

Ellington May 8<sup>th</sup>, 56

My Dear Aurelia,

Were it not for the forgiving spirit which I know you to possess, and the strong ties of friendship which years ago bound our hearts, I should hardly dare write you after so long, long delay! But Rill I do believe you love me and will appreciate my apologies, and attribute my neglect in writing to limited time and not to indifference towards you, my dearest friend.

During those short winter days I could do scarcely anything else but attend to my studies. And as each day and evening passed away I would say, well, tomorrow night I'll devote to answering letters, and something would happen so often, that I gave up writing letters until school should close and although I am very busy preparing for teaching I will steal a few moments and write you a line at least to show you I've not forgotten you. No, no! that can never be; the memory of other friends loved now, may gradually fade from my heart, but the memory of her who shared my childish sports, her, who loved in early days; ah! Never no never can I forget. Rill, there are other stronger claims in your affection than upon mine, but can you not spare me one quiet little nook in your heart? Say, Aurelia will you not remember me as a dear friend?

I have engaged a school for the summer, about 5 miles east from here – I expect to be some homesick even when so short a distance from home!

There have [been] two weddings here. Uncle Perry West has got his 5<sup>th</sup> wife, an old maid from Lin-Clairville [?], and our good Elder Mead was married last Sunday evening at the M.E. Church after preaching – the house was filled to overflowing – he married Miss Melinda Clark, a very nice girl I suppose. Do you hear from Di often – remember me to her –

How I wish you would come to Ellington this Spring or Summer.

Write me soon, Rill. Don't wait half as long as I did. Your friend

Mary.

[NOTE: More writing around the margins]

Now Rill write me a good long letter, don't blame me but cherish feeling towards me kindly as ever. I wish I could see you today, I shall soon be alone. Mother and Jule are going away for the afternoon. Come Rill and we'll sit down in our great family kitchen and chat away the hours; or we'll hie to the woods, our favorite place. I talk over old times. Come and see us here soon as possible. Your father is well as usual I think, for I see him at church, write soon.

Mary A.B.