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## Letter to Adie from Mary Sibley, December 15, 1848

Mary Easton Sibley

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Linden Wood Decbr. 15<sup>th</sup> 1848

My dear Adi,

Miss Ott wrote to you some time since in reference to your coming here to prosecute your studies. And not receiving an answer from you, she infers that like many other young girls, your head is now filled with visiting, dress, & beaux. If such is the case of course there is no longer any desire for study, or disposition to continue at school on your part. I do not say that such predispositions on the part of young ladies are wrong, for visiting is altogether proper & a duty at right times and at proper places. And as to dress a young lady should always think enough of dress to appear neat & genteel. And to the beaux also, I have no objection provided they are such in character and standing as our parents and best friends approve.

I think a young lady ought never to associate in a friendly way and familiar manner with any gentleman who comes within the class generally denominated beaux, without ascertaining her parents or friends opinion of them. The reason is obvious. Attachments are formed and fastened & encouraged whether or not, a gentleman is what he ought to be (which she must doubt if her friends who are better capable of judging than she can possibly be, disapprove of him, she is very unwise and very cruel to encourage his attentions. She is unwise to place herself in circumstances of temptation, and cruel to endeavor to revert the affections of one whom she must reject of she has a regard for the wishes and feelings of her best earthly friends, her parents. Young girls often take a fancy for an individual, and are perfectly infatuated for the time & imagine they never can be happy unless they are permitted to marry the person, who afterwards, when they have been a few months removed & beyond the influence of him, who has cast such a spell over their feelings, wonder how it was possible they could ever have tolerated his presence; and rejoice that they have escaped from the net. They will exclaim to themselves "I am astonished that I ever could have had a partiality for such a man". Why he is not at all the person I took him for. He has neither the intelligence, education. Or what is better than all the piety which I should expect in the man to whom I should resign my all" Why! He never could have made me happy how rejoiced I am that I took the advice of my dear father and waited until that fascination passed away and my judgement was called into exercise". This is no "fancy sketch", but has often happened.

Such a case has within the last year come under my observation. A young lady pious & well educated, on a visit to a relative, some distance from the place where her father's family resided, became acquainted with a young gentleman who had some fine traits of character and who was well spoken of by her irreligious friends, where she was visited. He was much pleased with her and by \_\_\_ associating with him, she became quite fascinated, and seemed quite inclined to encourage his attentions. Fortunately for her, she returned home without making a positive engagement and immediately communicated the matter to her father. On making enquiries respecting the young gentleman the father told her he did not approve of him sufficiently to wish to give her to him. He gave her his reasons, at the same time saying if you persist in going contrary to my judgement & wishes I shall not interfere. The daughter, a pious dutiful child immediately resolved to give up her preferences, and wrote to the young man to that effect. Six months afterwards a young gentleman, whom she had never seen before arrived in the place where her father lived became acquainted with her and she found in him every qualification that her father considered necessary for her happiness and found in him all her own ideas of perfection in a human character realized. She married him, and as she compares her husband whom she almost adores, with the individual she so wisely gave up at the suggestion of her

father, she is in perfect amazement that she should ever have thought for a moment of marrying him. I have written much more than I intended on this subject, but all girls of your age are in danger of making an unwise choice and you will forgive me for being so prosey for the sake of the love I have for you & my desire for your usefulness as a Christian & happiness as an individual.

Mr. John Garrison died this week and old \_\_\_ has been very ill is some better. Howard Douglass is in the last stage of consumption. It is thought he may not live until spring. Jane is very well. Miss Ott is in good health and as indefatigable in every good work as ever. Mary Blair is now here going to school. She is an amiable girl. And very anxious to improve. Please remember me to your father Miss Jenitta and indeed to all my friends you my meet. Mrs. Alderson returns to her husband this week .She wrote to him to come for her to \_\_\_ but he told her he could not leave home, but that he would meet her in St. Louis. We are not prospering very much in our church. We are cold as a \_\_\_, and deserve nothing but chastisement, oh! That Christians could live up to their professions. But alas! We are constantly forgetting our high calling and \_\_\_ have below, feeding on bushes when our privilege is to feed on manna from Heaven. May the Lord have mercy on us all and visit us with the influences of the Holy Spirit.

Affectionately your friend

M. E. Sibley