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

Elizabeth Ott

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You understand dear Alton that I am preparing this from hasty daily notes, for since the Treaty I have not mailed anything for you, knowing I must wait until you were within our bounds – Your last received by Mrs. Sibley bears date July 6th and my jottings on that day run thus – O such a long day, though not unpleasant on any account. I have been sad all day, & why I know not, neither have I been unhappy. I have had a very quiet day which was doubly welcome for I needed rest – Two of the girls took a fancy to play sick, & I met the fancy with a dose of rhubarb, & it was effectual – Last night we had another violent wind storm, & several trees were blown down – This evening is cool & pleasant & I feel like sleep – So goodbye here I will close & seek for thee, & me. God's best blessing. & content my heart in his sure promises to the sincere Believer. —

July. 7th I have been writing brother Siberia tonight. [see note below] & in Mothers journal letter, & now is the dearest privilege, that of telling thee of a pleasant day, & school duties for the week well finished, & house well kept – A letter from Mary Blair written from her Mother's beside, brings pleasant things – One from dear Mother tells me that I have by this time a new sister to Love – Brother Orans [Crans? Drans? This name has appeared in at least one previous letter, but an exact reading is not known] wife - I knew her, & esteem her. & now love her, because she loves him so well — She says Siberia thinks I neglect him, so I wrote him at once for he is very dear to me – Hylor will soon be home to stay – Father no better – Mrs. Wilson & Anna Morgan called & enlivened an hour for me – but it is very late, & I must rise early – So goodnight “pleasant dreams” be thine, & Heavens best blessing ever - - [Eliza's brothers have names that are uncommon today and are therefore difficult to make out. One, frequently referred to as “Brother S,” is named either Liberia or Siberia; the opening letter most often resembles an “S” so that is how it is rendered.]

8th Saturday and so quiet that I have enjoyed it much. – I have also had the pleasure of calling on Mrs. E, & Aunt Love And their kind words, & smiles were sweet indeed, but I tarried not for they had company & I am too lonesome in company now days – Do not feel flattered – I am but a “little girl” & my love confers no honors, however much the will would do –

July 9.th Sabbath, - Cloudy but we ventured to church. Sabbath School was distinguished for dullness in us all, we miss the moving [possibly “morning”?] spirit Mrs. Sibley – Mr. Johns said “All seem waiting her return” to their shame stands the confession – We had to go to the new church – Mr. Hills sermon was very good. Text 1st Cor. 2^d chap 1-4 verses – He is always sensible. — I left the house at Mrs. E's & ran up stairs one moment to see them, & was met, & greeted, by her dear self with “Have you seen the Order for Gen Price [Pres?] Com'd” I had not & she repeated it while Henry stood by smiling & happy – We all proceeded to church, & going home caught a fine wetting which only gave me occasion to laugh, At German School we had plenty of Teachers, but no leader. & I was forced into that office – You will think me an Amazon not in heart – Dearest – I long to give the reins to thy hand, & the leading in School &c to Mrs. Sibley — Thou hast been in my mind all day & many guesses have I made as to thy position, & feelings — Believe me dear Alton I am not, so selfish as to desire, all your thoughts – No! only that when you do think of me, it be with a full consciousness that you love me, from the bottom of your heart - Is the desire too large? too exacting? I plead thy great kindness, & pray God to bless.

10.th I arose with the hope in my heart that Mrs. S. would reach here one week from today, and the whole of my world smiled, but the mail brought a letter saying she would not start until after the 5th so I

do not expect her until the last of the month – I am content she is well & what more is essential? — I have been Surgeon today "Sib Lee," cut his hand in Town today. & came home to have it dressed after fainting His Mother being gone I gave him my aid, then & again after prayers, and he had a spasm again – You know he has been subject to fits. —

Laura Turnstall, weeps the death of a cousin in Mexico. A letter from Sister tells of her approaching nuptials with Dr. Clardy & one from "Adie Cayce," on the same subject – Adie, has had a severe trial with my sister this year, to my sorrow. God will reward her charity, & great kindness, as I cannot – Miss Easman has finished "doing good" – at Mr. Woodson's – She has used herself up thoroughly in that neighborhood — This showery day has ended well and I am grateful for the good & good feeling which prevails here these days – Love unmeasured to my dear Friend ——— Goodnight.

July 11th Night finds me weary but with a good conscience. No ghosts of unperformed duties haunt me, & peace has prevailed [sic. Clearly, Eliza intended to write "pervaded"] our family – I have written 3 letters – To Adie Cayce – Sister M, M, & brother S, and a page in Mothers journal. And nothing for me? dost thou say – Or is this too much – Nay! thou hast even written, "Anything from you will" – Bless thee ever, — —

12th Very warm, & a bad headache – The girls went black berrying & I rode to Town the while – Found Mrs. E very cheerfully planning a visit to the Fort, "But not 'till Mary comes home" said with a queer look; which said "so you can go too," and I was selfish a moment & wished Sisters visit did not interfere, but a better spirit whispered be patient & 'all will be well,'— How much I need your stability, I am so easily excited —

13th An excessively hot day – and interminable almost, though not without a blessing — A letter from Mrs. Abby E. Watson, a prize of love, I cannot transcribe but you must read it when we meet. – She & her husband unite in inviting me to spend my vacation with them, as a favor – God bless such generous hearts in all things - She is well pleased with Langdons wife "Bettie," & I hope you will be also — My heart pleads but for one look into the eyes so dear, & so kind to me – I do not know how to be patient.–

14th A cool pleasant day, & business went on finely in all departments – Dismissed school early to let the girls go blackberrying, & went to Town to purchase "truck" for a gown for Major S. Mrs. E. helped me chose [sic] the material, & lent me a pattern to cut it by, & both met with entire approbation, I was particularly commended for promptness – Mrs. Smith came in & admired the idea, & intends to "surprise," her "Old man," — with one —

I shared my good letter with Mrs. E. & Henry – He understood me Alton; and his eyes danced as he said "Let me see it Won't you" – but he was interested in this & when he returned it, he told me I might answer her questions about himself & Mary –

This is such a fine moonlight that I have thought of you longingly – What should I become, had I not one to Love, & live for – "Canst [?] till"? [? Both words in quotes are very uncertain.]

July. 15th I rose early & had all house work finished betimes, & swept the Major's office too, He was very willing, for he has found that I, can do it, & leave everything precisely to his notion – Then I set to work upon the gown & at 1. o'clock it was finished & on – "You have been so quick, I thought it would take a day or two at least" – I replied you must not measure my sewing by others here – "I have found that out" said he smiling & added "This is just the thing, The right kind of truck, cut right, right size, & a pocket in it,"– He knows how, to flatter me! — Then dinner, & putting up the Sabbath baking & cooking – Then a ride with Mrs. Lee – I found Mr. W. Turnstall Miss Maria & his little "Mary Joanna," at Mrs. E's

waiting to come out here, as I returned with them, & my "Pet" Laura, was wild almost with delight — Major S. & Mr. T. have talked a steady stream & we left them in full career. — Miss Maria's quiet good sense, has quite won me — but I was a little startled when she said — "You are so like sister Mary was, that I can't keep from looking at you, & brother think so too," He remembers Mary still, & a little incident tonight while Laura sang brought the tears, — Little Mary Joanna" is a beautiful, & good child—

I have thought of you with unusual anxiety today, & have missed you this evening more than I can tell. — Do not infer that I am anticipating perfect bliss from your presence — No! I do not know as I have a day dream, that has not its "dash of sorrow," but believe, me dear Alton it is not the less precious, I have long ceased to expect perfect happiness here, & find a more than substitute in submitting cheerfully to the Providence of God, & trusting him day by day — I am conscious of being far from perfect in anything, & of living far short of known duty — Thus have I learned the value of forbearance, of guidance, of friendly council, [sic] of indulgence of love. — It came at a time, & from a source most unlooked for — I yielded to the fascinating influence, & am satisfied. "What lack I yet."? Heavens blessing for thee, & me. continually. — —

July 16th Sabbath. A busy morning, though I found time to see a little of Miss Turnstall They left at S.S. time to visit Mrs. Easton. Our school was only tolerably pleasant — Mr. Ebert gave us a good talk on the text — "Bear ye one another's burdens, & so fulfil [sic] the law of Christ." I enjoyed the discourse very much — The mail brought a letter from you — Major S said it was only an introduction to a Mr. Jas Glasgow, who has not appeared — Even that token from you was more precious than I can express. — A letter from Mr. & Mrs. Rich inviting me most cordially to spend a few weeks with them, in my vacation, — — But I do not now, care to leave here, ere I see thee again 'face to face,' at least. God bless thee my Love!

17.th A pleasant day in spite of my numerous avocations. — I made the Major smile at having his favorite summer coat [?] mended after he had despaired of it - & little "Kate," has engrossed my needle, & pen rather largely. Yes & "Aunt Rachel." — It is pleasant to make others comfortable. House affairs progressed better than usual & I now desire but thy approving smile to crown the day — A letter from brother Siberia tells of brother Orans marriage on the 5th — All the family there met on that occasion, the first since the parting — I knew her very well & know "She is worthy of a better lot." — for she loves like a true woman. — Poor Siberia has been harassed most outrageously, but his truth, & integrity have triumphed entirely Brother sends special love to you dear Alton. — I have been reading the presidents message on the Treaty, & Mr. Winthrops address on the "Laying the corner stone of Washington's Monument — The latter is a master piece, and will link its author's name with that of his illustrious subject.—

July 18th This cool quiet day has passed with little to mark, or mar it. I have finished a pink dress for myself today, the first I have had in years — Poor "Sib Lee" had a spasm at the tea table — I sat next him & held him through it. His Mother was in great distress, & Major S. helpless. I am very fortunate in spite of all my nervousness, for I can generally act upon the instant. — Major S remarked to me afterward the contrast he noticed in "Hal," & "Alice," — The former was in great distress, & seemed to enter into the spirit of it wholly — He is always affectionate and kind — Alice never moved but continued to Eat as if all was well — She is Mary Junior, in every thing, except she loves to work — But she is selfish, and deceitful to the extent of her daring — I have thought of you so hopefully today, that I almost forgot the weary miles to be traversed, I often think I could never have patience to drag along as you must embarrassed

so heavily – But God cares for thee, & why should I tremble? [It seems odd that Eliza would refer to Alton as “embarrassed,” but the word seems quite clear.]

19.th The month progresses – Major S. is hopeful, & busies himself about a thousand trifles, to have all in order for the reception of his wife I need not add how gratifying this is to me. – Henry Geyer spent the day here in his own peculiar way – “Eddy,” called, & is very gentlemanly – Henry Clay also, for me to direct a letter to his Mary who is beside her dying Mother This has been a day of sweet visions. How many friends look for your arrival & watch your movements trustingly – Ah! It is bliss to know you are appreciated – and more to love, & wait, and pray – ! – — —

20th I am writing Mother a journal letter, and I write hers first every night, as I can not permit anyone to share with you my last thoughts – A very sultry morning. but a severe thunder storm has made the evening delightful – All have been very gay here A letter from the Col, has put Mrs. Lee in high spirits, & she has also visited Mary at Mrs. Chauvins, & met her son in law – for the first – Mary is very interesting at present – It is delightful to see others happy – I had my joy also, close hid from all eyes – Ah! Where art thou now? Where will rest thy dear head this night? The Omniscient is with thee. and none can hurt without his permission. To Him let us look in hope for all things, to Him be the glory ever, for all we enjoy here. & hope for here after. —

July 21.st I sit down after a day of fatigue & excitement, with a cheerful heart. The school week ended well, and I was glad to have a free day in prospect – I have been writing very busily since a letter for Kate, one to Sister M and to Brother S. to relieve Mother’s heart about her, Mary M. —

I met with a bit of reading, which woke sweet visions, of a quiet home rich in peace, — You have said you could not appreciate, such domestic scenes, – I do not think you have ever enjoyed one, properly so – & I cannot believe a heart as fresh as yours would remain insensible to the delights of a home, of which it was the sun & centre – God grant that thy future, fully compensate for the past, in a new life wisely ordered & a well chosen path thou shalt walk in happiness. & thy heart be the temple of Peace –
22.nd A day of busy preparation for the coming of “The Mistress.” – The Major too, for he has put new seats on the stiles — I have my part always ever, so need no extra efforts – The Major caught me ironing & exclaimed “Ironing them rags again” – Yes said I, holding up a cotton of his, nicely polished – He gave up, & passed on, happy in doing something — Wrote Mary Blair today & Mrs. Abby E Watson & closed the latter at Mrs. E’s where I was made welcome, & congratulated on being alone – Mrs. Lee & family being at Mrs. Chauvins. - Saw Mr. S. Watson who is able to ride a little- Gave Mrs. Smith a ride – and will tell you I have discovered, that I have been too severe – upon her, I state this, as I know you, would be as unwilling as myself to wrong any one, & desire to give her, her due, for then

[Much of the previous page is very faint and therefore somewhat unclear, particularly the word “ride”.] there is abundant to regret, still unatoned. — I saw a notice of things in Chihuahua up to 22^d of May – & some severe remarks upon the way the men & officers of Gen Price’s command spent their time, Mrs. E saw it also but we knew you would not participate & I remembered the Good Book says “He that ruleth his own Spirit, is greater, than He that taketh a City.” – The time of your arrival is still farther advanced, but the warmest prayers throng thy path with ministering spirits, if prayer, avails at Heavens mercy ___st. [least? dearest? seats? The word looks like “seast.”] — —

July 23.^d Sabbath – Today we were privileged to hear Mr. Morris at the Chapel of the College – His text was Rev. 2^d – 7 verse – [possibly “1” verse] I enjoyed his excellent instructive discourse much – & the girls were delighted. I had been instructing them, in the rites of the Jewish Church, & he just added the

key stone – A message came for Anne Muite, [? the name is unclear] to leave to see her sick Mother. So our quiet was broken by tears & bustle. German School pleasant, & the ride home delightful, & it brought to mind our rides in that direction — I found Henry Clay here with a head ache & a heart ache – disappointed in not hearing from Mary – I am glad to be alone again, I could not bear company today. Now goodbye – I will close & commend thee to Him who careth even for the Sparrow's fall, & hast said of his followers "And are ye not worth many sparrows.-

24th Rose early to get "Annie" off in time, & comfortably – & I found full occupation for every moment, & company to infringe upon my rest after school – Fanny Garvin & Naomi Barron, are now young ladies – It seems pitiful to see, those so ignorant & young entering presumptuously. & unrestrained upon the duties, & privileges of womanhood — News of Mrs. S. we need not expect her until the 1st of August – She is gaining fast in health & enjoying her visit – & journey much – Dora is not well — but is tenderly cared for by her husband – which is all we can desire. — How precious is this hour – All are asleep & I may give up to thought of thee & in fancy nestle close to the heart, where I have found "room", & a welcome — God bless it Ever-

July 25th A quiet day though every moment has been occupied – This is the last week of school, & it has extra cares. & many irregularities – The swing broke today & hurt no one to my joy — I hope you have enjoyed this day as much as I have in thought – Good night "pleasant dreams."

26th Irregularities increase. — Edward Morgan arrived to spend the day, & go down with Mary tomorrow – Mrs. Lee had company & Mrs. Wilson – Mrs. CM [?] Salsbury & Mrs. Jane Douglass called also – I like Mrs. Salsbury, & enjoyed the call much – but Jane Douglass needs a Mother sadly to correct her – Dear Alton way down in my heart I did thank you, again & again, for the effort you have made to correct me of the many vulgarities that mar, my language & manners very much – O continue it, & I will try to improve, dear, good Alton. -

Henry Clay called to get a letter from Mary under cover to me – [the letters rendered "to me" are too faint to make out very clearly] Major S. has been making out the bills – Regular business has improved him some he is much more regular in his habits & is very social since he knows "Mary is well, & almost home." – After tea we took a walk, & had a run to reach the house before the shower –which continues, & the lulling sound of falling drops invites me to sleep — sweet dreams be thine.

27th A rainy day, & therefore a day of rest to me. – Mary Morgan left in the stage reluctantly this morning, She has fared better than usual here and appreciates somewhat her privileges. – I have made two night-caps today & fancy they are quite pretty — & also that I create wants, for the sake of occupation. — Somebody has asserted, that to be always employed was a mark of plebian extraction — It may be so, however my mind takes a few, "airy flights," in spite of the unending stitch! Stitch! Gen Kearney bears the palm, among his compeers most nobly – Honor to the deserving —

July 28th This day closes the Session – If thanks, & praises are any test all are well satisfied – Even Mrs. Lee is "astonished at the improvement of her children," & made me a pretty present today Elisabeth M. Donald [McDonald?] left today – Mary Dougherty is spending the night here with Laura Turnstall — Mr. W. Turnstall is here, and says heaps of fine things for himself & in behalf of his family — He came prepared to take me home with them though I had not encouraged the idea at all, "Rachel" & "Washington" are both sick from being over worked – a sad reward for their fidelity They have been "treasures," to me in this trial – Miss Charlotte Shaw called to take Kate Rich, & left disappointed – We have received different orders & will act upon them

Good news of Mrs. Sibley mailed at Cleveland, & we suppose her to be in St Louis now — I am ready for her, & glad that she has escaped school vexations the entire year. —

The income of the school will fully pay me, so I am content to receive my due — Ah! I am weary, very weary, & long to hear again kind words, & to receive kind smiles — This is childish but Thou, art my “Confessor” — under God, & bless him for thee; —

29th Laura & Kate, my “Pets” left this morning. The the [sic] house was to put in order — Major S. & I dined alone — Mrs. Lee being at Mrs. Chauvins — After dinner I went to Mrs. E’s & was made welcome, & found rest & comfort — Mrs. E. begged me to accompany her to Leavenworth, but duty prevailed, — How quiet the house is tonight, & I feel greatly relieved in having no girls to watch over — How much I desired your presence this evening — I could have enjoyed it so unmolested I gave Rachel a dose, & she is much better — I may yet dispute the title of M.D. with you, though I must give you some share in this cure, for it was pills you left, that I administered.— Did you know Miss Jane Morrison who married Mr. Lockwood of St Louis — She is no more — She left a “baby boy” one day old — The Pettis family will soon remove to St Louis, to live with Mr. Lockwood.

— A letter today from brother Oran telling of his “sweet wife,” —

I slept but little last night. and the bed looks inviting — Goodnight.

July 30th Sabbath. Morning sultry & showery — Now very cold. —

Sabbath school small — Mr. Ebert in the pulpit — a good sermon Text Romans 5-6 verse — Aunt Love there, & brought me word from Mrs. E. that I “must stay with Aunt, during her absence,” — Mrs. Smith accompanied me to German School — where we had plenty to occupy us — I am suffering from over exertion, now that I have time to think of self — I find I have endangered my health a little. — A letter from brother Siberia on Sisters marriage, in which you are most affectionately remembered — Poor fellow. he has been tried most severely by Oran, Hylor, & Father, but his integrity & firmness will “stand fire,” & come out unscathed [sic] — God, keep my loved Ones —

July 31st Monday & I rejoiced in freedom from school hours — I moved quietly about, overseeing preparations for the reception of Mrs. Sibley After dinner I went to Town with “Sib Lee,” To meet Mrs. S as I told them but the Major was incredulous & said she would not come till Tomorrow — I was right, At Mrs. Eastons I found her, & renewed the embrace we parted with, just 6 months ago — We were soon at L. W. and such a jubilee as we had is seldom witnessed here, or anywhere on earth — Neither have I witnessed a more genuine Love meeting than between that husband & wife — The afternoon was most joyously spent in looking at her, listening to her, & admiring what she had brought new from the East.— Mrs. Smith & Miss Easman called to share our joy — She brought all something, & me a dress, & a China candle stick — There is a beginning — I was astonished that it came from her — We had quite a scene over the “key basket,” I would, resign, & she would not accept, & the Major laughed heartily & would not, help me, but I set it at her feet, & closed — [? The word actually looks like “cleased”] I am relieved & in good time for my head, my poor head, is sick indeed — I invited her to my room to ask her about sister’s visiting here.— She was willing, & the Major also — Ah, my head I must take means to relieve it — — Goodnight here Ever dearest —

Aug 1st & 2nd Two days united for a change. — Yesterday morning found me so far relieved, that I wrote to Sister, & closed Mother’s letter. then called on Mrs. Sibley in her own room, — Found her at breakfast Well but fatigued & the Major beside her “happy as a king.” I left soon but not without promising to accompany her to Mrs. E.’s after dinner. I went on pony with “Rufus Gamble,” behind me to his

satisfaction, But I was too unwell to enjoy the visit, all was bustle there company & Mrs. E packing to go to Leavenworth. So I bid her goodby, & she bid me to "keep my room until I was better," . Today I have obeyed, but no sleep visited my pillow last night again – How much I desired one, word, or look of thine, to hush my restlessness — My own will seemed to be powerless – Yet the wish is selfish, you would have been pained to see me so mastered. — Today I have been reading a strangely fascinating book – quite out of the common truck [trick?] – Mrs. S invited me to go to Mrs. Smiths with her, but I felt happier in my room – my mind is calmer & I trust nature will soon resume her proper functions. — But the pen is a burden & I will lay it down, & look to God for his blessing & care for us both now & ever My dear Friend. —

Aug 3^d 6. P. M. Well I am better, but I have taken some severe medicine and hope the worst is over – & I will now try to regard your injunction "Take care of your health" – I rejoice that you cannot see me now, so worn, & pale, & thin, though to see you again would be "meat & drink," to my very soul – 14. months have now elapsed marked with ~~their~~ ["marked" was added and "their" was taken out] many changes, since we said "Goodby,"— I feel this trial has been beneficial to my character, though my face has suffered sadly. What had commenced ere you left has progressed rapidly – Enough of this dark side — I have the fondest anticipations of your improvement, Daily events warn me not to be too certain, for dangers throng – your path – Yet no spoiler can scathe that noble heart, though he strike its frail tabernacle. That, though dear to me as my own flesh, is not the treasure I love, & reverence, 'Tis the mind, & soul that has beamed upon me from those deep eyes – telling me in language unutterable that I am lov'd, as I love – sweet truthful glances, casting all fear out of my heart – God bless thee dearest! God keep thee.

Aug. 4th Better most decidedly. – Henry Clay came out early to say Mrs. E was gone, & Aunt Love expecting me – I went to Mrs. Sibleys room & found her very cheerful – She pointed to several letters on the table & said they were 'Altons" (yours). [It looks as though Eliza wrote "yours," then added brackets/parenthesis around it and added "Altons" above it in order to clarify her meaning.] & expressed surprise that you had written so many & she not be informed of it – I replied - I had left it to Major S. supposing he would obey her request respecting your letters. — & I did not feel authorised to write of what he had not shown me. – She said she wished me to visit Aunt Love, while the Lee's were here, as she wished me to be here when she was alone — I have made the acquaintance [the word looks more like "acquaintion" but must be taken to mean "acquaintance"] of your nephew Rufus, E. Anderson. He is almost precisely your form & size & has your nose — How funny it looks to me, on his face — I have kept him occupied to spare Henry - Mary Blair is here, & Rufus is full of mischief teasing Henry - Col Lee has arrived at last Good night – May thy dreams be sweet, & good angels thy ministers – Aug. 5.th I awoke this morning dreaming of thee – I seemed in a strange place with many others, & suddenly a strange curious animal ran among us, very lively it was darting here, & there and I, was all curiosity watching, & following it, when the cry came, "to be careful "It would bite," It was poisonous" – In alarm I called Alton! Alton! and you came & drove it away so easily that I was incredulous as to its power of harming – You had put your hand upon my shoulder, as I looked up & asked was it really dangerous? – I cannot describe the expression of your countenance as you looked a "Yes," & drew me closely to you - As we looked up again Mother stood before us & her expression was equally striking. Her hands were relaxing from a clasp of fear, & her countenance told that her "dearest child," was rescued & sheltered – Does this mean aught? I could risk much to be saved by thy dear hand. if thou

didst not suffer - I have been "right smart," at work all the morning - Mary left early - and when we had finished, I read to Aunt Love from the Book I have mentioned - Rufus & Henry had been to L. W. & brought me a package no less than your letters - I was delighted for I had only seen a part though ["through" was probably the intended word] Mrs. Watson - But there was still the bitter drop - The very one I most desired was not among them, the only one in which I had been mentioned - Mrs. S. called and as she was leaving I returned the package without a word - My heart was too full - I could not be otherwise than reserved, for the tears were so close, and what she had written of our engagement, so distinctly before my eyes, & her words when I had spoken of you - & her improper reserve whether she considered, either you, or myself to be in fault, I would not say improper, but the Bible we both profess to love & whose precepts we try to make our rule life is very explicit, on such a case - - But do not think I am without fault - Aunt Love like a faithful friend set down with me, & pointed out where I erred in my course with her, & I confess that I have been wrong in not demanding at each particular time full explanations, Now it is too late, & I see my wrong in part at least, & solemnly promise myself with God's help & blessing to subdue my own heart, & treat her as I wish ___ [to be?], and would without effort, had she permitted me to have looked to her as a friend - I know dear Alton, your clearer mind will see wrong in me, that I do not, I can only beg you to forgive, & try to think kindly of me, & to believe I would not wrong her wilfully, [sic] & my first desire is & ever has been, to think of her, as one of rare excellence - -

Aug 6.th 7.th and 8.th Three days united again. - Last Sabbath morning came the news of Mrs. Blair's death - Henry was in distress. Some one must go to comfort Mary - Mrs. Sibley sent word she was too unwell and I consented, though I was very feeble. Henry plead [sic] that it would do me good, & I could not resist the desire to gratify them - The day was very fine, & I was indeed benefited - We found Mary & Rebecca almost inconsolable. & Mrs. Carter of St Louis with them & Dorsey Blair - Mrs. Gallaher & Jas went up also but left again soon - The neighbors were gathered, & had done that was [sic] needed - We were at Mr. Naylor's, & the Dorseys & all around had ministered to her comfort daily since she had been there - I was greatly relieved in finding she had arranged her childrens homes - Capt Shreve claims Rebecca, & Mrs. Carter takes Mary until the day she weds - Henry is delighted with the arrangement, & why particularly I will tell you when we meet - Henry has learned a hard lesson, but it will be beneficial to him, it is terrible for a heart glowing with the highest honorable feelings, to see that earthly friendships are vanity & its warmest expressions, & professions but idle wind - Monday early we started for Capt Shreves, with the corpse Mr. Boyd a neighbor took Mary & Dorsey Blair in his carriage & Henry & I in his buggy & some gents [possibly "guests", but unlikely] on horseback accompanied as far as Cottleville - Mrs. Carter took Rebecca & preceded us in the stage to have all ready. We dined at St. Charles in the house where she had so many obsequious [?] friends, & passed on unnoticed. I then took a seat in the carriage and Mr. Harris, rode with Henry. At Capt Shreves we found the family assembled - The Capt was absent, but Mr. & Mrs. C. made us all feel that we had done them an essential favor - Henry & myself recived [sic] special invitations to visit both families, & I to make Mr. C's my home when I came to St Louis. - Mary returned with us to attend to her Mothers things, & I am glad to be at home again, & Henry says I am - "50 [So?] percent [?] better" for the 3 days exertion & riding - This I know I have forgotten myself in the real sorrow of others - I found Aunt well, Rufus gone But the rogue, had questioned Aunt, about me very closely, & was not displeased, He says "Any one could love Miss Ott," - I fancy him much. his audacious, manliness is very winning, but he has a good loving heart, & is as frank

& generous as the sun – He insists upon it that Mary Blair is not smart – but when he became aware of her trouble, his heart ran over with sympathy, & so many tender regrets, feel from his lips of his “own Mother.” —

I saw many of my Dardenne acquaintances while there & rec’d much attention from them – Are you weary? I hope not – Good night. –

Aug 9th A quiet day – Spent in little jobs, & a nap after dinner – and at tea we were honored by the presence of Col & Mrs. Lee, Major & Mrs. Sibley – Sib & Alice – Now I sit writing knowing I have not been a very good girl – I was too reserved. Henry behaved much better & shamed me – He forgot self, & I did not — Alton dear Alton forgive & I will try, & hope, & pray, – Believe me yours only — — — — —
10th I have felt better today than in a long time, and able to look on the bright side quite hopefully – My needle has been no burden – Aunt Love & I, had the morning done – Mary Blair spent the afternoon & evening with us – Her bright young face is very charming, & contrasts strongly with mine, Forgive me for alluding to it again – I want you to be familiar with the “faded cheek.” I cannot bear you should be disappointed in the least — Mrs. Sibley called a moment on her way up from the Prairie, They had been visiting Mr. & Mrs. Watson – I ran out to the buggy with some watermelon for Major S – while all called after me “He wont eat it” – but he did with smiles too, & as I returned Aunt said “Well, you know how to take him pretty well” —

Henry & Mary are spending the evening in the parlor where we have spent happy hours – & where I hope soon to meet you again – Dear Alton I could talk to you all night – I feel so composed & happy again - My mind is Engrossed with the future, to which, this life is but a preparation and all its joys, & all its sorrows, are vanity, & valueless unless aiding us in this great preparation. How humiliating to “wake up,” as it were & discover that you have been intensely occupied with trifles, & overlooked the grand object of life To the believer in such a moment, Christ is most precious - He sees in him a Savior indeed, who substitutes his own perfect obedience, in the place of human frailties, & failures in known duty, & stands before a Just God, a Mediator & Redeemer – O, that we may appreciate him fully, & “lay hold the hope set before us in the Gospel-

Aug 11th Nothing of interest to write, tonight Mary Blair left early, & Virginia Gamble called & took dinner on her way up to Mr. Pitmans. –

I wrote to Mrs. Abby E. Watson, to relieve her heart about Henry & Mary; as she is deeply interested in them – I have found conversation irksome today from preoccupation of mind, by a Subject, always agreeable. —

12th Aunt & myself made an early call at Linden Wood, We could not stay Abby being sick in bed — We received a kind welcome from all – This has been a very warm day – too warm to work — but not for sweet dreams. Goodby – Let me leave thee trustingly to the “guardian eye of God.”

13th Sabbath – Exceedingly warm – I went to S. School early & found Major & Mrs. S & Mrs. Smith early also – Their chief discourse was how much they desired to get rid of Misses Brooks & Easman. What a change time has wrought!– Can I help blessing thee, under God for the wise council [sic] “Stay, and out live it all, I know you can” yes with Gods blessing my highest hopes are realised — Mr. Smith preached today himself - Subject Family Worship. an instructive sermon - After dinner I took a long sleep, For a week past I have desired to sleep almost constantly At first I woke exhausted, but now I wake refreshed, and hope a favorable change is taking place in my system What a blessing is the institution of the Sabbath – this stated season of repose, when we may forget cares for the body and

refresh the soul, with contemplating its glorious destiny, and the goodness of its Creator. How little we appreciate. & how sadly abuse its privileges; There is nothing so difficult as to keep the heart. right with God — Self, & things pertaining to self ever clamor for indulgence, & the petition “Lead me not into temptation” is ever proper, for poor human’s — My [obviously the word “May” is intended] the Good spirit be our guide, unto God. —

Aug 14.th A very warm day — and I sewed too much for my wellbeing — A letter from brother S. full of love to thou, & I. He cannot visit me, as we had hoped this year & says “I will bide my time” & hope to see your face once more — “My good bed waits, and my grateful heart blesses the giver of all good gifts, for all I enjoy & am permitted to hope for. — — —

15.th A fine shower has benefited us all. Mrs. Sibley was in a moment & to me unusually kind — Henry Clay has been trying to see if I would admit you are “ugly” i.e. not handsome & seemed a little disappointed that I think you are — He fancies Mary beautiful,— I cannot confess here, your attraction & charm to me — Goodnight sweet dreams —

16.th A letter from Father today in his own peculiar style. and one from Mary Morgan also - This has been a favorite day — cold & glomy [obviously “gloomy” was intended] without, one which makes home dear — My needle has not been idle nor my heart cold this day, though now goodnight here, while Not yet — says the pleader within —

17.th A letter from Sister, saying she will be married & leave with her husband to visit me for a few days only — I am content as things are at L.W. The Lee’s, & company I mean. — Henry took me out there today. Mrs. S. with the toothache. She will be long recovering her lost ground. — I have been writing Sister & brother Siberia, & must close for Aunt wonders what I am doing — G.K.Y -

18.th A fine clear, cool day — Aunt & myself have done a lot of quilting Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Watson took dinner here, He is not yet well, but is kinder & better than ever if possible — He was surprised to find me here, & claimed his kiss on the old plea i.e. I kiss his wife — Henry heard the “repast” [? The word certainly looks like “repast,” but does not seem to fit in context] & was much amused — & wondered about it &c — Col & Mrs. Lee also called — I cannot like his egotistical manners — — —

I have made further discoveries of Mr. Johns saying [? The “y” looks like a “g”] & pretensions regarding myself — He has absolutely lied to excuse his own folly! — Aunt Love & I have had a skirmish about your looks — She thinks you the finest looking of her nephews, & I insist that you are, “ugly” to hear your praises I suppose — — Mr. W. enquired of you of Henry today I cannot but like those quiet unobtrusive people — Goodby dearest. —

Aug 19.th I helped Aunt Love in her house keeping Abby still sick — Mary Blair spent the afternoon here, & I gave her a pretty M___y [Murry? Many?] collar — Mrs. Sibley called, & was more like herself than since her return. — A letter from Mother full of anxiety about Sister, & I have written her to relieve Lo ‘tis late my dearest one, & very little for thee, too [sic] write — — —

20.th Sabbath — A cool damp morning together with too much fatigue yesterday, like to have given me a chill. — We attended church & listened to an excellent, though severe sermon. — Text Acts 24th, 25 — Mary Blair dined here, & she went with Henry to German School — Their pleasure was sweet to me, yet I could almost have wept to see two so young, & so unconscious of the care awaiting them — so soon to taste the bitter cup for themselves.— This is wrong for in suffering only, is real good developed He whose life passes as a summers day, knows little of himself & less of his Creator & his destiny — In the hour of real affliction we turn to God, the only source of help — and the ear of the Almighty is ever open and The

trembling soul laying hold upon the promises of an immutable God, enjoys peace like unto a river, deep & broad moving on among Earths changes in resistless majesty — May God have made this a day of rest to you my dearest Friend -

A great fire in Albany the 19th 20 acres of ground. built up most densely entirely burned off – & many Boats, & lives lost also This came by Telegraph to St Louis -

Aug. 21.st A bright day – Henry Clay took me to L.W. early & Mrs. Sibley returned with us – The Major wondered “where I kept myself “& believed,” “I staid in Town to look out of the window” – Making the dress Mrs. S. brought me, & to my chagrin it is so badly damaged as to be nearly useless, – I was almost tempted to say it was always so with my presents, Always some draw back.- I have been Doctor & nurse to Abby today – We have had many calls which have cheered Aunt Love, she is fond of company & change – I live too solitary, but at present I love it. — God bless thee.

22nd My dear friend – I have nothing to interest you, & write to amuse myself. A letter from brother Oran which I ans’d in one to his wife I have written Father in behalf of sister Mary M - to interest him to give her something — Aunt has been out making calls, & feel’s better for the change – Housekeeping frets her – sadly – Abby is better – Do you covet my fee? love [?] & think — I think you would relish some of our peaches, apples, & melons better just now – I often think of your privations while enjoying them may all end in joy soon – is my constant prayer —.

Have you followed me thus far? – Would that I could reward your patience & promise you something worthy in the next. I can do niether. [sic] I can only appeal to the love that has been so kind, I do, trust it wholly – & pray you to believe me yours only – Your devoted Eliza. —

[The following note is very faded but easy to read:]

Alton 21 – 1848

[General note: Most last names and several first names are, to a certain degree, uncertain. Often, a note appears with the first appearance of the name in a document. For later reappearances of the same name, the same uncertainties generally apply even if they are not re-documented in another note. (In general, a small degree of uncertainty remains with any last name, even that which is not noted, because unless an outside source confirms the spelling, context alone cannot absolutely confirm it.)]