

Dardanelles Friday Nov 8 [1850]

My dear Father, Mother & sister

I know you are none of you sufficiently acquainted with Geography to judge anything of any locality by the above date and therefore I will tell you 'tis a wee bit of a place with half a dozen log cabins—on the East bank of the Arkansas river—100 miles above Little Rock & 80 below Van Buren. And now you are ready to ask why are you there? I will go back to Napoleon where I finished my letter to Mary—which letter I suspect is speeding its way over sand bars & snags—the Ohio is so very low we can make no calculation whatever on the length of time it will take for a letter to go to the East. We were at Napoleon from Tuesday till Friday. I am very sure there can be but one Napoleon in the United States. We lived on a wharf boat or rather we staid there for I can hardly call it living. My Mother you would have neither ate drank or slept there. I never had any idea of filth till I boarded there. Sarah and I had the most comfortable state-room on the boat. We had a feather bed but the sheets and other covering was of a doubtful color and we were well nigh devoured by musquitoes, fleas, etc. The second night that we were there some person opened our door & walked in—he was instantly greetied with “who’s there?” but made no answer. Mr. Ross slept in the room next to ours. I spoke to him and upon his answering the intruder withdrew. We was probably in search of our purses. It is a horrid place *{end of page 1}* *(start of page 2)* and I hope I never may have to spend another hour there. Our company increased so that we were quite a little party when we left Napoleon on the mail-boat—numbering fifteen I think, Most of them belonged to Little Rock except ourselves. I am much pleased with the Southern people. They are so cordial & affectionate. The feeling of a stranger is very soon disipated. I am surprised at the degree of sympathy & interest manifested towards my unworthy self. When I left N. I was suffering from a violent headache—for the first time since I left home. I suppose I looked really sick but I was not anxious for I am too much accustomed to the headache—but Mr. Ross & Sarah were fearful that it was the beginning of fever and Mrs. Rector a lady traveling with us insisted upon my taking “blue mass”—“she had some and I must take it.”-- I yielded though sorely against my stubborn will. I kept my berth the next day till noon then I thought I had “played sick” long enough—but if I had been sick six weeks in New England I should hardly have received more sympathy than was manifested toward me on that little boat. At five o’clock Saturday Nov 2 we reached Richland. The boat could not go farther the river was so low. So we transferred ourselves and a part of our baggage to some wagons. The wagon in which S & [I] came was one without springs. The seats were simply boards placed across the bed of the wagon—eight precious souls were stowed away on it. our ride of fifteen miles to Pine Bluff was very hard & rough. the road was by no means a New England road and our carriage not a New England carriage. We reached Pine Bluff at nine o’clock weary & worn but cheerful & happy. S & I had a room to ourselves but it was not the most comfortable in the world. I passed a sleepless night—and of course the morning found me not much refreshed, but Sarah was quite unwell so I said nothing about myself although I could not quite hide the feeling of weakness & fatigue that oppressed me. We all wished to spend the *[end of page 2]* *[start of page 3]* Sabbath there but could not as no stage would leave again for nearly a week and we could make no other arrangements—so at ten o’clock we started again and this time in a

covered wagon—we were very much crowded and never in my life have I suffered as on that day. Jolting jolting jolting from ten in the morn till eight at night. I have heard a great deal of complaining since I started, and am sick of it—and no person knew that I was suffering at all. but when I got out of the carriage I could not stand or walk. I was not sick in any way. I had not even a headache but completely worn out as I said then. I never understood fully the term weary till then. I slept very well that night however & Monday morning felt quite like myself. We started at sunrise. Mr. R Sarah & I walked on about two miles, and when the carriages came up with us we were just tired enough of walking to be glad to take seats again. We reached Little Rock at 2 o'clock Monday P.M. We found Mr. Vann the other Cherokee that I saw at S. Hadley. He started from Washington just before Mr. Ross by the Southern route—he stopped two weeks in Georgia and we met in Little Rock. The stage was just going to leave but the seats were all taken up so we must wait two whole days. This was unpleasant tidings truly for we were all so anxious to be on our way. but “what can't be cured must be endured.”—and in this case our detention was rendered more agreeable. Dr. Dodge of L, a friend of Mr. Ross—and also of Sarah was at the hotel and insisted upon our spending the intervening time at his house—and with the advice & consent of the council we concluded to go home with him—he has a pleasant amiable wife and a beautiful family of children. I enjoyed the two days there very much. We received a goodly number of calls and made some very pleasant acquaintances. Wednes afternoon at two o'clock we left Little Rock in what they call a stage which stage let me tell you is a miserable covered wagon. S & I occupied the back seat. The driver, a black man,—the front seat—and Mr. Ross sat on *[end of page 3]*

*[start of page 4]* on my trunk between. We stopped at seven o'clock for supper then traveled all night—two or three times when we came to a bad place we all got out & walked. It was a bitterly cold night. We did our best to keep comfortable, but did not succeed very well. We did not sleep at all. I wished I had the nice warm quilted sack that I used to talk about. My shawl seems very thin compared with Sarah's. Do not think from this that I have suffered from the cold for indeed I have not. We breakfasted Thursday morn at a little cabin about fifty miles from Little Rock then came thirty miles further to this place--which Mr. Ross says is not Dardanelles but Norristown—the first face that we saw was Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ and we were by no means glad to see him for we know very well that there was a stage-load in advance of us and that we should be obliged to delay again and so indeed we have been. It is Saturday now. We have been here since Thurs morn. We hope to leave this afternoon. We have had a comfortable abode here. “And this is Arkansas” how many many times I have reiterated this to myself and Mr. Ross very often speaks it for me. It seems like a dream that I am here and my home so far away. I do not realise it all--'tis well that I do not else perhaps I should not be so happy & cheerful. My courage has never failed for one moment since I started. I am anxious to hear from home. I am impatient of these detentions only when I think of the letters that may be in waiting for me at Park Hill. Well we shall be there next Wednes if prospered—six weeks from the time of our starting! Ah well, we have little to complain of when we think how many blessings we have had. We have been very well especially myself. Mr. R & S have been a little ill two or three times--but when we were aground in the Ohio--there were boats lying all around us in which the cholera was raging and not one case appeared on our boat. While we were at Napoleon a young man died on a boat lying at anchor close to our wharf boat after a sickness of three hours!. We passed many wrecks of boats

blown up or sunk—very sad and mournful was their appearance rising out of the water. The Sultana the boat which we took at Cairo the day before we went on here struck a snag & broke eighty of her timbers. She was repaired and we came safely & surely under the watchful care of our Heavenly Father. I spent a good deal of time on deck and was interested in watching the movements of the pilot. I never had a very correct idea of a western steamboat before this trip. Were I at home I could tell you something about them—but I must not write *[end of page 4]* *[start of text in left margin of page 1]* much more this time. I hope you have heard from me a few times. I have not written so much as perhaps I ought to have done, but I have not felt always inclined to write when I had the time and it had not always been convenient. I hope my dear parents you will not be anxious for me—be assured I will write truthfully concerning myself. If I am sick you shall know it speedily—and if my health does fail I will come home. Do let me hear from home just as often as possible. Much love to the brother & sister at the cottage. Three weeks before thanksgiving. Heigho! Well I will be with you in spirit. I long to know what tidings you have received from George. Perhaps he is at home. Oh if he is can I be quite contented--Geo I will be--for why should I look back? My letter is open to criticism but I am happy in thinking it goes to those that love me and will not be severe. It is full of affection for you all. Yr own Ellen. Much love to Dea & Geo's family. I shall write them as soon as I reach home.