

Nokesville, Va

Feb 24, 1864

My Dear Little Daughter:

You know that I can not be at home now, and it may be a long time before we all can live together as we used to. But while I am away, I can write you a letter now and then to help Mother make you a wiser and better girl.

I was pleased, when at home last, to see that you were still fond of reading. But you must remember that reading is not an amusement altogether, as some people, and especially little people, seem to think it. Those who love to read always have a pleasant & profitable way of spending their leisure hours. You should try ^{to learn} something from every book you read; but I do not expect you now to read such books as grown persons like best. Try to remember what you read. You would learn to do this soon, if you would get your mother to select a book for you, ^{and then} ~~to~~ read it very carefully, and tell her all you can remember. Do not begin to read a book and when you have

partly read it, throw it aside and begin another, as so many little girls do. Think whether you really want to read it, before commencing and then go through it. And so with every thing else. You can not too soon learn to finish what you begin.

You will have no difficulty in reading story-books, but those who read nothing else will not learn much from books. While you are very young you may be allowed to read them, but the sooner you acquire a taste for a higher class of books the better. I think mother can find in my library a good many books which you will find pleasant to read and from which you will learn something too.

Sometimes little girls who are fond of reading, grow impatient and angry when interrupted to do something for their mother or brother and sister. Now, this is wrong, and very far from being pretty behavior. Never forget how much mother, and grandfather & grandmother and Aunt Mary love you and love to see you improving yourself, nor that they will never interrupt you unless there is good reason for it. So, when you are asked to put down your book to do anything

for them or Frank or Robby, you should do so promptly and cheerfully. They are doing something for you all the time and it would be very unkind in you not to do anything you can for them, when at best you can do so little. You can see that mother and grandmother are always busy and often tired out with their labors: At such times, you can frequently do something to help, and when you can, try to do it before you are asked.

I have written you a pretty long letter and will have to stop for this time. I have not written to amuse but to profit you, hoping that good advice, coming from me, separated so far from you, whom you may not see again for a long time, and it may be never, will not be so easily forgotten nor so entirely disregarded, as if you saw me every day and I had talked the advice to you.

Good bye, dear daughter
Your loving
Father

Miss Sarah Ermen

Dayton

Ohio