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Letter to Mary Sibley from Julia Strong, March 20, 1839

Julia Strong
Grand Prairie

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Grand Prairie, Calloway- March 20th 1839

My dear E. & Mrs. Sibley,

Your kind letter of March 7th came duly and was perused with interest & pleasure by all of us.

You congratulate me upon the safe & speedy return of my dear husband- and well you may. I was almost petrified with amazement when he stood before me; the testimony of my senses I could scarcely trust! I had not indulged the first expectation of his return for several weeks. How much better are the ways of Providence to us than our fears, & infinitely better our deserts. Our meeting, as you would suppose, was one of commingled joy and sorrow. 'Twas sweet to mingle our tears together over our sweet, absent one & to recount the various scenes through which each had passed during three long months of separation. We feel, in the midst of affections, that if any have reason for gratitude and praise we are the persons. ___ our Heavenly father tho' he applies the rod is dealing with us as with "sons". I trust we are enabled to fall "not our will, but there be done".

When your letter arrived I did not expect to have answered it until I arrived in Marion lo'. Supposing that we should have been there by this time or soon after this. But circumstances which we could not control have detained us. The weather & roads have been & still are very bad & to day it is rainy so as to being up the streams. Mrs. Stony too has been so strongly urged to protract his stay and preach among this people He thought best to comply. But a more important reason than all is, that our dear sister Mary is now quite sick. She was taken ill nearly a week since and has suffered during this time very severely. Her attack however appears decidedly bilious- and tho' a serious one we have strong hope of a speedy and entire relief- after a thorough course of medicine. We have for several days not had her with deep anxiety, & still feel that her case is ___. But her symptoms are decidedly favorable. How long we may be detained on Mary's account is uncertain- but we hope not long for Mr. S. is exceedingly anxious to be about his master's business. Of course our return to St. Charles will not be as early as ___ by Mr. S. when at Linden Wood; it will be four weeks from this time before our return and perhaps more. When we do come it will give us pleasure to avail ourselves of Mrs. S's kind invitation & make her house our house at least for a few days.

I was surprised dear E. that you said nothing in your letter of being in bad health. Mr. S. though you looked very badly when he saw you least. This has been a trying winter on account of changes. Tho' we have had a large amount of pleasant weather. Sister M. has not yet a plan for returning east; she would be glad to visit her brother's in DuPage on her way. I trust you will arrange to go with her in either case. We take it for granted you intend returning to Mo; Mrs. Sibley thinks you are very well westernized. She had better make you her adopted daughter & encourage you to spend your pilgrimage with her. Tho' perhaps I can ___ stronger claims.

I believe however you are not much in love with ___ life as minister's families are apt to lead & for this reason would prefer to join the Linden Wood friends. I think we shall not differ strenuously about this matter.

In relation to obtaining one youth's ___ in general assembly I wish to say two or three things. In the first place I'm afraid the St. Charles ch'h' fail utterly of securing his for want of a a little more ___ & formality in applying. It is Mr S's opinion as well as my own, that Mr. Yontis should be written to on the subject on behalf of the session, and a pledge given for his services may be secured, otherwise he will

decline going. He would of course feel a delicacy in obtruding himself into such a disagreeable matter without being solicited formally be the proper person. We do not say positively he would go in such a case, but we think he would. He wishes too that of he espouses your cause you should get up a memorial to Gen A's. and obtain all the signatures you can. Mr. Y thanks unless ___ pains are taken your difficulties will not come up this session; many a difficulty will need adjustment. And they will thrust yours aside as a matter away off in Missouri.

Here is an other reason why you should have you advocate on the ground. Mr. Y. too has a good deal of influence with several prominent men in that body. The Brackenridge's in particular.

It seems by your accounts that Mr. Chamberlain still lives- and can figure & ___ as well as ever; he hold a most unenviable position in the eyes of the world & the church.

It is a matter of deep regret & a sore damage to religion in St. Charles that Mr. Gallicher has managed so long to keep you without a pastor. You never will enjoy peace or high religious prosperity til you enjoy the entire services of some amn who, in the spirit of his Pastor, is willing to spend & be spent for the souls among you who are perishing. May the Lord send by whom he will send but said you such an one speedily.

Your suggestions my dear Mrs. S., in reference to a change In your school establishment, or rather in its present arrangements was of course a matter of interest to us. Chiefly because of the deep interest we both feel in the cause of formal education in Mo and especially in the institution under you care. Mr. Strong & myself both regard LindenWood in its location and relative position to this state & adjoining states, as ___ & most highly adapted to the interesting cause to which you have ___ it. And it is a favorite desire with us to see its interests to promoted in the highest degree. To see it overflown with pupils. Some change you imitate seems necessary in order to attain this most desirable end. Besides the care of such an establishment, which mainly devotes on yourself become a grievously oppressive burden. What that change should be, or rather what changes would most promote the subject aimed at. Is difficult to say. The plan which has occureed to you pleased us so far as it exhibited a reason of confidence & regard for us, which is gratified to us to discover; beyond this we do not feel prepared to express an opinion. We can most heartily wish it success & prosperity. But in whose hands these shall be coffered we trust He will direct, who cannot err. The changes of such an ___ composed of immortal spirits to be trained for immortality, but first to become the wives & mothers of our state, is full of interest & responsibility-; we long to see Linden Wood ___ holding a prominent place among such institutions in the union, and there is no good reason why it should not. Such a position as you hold, as directress of such an establishment is not to be envied neither I should say my whole nature shrinks from it!

May wisdom be given you my dear Mrs. S. to adjust this matter in the best manner for yourself & others. & you may be sure whatever may be our relation to you, ot your school, we shall always feel a very deep interest in all that appertains to it or yourself. If we yield ourselves to the direction of Providence we shall be guided in his own right way." You will excuse this hasty line. I am more & ___ . & can only snatch a moment at a time to write. I have some fears that rains & mud will prevent me from accompanying my husband to Marion. But I hope not. I shall be very glad to see your bro' Jo.

My very best regards to Maj. Sibley, and all at Linden Wood. Dear husband & sis, Mary and love. Remember me affectionately to Mrs. Duffer. & Mr. Lindsey. I sincerely hope Mr. Lindsey or someone will

write to Mr. Yantis. It should be soon or he will have gone to S. Clay Co' to presbytery. I have received letters of late from ___ & ___ friends but nothing my new, love of them have been ___ seek out ___ in particular. With lung fever.

I am as ever yours affectionately

Julia B. Strong