

Letter from Charlotte Duhme to Mary C. Duhme, given to Lavon Lucking by Gran, Catherine Eustis Peck; and to me by Lavon.

Jan 28, 1896

My dearest, dearest Mother,

Today I am the happiest girl in the whole world, I am sure. The one drawback to my perfect happiness is my most loving thoughts of you.

But Mother, dear, your love for me is too perfect not to be glad with me that my stony heart has suddenly become so hot and active that it is painful. But I once promised you that I would never say "Yes" to any man until you knew him and all about him.

So I told Mr. Eustis that I could not say "Yes" until you knew him and approved. So we will go on just as we are until my return when he will come down to see you. But Mother, you must love him for he is worthy of it. Everyone speaks so well of him, and he is a general favorite. I don't know why I love him so - simply because I cannot help it. It really happened last evening, although I have felt it coming, I knew he loved me even tho he had not said so - and the trouble is everybody else knows it too. The other evening at Mrs. Woodburn's, Dr. Laton took me into the Library alone and taking both my hands, said "Miss Duhme, don't coquette Charlie Eustis- love him if you can, for I know him well. He is the dearest, truest fellow on earth."

And so one after another of his friends have come to me and begged me to be good to him. His eyes showed so plainly what he felt, but he did not speak. Last evening he took dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Haskell and myself - after dinner Mr. Haskell went to his office, Mrs. Haskell to bed, and Mr. Eustis and I to hear J. Hopkinson Smith read. I wore some violets he had sent me in the morning, and they seemed to intoxicate me- we walked home slowly, and sat over a little lunch Mrs. Haskell had left for us when he suddenly put his hands toward me and told me of his great love for me. I simply laid mine in his and he knew I loved him. It seems so strange, Mother dear, this feeling of rapture so deep, so deep has come to me. And he is not an intellectual - only a business man, a jeweller - and I love him with every inch of my being.

Where is that professional Professor I used to wonder about? I don't care about that now- I only want this love from an earnest, good true man.

When Mrs. Haskell came into my room this morning, she looked at me, threw her

arms around me, saying, "I see by your face it has happened. Nothing could be lovelier or more appropriate- and I love you for loving him." My face must be a very tell-tale one- for when I drove home this morning and ran into the house with my satchel, Mrs. Reno followed me to my room, and taking my head between her hands, she said, "You have my consent. I see by your eyes that a great joy has come to you."

And so it is, Mother, that others and not you have seen this great change. I am sorry for that - but I can't help being glad. And the joy has come to stay, for he is so good and so kind

He does not want to hurry me, and so we will simply drift - until he comes down. He appreciates my feelings, for he supported his parents for years. I don't know when his father died, but he lost his mother two years ago. His brother with two children and he have lived together - You met the boy at our house. Of course, you remember Mr. Eustis. He took Sunday dinner with us twice. Mama dear, life is very strange, but very happy. And I know my future will be happy, for I do not want very much- only love- & it has come.

I have had so may men make love to me, but I have always drawn back for various reasons. Now there seem to be none.

Allen¹ is coming up next Saturday & he will take me to Chicago Sunday evening or Monday. You might ask him to satisfy you by making such inquiries as you want made- so that you will be prepared when Mr. Eustis comes down. Oh. Mother, I want to hug you so and whisper to you- but I can't leave just now. I am almost ready to cry,

No more today- Please don't speak of this outside the family, for I have only given a conditional promise. Until it is settled I do not want anyone to dream of it. Minneapolis peoples' surmises I cannot help - They know him too well to be in doubt - But they do not know me.

Mama dear, be good to me and don't feel badly - be sure not to let me know it, if you do. I love you all so.

Lottie

¹Allen Ives, her second husband

