fire, and everything that has made me see clearly. There's never been a divorce in my family, and they would have hated it.

I know I'm horribly egotistical and selfish; I ought