

at the beginning of the year. Her last New Year's letter before Frances' marriage in 1816, begins: "Most warmly do I hope that to you this day may be repeated many, many years. and that each succeeding year may bring fresh happiness and increased delight in moral and intellectual improvement. Indeed, I hope that this opening year will bring with it a very marked improvement in your mind, that it will become more enlarged and more elevated, and that you will try to raise it above the petty follies and frivolities of the world by still keeping fresh in your mind the excellence a Christian ought to arrive at; and by really arriving at it, not thinking still that at some other time you will alter your conduct, whether of mind or actions, but by resolving and acting at the same moment. Do not imagine, my dear, that when I talk of altering your conduct I mean to find fault with any part; I only mean the wish for your steadiness of resolution in any change that upon due self-examination you may find necessary. A steadiness of resolution in doing that which you know to be right; however, you may be induced from it even by your dearest friends. Before you begin your course for this year, I should wish you to look over your present mode of managing your time and your mind, and consider whether you cannot make some advantageous alterations; whether a portion of your thoughts are not too often allowed to dwell on trifles; whether various fragments of time are not thrown away that might be devoted to some useful purpose, or at least mental acquirements. I believe you will think this is like my walking up and down lectures,—but no, I do not wish to lecture, I only wish to give a hint. At your age you require no governess or direction, but sometimes a friend will remind you and point out something to you which might have escaped your consideration. And indeed you are so docile, so reasonable, and take advice so kindly, that you induce me perhaps to continue in the old way."

Sometime during the summer of 1816, Miss Noble and her two nieces, Catherine and Frances, were invited to spend a few months with the Stewarts at Wilmont. It was during this visit that Frances became engaged to Mr. Thomas A. Stewart, the younger brother of Mr. John Stewart. He had shortly before this period returned from an extensive tour in Europe, or rather a voyage along the coasts of Spain and Portugal and down the