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Letter from Elizabeth Ott to Alton Easton, May to July 1848

Elizabeth Ott

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Letter 20th

Linden Wood- 1848.

May 27th — My 19th epistle to you, my dear Alton – I dispatched via New Orleans [sic] & Sallitta [?] After ironing a lot of collars for the Major, which even one as fastidious as your dear self, might have prized; so clear & polished, were they, I paid my respects to Miss Fanny Garvin, who was visiting the girls, and then mounted pony & mailed my letter, & called at the store to purchase a supply of paper, then home by the long way without alighting — I feared to call at Mrs. Easton's lest I might disturb Mrs.s Watsons & South's last day together, but since my return I have learned they were at Mr. Pettis's, & now remembered while waiting at the store, of seeing Mrs. South on the porch, Her cap & dress deceived me, & I did not notice her, though she seemed endeavoring to attract my attention, – I had a fine ride all "by myself" — News from Mexico cheering, – "Baltimore," has come at last, & Rachel is happy, & not happy, as he returned unwillingly I am always cheerful after dispatching a letter, yet reflection makes my heart tremble, the chances against its reaching you are so numerous. — A happy heart be thine ever, my dear friend, & Gods best blessing. –

28th Sabbath. A very warm morning & a very cool evening – Behold me en route to S. School with 4 children in the buggy! – I have "my share" to take care of, at all events – Mr. Smith gave us a superior sermon. Text John 5th 30th verse – "Search the Scriptures &c" – How my heart yearned for its mate – Sweet, bright visions, gilded the cloud, that enshrouds the future with heavenly hues, my heart pleads ever that pleasant days are still in store for us.-

Laura Turnstall's friends sent for her to visit at home a few days - Marion's husband was the messenger – & I am sure he is, uncomfortably ugly –

My leisure hour previous to German School was disturbed by Mr. Alderson, He knew the Major was in Town, & took the chance to call on me I secured Mrs. Lee [sic] aid ere I ventured, & when the Major came we both took leave. & he called us to account for it tonight — I pleaded that he served me so at his last visit, & reciprocation was just, in this instance.

I have longed all day, & last night for an interview with you – So many serious, & yet pleasant thoughts have trembled on lip for utterance – Dearest does the Sabbath bring you rest – and and [sic] grateful memories, & dear hopes. God grant it, and bless thee continually —

May 29th I dreamed of thee last night dear Alton – the first in months.— I dreamed I received letters from you & then that you came to visit me, I was both delighted and sad, for you said, "I cannot stay, I must go back again." – Your brown ruddy cheek & bright eyes are now before me – I do not remember speaking a word, but I held you hand constantly while others talked with you – I awoke agitated but not unhappy – I did not feel alone as I have done, when waking thus, but as if I had indeed just seen you "face to face" – Tell me, "was it all a dream? —

Sad news of Mrs. Sibley came today, She has been sick "nigh unto death," in Boston of Billious [sic] fever & sore throat, She went there accompanied by Old Mr. Bartlett and was taken ill the night they arrived, & had continued so 10 days Dora & husband had been with her five days when they wrote.– Major S. is very much distressed, Mr. & Mrs. Smith called but their presence could not dispel the gloom the letter has thrown over us – My cares have become as heavy that I was well nigh fainting, but the new necessity has roused me again, & I hope to go on to the end, in a manner that will meet the approbation of the Master & Mistress. Aunt Love wrote me a note today, asking me to visit her soon, – Goodbye –

30th Rose with a headache, but had not time to nurse it – School and music lessons passed slowly indeed – but all is over now, – I could not go to Mrs. E so sent Aunt Love a note, & Mrs. Easton a bouquet — Distinguished myself making paste for Major S. after a recipe, & succeeded to the admiration of all paste connoisseurs [sic] Good news from Mexico has banished pain — & good news of the great movements in Europe – The Pope is in jeopardy – France doing well - & God “turning & overturning,” to accomplish his own wise will – Wrote to Sister M, M, & Adie Cayce – Adieu – 31st Rose with a headache, but breakfast, & sweeping the Majors Office, put that to flight, and now I feel like enjoying sleep.–

Let me review the day independent of daily cares, I have written Mother & the little ones – & been to Town, found Mrs. E well & laughing at Aunt Love, who lay on the lounge, tired out, having rode down 3 miles below Mr. Judges on the Prairie to gather a pint, of Strawberries – I had a happy call there, all were so kind.

Mr. Mrs. Lee & Mr. Busbyshell, [The name does seem mostly clear] friends of Mrs. Lee spent the evening, & made it a lively one to jokers – but I was occupied with my own thoughts – We had a cherry dumpling for dinner the entire crop of this plantation in that line — No news of Mrs. S. and all are disappointed. – None from dear Alton, but that chills not love at its fount. No dearest – Goodnight God bless thee.

June 1st A cool day company left early – and this long day has had every hour filled until “set of sun”, when I stole away to rest, & was soon called – but all are now asleep & I am free till dawn, —

Mrs. Lee, & Mary met today at Mrs. Smiths with her (husbands) permission [a small note above the word “husband” reads “Major Lee’s” and is evidently intended to clarify that it was Mr. Lee, not Mr. Smith, who gave permission.] but he, forgives not so Easily this disrespect to himself The bed looks inviting – pleasant dreams be thine, ever – — — —

2nd We were honored by a visit from Mr. Johns, – Cady & children The [sic] came at 10. A.M. & I committed them gracefully to Mrs. Lee & the Major, giving them my presence only at noon, & they left before school closed to my great joy – I had a special dinner prepared to which they done justice & I trust are well pleased, — This evening we are having a most terrific storm, thunder lightning & rain falling in torrents, — will you think me less a woman if I confess that I delight to watch such a warring of the elements, to mark the lightnings trick, [track?] & the deep thunders roll — This needs your eye to mark its grandeur — Good news from Mrs. Sibley she is in New Bedford — She reached there the 23.^d Ult God bless you both, with his best blessing, – for Jesus sake—

3^d Saturday – Cleaned my room this morning, & now it only has the vacant chair to make it a choice spot to me, – Mrs. Lee & myself called on Mrs. Easton found Aunt Love sick Mrs. E. not well but uncomplaining & Henry Clay also out of sorts — though to me all were kind indeed, — ——. June finds me still “Major Domo” here, and I look back upon a week of hard labor from all –

Major S wrote his wife not to hasten home to endanger her health, which gratified me as a proof of his love, — — I have the comfort in all my care to have the boarders all very happy & entirely obedient, & respectful at all times & affectionate towards each other and myself – & many a pleasant scene we have here which would amuse you much could you look on, — But do you think I have forgotten that this day is the anniversary of our parting — O how long this year, & its bright hours to me so “few & far between”, if any have has [?] been hard to bear, O dearest what must have been thine, The sad words in your letter, have almost broken my heart — To me the past was delightful, & it even

tinged the future with rainbow hues, Your success has gratified me more than I can express – The praises are precious – & I picture to myself your improved looks very often – So I have comfort Hadst thou any? Dear Alton what would I give, in my power to be assured of that, – May God help us to bear, & do all his will, & bring us together in person, as I trust we are united in heart – then His probation will soon be forgotten, or remembered as a blessing —

June 4th Sabbath — In the night last night we had a tremendous storm, – You laugh at the “big word,” be assured however it is for once in place. The wind tore a limb from an elm tree, & I feared my windows would burst in, Can you believe it – The roaring of the wind, & repeated peals of thunder never woake one in the dormitory – but I am always awake – It is Sarah’s duty since I have been in the family, to do her work in my room before I am up, & she says she never yet found me asleep – I attribute it to my always having care of others, at home it was of the children, here, of the girls, I hope one of these days to be cared for, & to asleep like other people – Do you remember once telling me, when seeing me imprudent, if you “had the care of me you would tell me to go in out of the damp air” — & I, in the same jesting humor gave myself to you, & I believe we shook hands to finish the bargain, but I am not certain, - Little did I conjecture the result,, Do you remember it, & had you any suspicion that you might undertake so unprofitable a charge The dark thundery [?] morning, together with no preaching in Town, kept us home – I held S.S. two hours, at noon it cleared off so we attended German School – Mr. Smiths year is out, & his health being poor he will take a rest.— – I have employed my leisure today writing to Mrs. Abby [possibly “Ally” but probably not] Watson Aunt Love told me she was very much troubled about me, She was aware as I have told you in my last of what Mrs. S. had written to Langdon & Mrs. Bartlett, & what she says of our Engagement – freely, & your letters seemed to confirm it & she knew I was feeling very differently & it alarmed her, & she took it to heart – in good earnest, – I have written her that I am entirely satisfied with your course, & think I understand you, & rely implicitly on your integrity — I was astonished to find her so intrested, [sic] but she knows love is no fable, & therefore appreciates my feelings – God bless her “womans heart,” But let that rest — My thoughts have a higher aim tonight — even beyond the present life — Forgive dear, dear friend, but my heart will plead for you, & with you,– I cannot hush its yearnings — I know not why,? but I feel as if you would not be fretted, were you beside me, & I had, the courage to say this to you, Could you be so forbearing with me? — Thou knowest all I would say,— If I love you I cannot help but desire your highest – good – I cannot be wholly happy, & fear you are not interested, deeply & savingly [sic] in the religion of Jesus – If I know my own heart I care not for forms, or societies, – Let me but see you happy in the “hope that maketh not ashamed,” & I will be content, — Do I trouble thee, whom of all the world I would not, forgive, & believe me sincere, then I know all will be well – God bless thee–

June 5th The Monday of another week is added to the past, and what its stamp upon my soul for well [?] or woe – I cannot scan the record, for hard as I try to do well, “evil is present with me,” in hours of conscious weakness & failure, how precious the “Noble hearted Substitute,” — “who seeing our woes & weakness pitied, decieved [sic] the stroke of justice for us, and gives all, freely as a king, only asking thanks for mercy.” — May we learn our need, & appreciate his fullness & love – Amid my varied cares and duties, I have still found many a moment for three, & many a pleasant vision has flitted across my mind – Rachel is sick which has added to my care, but as a cheerful heart has made “all well” – The air is very cool, so we forsook the porch and gathered in the little dining room, & the talk was of dogs, which

ended in calling him honest – “for he fawns not on those he loves not” — Goodbye God bless thee in all things my dear friend,

June 6th A letter came today of Mrs. Sibleys dictation to her husband giving an account of what she had seen & endured since last she wrote some 4 weeks ago,– She was sitting up for the 1st in 16 days which shows much suffering, & tells me she will not be here soon & I must prepare the new summer wear, & today I have cut & made a pair of pants for Washington to his notion, —

Major S. is sad about his wife, & harassed with the fence building and farm work — He misses her very much — Miss Charlotte Shaw called today to see my little “Kate Rich” Mr. James Glenday [Glendoy? Glendey?] was buried today – died from a wound in the foot – left a wife & 3, helpless children the eldest being a cripple & very poor indeed. —

7th — Went to Town after school to purchase mens summer wear, – and succeeded in pleasing all concerned, – Made Stilly John a pair of pants & Rachel says “Now that is so nice for the old man,” — Looked in one moment at Mrs. Eastons, all well — A letter from Abby with love to my humble self,– But my heart is overflowing The Treaty is ratified, & the troops already “en route,” for home, — What hopes are roused – Dear Alton is the “dark mantle” about to be raised, and will it indeed give “joy to thee & to me,” — God grant it, & bless thee continually my precious friend.—

Major S, is almost sick, We had the evening together alone, all being at prayer meeting, & he was quite social – Rachel is also ill, poor soul she is a treasure of fidelity, — —

8th Good news of Mrs. Sibley - __ [do?] of the Treaty — Major S & Rachel better Washing done all, O,K, [? The letters seem clear, but the meaning is not] so I feel quite relieved – This evening we had a call from a Mr. & Mrs. Cutter of St Louis - They have educated a daughter at the Albany Ft. Academy, & learning I was here called to see me, & the place Miss Harriet Cutter and my sister were classmates,– A warm pleasant evening Mrs. Lee out to tea She is in high spirits while I feel to be silent & quiet perhaps not the less happy – Don’t believe me dear Alton? — —

June 9th Friday evening finds me delighted to be released from the school room – & glad also, over another pair of pants finished I have nothing worthy thy eye tonight, this close application of my head, & hands, makes to read, or think beyond the present duties out of the question But the heart is not chained, to this Creation. No, No,! My Own, Goodnight. –

June 10th Saturday and a resting day to me, House duties & Mending occupied the morning and after dinner I called on Mrs. E, I found her alone & had a pleasant talk with her – Tea found us gathered here again & then we all took a walk down to the “big gate” & up the new lane, and “Reviewed” the new “Yellow Gate,” which has been hung today Finally we sat down on the stile to enjoy the fine evening & was [sic] soon joined by Henry Clay – He remained to prayers & still lingered & found he wished a talk with me, To ask me, to intercede for him, & his “Mary, with his Mother, — He was much excited, & entirely wrong in his estimate of his Mother’s feeling towards him – I set him in order upon that subject, & urged him not to be “rash if he loved his Mother” Then followed a “torrent of Tears,” & exclamations of “I do love my Mother! again and again – When he was calm again, I promised to do all in my power for them & told him I thought he had a good, & true friend in you “So do I,” for he is the only one who has ever helped me,” burst from his full heart – He spoke of you most lovingly, & asked me, why your letters were so sad, Then my eyes told their tale, for an instant – We parted with a mutual promise to act right, & trust God, that all would come right.— His urgent trouble is that Mary becomes homeless & penniless, on Mrs. Blairs decease which seems very near - God bless you both, continually —

11th The first intelligence was Julia Bangs has eloped with Mr. Turner of St Louis, — This is a more aggravated disobedience than Mary Lee's, & Julia had also engaged herself, to Mr. Bateman a Teacher at the College, to mislead her parents – Whitney & family were her abettors — I slept so little last night that I am almost sick – Went in to our S. School, We had no preaching & Mrs. Lee attended the girls to the Methodist church, & I spent the time with Mrs. E pleading illness to them which was true – Henry C, met me & gave me a most expressive grasp of the hand – & when he returned from church I had good news for him – Mrs. E was very gracious with me, & told me cordially what she could, would, & desired to do for him, & what she required of him, and asked me to tell him & to see & talk with Mary – The naughty one, I found had not said the first word to her, & I scolded him a little, but he was so timid & tenderhearted, that I was quite overcome – Mrs. E. & I had a talk of you also, & as [?] her [?] saying to me “You can tell me any thing,” I did tell her, what Mrs. S. had been writing & saying about our affairs, & she explained it to me, & told me that she & Mrs. S. had, had, a few words about it since you left – Mrs. S. had said you ought not to marry any how,” & Mrs. E had replied “That she could see no reason why you should not – & she continued Dont you fret about it, Mary don't want him to marry at all, & neither was she willing for Langdon to marry” – but she has nothing to do about it” – We concluded as usual with “Well all will be right when Alton comes” — Can I help loving her, or you, am I not excusable, even were I a devotee,? Don't shake your head, no! For we may love the worthy, next to God unrepented dear Alton you k_____ [know?]

June 12th Monday & full of business. After School I went to Town to see Mrs. Blair by Mrs. E & Henry's request – The latter gave me a letter to her which made all easy, I found her very low but cheerful, & gratified to close this business, & see Mary provided with a friend. – I told Henry he missed a great deal in not doing this himself Her testimony for Mary was very interesting – I saw Henry again after my return & made him very happy with what I had learned. Mrs. E, Mrs. B & Henry joined in asking me to interest myself in Mary and advise her as I would a sister – a pleasant task for she is a loving, & lovable pupil Henry & his Mother are coming to a fine understanding of each other & both are happier – What is life without love? May you never know by experience, Now I must close, & ask God to bless thee & me, & try to rest for the morrows duties are not light – Good night dearest –

13th A sick day – But tis past & I now feel better & cheerful – I had a sad dream of you dear Alton this morning & it has shaded the day in spite of all my efforts. — Mailed a letter to brother S. in answer to his received yesterday – [“brother S” refers to a brother whose name is either Liberia or Siberia. In this document (and in the majority of others) the letter looks exactly like an “S,” but if in fact the name is Liberia, then the text should read “brother L.”] Read the “Presbyterian” a paper – today – [“a paper –” was added later as a clarification] I have taken it [this is the end of a page and the beginning of the next; it appears that Eliza forgot to add the word “to” when she began the new sheet of paper.] keep an eyes [sic] to the world, I find I cannot converse as I once could. from reading so little of general intelligence, or indeed of anything, I would not have you find me retrograding, & yet I fear you will be disappointed – but if a true heart is a compensation, thou will not feel impoverished – Dear Alton. May God make up what we should be for Jesus sake. — — —

June 14th This long weary day closed very pleasantly – After Tea the girls held a little meeting, & I was relieved of their presence & went to sit on the stile when Henry Clay came – & we had a long talk – He insists that I have rendered him an immense service as a “_____” [daysman? Claysman?] between him & his Mother, that I have “Loved him committing a great sin against her, as he had determined on a rash

act, but for my timely interference” – He said I had made him acquainted with you too – That he had thought that you, & his Mother did not love him, & treated him as a child, “& now,” says he “I see I, have been all wrong, & I have said many unkind things to Ma, when I would have died for her, but I thought she did not love me,” – Indeed the flatterer, would have made me believe, I had been a benefit to the family, instead of the humble receiver of favors but I pray God I may never be ungrateful to any of you in the least degree – & to you my noble Alton, ever devoted, wholly.— Such moments are worth living for, & blessed be God for them, May thy pathway be ever lighted by these foretastes of Heaven. –

15th Today John Simpson arrived, while I was in school & after I was released & dressed, I paid him my respects, & found him looking badly & his burning hand told a sad tale. He said he had not slept for two nights, and that too as if dissipation was reputable – I can not look upon such a waste of life & talent unmoved — Were I his sister I should try, to my utmost, what kindness would do for him,— Mary Blair came out to spend the night & Henry called to see her, & I obtained them an interview, & that too with the Major’s tacit consent – I was glad I could appreciate their feelings. They are a fine match for size, & looks. & hearts – God bless them.

Today the remains of Mr. Wm. Cornforth were conveyed to the tomb – A day or two before the accident, he was out here with a party Serenading, & “the gayest of the gay” so Mr. Jas Gallaher told me – How much he is lamented – So talented, industrious, accomplished & gentlemanly, that all who knew him feel impoverished in this dispensation of Providence

June 16th Mary Blair was quite willing to stay today to my satisfaction – John Simpson is quite renovated by a sleep of 10 hours.— I have felt well myself, & finished my last pair of pants, & glad am I, to have even that little ready for the Mistress’ return.— I hear much speculation of the troops, leaving Mexico, but I try not to anticipate, This evening I have been hoping you had the package sent a month since, & was thinking of L.W. and the past, as well as I of thee, Good night, God bless thee.—

17th Saturday, & a quiet day – The girls had a fine frolic in the morning, Mary Morgan, & Laura Turnstall, masquerading – The former as a Santa Fe trader, the latter as a Frenchman, — They performed admirably, but when the trader, made love to me, I was astonished at my own feeling’s, I could not endure her, the dress changed her so much – I could not allow her to kiss me, It was revolting — After dinner I went to see Mrs. E, & found her surrounded by company – Mrs. Bangs was one & she relieved her heart, in detailing Julias Elopement to me – I pity Mr. & Mrs. Bangs, but they have been the real authors of this affair - All can be traced directly to unlimited indulgence on their part—

Mary Dougherty & Mary White – spent the evening at L.W. Henry Clay came also & after prayers I had a long chat with him at his request — He is quite happy as far as his heart is concerned, business presses upon him, or the want of proper business – How much your presence would have added to the pleasure of that hour –

18th Sabbath, but not a day of rest — I had the care of the girls alone today, and too at Mr. Hills – Mr. Smith is too unwell to preach, & Major S. would not come to hear any less than him, – He gave us a good sermon on 2,^d Phillippians [sic] 12. & 13. would that I had been more interested. — I saw Mrs. E & Aunt Love a moment, neither are well, but kind as angels – Major S has been fretted sadly today – 1st no word of his wife — Children noisy — Pony in attempting to jump the fence, fell upon it, & it had to be torn down, to release her quite enough to disturb any one who loves quiet — I found my German School, interesting, & this hour the best of all the day – Now I can turn to thee under God, & find comfort, & “rest for the weary soul” – rest for the heart, rest for the thought God, give thee, rest –

June 19.th Monday is over a weary day - Washing, going on, company to provide for & entertain, School duties, company of the girls to stay all night, but tis past, & safely — Recd a note from a friend Mrs. Edwin, B. Turner, formerly of Albany, now a missionary in Iowa where Harriet Clarks friends reside — Harriet & Julia are our company How my heart greets thee as the hope that you are bound homeward becomes more certain – May thy path be a pleasant one, my dear Friend.

20th Opened with a severe shower — Julia & Harriet remained till School time – Mrs. Smith called to get the buggy – & all was confusing to me until 10 [4? The number is very unclear, though 10 makes more sense in context] when I was again at my table in the School room.- 5. PM relieved me – Showers again, & most welcome – no news of Mrs. Sibley to cheer us — Sleep beckons me, – good night dear Alton. — —

21st Today I have seen the Order of the War-Dept. appointing the route - & destination of the troops. – How long, & weary seems your march The longest of any. – God be thy shield & hope, the whole way — Fancy oft oe'rleaps [oe'rleaps?] the long journey, & conjures up sweet visions of a quiet home when I shall be no longer alone, – but can enjoy the glorious privilege of living with the one I love,— life will then be precious, & efforts have an adequate object owned & possessed, — Dear Alton, something whispers your eyes will smile & acknowledge the “tender tie,” & I am blessed even now: I have been amusing myself of late watching John Simpson, and weighing his mind, and education — I have conversed but little with him, but have ever found him intelligent, correct, just & honorable – Last Sabbath morning I had a chat with him, in which he spoke of his life in St Louis at precisely its value, utterly vanity, I could not forbear adding – “O, you gentlemen live too fast – you waste your life, literally, [sic] & impoverish society, & your friends in doing so’ – He seemed startled by the idea, & I explained, by showing him, that their energies & hearth, [I think Eliza meant to say “health,” but the word “hearth” is quite clear] & a taste for enduring pleasures was early destroyed, & then they were useless to themselves & their friends – He took it kindly of course, but it set him a thinking – I wish most heartily that some good angel should be commissioned to unlock with the key of love to store of good I am sure lies buried under this, “trickery of fashion” — some loving heart, a real earnest woman, I mean, might rescue him from destruction I believe, with God’s blessing – How singularly I regarded him, I felt assured it might be done, & my own heart was “mute as death,” towards him, Have you ever experienced such an emotion?— I know. you can sympathise my generous One. —

June 22nd Rain, Rain, is the order of these days – Last night we had a storm, which damaged fences considerably, & now it rains in torrents and the air is very sultry – I am heartsick with hope of Mrs. S. arrival, or a letter at least being deferred — “Female nature” bears vexations badly at best – The Major’s solemn face distresses me, He is so troubled about her - A letter from my N.O. [the letters seem clear, but I don’t know what they mean] friend mailed at Albany where she now is; Ah I must “lay me down to sleep & pray the Lord my soul to keep’ – How long since that simple petition has been in my heart. Now I may add one for a “dearer self,” God grant it for Jesus sake, –

23rd Thy birthday – The first moment I could claim, was spent re reading your letters, and I never enjoyed them more. Dear, kind Alton God bless thee ever – A letter from Mrs. Sibley has cheered her husbands heart, [the word is too faded to make out fully, but makes sense in context] but it tells of feebleness, & I infer another month at least will elapse ere she arrives – My heart sank, but necessity, is a stern mother, & I have roused myself to ~~the~~ the screwed effort — Now Goodnight ———

24th J. O. Simpson, departed right early – After morning duties I made Major S a visit in his office, on business, & finding him in a good humor we fell into a long talk, – First of John – I found the Major was much displeased with his visit – Said “He had been invited not to come,” & many very severe things, Some were very just & others uncalled for — At last I suppose he remembered I always stand defender of “Rock” [possibly “Rack”? “Rick”?] & “Slick,” [based on earlier letters, I know that these are animals, and “Rack/Rock” is a dog] & perhaps might venture to take some of this for you whereupon he spoke of you, as a great contrast to John, every way, spoke kindly & generously of your living here, & viably [the word is clear but seems uncertain in context] of you as a man every way – I ventured to tell him then that you appreciated him & the privileges you had enjoyed in his family – Need I add I am happy & satisfied at last in knowing you now possess his good will. — I have seen Mrs. E. today but not alone, Mrs. Lee invited herself to go with me – She is a little curious to learn what is passing between Henry Mrs. E, & myself —

June 25th Sabbath – and a pleasant quiet one – Mrs. Smith being ill we attended the Dedication of the New School church, on the Street. Mr. Hill officiated, & I enjoyed his excellent & appropriate sermon much. We had very fine singing, Text 81 Psalm 2^d verse – [possibly 87th Psalm, but not likely] Called at Mrs. Es a moment. but had to say Nay to their kind invitations to stay – German School large & interesting I have had most pleasant thoughts of you all day – and “what wait I for, for him of the gracious Hand that supplies all our need, His blessing! be it thine.

26th A call from Mr. Easterly the fore guerreon, [Doreguerrion? Most of the letters seem clear but the word is unknown] He is unwell & was silent and reserved for him. He stands first now in his line in S Louis —

A long letter from Mother gave me pleasure & pain as usual — Dear Mother knows what it is to “Love & suffer” — This has been an extremely hot day and weariness is in every limb,” I must answer dear Mother, tonight Goodby my best Beloved. If thou art spared I am content. — — — —

27th We suffered extreme heat until noon when a storm came up & the rain fell in torrents, but it was clear at night & I rode in to see Aunt Love about J. O. Simpson at Henry Clays request, – She like myself is very unwilling he should be here an unwelcome visitor & the threats are “loud & long,” against him — Aunt reverted to the past with bitterness when Dr. Simpsons house was open to all & even the Major spent months there with out the least compensation, & then too to John’s generosity in always paying for his board when here – In this view, things look very uneven —

Mr. Jas Gallaher, brought Mary Blair here to stay the night, & Henry came out in the evening to see her – I fancied the Major frowned. I would not blame him, did he not appreciate love & attentions so thoroughly when bestowed on himself – While I write sweet Mary lies in my bed, all unconscious in her new happiness, of the heartaches in store for her in common with all mortals Henry & Mary are a beautiful pair just to look at, but their helpless inexperience is painful to one who has been initiated into the realities of life –

28th Nervous headache, has made this a weary day – but I had less than usual to do in school – Mary left today & Henry called a moment while I could tell him of a letter from Mr. Bartlett, saying Mrs. S would not leave there before the 27th [could also possibly be 21st] — The Major has been tirading about John again – He having discovered that John intends to return again, but “Aunt Love will veto [?] that. Ah! Thou wilt [sic] be welcome to all I trust, to me more than welcome Ever – – – – — —

June 29th The headache left me gradually and evening finds me cheerful Three of the girls have just left the room – This is my first case of arbitration this year, & I rejoice in being entirely successful in restoring good feeling, & seeing the peace treaty sealed with loving kisses —

Harvesting goes on admirably, & indoors we are doing well also – and the Major goes about smiling & chatting, quite happy again. Would that you occupied that vacant chair that I might look into those dear kind eyes again! I know they would smile! Today I had a great scheme in my head for the future: – How you would laugh at my wise stars! [‘stars’ seems strange in context but it is the only sensible reading I see] I cannot confess here Goodby my dear friend God bless you Ever –

30th Mr. Samuel Watson was thrown from his horse today, & nearly killed — All from the breaking of the saddle girth — What dangers throng our path!- We had calls from Mr. Garriott – Mrs. Rorseter [?] Janes Mother, who is visiting here, Mrs. Smith, & Miss Burks – Mrs. Lee is rejoicing over a letter from her Col, & speculating upon his near arrival – I sit quiet, but who can count the anxious throbs. I hope you are spared them is it wrong for me to be so engrossed, in thee? Dost thou shrink from such close alliance? No, my heart answers promptly, He cannot change, for God has blessed him with a steadfast soul — & I, may say mine, unreprieved — —

July 1st Saturday After “general review,” I sought my room & have enjoyed a day of rest — A letter from Sister Mary M, tells me indirectly that she will in time wear the “Hymenial Halter,” as she terms it – She begged a long letter, but I cannot give advice on such indefinite grounds, & so wrote her – I know the father & a brother of the family and have no fears, but she is doing as well as we could desire - & I confess that I am relieved. She has proved herself too fond of visiting for a teacher, and in our circumstances I am glad that she is soon be settled honorably & well to do in the world — Dear Alton this is plain talk about a sister, but with you I must have no undercurrent – You must know all, or nothing - O, I bless God, for your noble soul, that can appreciate things aright & that I enjoy so dear a privilege in your friendship, “The night wears apace,” goodnight dear Alton. —

John Simpson was here about 20 minutes this morning to get his trunk He gave a general excuse why he left, & all wondered but me. Major found me alone afterwards & asked about his coming & said “He came to the Office, & looked so badly I was sorry for him & asked him to stay” – “How long did he stay?” I said promptly about 20 minutes –

July 2^d Sabbath – Rainy morning, & I held Sabbath school at home — It cleared pleasantly & I went to German School – We had a full school & several gents as teachers, but I had to lead much against my will — Mr. Watson is still living – Henry Clay called, & told me the Major’s complaisance misled John Simpson, & he fancied I was the mover but Henry & Aunt Love, assured him I was clear of that — “Rock” [Rack?] caught it today & one of Mrs. Lee’s dogs – Well here I am complaining? – Trifles make the sum of life. One fretting mind can make a paradise miserable, & one grateful heart, that can bear, even as it must be borne, with, can reverse the picture

3^d Having duly performed my duties here, - I mounted pony & was soon beside Mrs. E. and found her alone for the first in 3 weeks – I delivered Mrs. Blairs messages, & think she is satisfied as to Mary’s parentage, she spoke of her kindly & commended her modesty — She then turned to my affairs – comforted me about Sister’s new move, asked me about my visiting Mother this year, & approved of my decision, & thus we held sweet converse till I must go, she urged me to stay & gave me a dear kiss at parting! She is so kind & so judicious – 13 months today, & I could not talk of you so calmly as I have done today with Mrs. E. She is watching your movements as narrowly as I am, & with as deep an interest

perhaps, & most likely less selfish – I will not be so selfish as to claim that mine is a better love, but it is unmeasured, & not all untried – ——

Henry Clay made me a long call this evening – I wish he had 10 years of your experience in some things, he is noble hearted, though all unprepared for life's hard conflicts – But all must travel the same rugged path who would excel —

4th “The glorious Fourth,” It was holiday – Major S. permitted the girls to attend the Oration in Town & Mrs. Lee “done the honors.” With the Majors permission & wish indeed, I, attended by “Uncle Washington,” rode down to see Mr. Watson – I found him better, & today for the first hoping to recover — He had been forbidden company but he said “I must see Miss Ott” – I sat half an hour with him, & felt as if in the presence of the dead almost – so changed is he from suffering – In all this his mind is, & has been clear & calm. Death had no terrors, & the hope of recovery gave no excitement I here saw, how the christian bears the chastening rod. — — On our way up we went upon the Momenvelles [? It's an unclear proper noun that begins with “M” and ends with “elles” or “villes”] to have a summer view – We arrived home to dinner, to the surprise of all – & then I sought my own room to rest & think – On analyzing my feeling I am surprised at the dependence I had placed in Mr. Watson – I kissed him in parting with very different feelings than ever before – As an Elder in the church I am entitled to his care in one sense, & the kindness of himself & wife, has been steady & unflinching through all the changes I have suffered, & they had even begged me to spend my vacation with them this year with a delicacy that would have become the highest pretentions — I was soon roused by the cry “Anna Morgan & Horace have come,” — I lay still but one arrival after another demanded my presence until a full dozen guests, the Dr. among the number honored us with their presence – But as the Major had refused to board his daughter, & we were not urgent for their stay they went to see Mrs. Bangs & I felt greatly relieved, but the wise one took Mary along also, & staid so long that we had prayers, & the Major being very weary I offered to wait for her, & “Sib Lee” went for her & had [?] the Dr. returned by another road, took a seat, & sent Mary off, & asked a little conversation with me — & for 2 hours he kept me. Asking question!, praising himself & children &c &c - & the entire motive was to stay all night, & to have me fool enough to take extra pains with Mary – He has lost his trouble for once at least – It will be sometime ere he catches me “tete a tete” again — Let me think of my own best friend. & forget – such vexations –

July 5.th How I dreaded to rise this morning, but I must. & I found the Dr up also but he very kindly left to breakfast at Mr. Bangs – Mary had the “pouts.” because he had sent her to bed last night, but I would not notice it Mrs. Lee was full of fun, for she had heard the talking, & I let the Major into it, so he could share the fun – A very sultry morning, but showers have relieved us very much — Finished a dress for myself a very plain one, & “very becoming of course” – “They say” – How sad, & lonely I have been, The hour of evening worship was a great relief, and this of freedom delightful, — This seems little better than a continued complaint, to myself. with not a little Egotism to season it — To thy Love I commit all, & pray God I may not weary it, & destroy myself, what I would preserve as the choicest of earthly blessing – Thy love, dear Alton —— — —

[The top of this page was later labeled “Letter 20 – 1848”. This page is the last that I have of “Letter 20th.” Because there is no signature, and because the text ends at the very bottom of the page (indicating that the author may have intended to follow it with another page) it appears that that the

rest of the letter may be missing. How, this page does end with a complete sentence concluding a complete entry, and since this letter's last entry is dated July 5th and the next letter – "Letter 21st" – apparently begins on July 6, there may not, after all, be anything missing.]