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Johnstown June 4th

My dear cousin

"Better late than never" but better still to do all things at the right time. To open your eyes at the right time. That is in time to get your breakfast – or to save yourself or friends from imposition. – To close your eyes at the right time. That is when oppressed by sleep, or when the follies of those you love are to be winked at – but more especially is it desirable to answer letters at the right time. and now it remaineth for me to show the right time – when all reasonable letters should be answered. 1st then letters of friendship should not be written when the writer feeleth it to be [a bore] unto herself – neither when she thinks it will be unwelcome unto her who shall receive the same. 2nd Said letters should not be written until unless the friend has some news to tell. Some fault to confess – or some warm feelings swelling the heart which must gain utterance, for nothing is more out of time than to attempt to write or talk when one has nothing to say.

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All this dear Lizzy leadeth not to a list of state apologies – but to the announcement of the simple truth – that since you last wrote to me I have often thought of you and talked of you and with pleasure but up to the present time, (hearing of you often through others) I have not strongly desired to write to you. And now that I desire to write and judging from your last letter to Cate that a line now and then from a friend would give you pleasure, now that you are enjoying the quiet of Peterboro – I think the right time has arrived, and I commence, after this lengthy [exposition], my epistle by saying that Cate and I am at home enjoying the solitude of Johnstown, and that a messenger of yours visited these parts about a fortnight since and by its quaintness ruffled our placid faces with something like a smile. He told us many things of you, not in themselves amusing. But made so by the style of description. He said among other things that "you were more happy when asleep than awake" – how can that be so? – how can you judge of your happiness when asleep or compare it with what you feel when consciousness returns? I have thought and thought, for a reason why you should enjoy a greater amount of happiness asleep than awake, and no good one can I find.

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However the natural inference to be drawn from such a declaration is that the fair one must be in a situation common to romantic girls of seventeen. Girls at that age often sleep and often still they dream of some friend – some lover – perchance a Greek lover – a Cavasilus –

this makes sleep sweet – for better is not dear Lizzy that to sigh for his return by day? I learned from that messenger that your philosophy had not yet enabled you to combat that hydra-headed monster called Blues. However I prophecy that his overthrow is at hand. Have your weapons in order and I too will make mine ready, and when I visit Peterboro (which will be soon) by our united efforts, we will compel to depart from the breast of an unsophisticated country girl and seek companionship (in some more gloomy abode) with the heartless deceiver, the gay coquette, the rascal the [blizze] [se], him who has so long tormented you. I look forward to a visit at your fathers house with a deal of pleasure. If I can get there I will stay a month I received the paper you sent me and I agree with the writer of that article or exercise, I have something to say to May and I must say adieu although I have in truth much more to say to you. Cate will answer your letter soon. William is here now. Write to me dear Lizzy as soon as you desire – Love to all. your cousin Lib

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Lib Cady June 26th

Miss Elizabeth Smith  
Care of Gerrit Smith Esq.  
Peterboro  
N.Y

Johnstown.  
Jun  
25  
N.Y.

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When you write to Sid tell him that his Johnstown friends each and all will be happy to have him spend his August vacation at the old mansion – the grey pony is well tell him, looks as gay and proud and has the same elastic gait as when in days of yore he so gallantly served the country with Sid upon his back – and the little waggon too is still in good condition. We are all well and happy, and rejoicing to hear from Seneca that our poor sister May, is better. We have all suffered much anxiety on her account she seemed for a time to be so rapidly declining If Miss Tallmadge is still with you remember me kindly to her and say that she must stop at Johnstown on her return. – – – good night I hope to see you soon  
Till then adieu – – -Lizzy

[right edge of envelope]

Dear May, I suspect you of having intended (as you in fact were) to be rather sarcastic on me in your letter – I plead guilty – but in extermination of my guilt I say that I was on the eve of leaving the city – and had many, many, things to occupy my time and mind or I would not have written to an old friend such a business letter. I felt relieved to hear that you had received the guitar and liked it so much. I will give you all the instruction I have received when I visit Peterboro, I play very little that is not well. I have only taken lessons six weeks – and in New York I did not find much time to practice, however I know about half a dozen pretty songs and four waltzes – If papa attends court at Utica the first week in July I shall go then with him, and from there to Peterboro if an opportunity offers. It is doubtful whether papa goes, as important business he thinks will compel him to be at Plattsburgh about the same time – so I shall be obliged in that case to make some other plan but I am determined to make the long thought of visit this summer.

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When do the Cochran's visit you? Perhaps I will come with them. That is if they will stop for me. When you write to them tell them to do so – if I do not get there before them

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[same as Page 5]

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[typed transcript]

Original in  
Alma Lutz Collection

Johnstown June 4th

(1839)

My dear Cousin

"Better late than never" but better still to do all things at the right time. To open your eyes at the right time, that is in time to get your breakfast – or to save yourself or friends from imposition – To close your eyes at the right time, that is when oppressed by sleep, or when the follies of those you love are to be winked at – but more especially is it desirable to answer letters at the right time, and now it remaineth for me to show the right time – when all reasonable letters should be answered. 1st then letters of friendship should not be written when the writer feeleth it to be a bore unto herself –

neither when she thinks it will be unwelcome unto her who shall receive the same. 2nd said letters should not be written unless the friend has some news to tell, some fault to confess or some warm feelings swelling the heart which must gain utterance, for nothing is more out of tune than to attempt to write or talk when one has nothing to say.

All this dear Lizzie leadeth not to a list of state apologies [sic] – but to the announcement of simple truth – that since you last wrote to me I have often thought of you & talked of you and with pleasure but up to the present time (hearing of you often through others) I have not strongly desired to write to you. And now that I desire to write and judging from your last letter to Cate that a line now and then from a friend would give you pleasure, now that you are enjoying the quiet of Peterboro – I think that the right time has arrived, and I commence, after this lengthy exposition, my epistle by saying that Cate and I are at home enjoying the solitude of Johnstown, and that a messenger of yours visited these parts about a fortnight since and by its quaintness ruffled our placid faces with something like a smile. It told us many things of you, not in themselves amusing, but made so by the style of description. It said among other things that "you were more happy xxxx when asleep than awake." – How can that be so? How can you judge of your happiness when asleep or compare it with what you feel when consciousness returns. I have thought & thought for a reason why you should enjoy a greater amount of happiness in sleep than awake, and no good one can I find.

However the natural inference to be drawn from such a declaration is that the fair one must be in a situation common to romantic girls of seventeen. Girls of that age often sleep and often still they dream of some friend – some lover – perchance a Greek lover – a Cavasilus – this makes sleep sweet – far better Is it not dear Lissy that to sigh for his return by day? I learned from that messenger that your philosophy had not yet enabled you to combat that hydraheaded monster called Blues, however I prophisy [sic] that his overthrow is at hand. Have your weapons in order and I too will make mine ready and when I visit Peterboro (which will be soon) by our united efforts, we will compel to depart from the breast of an unsophisticated country girl and seek companionship (in some more gloomy abode) with the heartless deceivers, the gay coquette, the roue, the blazze, &c. Him who had so long tormented you. I look forward to a visit at your father's house with a deal of pleasure. If I can get there I will stay a

month. I received the paper you sent me and I agree with the writer of that article or exercise. I have something to say to Mag and I must say adieu although I have in truth much more to say to you. Cate will answer your letter soon. William is here now. Write to me dear Lizzy as soon as you desire – love to all  
Your cousin Lib.

Address – Miss Elizabeth Smith  
Care of Gerrit Smith Esq.  
Peterboro  
N.Y.

Dear Mag, I suspect you of having intended (as you in fact were) to be rather sarcastic on me in your letter. I plead guilty – but in extermination of my guilt I say that I was on the eve of leaving the city – and had many many things to occupy my time & mind or I would not have written to an old friend such a business letter. I felt relieved to hear that you had received the guitar & liked it so well. I will give you all the instruction I have received when I visit Peterboro. I play very little that is not well. I have only taken lessons six weeks –and in New York I did not find much time to practice. However I know about a half dozen pretty songs and four waltzes. If papa attends court at Utica the first week in July I shall go there with him, and from there to Peterboro if xxx an opportunity offers. It is doubtful if Papa goes as important business he thinks will compel him to be at Plattsburgh about the same time – so I shall be obliged in that case to make some other plan, but I am determined to make the long thought of visit this summer. When do the Cochranes visit you? Perhaps I will come with them, that is if they will stop for me. When you write to them tell them to do so – if I do not get there before then. When you write to Sid tell him that his Johnstown friends & all will be happy to have him spend his August vacation at the old mansion – the grey pony is well tell him looks as gay & proud & has the same elastic gait as when in days of yore he so gallantly served the country with Sid upon his back – and the little waggon too is still in good condition. We are all well & happy, and rejoicing to hear from Seneca that our poor sister Meg is better. We have all suffered much anxiety on her account. She seemed for a time to be so rapidly declining. If Mrs. Tallmadge is still with you remember me kindly to her, say that she must stop at Johnstown on her return.--- Good night. I hope to see you soon,  
Till then adieu--- Lizzy.