Olive Rush Diary Fragments, circa 1890-1907

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August, 6. 1890. Wednesday.

Ha, ha, old Journal I've found you at last! Lost so long, you now come to me to tell me of a few of my more youthful days. And I intend to scribble in you again.- Happy days were those, - and, in fact, how can I say otherwise than "happy days are these" - for there is nothing that should make them unhappy.- I have been rearranging my papers and books and things in my drawers and ran over several old things that I had long forgotten. Oh, the notes! the school-girl notes - from Stella, Perl, Lavinnie, Leticea, Jone, Lona, Mollie, Cora, Ollie, Tina. (who are the girls all now? what will they all be?) it is four or five years since most of them were written - some are the same sweet girls - some have changed very much - how will all be in the same number of years from now?
Some things I found - in fact almost everything - recalled some happy time of the Past. there were the songs that we sung in school and at "last days." Then the old worn, and doubled papers with the songs on them that we sang at the Beardsley Concert. Oh, those dear old days (bless them) when we were to practise in the hall! From little tots of three or four, the girls and boys older than myself. (then, 14) how we enjoyed that fortnight of genuine pleasure, never to be forgotten I vow, by any-

Then my mind was called to the little pet lambs. Dotty, my darlingest pet that I ever owned, with his snow-white wool - all but the single, and perfectly round black spot on his side, how I loved him! I do not expect in the least to ever find any one or any thing half so fond of me as that lamb was.

How he would play for
me, run to meet me, caper and frisk when he saw me bringing his milk, follow me around until they called me "Mary." I do believe that I watched with as affectionate eyes as ever human was blessed with, my lamb grow, day by day, through all that happy summer- and Oh, I think that I have never yet felt deeper sorrow than I did on that chilly, frosty morning in late Autumn when I stooped by his side, down in the stable where pa had carried him, and saw that he was dying. His sweet eyes looked into mine so pitifully, and he did not even bleat when I called his name, which well nigh broke my heart.

It all even brings tears to my eyes now, as I think of it. I think we sometimes think of children's sorrows as sort of trivial, but I tell all you they are not.
Aug. 9, Sat. 7.30-P.M. I have been very busy today - and still when I think of what I did it doesn't seem as though I have done much. Received a letter from Cousin Marie, one of those jolly letters of her's which always raise my spirits several degrees higher. Marie is full of her fun, but I believe that she will make a grand woman if she only will try hard enough, and I think she will, though it will be try indeed for she has her own way to cut entirely and I know that she almost becomes discouraged sometimes. I wish I knew just how to help her, but it would have to be in one particular way or it would have no effect on my queerly constructed cousin. I shall never forget one moon-light evening, when we sat together on the floor in the bay window upstairs, and talked about many things. Marie said that there was one thing that she always had to regret at the end of every day, and that was that she always talked about herself so much. [paper overlap/cut-off:] [??]Gift his face:
at the wedding - have a "special invitation" to go to Mat Wrights for dinner. That will be - oh! such a change from the summer's entertaining of and cooking for visitors. But the trouble will be [...] a place on his [[head?]] if he would only lift his face.

After awhile the angel went away - (These (the above) are thoughts from Mr. Swadirer's sermons.)

I am a gatherer of sticks and rubbish, and of course they do not do any thing towards building the beautiful character that I would like - Oh no! they do the opposite. They fill in where there should be the strong and firm foundation of my grand ideal character. For it is right now that I am building the foundation of my character - one of the most important parts of the building. And [[strikethrough]] with [[strikethrough]] a character built upon such a foundation as this would be weak indeed - not able to withstand the storms of coming years - Better things are for me - will I accept them? or will I let the angel depart?
at the wedding - [[illegible - page cut]]

have a “special invitation”.

In “Pilgrim's Progress” a man was seen gathering up the sticks and rubbish of the quagmire. An angel hovered over him, holding a crown ready to place on his head if he would only lift his face. After awhile the angel went away.

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Yesterday I took dinner at Mrs. Wright's. The guests were: Emma Phillips, Ella Winslow, Ora Winslow, Mollie Bogue, Ora Bogue, Louie Gougill, and myself. Mary "[[Gougill]]" was invited but was not there - I had a very pleasant time. Lorna is intending to "go through" Earlham sometime - I have made arrangements so that I will get to room with Louie G - am very glad.

We washed this morning - had company this evening. Haven't eaten any cloves (or coffee), tho' the temptation was very strong sometimes -

Aug-17. Sun - It is very hot this evening. Went to church this morning. Emma wanted me to take dinner there but I had to come home and get dinner. We had water-melon for dinner. There were a lot of boys here and I had my hands full. They giggled awfully at the table.

Oh, dear! I am feeling awfully blue today, I guess.
and I hardly know why.

I wish De Witt Cortes wasn't coming this evening. I don't want to go to church and I don't feel like buggy-riding. I almost wish it would rain so he couldn't come. I don't know what I do want to do. I don't feel like practicing my piece, tho' I know I ought to. It is "Paul Slide and Some of Samantha Allery's views." It is 17 pages. I finished copying it Wed. evening and had it all learned Fri. evening.

Was very busy all last week, had company every day in the whole week. I am working pretty hard this summer.

I can hardly wait until time to go to Earlham - it is only three weeks from next Tues. th'o'. 22 days! Ma said this morning that those would be very busy days. Yes, indeed, they will. - And to think of the promises of visits. - before I go! whew! they will never
be fulfilled, I am afraid. Though I certainly aimed that they should when I made them.

I haven't any very bright prospects this evening, even when I think of Earlham, I think of how awkward I will feel, how the girls will be above me, how that I will not have a lot of fine clothes like some of the girls, how I will want to take music and can't! Oh unworthy creature! I ought to be thankful I get to go! But I cant [[can't]] help but think of these things sometimes.

But I intend to work hard - and be a great painter. Although I know that American painters are almost always poor.

I wish the wind wasn't from the north, I am afraid it won't rain. Louise Gougill says she has a new little brother. Aunt Mollie has a baby girl.

I haven't read hardly any
lately, I started to read "The Spanish Student." but didn't think I liked it very well. Let me see! I have read within the past year: Holme's "Arthur Bonnicastle", "Elizabeth, or Exiles of Siberia"; reread, "Pilgrim's Progress", and "Lucile"; read "Ben Hur", also "Children of the Abbey", and am reading "Glimpses of Fifty Years". I like them all, "Arthur Bonnicastle" is very interesting, and many lessons may be drawn from it. "Elizabeth", is a pathetic story, and tells of the life of the exile. "Pilgrim's Progress" - of course, nothing can be said of this that has not been said. "Lucile" is a beautiful poem, in which Lord Lytton says a great many grand things. It is full of beautiful and truthful sayings, which show the authors deep thought and careful observation.

"Ben Hur" is simply grand! Surely, aside from the Bible, no story so sweet was ever told.
It reminds me of great pictures of which I have heard, and which I intend
to some day see. It is full of beautiful pictures itself. Two I especially
remember and admire. One is the scene on the road near Jerusalem.
Ben Hur is a captive. He is kneeling, with his hands chained behind him:
nearby stand the horses, and the men, that is the officers. Joseph is
standing in the rear: Ben Hur's hands and feet are torn and bleeding, his
garments tattered, and he is looking up, with somewhat of surprise to
the boy who is offering him a drink; which he has procured at a well on
the other side of the road. The boy, which is the Christ, is very beautiful,
that is - the sort of soul beauty that you meet with so seldom - the kind
that breaks your heart, and makes you think, not of the person himself,
but of the beautiful soul within him.
And still the boy has also regular features; beautiful, dark blue eyes; light, curling hair, which falls down over his shoulders; his skin is fair; and he has a gentle, refined air about him which is not common with boys. He is stooping over the wretched-looking slave, with one arm thrown around his neck, as with the other he holds the water for him to drink.

The other picture is in the villa near Misenum, the home of Ben Hur - It is a beautiful room, and through the open doors is seen the lake and village. In the centre of the room, on a rug is Tirzah, who has been playing with the children; near by stands the lovely Esther, looking on the group. She is richly dressed. Iras in her dirt and rags, yet retains some signs of her former beauty, but she looks rough and careworn as she kneels and kisses one of the
sweet children, while the other looks on with astonishment. Rich and
grand are both of these pictures. Oh, if only I could paint them as I see
them, it seems to me it is all I would ask in this world.

Aug. 18. Well, I went buggy-riding and to church both last night, and
had a very pleasant time. It became very cool, and I suppose my spirits
rose. This evening we commenced making one of my dresses to take to
Earlham. Walter went to [[strikethrough]] town [[/strikethrough]] Marion
this morning and it is almost 9 o’clock P.M. and he hasn’t come home.
We are getting rather uneasy, hope he will be here all safe tho’ in a little
while.

Myra is all taken up with Stanley, indeed she is fairly lost, half of the
time, with him in Africa.
I felt ashamed of my poor delivery, although of [[paper overlap]] children were very dif - [[cut off]]

afterward learned [[paper overlap]]

taken from Walter's pocket. I told him he was on the road to ruin; he said he "wasn't on the road tho', he went on the side-walk." What on earth will he ever come to? He told a whole pack of lies about it all. I expect I used to be just as bad though, and look how I have come out! My!

Ira and I were talking this evening, as we washed the supper dishes, about the good old times when we were youngsters. How we used to count our fingers off with the "Wise, fries, limber lock, Three geese in our flock," etc - how the "extra" would stand on the steps and go through a rigmarole of questions until at last carried home on his choice from a bear to a bird; how we played "Froggin in the meadow", "Toadie, Toadie, how is thee?", and "Pussy wants a corner", "Don't you remember"
said Ira, "one night in the dining-room, when Walter was blind-folded? the girls, Myra and Emma played. You and I were the last ones caught, and we would slip around under Walters [[Walter's]] arm, after Clint and all the rest were caught."

"We would play those games at night, and then, Oh Ira, the dolls in the daytime! - up the boy's stairs." What jolly times! Will I ever forget them?

Have been very busy today. Have made some aprons and things for Earlham -

Friday, Aug. 29. We had a very queer visitor Wed.; Jane Weeden - she is an old maid - very old -, and is appointed by the National W.C.T.U. as solicitor for the Temperance Temple. And she is a beggar, too! She is of a nervous temperament, and as I told Myra, "says what she thinks without thinking". Daisy Brushwille was here
Took a buggy-ride Sunday eve.

Tues. evening Myra and I went to Uncle Elwood Haisley's, staid [[stayed]] all night, and came home this morning. Had a good time.

How time flies! this has been such a short summer. One week from today I start for Earlham. Whoopee!

Gathered around the table this evening are: Ma and Calvin reading Stanley; Pa, reading the Bible; and Ora, here by my side reading the papers. Myra and Mark have gone to bed. Walter, Emma, Clint, and Greeley are upstairs, Everette is lying on the floor asleep. Twont be long fore I will be away from these circles. In the years to come, I may look upon this little flight from home as a trivial affair. But I expect that it will seem as long to me, now, as will the long and wearisome stays of future years. I'm only trying my wings, now.
like the great painters do, to draw, to design, to sketch, to mould in clay, to sculpture! Oh, I will learn about the old masters! how it was that they succeeded! how I shall succeed -!

Can it?, now, can it be real that I am going to all this tomorrow! My trunk is packed, in there in the dining-room. But something will surely happen - My clothes may catch fire, something may happen to the money,- oh there are a thousand ways to hinder! Providence help me!

I might have been there now, just think, some the girls are there tonight, in their rooms. I am at home, Louie thought she had to go to a wedding. - 'fraid she didn't get to as it's rained all day.

Ma gave me a Bible today. I appreciate it, I always have wanted one.

With as bright hopes as possible for the morrow, I will go to bed, tired and sleepy. It seems strange that people so bad as I am get such sweet sleep. Oh, that I were good!
— Earlham College —
Sept. 11. 1890 - Thurs.

A thousand apologies, Journal mine, for loading you with Earlham trash, but I could not get the kind of book I wanted for a Journal, and I thought I just must write some (don't know how I ever did without a Journal). Well, well! here we are in our little bed-room, grumbling because it isn't so nice as we wanted - Louie and I - wishing for tomorrow when we can put down the carpet, and fix our study-room - discussing Miss Harris's lecture of this evening - talking about the "College yell." - laughing over the suppers - dreading tomorrow's hash - etc -

I cried when I left home. Kissed Mark good-bye as he lay asleep in his cradle - kissed Myra good-bye, the last one - they two won't be at home when I return.
Didn't get to tell [[Eunice?]] farewell - Walter took me to the depot. It rained terribly when we came - had a splendid chance for the "blues" but haven't had them very much yet. Tho' I'm glad, now that I didn't write in my Journal last night. We didn't have anything for supper, hardly but marmalade - I couldn't have eaten much anyway. I could only sit and gaze and wonder. Oh, the girls! Blue eyed black eyed, brown eyed; long and short; pretty, homely, horrid! I never saw such a green-looking set of boys in my life! I wonder if nice-looking boys don't go to College - Edith Johnson and Mabel Bowen gave us a call last evening.

I was classified this morning, as follows =
Painting (4 lessons) $30
Elocution (3 lessons) —
Life of St. Paul (2 *) —
And my board is 57.75

My classification would be complete if I could only take Music. but I can't.

Oh the Art work is grand! The rooms are very nice, and contain many beautiful works. Prof. Bundy is a very nice man, I think. Know I shall like him. He is very quiet. Gives me just enough praise to encourage me, criticism enough, help enough, time enough.

I took my first lesson today: it was a queer study - a kind of a leaf. I did my best on it, and Mabel B. told me this evening that she said it was better than he expected. Hope I shall always do that well!

Louie is very good to me and I think I shall have a very pleasant time here. I wrote home this morning. I had to send for more money too - The school is very full, here
Earlham Yell
Re ri ro rem
Earlham, Earlham
The thou ram.
We are, a big household. Yesterday a girl's trunk was taken to the Insane Asylum instead of to the College; a boy snickered last evening, at Grace; today my opposite dropped his head very quickly when the bell tapped for pudding, and raised it as quickly; I hunted the book store, and went into the boys' hall. These things may seem dry to anyone else but to us shut-up Earlhamites they are exceedingly interesting -
Rush Hill
Oct 20. '93

The years are going by! What have I accomplished? Weal or woe? The past scraps of a Journal. I have just read and they are very full of meaning to me. I know how from the depths of my heart I wrote everything and how that I felt it all. With such insight into my own character and knowledge of how to improve it, why have I stood still - why am I no better - ah I even feel that I have added to, instead of taking from, those evils. On this one dark day of my life do I realize that my life has been fruitless.

It proves the truth that lies in the theme of an humble Sermon that I heard the other day, that the desire to do good will not alone avail.

But have I not tried? Alas, temptation! and the perversity of human nature!
How gladly would I give up living. How welcome a peaceful death.

I think that I will work and think for others, but who would work and think for me? Now that seems selfish, but doesn’t it take all my time to keep my own affairs in order? and then a I not often sharply reproved for their lack of order? “Give & it shall be given”

If I didn’t have any affairs of my own - but can I lay down Art and disappoint my friends? Must I not give thought to my students and at the same time improve myself?

“Do with your might what your hands find to do.” That is it! Right here with my students and with kind words and thoughtful actions here at home lies my opportunity Let me think of others in my work and I shall forget to be selfish and gloomy Oh there are opportunities, and always were - but oh for the
strength! I shall try again!

Ma is calling me to finish her picture. Now for the trial.

Feb. 25.-1900. It all looks very foolish & silly and strikingly full of Ego. But I shall keep it awhile longer if only for a looking glass for Rebecca's use when now and then she thinks after all she has been a rather nice sort of person. It may help her a little to be more cheerful & sweet. May help show her what has been the lesson God in all these years has tried to teach her.

1907. Wed., Aug. 21. - I have been looking again into the looking glass. Poor little girl! People who have a little light on a strange road in a strange country stumble often and sometimes turn back and lose, and grope, and turn again and push along; the light sometimes seems failing, sometimes flashes more broadly. And ever the poor wanderer is conscious that a better light might have become his if perhaps he had done this, or if he had not done that, or had kept a path that his little light had not [[strikethrough]] kept [[strikethrough]] made always clear. Some fail because will o'the wisps are forever alluring.

This summer has been a sweet one, for Calvin and I returned home to find everyone well and the home as of yore - a flowery, fragrant, breezy green hill. My father & mother & brothers & sisters are so precious to me now & nothing else in all the world seems to matter really - except a few near friends, and the good and beauty I see in the world everywhere - everywhere a portion.
meeting, at Back Creek. I went with pa in the sleigh. ([[Mida/Meda Winfrie]] was there. She is staying at [[Jessie]] Thomas's.) - (I wrote in Tina Arnette's and Mettie Kimbrough's albums yesterday) took my skates today. Oh, the ground is so slick. It has been real cold, but is so warm today. We skated at noon. Will Rattliff took my skates - when I told him not to, - and the crank was skating on them - it made me so mad. I told him what I though of [[strikethrough]] at [[strikethrough]] it too. Well I went home with Tina, and I skated a long while, after school. - Had a nice time. - Next morning we were skating before school & then Pearl H. ran against me and we both fell. Hurt my knee some. We went to school. Cora J. (my deskmate) wasn't there. I wrote in Linnie Overman's albums to day. Jeady Sherman and another girl visited school, this evening, and Jeady recited our reading class. Our lesson was "The rainy day" - "Break, Break, Break," and "Transportation of seed." We voted for president we liked best. I voted for Lincoln. He gained the day. Then we nominated presidents, Blaine was elected. I came home. Pa and ma were gone to meeting.

Saturday - and - Sunday - The weather still remains very warm, for middle of winter. Ice and snow has melted so that very
little trace whatever was left by Sun.

Pa examined his bees Sat. and out of over 80 stands found 3 of 4 stands of bees dead. Uncle Robert called. Sat. eve. Pa and ma went to Bethal to meeting and Emma went to Uncle Roberts. We kept Everette. Sun.- roads are very muddy. Now and then a little rain. Boys went to meeting. Mira and I dident [[sic]]. Dark and cloudy this evening, making a person feel dreary.
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