

Los Gatos, Cal.,
Jan. 19, 1897.

My dear Walsh,

I have at last opened my boxes and dug up these stories. Of course I cannot write a criticism of them—the remarks I have put on them need no explanation, I think—anyhow the faults they indicate are very trivial.

Of the baby story I may say that if I were an editor I should reject it. Readers will not have more than brief references to pre-natal matters, and the “bluggy” termination is more disagreeable than artistic.

The other story is better though it has, I think, this fault. The term “blaspheming Jew,” as used by Shakespeare, is generic—any Jew’s liver would have served the old bookworm’s purpose, as, being a commentator, he would naturally know. The blasphemy consists in denying Christ’s divinity. The “general reader,” however, would not know that, and the story would “go” with him.

Did I thank you for the date of Lily’s birth? I cannot put her epitaph on the stone—they would not let me; so the only inscription will be:

“Lily Walsh
1872-1895.”

You will, I hope, not be sorry to hear that I have recovered my health.

I cannot deliver your tender messages to Ms. McEnerrey, for I never see her; but I see Mrs. Hirshberg frequently, and shall ~~always~~ overwhelm her with evidences of your good will—as long as the supply lasts; and then I’ll invent more.

Sincerely yours,
Ambrose Bierce.

P.S.—I forgot to say that you can easily become a first-rate story writer—no, not “easily,” but none the less certainly.

B.