

Mrs. Mary O. Gibson,  
Versailles

Ky.

Leamington  
May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1875  
Monday

Dear Sister Mary

This morn.  
Before going down street, I  
intended writing to you  
that the letter could  
The morning mail  
But, it is felt as it  
ed, as I can say positively  
that Sumner went down  
to Hartland. He left on  
the noon stage, much against  
Mrs Sumner's will; he was  
very firm having pro-  
voked to accomplish  
certain things before  
your return and was  
consequently, arrived  
in H. in Bradford this

with. As usual, he went  
to Cin. last Wednesday and  
returned with bottles of  
our medicine. Mrs. Hobart  
speaks of moving somewhere  
west - where? I have for-  
gotten. Inman, as usual,  
in his letters, has written  
you all about his last  
trip, so I will nance off  
on something else.  
Principally, Daniel, who  
like a grating lion  
takes every one of us  
manage. He is perfect  
with the exception  
of that same cold he had  
when you left. I have just  
come up from the sitting-  
room bearing Tobias and  
Daniel in a furious  
group - Mittie reading  
some Sunday School  
book, Fannie at her  
music, Mrs. Inman  
drawing curtains and  
the baby (the very best one  
I ever saw - the Johanna  
I would like to see them  
all) sitting on the floor  
eating crackers, her cheeks  
as red as roses. The mid-  
Tobias are the best of the  
little children - all of them  
are as smart as any I ever  
saw, particularly Fannie  
for whom I have great  
admiration. She displays  
so much industry and  
perseverance about her  
music and so much in-  
telligence in every subject.  
I am so glad that she is  
named for me - being  
from a smart woman

her names has right to be  
superior. Your father as well  
as your mother and family  
are all well.

The latest excitement  
is the presence of the Bishop.  
We all went to the Episcopal  
Church last night, where  
we saw at least twenty-five  
persons confirmed; among  
them Mary Gray and  
Mary Mitchell. The church  
was crowded, chairs being  
placed in the aisles —  
and with my usual luck  
I walked all the way up  
to Mrs. Woodrard's pew,  
found that filled with  
strangers, consequently my  
exit and I was obliged  
to return. This was almost  
as embarrassing as the whe

GIBSON & AUSTIN,  
Attorneys and Counselors at Law,  
No. 5 Carondelet Street,  
NEW ORLEANS.

If not delivered in 10 days, return to ~~the~~

*Wm May W Gibson*  
*Lexington*  
*Fayette County*  
*Kentucky*



My Dear Mary,

Jan'y 17<sup>th</sup> 1874

The deed from Col Rerey duly signed by you has been received, executed & by Post and will go forward to be recorded. I am today, this moment, in receipt of your letter. It confirmed my suspicious fears — my worst apprehensions. You may trace the disastrous situation, & pecuniary embarrassment, a timid disposition and an empirical occupation. I have not come to Lexington because I imagined I was not wanted there in this I was correct.

I never supposed the causes you mention, however, had produced this feeling. I never dreamed of such a condition of things.

I must reflect upon all you say. I would not have been as much shocked at my brother's death — as at his Canon. We must devise some plan & get him on the right road. I have had several talks with him, but his temper is quick & he has been chilled by hard blows — has no confidence in anybody & only trusts a little in your Father & my — thinks they are bent on robbing him. I must consider the question in all its phases. I wish you would read my letter to your Father dated January 13<sup>th</sup> 1874 —

I will come to Lexington next summer and look into things.

It has always been a cherished purpose of mine to come to Lexington as soon as I had means to live on, & continue my profession there — on account of my health & for the education of my children.

But things are in such a condition generally that



Coming here if you possibly can. In kindly ways his  
man's bills, his dry goods' bills, his seedbill, his hardware  
bills, his store account of all kinds - cannot get  
a dollar on credit - will be sued right & left  
this Court. Sister owes half of all these bills.  
They owe \$5000 to Cullum; they owe their  
merchants \$12,000 - all due.

They have no clothes - no food - no credit  
no money. The plantation is mortgaged for  
double, three times its value. There are no  
schools, no churches, no society, no protection  
for life & things are getting worse & worse.

Knows that a place for sister & her family & do you  
think she knows better how to manage the  
plantation than I do and yet she persists she  
does & yet she abandons Sumner's & her other children & left.  
Things are awfully broken up here. I am myself deeply  
in debt. My health is very uncertain. I am carried  
away from here every Spring.

Wish you would tell Sney & Sally not to come  
down here. I am supplying in kind with  
provisions but I cannot buy do this. In fact,  
he will come down here upon my office.



I really believe Sister's mind perfect. If she stays  
out that place a year longer, she will be carried  
away like poor Father was.

But enough. The situation is beyond my  
Comprehension. Sister do all we can do  
for the best. There talks with Aunt. will  
do all I can on his own as well as on your  
your children's account. When he comes  
back try to make him write often & communicate  
with me. He tells me he has not heard any letters for  
three years.

You can repeat what I say to Lucy - & Sally.

Lucy is a very superior woman. She ought not  
to stand by & see Sumner's trust abandoned, dismantled,  
broken up & down and every dollar that might  
go for her Mother's support & her own & for the  
education of her brother, and for their general  
welfare - be put on Fire & sold for the benefit  
of the Bailey & Sister's Creditors - while they are  
denied everything in life. If of Sister was in  
her right mind she would not do these things.

We are a curious set.

May God bless you my dear May & bring you peace  
& kind thoughts. My love is very well and ours

children are a great blessing. See the affection for them  
R. Johnson.



Mrs Mary S. Gibson  
Versailles  
Kentucky

will not prevent your intended  
coming hither.

Tell the Princess to encumber no  
more the growth of her wings.

Mother says she will devote her  
first cheerful mood to you. Grand  
mother will fully appreciate the pigs  
and pet them immensely.

Most verily yours,  
Hart Vance.

New Albany Ind.  
Sept 6<sup>th</sup>, 1876.

Dear Cousin Mary,

I wish I had  
stayed a little longer! My symptoms  
of nostalgia are aggravated by thought of  
my unsatisfactory relations when I left.

I enclose a letter to Cousin Sarah -  
the sparring against Cousin Sally which  
I declared I would try. As I  
submitted my cause to your discretion I  
submit it for your approval. Read it  
and, if it be not incompatible with any  
promise and your will, please deliver it.  
I think all whom I strike, richly  
deserve the blows and hope you will see  
fit to transmit them.

As relevant to this theme, I send

the "lecture" which you said was a libel on the girls. Don't you think now that it was not utterly unwarranted.

I have sought over a great part of Louisville and the whole of this place for the fringe but can find nothing nearer what you want than that, a sample of which I enclose. I will make search again on Monday but doubt my finding it as I have inquired at all the stores on Fourth St. This is 20 cts pr. yd. If it will do, write me and I will send it.

I missed Mrs. Cowan at Frankfort, she having departed Kentonward. I visited the hills but it was rather too warm for sentiment.

Now I found a reprehensible postal card from Hart, which made me half ashamed of myself, and I

shall devote to-morrow to the completion of my letter to her. She infers that I am certainly dead.

By-the-by, just there, I quietly ~~asked~~ asked, if there were any June-apples about. "Well, well! Hart," exclaimed Mother, "You have undoubtedly lost all sense of season!"

I called on Miss Daves Thursday evening and found her cordial but (mirabile dictu!) sarcastic. I never was so snapped up in my life. I was made meek with astonishment and a discomfiting steadiness of her gaze into my eye. After the first half hour she didn't remove her eyes. She has undoubtedly assumed a new role. — She contradicts authoritatively the report as to M.E.P.'s marriage.

There will be no Exposition this Fall, but I hope that fact

Monday

My dear Mary,

Wants says he wrote you  
of Ma's hurt. He has been here  
all, and is still, with swelling  
of the stomach. Howard was sent  
and Ma was excited and  
she followed me to the kitchen in the  
night dark and fell off the porch.  
We thought she was dying that night  
but she was better Saturday. When they  
were able to examine her leg and back  
and pronounced the thigh bone fractured  
in the socket - a hopeless injury at  
her age. I do not think it broken  
tho' she screams with pain almost  
constantly - and must sink under  
it very soon. It is fearful to see.  
Benton helps me nurse her as Matt  
and Howard are quite sick upstairs.

Tuesday noon.

So far I had written when Ma

mutantly became thin - with intense  
pain in the head. The Doctor  
has been with her ever since and  
says it is exhaustion of the brain  
from her heart disease - or aneurism  
in the neck. She is thin - and  
seems scarcely alive - but is now  
in her senses - and seems to have  
no pain in her leg - or not to feel

I have not a cent in the house  
and have need your money that  
had - as I know you would have  
me - and now - oh cousin Wirt  
if he can send me a little -  
for I need everything for her  
and cannot get out to borrow  
it here - or sell anything -

I am almost unable to write. But  
wrote to write to Sarah and you  
I wish Sarah had come to see her.  
You bless you all.

J. P. Vance

ty says.) I have retained from childhood the impulse to press my face amid all delicious bloom, but I know that that would destroy these, and so I stand among them helplessly incapable of the delight that they seem to offer, only reading, in the repeated occultation of their supreme loveliness, an analogue of my own experience. Am I foolish, because, having seen the quick fading of all the bloom that I have admired or loved, I devote my thought to a perennial flower, assured of its future perfect blossoming?— what though, may be, not for me? I cannot be proven so foolish, as I would be—as I have been, in calling, a flower, that which is a weed.

Poor Joe! I pity him in his double propinquity! Very sad it is, that one man's should make the other so

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sweet folly. When "Reason" shows only bare rough rocks to the footsore, only dark vistas to him longing for ideal lights, while the folly will soften the ways with strewn blossoms and envelop him with a rosy mist of dreams and tender romance, why should he not choose the folly? Does not <sup>love</sup> wisdom sanction the choice? What matter that the mist must dissolve, the rocks, be seen and felt, the darkness, known? They cannot annul the memory of the exaltation and the happiness that have been, and, to the wise, that memory may be better than any profit of a gleamless weary companionship with Reason.— Epicurus was a truer philosopher than Gens.

I might plead thus (though I would be arguing on an analogy of Christian sophistry) but you have been so pointed

in your aspersion, that I mean to prove explicitly that I lack neither "sense of season" nor "sense and reason";—even in the matter from which you derive your opinion. — Without urgent occasion, I should have been reluctant to avow any rational motive, for reason, I believe, is generally held heterodox in love.

The sense of her flesh loveliness  
That shrouded my being  
I know you will not distinguish from  
the "sense" which you meant.

The definite reason by which I have been  
ruled involved also the "sense of season":  
My phantom was adult, and naturally there  
was no unfulfilled condition of real con-  
summation — except discovery —, but cir-  
cumstance not only baffled discovery but  
barred even the contingent consummation.  
And so with every year I knew some  
of life's sweetest possibilities gone by —  
with each of many years to be I knew  
that many more would go by, until

hope made itself a paradox and shift-  
ed its dwelling place to the Past. —

"Life itself was turned around."  
(Do you understand now why I said I was  
older than you?)

In renunciation of this phantom and  
consecration to a living lovely but-reality,  
(You witnessed the ceremony.), I made the  
sacrifice proscribed by Nature, synchronous  
with the prospect granted by the possibilities  
of my lot. I freed myself from the con-  
tinual stress of the thought, that every day  
was an expense, not a gain of life, and  
transferred the objects of being to the  
Future. I was rejuvenated.

Beauty has innumerable morning-  
glories of innumerable hues. They have  
literally bespread the garden, and every morn-  
ing I go out and watch dreamily the  
perfect splendor that they make over  
everything, until, as if exhaled with the dew,  
their beauty fades and they shut them-  
selves away from the sun (flower, Beau-



that my "lecture" was not "a propos." I hope, however, she does not meditate on effort to annihilate me. I should regret being obliged to contribute to any failure on her part. - Matter and I are not annihilable.

Oh, I know what is said about "Absence &c." - namely: "Absence-empansplis the beloved object in a lustre of ideal excellences and beauties - a halo, a splendor, - hiding all defects known areas and promoting tenderness to love and love to passionate devotion" - Do you think this fact lessens the probability of "chronic nostalgia" in me? -

I am "foolish," if you will, but I have no intention of reformation. I might plead sufficiently only that to one in such a lot as mine, it were well to be able to yield oneself wholly to some

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How miserable have you utterly forsaken? Do I lack the fit wedding garment or have I failed to multiply my "talents," that I should be thus "cast into outer darkness"? Even the pretty souvenirs, that I somewhat surreptitiously enjoy, are, in my suspense, but suggestions of their own examination and the absence of their realities. Shall I discredit, my dear Cousin, your professed sympathy, or your ability to recognize the exigencies of my condition? Why do I suffer this doubt-haunted suspense?

Dear Cousin Mary,

The above inception of a carminated plaint and protest was interrupted last evening by the receipt of your much-relieving letter. I had begun to conjecture divers calamities

that my letter to Cousin Sarah had mis-  
carried - you possibly delivering it before  
reading my caution - and I had so in-  
curred the direful whelming of your threat  
and wrath; - that you had, perhaps, gravi-  
tated to the enemy (morbid chimera - that!) -  
"and others," equally baleful.

I am sorry I did not reduce the repre-  
sentation of my case, so as to insure your  
approbation. I feared, while revising it,  
that my temptation to "show" had made  
me too explicit, but the temptation was  
still potent and it went unaltered. If  
you anticipate that its communication would  
at all incommode you, please suppress it.

I can trust the management of my vin-  
dication to you and can with an effort,  
I suppose, forego the gratification of my  
propensity for mental swordplay.

I think, however, if I may speak as  
a third party, that M.C.E. scarcely de-  
serves the consideration which you show.  
His implied derogation of your maternal

care hardly left it incumbent on you to be,  
even ostensibly, his accomplice in his in-  
tention of secretly maligning me. If I  
<sup>I wouldn't care</sup> were you, whether or not he knew that you  
told me what he said. - But I trans-  
gress my privilege of speech.

In one respect, at least, I can claim  
your approbation of my letter. It would  
have been unseemly and ungrateful in  
me, when I had been the beneficiary  
of your good opinion, to let pass *pro con-  
fesso* a refutation of that opinion. I  
have but filed my answer, as was thus  
demanded and as all law and equity  
would allow me. - For its severity, Na-  
ture must be my warrant. - Knowing  
that I am exculpated in your mind,  
I shall be content with whatever dispos-  
ition you may see fit to make of that  
answer.

I shall be very glad to receive Cousin  
Sally's intended replication, if it shall  
develop any plea, to justify me in believing

G.D. I too, have  
found among my  
subscribers, especially  
(of being ignorant, it  
is singular) not  
mine - Duncan  
I suppose I will  
expect it in a day  
or two. I wish to  
send with it a book  
that I must receive  
from a borrower.  
Don't compel me  
to red ink again.  
To Mother & Child  
as sister as they and  
still alive?

equivocal that occurred in it, which I hoped  
you would hold venial - the assertion of  
my inability to speak except from inference  
and surmise. I could not speak otherwise  
because of my promise. - Remember,  
in deciding the fate of my letter, that one  
"who is merciful  
While the bad is cruel to the good."

Upon revision of what I have written,  
I conclude that it must have grown fully  
cool enough for sentiment. - And yet  
my only ready and, perhaps, my best  
reply to the Princess' remark is a mere  
echo, I have nothing to say.

My letter doesn't seem half-finished,  
but the hammock is swinging in my brain,  
I am both to speak of it except in song, and  
song won't come; and so with love for all  
I am

Yours, the Rejuvenated,  
Hart Vance.

Sept. 24th 1856

gelling! Why didn't they take him to  
the Centennial? I think the impress  
of the concentrated World might possi-  
bly have obliterated that of the Royal  
Seal - (in him, at least, he being yet  
young and perhaps easily mutable.) -  
and so rescued him from its (in his  
case) deplorable magic.

I went to see Miss Dawes again  
(to try to establish some plausible excuse  
for my previous call - I will have  
two pretexts to fabricate next time.)  
and found her perfectly restored to her  
old character. She was exceedingly gentle,  
smiled upon me even in her pensiveness  
(She was very pensive), praised me, es-  
pecially for truthfulness, - and evinced  
no acrimony except in a punctilious noting  
of every sentence of mine which could  
possibly be interpreted into a reference to

the Princess (M.E.P. had been there  
between times and she was fully  
posted.) - which she positively interdicted.  
She too has departed Centennialward  
and so my loneliness is accentuated.

My letters to Aunt and M.E.P.  
were the poorest I ever wrote. The  
burden of the former was, "I am out of  
time," and it was all burdens. I wrote  
only a supplement to that written at  
Westland.

You aggravate my regretful wish, that  
I had stayed a little longer, by your  
announcement of Cousin Lucy's having  
been there. I hope yet, however, to see  
her before her southward return, though  
we do seem fated not to meet.

Another collision with Cousin Virginia  
also would have been very pleasant.

Enclose for her my reply - berhymed -  
to a breakfast-table sally of hers, which  
it will probably suggest to her memory.  
- I hope she has not obtained through

Miss Pugh a contraband copy. -

I wish I had stayed, the more,  
since it turns out that I might as  
well have done so. Mother jumped  
at conclusions in saying that I had  
lost my place, but, though I am still  
in office, the revolution here has thrown  
me officially among strangers and I  
have not yet gotten an assignment.  
I was sick for a while and have  
since been reading law. - I am  
making an effort at the same time  
to secure some more steady employ-  
ment than my office affords. -

By-the-by, while I think of it, - I  
did an involuntary and unconscious injustice  
to The Family in my "flock" anecdote.  
I sometimes get the numerous long  
lines of my ancestry twisted and tan-  
gled. The hero of this story was a  
Thompson.

To recur to my defensive letter - I meant  
but failed, to call your attention to my



Mrs. Mary D. Gibson,  
Versailles  
Ky.

What do you mean in declaring that I am "not exculpated in your mind?"— that you hold me to have been at fault in the original trouble or only in this letter? I thought I had made the latter impossible by submitting my whole action to your option. — But no matter! I know you do not think me much at fault, for I know I was not much at fault.

I shall, however, always deplore both the delivery and writing of the letter and hold myself to blame, if it has involved you in the disagreeable jar or caused you any personal worry.

Grandmother had a terrible fall last night. With her indomitable self-confidence (the characteristic concomitant of an utter want of confidence in anybody else), she attempted

New Albany Ind.  
October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1876.

Dear Cousin Mary,

Your disheartening letter found me already quite sick—physically, and made me likewise—*meta*physically. Nevertheless I have complied, as far as I could consistently, with your suggestions. I have written to Cousin Sarah a letter which, I hope, will tend to conciliate her, but I cannot say that it is "a letter of apology," though I disavowed most sincerely any purpose or idea of mortifying or displeasing her. I very gladly moderated some of the "strong terms" which, I found, I had used as to Cousin Sally, but I could not abate anything that I had said of her uncle, although it was, perhaps, superfluous and so out

of place.

After having confidently submitted my letter to the touchstones of your will and judgment, I might reply reproachfully to your emphatic information, "I handed it to her, understand me, against my will and judgment," but I won't. You are just as good as you can be, at least to me, and in reproachable for anything. What matter if I do "understand" perfectly, that you were infected with my own temptation and so led to disobey your judgment in this letter-delivery? It only proves that I again owe you gratitude for sympathy, and verily I can heartily engage myself to the perpetual payment of that debt.

I am grateful, too, for your wholesome counsel as to the suppression of my amity-destroying propensities, but I am afraid it is of no use. I have been very often similarly advised - I have even advised myself imperatively, but still whenever the

chance comes the propensity is there and dominant. I have, however, reduced its power to some constitutional limitations, as it were.

I was most distressed and vexed by Cousin Sarah's change of determination as to her visit here. What reason in the world is there for entangling Mother and Grandmother with my responsibilities? What such reason could there possibly be in a matter as purely personal as this? Is it impossible for one to be perfectly individual? Mother had no more to do with the matter than you, - no, not nearly as much, and Grandmother knows nothing at all of it. Why, then, should this disagreeable thing come between them and Cousin Sarah? I cannot see the moral philosophy or the natural wisdom in such multiplication of unpleasantness. I don't know whether it be Christian or not, but I know it is pitiable.

be ripe. Tell Louie to save me  
some of the seed of her metaphorical  
morning glories.

With kind regard for all I am  
Louis (per auctoritatem matrem,  
si non aliter)

Heart Pance.

P.S. Mother says please send her,  
when you write again, the names of  
the best elementary French books.  
She is greatly obliged for your invita-  
tion and would greatly enjoy a visit,  
but she cannot see now a possibility  
of coming.

to cross our several back porches in the dark,  
stepped off the edge, and struck at full  
length on the pavement, two feet below. The  
Doctor says her only hurts, beside a sprained  
wrist, are severe bruises, but she screams al-  
most constantly, when awake, with acute  
pain in her thigh and heel, - greatly I  
think from nervous cramp. My "badinage"  
seems to afford her much relief. I prescribed  
placing a broom in her sight and "littering"  
the floor. I told her to-night that it  
would probably snow before morning -  
enough, at least, to cover the pavement.  
She immediately lifted her sprained  
right hand and commenced testing her  
power to grasp. I saw in her face antici-  
pations of a grand frolic with her broom  
and that snow. - Pardon my unseemly  
words, - but the fact is not so frivolous  
as it appears. Once, when she seemed to be



barely kept alive by constant stimulants, she was completely cured with a similar remedy, administered by Beauty. — I fear she is very seriously jarred now.

We have all been quite sick during the last two weeks, with some kind of malarial fever. My "spell" originated in too much curd, was enhanced by neglect, and for a day or two has threatened to become neuralgia of the stomach. (If the threat should be executed, I may soon "cease from troubling" in this vain world, but I believe that there is ample function for my peculiar faculties here and that I will have a longer assignment.) A severe cold is combined with this, and, to emphasize my delightful condition, I sprained my ankle this morning.

So Cousin Virginia has slipped me on her string! I suppose she thought the use of the third person in "Exception",

only a poetic circumlocution. I wish I had been there to play into her fancy — in the role of "the little joker."

Please let this cheerful letter be virtually supplemented (in consideration for reply) by the yet unnoticed portions of my last. Would you confine me to a diet of pepper and salt and vinegar? Some saccharine element is essential to any nutritive food; yet — Her Royal Highness may be in the Moon for all that I can learn from your letter. —

Red ink denotes desperation.

By-the-by, you need not hesitate to write me as fully as you would talk. Surely my letters are such as must be sufficient hostages for any requested protection of yours.

Give my love to the Princess — si illum dicere potes! — and express my hope that "Everybody" proves faithful.

I will send the seed as soon as they



Mrs. Mary D. Gibson,  
Versailles  
Ky.

Dear Cousin Mary.

Fearing that a 'better mood' is not to be my fate in this life, if it implies relief from trouble, I will write one sheet with Harts Mary - just to say how gratefully we all hold you.

Hart is a mono-maniac upon the charms of Hartlane, but I think he misses your kindness more than the all the other more ideal attractions. He and Ma hold a daily love-feast over you. I don't know which is the most fascinated. and when they are through praising you - it is then "precious little Mary" Now I wish to see her.

I cannot go to Ken - even to see you. Did you ever see an old horse in a cart - held up by the shafts. So am I - and if I were taken out of the pressure of daily labor. I would fall to peas.

If there were any one to get breakfast.  
I could not get up in the morning - but  
as it is - I have to - and do -

But I do love to think of you all - happy  
and natural in your home - It does  
me good to know of you, and Hart and  
your children, so like old times.

I am grieved for poor Mrs Burke.  
Her life has been sad enough - without  
this destroying flow.

When will Sarah go South? I hope she  
will get here in some of her routes.  
Ma is well as usual, but my Howard is  
very sick with Malaria's dysentery,  
and I have been in bed half my time  
with pain in my left side.

Did you know Mr Guion was dead?  
He left Annie not a cent - and I fear she  
is in want, Mary Ann Shelly wrote to us -  
I hope Hart will get some place soon, and  
I some more Government sewing, so I can  
write to you as I wish - without weight on  
heart and mind - With much love - J. P. Vance

NOV 20  
IND.

Mrs Mary D. Gibson  
Versailles  
Kentucky

her now - enough to cook you  
something to eat - and we would  
all love to see you so much.  
We hear from no one - and I am  
heart-sick heavy of the election  
and wish I could destroy all the  
politicians in the country I have  
no faith in any.

Do write of you all, and come  
if you can. It is all so dark  
before me. that I long to see  
the face of one I love. I cannot  
give up the hope of seeing Sarah  
this trip.

Ma sends her love to you Lottie  
and to Sarah if with you,

With true affection

Your cousin

L. Vance

Nov 15th 1876

My dear Cousin,

For three weeks we have  
looked for Sarah and her children,  
and hoping you might come too.  
We have no clue to Sarah's plans.  
But suppose she is still with you.  
Susan Alexander wrote me that  
she thought they had gone South.

My life is as like a magnet. More  
that I cannot note time - Day  
and night it is one round of  
worry, and work while Ma  
sleeps - for I never leave her awake.  
She has improved a little in her  
strength but her right side is  
useless - whether from paralysis  
as I think - or from fracture as  
the doctors say - cannot be proven.

She was so tired of the lead, that we lifted her into an extension chair - yesterday, and she is on it today - much relieved and without any pain, but her feet are immense - and the water is gathering on her legs.

She is much depressed - talks of her death as certainly near, and grieves about leaving me so lonely and friendless. She is very anxious to see you - and to hear that dear little Mary as well, no day passes that she does not tell me of you all, and how kind you and Hart were to her, and how she enjoyed her visit. I still hope she will recover, but no one she thinks she can.

Mr. Alexander has been over here and sent Ma all she has eaten on her illness - very kind in many ways - I have never known her except very shyly -

What are you all doing this miserable weather? I have been in a dark room - and been pain till my brain is sore - and when I get out - all is sorrow and difficulty and harassing need.

Hart is still unemployed and very depressed, is sick and often suffering, and will not go anywhere for change. Beauty looks thin, and pale has been much fatigued and worried trying to keep me nurse Ma - I could not send her to school, and she needs your company, studies too much.

We want to hear from you all, have you sent Duncan to college? and what are the girls doing and how is your own health? Can you slip down before cold winter to see Ma? I can leave



Mrs. Mary Q. Gibson  
Versailles

Ly



New Albany Ind.  
December 22, 1876.

Dear Cousin Mary,

In closing  
my note yesterday I failed to no-  
tice, <sup>until it was dispatched</sup> that the currency to defray my  
laundry expenses was on the ta-  
ble instead of in the letter. I  
enclose it now lest my directions  
in the matter may seem queerer  
than I meant.

I am sick and miserable  
as I write and am brief lest  
I be incoherent or blundering,  
for just now my life seems one  
pitiable blunder, all dull and futile.

I hope to see you soon.

Hart Vance

Sep 14<sup>th</sup> 1876

Dear May.

I enclose a few lines just to say that we are quite well, though there is a good deal of sickness in the household. George has chills & fever and the brother of the young lady who teaches the children has something like Typhus fever. Pen also has chills & fever. I am rather dispoed to think that this is an unhealthy climate. It is a magnificent farming country and Ulin is my comfortable "fix" but it will be years before there is any country society in the neighborhood. The climate is abominable and the roads execrable. Willy went to the depot

this morning for Miss Louisa Vorkhis  
but returned without her; so that  
I suppose I shall not see her as  
we are to get off to-morrow, if we  
can make our way to the depot. The  
train here is crowded. Nancy & myself  
occupy a carriage in the yard.  
Miss Vorkhis looks splendidly and  
is more affectionate than ever. The company  
here is our best reason of coming, for  
as the eye can reach, through the cab  
is very indifferent. For two weeks it  
has rained every day. You will have  
to try and get out there this fore-  
noon staying this out so long that I will  
send it in a separate envelope. Kinds  
for the children & much love for  
yourself from your devoted husband  
Hart, full on