

[Letter from Arno Knight to Olive Drinkwater]

Maysville March 27<sup>th</sup> 1880

Dear Olive:

I recd. a letter from Llewellyn Monday this week and inclosed was a bitter, sarcastic little note, from "Friend Olive", Saying "she did not owe me any letter, that some other young lady, who knew more of my business than she did, was probably occupying my time with better letters, etc. that she, (Friend Olive) did not care, but was tired of her present kind of a life, and was going to flirt with all the fellows etc.. Well Ollie in the first place I had not recd. an answer to my last letter In the second place if you have grown tired of me and my letters of course you would not care if I wrote to a Dozen other girls As to flirting with all the fellows, that is precisely what every good looking lady is expected to do. It seems to be absolutely indifensible [*sic*] to the happiness of all beauties of the "gentle sex", to carry on a flirtation, with one, or more, of her admirers. As for those agreeable letters I do not receive any, from any lady, young or old, excepting yourself, my Mother and Sisters. If any young lady knows any thing of me, or my business, they obtain their information from a source that I know not of. I have written once to P.G. Hurd and to several of the boys in L...lle and some seven or eight months ago, I wrote a letter to my invalid Cousin Nancie Drake. For the past two months I have been sick more than half the time, and have not written even to my Sisters in Franklin. Have wrote two letters home But my dear girl I am aware that you are simply tired of a lover two thousand miles away whose feelings towards you, you doubtless distrust and whose motives, and character, I can not blame you for misjudging as I believe you do. You doubtless think that love deep, and true should find some other method of expressing itself besides empty words of endearment. I understand how my conduct appears to you and I have no excuse to offer that you would believe, or understand now. Sometime I may be able to explain if you should then, care to know.

As it is all I can do is to offer you your freedom if as you say your allegiance has grown irksome to you, and you desire a change. I do not now, I never did care for a love, that is not freely, gladly given. No unwilling allegiance, no promises, that are regretted, would I wish to consider as binding, and however deeply my own feelings were involved, I could not accept of a promised love and fidelity, of which a lady had grown tired and wished to cast off feeling she had made a mistake. If such are your feelings towards me, if there is another who has a deeper claim upon your heart if you have warmer feelings of regard, or love, for another than

you can feel for me, you can consider yourself free from the galling fetters that bind you to me without proffering a worldly friendship to soften the blow. Forget me burn my letters and seek for happiness in your own way

I have still one or two objects I must strive to attain in life, and then I shall be only too willing to relinquish a hopeless, ceaseless, struggle for worldly things beyond my reach, and strive to make the best of the disagreeable trials and disappointments of life. God knows I get tired enough of this ceaseless struggle, toil, and worry of such a life as I have led and would like a change. I really believe I should find more happiness in a reckless, dissipated course than I do now, but I owe it to myself, and those I love to make the best of my opportunities and to be at least an honorable man striving to do my duty even at the sacrifice of happiness. Will write Llewellyn soon. Sorry you were not feeling well when you wrote. Hope this will find you well and happy. When my actions prove my sincerity believe me what many profess to be a Friend