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Unknown Cousin to Anna (4 January 1903)

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Anna Elizabeth Gage Evans

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Baltimore Md. C. Jan 4th 1913.

Dear Cousin Anna

Your welcome letter just received & I hasten to reply, that you may know how sincerely I sympathize with you in your great sorrow & I can readily understand how "life has held very little" for you since such great losses came to you - followed as they were by misfortune & struggle - I had years; sad & bitter, of it all & as I look back upon those years I marvel at the strength & courage given to me - Surely the "Lord doth temper the wind to the shofar Lamb" or I should have been lost in the surging waves of sorrow, distress and bitterness - I remember once in prayer meeting when our Pastor called for passages of Scripture, how my friends were moved to tears, & even I, when I arose & said "Open the way, O Lord, for the King of glory to come" He, the Dear Father, is your only refuge my dear, & I feel that you realize this more fully than I can present it & that you have been, & will still be sustained & strengthened & in time can find joy in living - Let us hope for many years of an enriched life for you - For ten long years my struggles lasted - but after that the light broke thro. Let clouds, I had done what I could to prepare my children for their life work & my efforts have been abundantly blessed - My health has been restored; until now, at nearly seventy one years of age I am stronger & more vigorous than I was at fifty years of age - We have been down here in this delightful country two & a half years & in that time have not consulted a physician & Kate who was always subject to severe attacks of tonsillitis has had but one attack & has been in all other respects perfectly well & ready for her daily duties - She was called here as Pauper of Mr Geo Vanderbilt's school in his his model village was permitted to bring with her one assistant altho it was not the school would not be large enough to warrant it -

Mr V. had erected a beautiful building of four rooms
& furnished it with most modern adjustable desks &
chairs - black-boards - maps tables & various supplies,
then gave her Carte Blanche, to purchase such decorations
as she chose for in pictures, casts - vases &c. in N. York.
~~What~~ she did to the amount of \$350 - So of course she
had a very artistic & well equipped structure in
which to begin her work - School opened with forty
pupils. Before the close of the first year they rather
she had to refuse many applicants & during vacation
an addition was built. The entire building was then
fitted out to accommodate 125 pupils & now the school
is over-crowded & twenty applicants were rejected this
Christmas vacation. Kate now has - two teachers in music
her 1st assistant - a teacher for Mathematics - a primary teacher
& an assistant in that department - with every vacation
period shortened in order to hear all the classes - So you can
judge of her success - Kate lovely, has great tact & ability
as an Organizer & Principal - Baltimore is a small village
not more than fifty houses, but is the sweetest cleanest
most beautiful place I ever dreamed of - The patrons
of the school are mostly children of the employes
on "the estate" & the poor mountain whites - some of the
children walking four miles & never missing a day
Such attendance & interest is rare indeed - Kate opened
a Mother's meeting ^{the first} Fri aft in every one sent special
invitations to all the patrons to come & then she gave
talks - At first from four to six would be in attendance,
now there are from fifty to sixty & the numbers increasing
every one - & if one of the numbers fails to be present there
is a great wail of distress sent in - The patrons of the school
are all very enthusiastic over her work & show their keen
appreciation in every way possible & she has the earnest
support & cooperation of Mr & Mrs V. - in every thing she
undertakes & ready responses to any suggestions -

You ask about the family - There has been no radical change
in our family in the last six years - No deaths & only one mar-
riage & one birth - My son is now living in his own cozy little
home in Charleston, has the dearest & sweetest little wife than
even a mother in law could wish for - Their daughter Ruth is now
ten years old & the boy Gage Criffen (two family names) two yrs
old last Nov. Of course he is wonderful - I have seen only his
picture, but am not loth to believe the tales I hear - We hope to have
all the family visit us next Sept. Adelaida is still at the
head of the Musical Dept in the Inst for the Blind in Indianapolis
was sent as a delegate to the "Nat. Association" held in Raleigh, N.C.
last summer - I have the report with one of her talks, which she
gave - She was notified just an hour before the discussion
opened that she was expected to take part - So had time
to only to jot down a few "leaders" - Of course, the reporter took
it down & it went to press "j's so" - but I think it very good
for an impromptu - I shall ask you to determine if as it is
only coarsed to one - Harry Wright & Minnie still live in Gate Ga
Berrie their only child - teaches Physical training in one of the
N.Y. Normal schools in Cortland - So fine in her work -
Kate Leake still in Chicago - Clara her daughter married &
living in St. Louis - Gage (our blessed idol) R.R. Civil engineering
away off in Texas - So you see only years have made the changes
Will, Henry & Paul are still in their respective homes & Henry
dear sweet patient man still a victim to locomotor ataxia
& incapacitated for business of any kind, but is comfortable
happy with his sweet loving wife Ollie - Will & Ella with their
one daughter now in her 14th year still living in Louisville in the
old McKee homestead - What did I say? No death! Yes there
has been one & Oh so sad - Dear Minnie's only daughter so hap-
pily married & such a beautiful little home & Min making
her home with them feeling that all her cares & responsibil-
ities were put aside & that henceforth her earthly pilgrimages
would be joyous when suddenly in less than two years after
her marriage Kate was stricken with pneumonia & died
in three days - Oh! The bitterness of that sorrow for the dear
devoted Mother! Min has four sons all married no
children in any household & she lives with her son Will
in one of the towns near the bustling crazy city of Chicago

There is so much I should like to say but after asking you a few questions I must wind up & leave something to say at another time - After coming here I felt that I was quite near neighbors to Cassius & the various S. C. Cousins & to you - I wrote to Blanche Gay Steele a daughter of one of Pa's Cousins & she made us a two week's visit bringing with her Harold Gay one of her brother's children a bright boy of 10 yrs - We had a fine visit - She brought me a Louvain's paper published in 92 - I believe in Roman There were two columns devoted to a history of the pioneers Esago who came here in (I think) 1780 or 82 - Matthew John & James - I think John your grand-father as the paper told of my grand-father's removal to Ohio, of Matthew's having remained, & of John's family living "somewhere in the south probably in Northern Georgia" Blanche & I had great times talking over the family & taking pride in all we knew of them - I told her of you & really talked of writing to ask, if you could not come, & give us the history of your branch of the family - I had a letter from Blanche just last week - I knew of your sisters but could not remember their names, nor could I recall whether you have a brother or brothers - This is one question, another - "Lizzie's" name - I know she is Octavia's mother & I think I remember that O. is Ag's only daughter - I think it is Ada's picture that I have - Any how give her my love - also "Lizzie" & I tell me please if Quitman is in Miss. You seemed so near to me when I met of you as in Portersville & I've not so often of writing to ask you to make us a visit - I shall be here all alone with only our two servants all next summer - Adeline & Kate expect to sail for Europe just as soon as school closes - Cassius has made me two nice long visits, & is coming again in May & stay till Persie joins her - I hate R. R. travel & hope I may never never have to take another train - Accept my best wishes tenderest sympathy, & sincere thanks for your prompt reply to my letter & my warmest love -
I write very soon to Cousin Willa
January 25th Nineteen Hundred and Three.