

Castleton September 23 1858

Dear sister Mary, we received your letter mailed at your finally settled home with much pleasure, and were much rejoiced that you had at last like Noah's dove, found rest for the soles of your feet; but regretted to hear that you also should be subject to that dreadful penalty, ^{pen} which so few escape, but anxiously hope that it is this that a mothers love, and a mothers joy, is your reward.

I will not fill up a particle of this sheet with excuses uninteresting, but will just say I am now improving the first opportunity for a long long time and also that I am seated beside little Francis cradle with my paper in my lap as the only chance I can have to write at all. My family number 13 besides day laborers occasionally of which 6 are railroad boarders but we hope ere the week is through to bid them a joyful adieu as the cars have for 2 or three days rattled by us through our peaceful quiet valley making our mountains and hill resound and resound with the shrill neighing of their iron steels. We and also our neighbors enjoy our usual quota of health with the exception of Mrs Henry Stevens former -ly Mary Ann Perry she was taken in a fit or rather congestion of the brain one evening in January last. at an evening singing school, was brought home in an almost senseless state and remained so for a number of days.

but finally regained her mind but ~~not~~ so her strength and health, it is with great difficulty that she can walk and she probably sits up about as much as I did when you left, her nervous system has sustained the greatest shock they were known some 3 weeks since very much to the amusement of the unthinking and the astonishment of those who have not the hearts to appreciate Henry's anxiety immediately after the ceremony they started for Saratoga and by easy stages accomplished the journey in four days.

This is one of the big weeks in Castleton as the annual cattle show and fair comes off and also the finishing of both the Whitehall and Poultney railroads takes place as far as the village of course there will be a deal of rejoicing to say nothing of its consequences how pleasant it would be if your self and your could be with us how snugly would we hide ourselves ^{from the confusion} and talk over the past and plan for the future but that may not be now if ever far as

We were glad that you should in so many words in your letter to Cousin Henry say you were not unhappy for some how the impression had gone forth both among your own and the friends of missions, as well as those who oppose such efforts, that you regretted having embarked in such an enterprise not that you regretted your choice of a companion, but that the trials and self-denial were more than you could well bear, for we can now appeal to your writing ~~as~~ an answer to enquiries we were desirous that no such feeling should exist more for the sake of the cause than your own sake much as we deplored that.

It is bad taste entirely to not embark on the
frail fickle sea of matrimony among theachelors
and maids Among the number is James Adams
Linda Miss Woolson all the world agreeing with him
that he has a fine lady for a wife Mr H Gusswalt to
a Miss Basset Tomlinson to a stranger besides a host
of others Dr Perkins is to be soon to Dudley's wife's Mother
Edwards writing says I must close by subscribing myself
Dear Brother & Sister Lyman Your sister Sarah

In common with the rest of the
family I will contribute to make up a family letter & yet
when I reflect how long time has passed since I have
written to you I am almost ashamed to write but
my only apology is a general one - an aversion to writing
& after all I highly prize this means of holding converse
with departed friends I am happy to learn from your
writing that you are as well supplied with the
absolute necessaries of life as you are - for in the
general rush for California & the general rage for
gold - the consequent neglect of agriculture - amid such
an unprecedented increase of population I have expected
to hear of much suffering & starvation - You know that
from the first I doubted the propriety of our A.M.Soc
endeavoring to sustain a mission West of the Rocky mts
while at the same time our more contiguous states were
in so much need of help - but notwithstanding my
private judgment in the case I sincerely hope & pray
that you may succeed in the object of your mission
& may you have the pleasure of seeing the work of the Lord per-
in your hands

so many of our acquaintances have gone to California
that the territory west of the Rocky Mountains seems must
nearer to us than it formerly did & when the Rail
Road is completed from us to you we shall then
be neighbors again & if we live to see it accomplished
the cars now run past us twice in a day so if you come
to see us you can get off in our lane but by the way
we are not very well suited with R Roads for they
has split our farm fatally our friends are much as they
were & look much as they did when you left except
the wear & tear of time & trials. By the way Bro I did
you not tell some large stories of Oregon productions?
Or does your observation confirm the truth of trees
15 ft through 300 high & wheat I cannot tell how much
or does the western breast of Mother earth yield, after
all - about the same as the one that we have been
wont to derive our nourishment from in short
have you increased in stature any sense you first
trod the soil of old Pacific's coast? I trust you
will answer me in the affirmative & please to add as much
other matter of interest as may come within your
observation & may the Lord bless you & keep you
from all evil & when you have done with the toils
& cares of earth & all things shall fade from your
vision, may you be received to everlasting habitations.

Accept this from your brother
E A Benson