

September 10, 1801 Plainfield

Most distant but nearest and dearest friend,

I shall I address you? My pen is inadequate to the task. Time and distance with all the intervening train of rocks, rivers, mountains, hills and dales and the more powerful combatants of calumny and detraction and the multitude of cares and business which surround me still maintain the conflict which I have so long been engaged and which combine to extinguish the sentiment of friendship and affection which is so deeply planted on my breast and do I need to tell you whether they have succeeded. I think not. You better know my heart than this to judge. While engaged in such a conflict and opposing so many enemies you cannot but suppose that I must receive some wounds, though they may not prove fatal. This indeed is the case. They wound but cannot kill. No, my dear, the bleeding heart they cannot conquer. But how long must I thus contend in battle? Will not fortune once more smile and bring the happy day when I shall triumph over these enemies and enjoy unmolested the prize for which I fight. Will the hour never arrive when with pleasing sensation I shall personally behold and address you? Tell me my dear friend shall we never meet shall we never see each other again, even on condition that our lives and health will long be continued. May Heaven be propitious and bring you to the mansion bereft of its friend. Thus I have heard nothing from you since April. I presume it will not be unagreeable to you to hear from me. I have been employed in a school ever since the first of June, except one week vacation and shall continue it till the last of this month. the school is generally pretty large. Yesterday I had fifty-two scholars. I have boarded at Mr. P. Beaton (?) all the season and now writing in the very room where you have enjoyed so much pleasure with your worthy Miss Clark. I have heard nothing from her this summer but the last news on that she was much out of health and I am I hope to send this by Miss L. Mitchell and hope for a return by her. Write everything that you can with propriety and safety, for I wish to know your situation in everything that respects your happiness - tell me your prospects, your hopes, and our fears, your misfortunes, and your trials, your pleasures and your enjoyments, your joys and your sorrows - let me not be a stranger to what you are experiencing. May the auspicious day soon arrive when your bosom shall no longer be the residence of affliction and sorrow but the mansion of peace and felicity. Forget not your friend and believe me continually yours - adieu my dear friend once more adieu.

Lydia Richards