

[Letter written by Ella Watson to Arno Knight in response to a letter he mailed to her on March 10th 1872 from Boston]

Lincolnvile March 30

Dear Friend Arno:

I received your welcome letter last night. was quite suprised did not expect one until Wednesday. but Oh was so glad to receive so kind and true a letter from you dear Friend. it cheered me so much for god only knows what I have suffered within the last fortnight. Arno I wished I could write you all I would say if I could converse with you one hour. but I try and write you the most important part of what is between my self and the man I have loved better than my own life. and I trust you with my secret as I would trust no other. When I was but fourteen he came home from sea we met we had not seen each other then for two years there seemed to spring up a strong attachment for each other we were married in just one year after we met. we were to have waited five years before being married I was then so young. but he bought a farm and wanted a housekeeper so of course I consented to become the same. and thought we should be more saveing. we were doing well enough and Oh we were so happy it seems to me I would be willing to die if I could only live those two years again. we done every thing in our power to make each other happy. but he thought we could do better if we moved to Camden. We went but better had I laid my head on a chopping block and had it severed from my body than to have suffered what I have since. there was a person that tried to bade him away from the truest wife that ever a man had and if I not been informed of it in season he would have been ruined. It almost broke my heart. he was away at sea at the time I heard of it. I scarcely tasted a mouth full of food for three weeks. I had a hard struggle but I thrust from my heart a part of the purest love ever bestowed on man. Oh how I suffered. he had betrayed the trust I had put in him. I had loved him so fondly almost madly only too well. I lived on with him for Walters sake trying to forget the fearfull stab he had given me. but from that time how changed I have become only a wreck of the Ella of old. I never knew what the word flirt meant then. since I have made myself as agreeable when in company as possible. tried to forget my troubles in gay company but if one could have removed the mask of gaiety and read the bitter heart torn and bleeding concealed from the world. they would have pityed rather than scorned. but god knows I have been a true wife & mother save in words. Oh if I could settle down in some spot away from the busy world and be happy. but there is no happiness for me I fear in this

world but I will struggle nobly on until this life's cares are ended to meet my reward in heaven. but I have left my subject there is one thing he was always kind to me as a husband ever could be. and I think he loved me dearly. but still had not mind enough to overcome temptations do you wonder now why I have so urged you to overcome the temptation of strong drink. but the first year in Cal. I know he was steady and sent home his wages. and I felt so encouraged about him but I feel now as though he had deserted us entirely. he writes me that I had better get a Bill of divorce from him says he is unworthy of me. but when the ties are severed they will be broken by him self. Oh I pity him so much. much more than I blame him if he would only come home now I would forgive him as happy as possible the rest of our days. Your question concerning J.E. Scruton I shall answer like all others truthfully I flirted with him that night or rather tried to make my self as agreeable as possible for the evening. Thinking he would only return the compliment. but found before the evening was through that he was quite in earnest – then I gave it up but found I had flirted with the wrong fellow. tell me Arno who told you about it. I was at the corner yesterday went to Belfast I have got a chance in the plant [?] ?? I wish to accept it. Flo is going there to work in a fortnight. I do not think she will stay long but she may try it and see it will be her first attempt leaving home. I do not know what I shall do or where I shall go and I sometimes don't care what becomes of me no one but you would I speak so freely to as I have to you not even to my dear Mother. Why is it I oft times wonder that I put so much trust in you. never but once have I doubted your friendship you could not blame me then. but I hope our friendship in the future will be as firm and true as now. I no we have not been as free to speak our feelings to each other as we might have been.

[writing in the margins]:

Promise to burn this the moment you read it for my sake not copy it either you may keep all the rest I shall write but this if any thing should happen to your [??] not wish others to know my secrets.

You did not give me back my letters before you went away I want them do not destroy them but keep them for me. I may come that way in the course of a month then if I see you I shall claim them.

Arno if you could only promise never to let another glass of liquor pass your lips but I forget I have no right to ask so much of you.

Arno who are your correspondants tell me. write often for your kind letters will cheer me through many an lonesome hour.

I hope you will go out to Waltham and see the folks for I know they would receive you with pleasure. I think Helen ought to have written you. but do not mind that she will be very glad to see you. she is impulsive but it is her nature

good by for this time. kind Friend write again as soon as you get this your true Friend until Death E.E.W.

I guess you will have a days work to find this letter out