

Diary of Mary Ursula Crowther
01 January to 19 June 1886
Alexander Turnbull Library Reference MSX-4114

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01 January 1886 Friday

I have not written in my diary for several weeks, but my last days of school were so fully occupied that I had not time and I think that the chief events are too deeply rooted in my memory to be forgotten very soon. I cannot think that my school days are over and that I am now starting on my after life but I suppose that it will all come natural enough. I got two prizes at the breaking up. One "Leonie" for conduct and the other "Ester West" for neatness. Grace McKelvie received the other neatness prize for there were only two. Our bazar was a great success and after selling almost everything we found that sum amounted to £17 13s which everyone thought very creditable. I put in for a raffle & obtained the prize which was a work-tub painted by Mr Stowe. I was very glad to get it for it will be something to remember my dear teacher by. We gave Mrs Stowe a hot-water bottle as a present for we...

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...thought that it would be a comfort to her on the voyage to England, if they go which is a little uncertain on account of old Mrs Stowe's health as Mr Stowe's chief object is to see his mother. Mrs Holt's concert also passed off very well. Ismene was the only one who broke down although several of the others were rather nervous. I was very glad that I did not have to perform for I felt very shakey when the others played and I do not know what I should have done if I had had to play.

04 January 1886 Monday

I have not had time to write in my diary since Friday night for on Saturday I rode to the Hutt and was so knocked up that I fet fit for nothing except bed when I came home. It is the first time that riding has so affected me but I suppose that it is owing to the length of time since I rode last. Yesterday was a very fine day but I did not go to Church. I cannot enjoy the services here as in the dear old Cathedral at Wellington and I miss Mr Still's face so much for there...

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... is nothing taking about Mr Garlick, he will, however, be leaving soon and I hope that next man will be pleasanter to look at at any rate. I have finished reading "Leonie" my conduct prize today. I like it so much more I think than any other book which I have read. I have been gathering fruit this evening with Isabelle Wood (for the little Woods are staying with us for a time). They would be nice children if they were properly trained. I feel very lonely sometimes and long for a young friend to talk with but I fear that there is no chance of my wish being fulfilled as there are no young people here for whom I care much. I have not received even a letter this Christmas and I do not know what is the reason, perhaps people are too much occupied with their own pleasures to think of it, but here a long letter is such a treat. Father received a letter from Uncle Mc on Saturday and they have been spending their Xmasat Mr Harper's. Ismene promised to write to me during the holidays but perhaps she...

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...expects one to write the first letter. I promised to write to Ethel and May but have not done so yet. I think that I must leave off writing now for I am getting very sleepy and must have supper and go to bed.

05 January 1886 Tuesday

We have had a very busy day. Father did not feel very well last night and today he had to go to bed, but I think that he will soon be well again. It has been very warm today and of course the heat makes anyone feel good for nothing and then it is a great effort to do anything. The

children have been fairly good on the whole but the heat tries them very much especially in the temper line. I have been making jam today and that is a warm job for a warm day. Mamma has just come in so I must leave off writing and go to supper after which I shall not be long in going to bed for I am rather tired and have to look forward to another busy day tomorrow.

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06 January 1886 Wednesday

It was the hottest day that we have had this season. I think the thermometer was at 81^o in the afternoon. Father was not at all well so we had a very busy day and as the heat was so great it was very very trying. Little Tommy Devine brought the mail up in the morning but I did not get any letters. I think that people must have forgotten me or something else.

07 January 1886 Thursday

Another very warm day. The place was enveloped in smoke all day which gave one the feeling of being smothered. Early in the morning the sun appeared quite red. Eliza Johnson and Minnie Whakeham came to see us; they arrived about half past 12 and stayed until 4 p.m. Of course I had to play and amuse them or entertain them I suppose is the proper word.

08 January 1886 Friday

The wind changed during Thursday night so it has not been so warm today. This morning I went through the bush to the...

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...new felled part which Father set alight. I hope that the fire will not spread into the green bush because it is so lovely that it would seem such a shame if it was burnt. I have been gathering fruit this evening. Belle went with me but she was rather lazy indeed she dislikes anything like work very much. Jim and Mary came over to the oa after I had been there some time and helped me a little. I cannot write any more now for it is getting late. The kids have been pretty good today, but Ethel had a yelling fit tonight because Jack went and left her.

13 January 1886 Wednesday

I have not written in my diary for several days for I have been so busy. I am very tired tonight for I have been washing part of the day and it is very tiring work. Nothing of importance has happened during the last few days. It began to rain yesterday morning and continued to do so all day and last night. The wind changed to the south but the rain was not very heavy and the ground is already beginning to get dry.

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...again Aunt Maria is not at all well just now. Jim and Mary are going to live at Whiteman's Valley for a time so Jack & Belle will have the management of the farm. I am beginning to feel more at home now and miss everything at Miss Ellen's less. I have not written to Miss Ellen yet and I wish that I could get an excuse for not doing so for it will be rather an ordeal as there is so little to write about. The MHR Nelson is paying Wellington a visit again but I do not know whether I shall be able to go in to see her or not. I shall go to sleep if I write much more so I must leave off for tonight.

02 Feb 1886 Tuesday

I have neglected my poor old diary very much lately, but I have been so busy all day & at night I am too tired to write. School began again yesterday and I feel rather sorry that I am not going back. I seem to know so little when I think about it but I must study at home now. Father has not been able to take me in to see the HMS Nelson, but he has gone to town himself today and has not yet returned (9 pm). A man...

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...(German he calls himself) has just finished tuning the Panio and as Mamma has asked him to stay all night he is enjoying a smoke on the front steps. The weather, since I wrote last has, with one exception, been very dry and the so of course the place very much burnt up. The kids went home last week. Belle did not want to go at all. Belle Wood has been in Whiteman's Valley for a short time while her sister came home, but she is going to return tomorrow so I am going to stay with Aunt Maria as she is not at all well. I have not heard from Katie yet and unless I get a letter to night I think that I shall write and give her another rowing. It has been very hot today and I went out after the sun was down without a hat the consequence of which is that I have got a bad tooth ache to improve my temper which it always dose.

03 Feb 1886 Wednesday

Father came home at 12 oclock last night. He went to Kai-warra and got the box which Auntie sent. Mrs Cammeron is very ill with rumatick fever and inflammation around the heart.

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13 Feb 1886 Saturday

My poor old diary how I neglect it now, but I am growing sadly lazy lately especially over writing. I rode down for the papers yesterday afternoon. Mrs Pharazyn and Marion sailed for England on Thursday in the R.M.S. Kaikouri. Mr and Mrs Stowe & Reggie went also. I should have liked very much to have seen Mrs Pharazyn and Marion again but it was impossible. I wonder if we ever meet again where it will be. Miss Ethel Williams was married on Wednesday (10th). The wedding was a very grand one of course. There were 10 brides maids and two or three flower girls all of which were drest in cream musling with pale blue ribbons. The bride wore ivory satin turned with Brussles lace and pearls. Mr Still conducted the ceremony assisted by Mr Parks his curate who I have not seen. Mamma has not been very well today and I have felt rather out of sorts so we have not done much. Aunt Maria still continues to change; one day she is pretty well and the next not well. I did not go to Church last Sunday for I was suffering from tooth ache of which....

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...I have had a treat lately. I miss Church very much and I am longing for a glimpse of Mr Still's nice face again. I feel no pleasure in attending the service here, I suppose that it is wrong but such men are put into the pulpit; only last Sunday a youth of 17 years preached. A Mr Murray is going to succeed Mr Garlick at the Hutt, but I do not know anything about him. I have not received any letters yet so when they do come they ought to come with a rush. I expect that Edith Rowdon will write to me soon as I wrote to her last week. We have not heard anything more about Mrs Cammeron so I trust that she is better Poor girl she has had a time of it with that man for a husband for he has broken his blue ribbon pledge and is drinking worse than ever. Clara Storey has not returned from her tour yet. Our new neighbours the Cheatums arrived on Thursday. There is quite a large family of them 7 children I think and an old Grandmother besides the mother and father. There is one girl about 15 and a boy 19 years of age. I have not seen any of them yet and I do not feel very curious about them. No more tonight.

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15 Feb 1886 Monday

We have had visitors today viz Mr and Mrs Whakeham, Mrs Johnson & Mrs Collier. They came about 12 o'clock and had dinner of course. I got through the time pretty well, but such people are not much "in my line." I went to church yesterday and Mr Diament preached. He has a very peculiar manner of speaking which gives me a choaking feeling in my thro all the time & after Mr Still makes the service almost unbearable to me. The people at the Hutt have been endeavouring to turn the Rev Mr Cross out as they do not like him, but he does not seem inclined to go so I do not know what will be the end of the affair.

18 Feb 1886 Thursday

We have had a very rainy day. The weather has taken quite a turn now. Mr Garlick came to see us on Tuesday and of course Father and he had a long conversation, but I did not see very much of him. In the evening I took some plums to Aunt Maria which she seemed to enjoy very much. Father went down to...

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the evening service. We received a note from George Storey saying that Mrs Cammeron is out of danger also one from Edith Prover telling us that old Mrs Byers is in town and I suppose that she will come in to see Willie on Monday. I have been trying to finish my picture today but have not succeeded. I miss Mrs Stowe's help so much. Father has not been very well this day and my back has been rather bad at times.

27 Mar 1886 Saturday

My poor old diary has been very much neglected lately but I fully intend to begin afresh in a new book when I have finished this one. I have had tooth ache for about 5 days and it nearly drives me crazy at times but I hope that it will be better soon. Father has gone to town today to buy a watch for Emma Prouse. They have had a subscription to get a present for her as a token of thanks for services as organist in the Church. Mr Garlick is going to make the...

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...presents... on Monday night at his farewell gathering. I received a letter from Miss Annie last night also Miss Ellen's photograph, a very good one, Mrs Stowe was very ill just before they left for England. The "Kaikoura" arrived at Plymouth on the 23 of March so I suppose that there will soon hear from the Stowe and Mrs Pharazyn. The weather has taken quite a turn and it is very cold the wind being from the south.

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01 June 1886 Tuesday

I have not written in my diary for an age, but as I have nothing particular to do tonight I thought that I would write an account of our doings during the last few weeks. I have begun to correspond with May and Grace lately. Poor old Frizzles I should like to see her again everything has been going on as usual. Aunt Maria has been very ill but she is better now. I go to see her very often. George has gone away to Palmerston and writes that he is charmed with the place. A Mrs Gordon and her little girl from Wellington are staying with us for a short time. Mr Murry came to see us a few days ago and as Mamma had gone to see Aunt Maria I had to entertain him for a time. I like him better than Mr Garlick, but my sympathies are fast going the other way. I went for a short ride this afternoon, but it began to rain so I turned back again...

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& called at Aunt Maria's. I hope to go to Wellington soon for I have not been since I left school. HMG has painted a photo of Mr Mantle & WLC and put it in the Museum so if it is there when I go to town I think that I shall go and see it. I did not think that he would be an artist. I intend to begin a new diary on my birthday, that is a proper one so I shall not write much more in this old book. I receive letters from Edith R. She is going to be married about September; I cannot think how she can marry a man like ER he seems to me such a shallow brained fellow but I suppose that if every one thought alike it would not do at all. Edith is attending the "School of Art" and is, I believe getting on very well. I shall have to make a new beginning or she will have me behind. Fred Verner brought Mr Rowdon's poney over a few days ago as Jack Wood has taken it to graze for the winter. Fred Rowdon has gained his object and gone on to a station...

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...and appears to like it very well. Arthur and Harry are going to the College now and I think that they get on very well. I shall not write anymore tonight.
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14 June 1886 Monday

I did not do anything at all.

15 June 1886 Tuesday

We had a fearfully windy day. Some people started to go to "Whiteman's Valley" over the hill but they got lost and had to return.

16 June 1886 Wednesday

A lovely day. I went to the Woods in the afternoon and Mary asked me to ride home with her the next day.

17 June 1886 Thursday

I got up about 7 a.m. and started off to meet Mary. We had a very pleasant ride. In the afternoon Mr W. Kendall came down and we had some singing. When we were about half way home it came on to rain so we got nearly wet through.

18 June 1886 Friday

It was not a very fine day. I stayed in doors all day and sewed.

19 June 1886 Saturday

I did not do anything but sew.
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