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6-19-1847

## Letter from Elizabeth Ott to Alton Easton, June 19, 1847

Elizabeth Ott

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St. Charles Mo. June 19<sup>th</sup> 1847.

A.K. Easton.

My Dear Friend, —— Can you forgive my breaking my promise not to write again, Indeed I could not resist telling you of my happiness. — I have just returned from a 24 hours visit at dear Linden Wood, & I trust it has been a useful visit, & that its results will relieve your good kind heart, —— I learned through Aunt Love Thursday morning, that Mrs. Sibley was evidently feeling much on my account, but that she was unwilling to make advances, I felt that I understood her dilemma, & resolved to make another effort, so wrote her desiring an interview, she met it cordially & appointed last evening for it at L.W. in her own room I went. She met me kindly & we conversed affairs as dispassionately as possible —— I took especial care not to bring any direct charge against the P——s of J——s or her instruments, but stated facts kindly & calmly as possible, & Mrs. S, with her natural honest kindness traced them to their right authors without hesitation. She brought a charge or two against me, but unfortunately for her case they redounded upon their authors. & I think she was gratified to see me in a better light, —— I never felt the subtlety of that One so much as today, her skill in turning everything to account is consummate; but the “scale is turned,” I feel most clearly —— I will no longer stoop to defend myself, but endeavor by a distinct & steady course to live down the whole wrong, & not only ~~possess~~ can I enjoy a conscience void of intentional wrong, but an irreproachable name, through the help of Him whose aid is not sought in vain. —— I found all had been very careful not to talk as freely to Mrs. Sibley, as they did to the public & I asked Miss Eastman directly why she & Mrs Lee \_\_\_\_

[Here begins a new page. Because the previous page ends with an illegible word which appears to be the first three letters of a hyphenated word, it is possible but not certain that a page may be missing here. I believe that “the P——s of J——s” is a reference to “the Princess of Jesuits” who in Eliza’s previous letter (6.15.1847) is referenced as being responsible for influencing Major Sibley in the matter of Eliza’s displeasure with the people of Linden Wood. This person’s identity is not clear.]

did not say to Mrs. Sibley about Jemima” what they did to others, she said because “Mrs. Sibley would not listen,” but Mrs. Lee will find as quick as she returns, that she will be called to account for her voluntary communications to Uncle George, & Miss Eastman, & her remarks about Jemima “Aunt Mary” has listened to me, & discovered some very new things, —— I spoke to her of the Majors feelings, & told her what he had said, —— She was startled, & evidently sees with me that he had been acted upon, though unknown to her, In her accusation against me she said. “Alton says Miss R [the initial might possibly be K] has made an attempt to injure his moral character,” Now I charge you with doing it. Miss R never talked with any one but you about him, & that a long time ago & in confidence & you had no business to tell him, “& beside,” said she with great point & severity – “There was nothing in that derogatory to his moral character, only of his inefficiency &c,” —— I answered Mrs. Sibley I think charges Thus, & Thus, are immoral, She was perhaps never in her life so surprised, I told her precisely the time & place, when it one was detailed, & the effect upon myself. – & how I had reasoned it out, How I had been confirmed in my opinion by Major Sibleys assurance of your honor & integrity, “Well” said she “I never dreamed of this,”# I will ask Miss R, why it was kept from me, & all about it, —— I gave her your explanation to satisfy her, & told her of other charges, & how the girls had come to me on the

same subject, & what that One had said, & done among the girls & how that determined me in the step I had taken in going into the town School. — It was all news to her, I am thoroughly convinced, and I hope I shall never see any one so humbled again.

["Thus" and "Thus" are underlined three and four times respectively, which could not be replicated in this document. The pound sign is quite clear and large but overlaps the closing quotation mark that it is next to. Below it is an insertion sign. It's not clear if this is has any significance or not. Possibly it refers to the marginal note that is written sideways in the left margin of this letter, but this is only a speculation. The note reads as follows:]

Nor does Major Sibley for when he saw what he did in Altons room, he was indignant on your account, & said that he had never heard a single accusation against you in that line & could not understand that & seemed satisfied when she explained it & nothing further had passed between them about you—

[This marks the end of the marginal note and beginning of new page.]

I had determined to have so entire, a canvass [converse?] with the Major, but on reflection I felt that it better rest at present— He received me cordially — & today I had a long visit with him in his Office, We talked of the School, & the War — I listened with delight & benefit to his far reaching views, of things now enacting in our & Mexico's history — I felt that I could do more to merit his respect, which I value very highly by quiet efforts to please, than by open claiming of rights, & today I trust that he felt he had a willing & grateful listener.—

A shower last night detained me all night, & a most valuable one to me it proved, as it gave opportunity for explorations and arrangements & today I seemed almost reinstated in my old position, and not that, but a closer one to Mrs. Sibley, "Thereafter," said she this morning, "I hope there will be nothing between us, I now consider you one of the family, & have nothing to keep from you."—

Last evening she spoke of my reserve, I told her why frankly & that I was now waiting to give her my confidence for I felt that things were changed & to prove my sincerity I told her the general history of my family for the year past # & required her entire silence upon it for your sake, & that you had known the state, & progress of things in my family since your return from Mexico, & that Mrs. E.S. "Aunt Love" knew the result

I have consented to take the school the next year I feel assured that Mrs. S. will endeavor to render my time pleasant & my confinement, as light as possible, & give me all reasonable freedom & opportunity for active exercise, She will if possible put Aunt Love at the head of the housekeeping, & "then said she I shall claim your society more than heretofore"

[Here ends a page. There is a brief note written sideways in the left margin which reads as follows:]

I know she was very curious on that particular subject.

[This note is evidently intended to correspond to the pound sign which immediately follows Elizabeth's statement that "I told her the general history of my family for the year past," and to refer to Elizabeth's family's history.]

In one thing we agree perfectly – Jemima is not to be removed at all, which is the late effort, & we shall do all possible to improve her, & make her happy in her proper place — and further No day schollars, [sic] no visiting, no privileges to any one, Monthly reviews & paper continued & things after the “good old times.” “Pony,” will be my “Pet,” also —

I confessed to her frankly that if all was as it could & should be there, I had rather teach there, than any where else, because it seemed to me the safest retreat & because I felt, that you had rather know I was there than any where else, — I expressed a desire that you could know of our meeting & arrangement’s & restored confidence, she approved of my making the effort ~~of~~ to letting you know, & she prepared the envelope to shield me from observation at the Office, (I did not confess two delinquencies already.) & told me to give her love, & to tell you she should most likely not write until she received a letter from you, — She said you had said nothing to her of me, & what seemed to pain her most was, that when you left last year you had left trust’s with her, quite unexpectedly, & this time you had left nothing, She said she had written to Mr. Gamble about it & most likely in his answer he would explain it, I told her I knew nothing of your business, & did not desire to know, & you knew I did not, & I could not explain her difficulty in the least. — [Here the pen apparently changes, though the author is apparently the same and there is no new paragraph. Perhaps this section, which is at the bottom of a page, was added later as an additional note.] — It is “thou & thou” between us now & in order to keep it so no third person is to go between us. The results of this years experience will be in the end advantageous to me I feel assured — Mrs. Sibley has learned a useful, though severe lesson in making that change & she admits that Miss R. influence in it, & that she had learned there is a difference in teachers, and in actual dispositions, & that an accommodating spirit is invaluable.—  
[Thus ends the note, if it is one. The next page begins as follows.]

## No. 2.

June 20<sup>th</sup>. Sabbath Morning and a most lovely one — I feel as it would be a “day of rest” indeed to me, a rest of the heart – I only lack the presence of my “dearest friend,” to render me quite happy; but I may be with him in spirit, & seek for him with myself the care, & love, of the Lord of the Sabbath — Among my “good things” yesterday was a kind affectionate letter from Father, — It was an agreeable surprise, — When he first went to Baltimore I sent love to him, in a letter to Brother Hylor [?] and desired a correspondence — I could not forget that he was my Father – I knew under the circumstances he would be very lonely, indeed, & could not resist letting him know I could still render him due respect cheerfully & was interested in his welfare — This is the first notice he has taken of it – He has tried unsuccessfully to have mother & brother Siberia [Liberia?] settle in Baltimore & now he turns to me for sympathy. — His letter is rather distant & full of his views of religion, & among them some good things His paper said he sends me regularly & it is far better than I dared hope, yet I cannot show it here, It is noticed very favorably by other papers, & I hope he may be happy in it One thing is gained by it he has employment, that suits him He calls his paper “The Morning Star,” & the motto is “God is Love” & “perfect love casteth out fear,” On the whole it is an attractive sheet. though his religious views are fallacious & badly supported, Had Father been an educated man his power would have been tremendous for good or evil — I shall answer him affectionately & try to do justice to all, he does not

allude directly to recent changes [charges?] so I can do the same & not commit myself in any way —  
—

[No doubt “Siberia” is an unusual name for a brother, but the letters are clear in this document and I cannot see any other possible reading. However, in another letter (7.1867 Letter 5) the name appears to read “Liberia,” which is also a possibility. This marks the end of a page, and at the bottom of the page someone has written an upside-down note which reads as follows:]

Reconciliation with

Mrs Sibley June 19-1847

[End note; begin final page of letter.]

How anxiously I desire that this may reach you, & if it affords you the least gratification I am satisfied, very happy happy [sic] in the hope that I am forgiven, for thus claiming your attention & and interest. I sometimes fancy that I am so blinded by my own feelings, that I invest you with equal interest in me & embarrass you not a little, that thought is painful indeed, I would have you free as the air.

I wonder if you will remember your own birthday, & send an unoccupied thought to me, I shall remember it with gratitude, I claim the 23<sup>d</sup> of June, almost as much as the 6<sup>th</sup>. of Jan’y & many, many, earnest longings & desires will go up for you then, as ever, — Can you forgive my weakness, I fear I did not deserve the privilege of writing you, I make what may seem to you so bold [bad?] a use of it — O please set me in order, remember I look to you for council, & trust you with my whole heart,

I have no gossip, or news of interest. The ladies of St Charles are getting up a banner to present to the St Charles Guards, going from here —

The lines you find with this I fancied & hoped they might find an echo in your heart also, so as usual acted from impulse, — Now have I made you comprehend my present position & future prospect — I will review [?] I remain in the Town school & board where I am until 1<sup>st</sup> August, then go to Farmington to visit with sister until 1<sup>st</sup> of October, then return & resume the charge of Linden Wood School & and the shelter of the home of homes, & protection of the the [sic] two I love, & esteem very highly & ever have [the word might also possibly be “Love”] Major & Mrs. Sibley, — Good-bye my Dear Friend, please accept the best wishes of your own grateful & loving Eliza Ott.

[In the left margin there is a sideways note which reads as follows:]

I shall most likely visit L.W. very often as that is Mrs. Sibleys express request. She says she needs my assistance & company – I fear I am flattered and a little giddy at the sudden reversion of things, but I will remember my weakness and be sober