

Berlin W. Schellingstr. 6.

Dec. 10th 89

A2/374³

My dear Kelly

It seems I have taken a leaf from your book in letting such a long time elapse without writing to you. In truth I have been very lazy in this respect ever since last spring, especially with regard to my English friends, and I find it ~~less~~ difficult to confess than to apologise — so please pardon me, as I have often pardoned you for the same fault without further excuses. I think I sent a post. card in answer to your last letter dated from August; at the time I was really in too great a hurry for more, but later on it was a curious disinclination against correspondence

in general took kept me silent. Besides
there were really no news to tell of any
particular interest. — I had a delightful
journey to Switzerland with my mother,
first visiting different friends in the
South of Germany (Tübingen, Stuttgart) and
then spending about 4 weeks at Engelberg,
high up in the mountains, near the lake of
Lucerne. Before returning to Germany
we made a trip to the Helian lakes through
the Gott harden Bohem and enjoyed it exceedingly.
My greatest pleasure was however to
find my dear mother much benefited
by the journey and the stay at Engelberg.
I left her at Thurnau (near Dresden)
with my cousins to enjoy country-life

a little longer, while I had to be back at
Berlin by the 10th of August. I would
have been very hard coming back all alone
to the dreary town and lonely house, had
it not been for the prospect of paying
a visit to my sisters in the Thury lakes on.
I spent another 10 days with them towards
the end of the month and found your letter
waiting for me on my return here, together
with a heap of business-letters. I had been
delayed in the Thury by a sore foot, which
brought on a deluge of correspondence
on my return, as the prospectus had by
this time to be got ready. This kept
me very busy during the ensuing weeks.
Then my mother returned about the
middle of September, and later on my sisters.

We are much as usual now, resigned to our
narrow winter quarters and the rather monotonous
routine of our town-life.
The Lyceum bar is going on in its accustomed
jog-trot, and I suppose it is the repetition
of all the various items — mostly interesting
in themselves — that makes me feel rather
dull about it this year. The new courses
for the Librarian are new no longer this
year, the first impetus of energy and in-
terest about them has subsided, and the
unavoidable difficulties and disappointments
attending every effort of this kind, actually
impress one more and more as one goes on.
Fortunately the teachers continue as good
as ever, and there is no want of perseverance
either about the students that we have
kept — but the number of them that

had to give up! Ill. health in various forms
 was the result of over-work or over-
 strain in most of the cases, so that my
 impressions lead to the conviction that
 we have aimed too high and shall not
 be successful, unless we fix a different
 standard, viz. a lower one than that
 of the men-teachers. Of course we shall
 go on with this first course of 3 years
 for better or for worse, but I am afraid
 the results will prove that we shall have
 to modify the quality of our work in
 order to meet the average capabilities
 and possibilities of our candidates.

However I have a few nice new-comers
 who have come to Berlin merely for the
 sake of their studies, ^{and} who will, I hope

I find hard to read Robert's pleasure of life but I cannot - the bar -
 give any more

do well in course of time, as they need
not overwork unless they choose to.

We have had an early winter this year
and just now the weather is much un-
pleasant, with snow over head and drizzle
on the ground and no sun to speak of,
so that I am reminded of London days.

My mother always suffers from melancholy
as well as physical depression in this kind
of weather, which naturally makes me
obtain it the more. Let us hope that
after Texas there will be brighter days
in store.

She has been busy of late doing some
pretty work in leather engraving. She
sent a portfolio of her workmanship

to a bazaar, and it was so much admired,
that she got orders for nine or ten more,
which was rather too much of a good
thing. However she seems pleased her
and she has nearly finished them now
earning quite a nice little sum of money,
at least considering that these are her
first earnings.

I am conscious of writing you a rather
disconsolate letter, but I cannot help it.
In fact I would much rather not have
written at all, but that I feel ashamed
of my long silence and want to pull at
a little at the threads that connect us in
spite of time, and change, and distance,
I hope. I suppose you have been and
are busy as usual, and I trust prospering

with your school as usual. I remember
you had a pleasant holiday with the ^{Mr}
Lincas, ^{in the journey} but a less successful visit after-
wards. At any rate I hope you came back
to your school refreshed in body and mind.
Have there been no unforeseen good strokes
of fortune or interesting little episodes since
then? Where and how are you going to
spend your Xmas holidays? How are your
parents and sisters? Is Miss Pitt. Schime
satisfactory? — To sum up all, I wish
you a very happy and idle Xmas time
and a good, cheerful beginning of the New
Year. My mother and sisters join in these
good wishes and send you their love.
I hope to hear from you in the holiday-time
though I am I hardly deserve it still I am
and shall always be Yours affecly
John van Cott.