March 17th, 1861

Dear Aunt Betty,

I have always endeavored to make the Golden rule my rule through life, and although it is very cold and snowing, I must try to answer your very acceptable letter to-night. When we came Monday morning the ground was covered, and the snow still falling, it continued to fall till about twelve o'clock today. Then it was several inches deep. I never saw a more unexpected and unwelcome storm for the winter. The fruit trees were in full bloom, and consequently the fruit must be all killed. We have put up our iced tea, and if we don’t have fruit, summer will not appear like summer. I am not sure how much destruction I was upon the reception of your last letter to learn that you had decided to leave your pleasant mountain home for the one in Tennessee. Since Virginia has acted so ridiculously, I almost wish that I could forsake her borders and
accompany you thither. What will uncle louisa do with the farm, and how will you make up your minds to leave it pleasant spot? Please let me persuade him not to go, for I shall never be able to visit you out there, and then shall all your most wishes have me visit you at all. I think the last accounts that the Old Dominion is endeavoring to throw off the yoke of some--not Lincoln--and I almost wish that if she does not act quickly, the Southern Confederacy will consist of our men. I have seen some and some excitements about secession every day, and heartily wish I was closer to them so that I might take the secession stump from them. The abolitionists certainly can't flourish among us for last week the anti-Slavery office of Robinson and Landis was burned to ashes. I was thought to be set on fire by some of the negroes, or by the friends, but they have no proof of it. I don't write the bill when it looks fair, and take delight in telling it of course. The horse was valued at Twenty Thousand dollars. We went to church Sunday last in preaching, and when we got home, and then another and children were here. Aunt Martha is
This is still hanging to the Nelson family, who are now in a state of starvation. I have seen her several times, but she is in a sad condition. She is in Williamsburg staying with cousin Hannah. I think she has another letter by Charles Carter, by which she is waiting for advice. She will remain in Williamsburg till Dr. Nelson is ready to go to Matthews, where he intends to set up. Brother is very ill, much pleased with Lexington, and the two country people, and has gotten out of his way. I was called to his last letter, but have not seen him for some time. He has been to the depot some young ladies to act, and acting, on quite a spree, I've no doubt. He's a gentleman himself admirably well on the 32. I have seen to understand and from that fact Brother thinks he will supply him with the not of the family. I am sorry to hear that羊肉 is sending word to the Nelsons to all, one, and as I can't send you the value of mail, I will send you the receipt for it. If you are still gone, tell Mr. Collett that I'm going to keep my promise, and if you are still gone, I will, with you all.
if not when will she land? My tasks get larger
and larger. I have two music scholars now. They be
one has deg very much. I have ever writing
all last week and yesterday, but this some
now and I am truly glad for cooler weather
and writing. Shouldn't have any of this come
together. I am sure I never write a more
pleasing letter than this, but indeed there is nothing
of interest transpiring in your case, so you will
please excuse this once. All well in the
family. Every body joins me in much love
to you. Love to send for all the children
servants, My Julia, that is, and all my friends.
Hunt very particularly. I need not say write
soon for you treat me very kindly.

Your devoted Son [illegible].