

[Letter from Arno Knight to Olive Drinkwater]

Bassickville May 5th 1879

Dear Olive:

With pleasure I received your letter filled with true womanly sentiments and expressions of encouragement You wished to know what I have been doing and I suppose what I am doing Well I have worked in the mountains lumbering a little, in a Saw mill some, and have worked in the mines some and finally wound up with the mountain fever from which I am rapidly recovering; this being the third day since I have been able to sit up

Shall go to work again at once Have got a lumbering contract in which I am confident of making from \$2.50 to \$3.00 per day if I have my health but I have got to wait a week or ten days for the snow to get off from the Rocky Mountains as I shall have to work in that range of Mts. in the meantime I can work in a Saw Mill Mining is a precarious business the pay is very good if one could have constant employment I got \$2.50 for night work upon one mine and had just got started in when the Proprietor quit working it Yes your idea about a farm is my pet scheme but I don't know whether I shall do much at it this Summer I want a farm where a White man can live instead of merely existing Don't fancy this parched up desert nor a negro settlement in Kansas If I strike a locality to suit me shall take a farm at once otherwise I shall strive to make money as fast or faster in some other way If I don't quit talking business transactions your head will get filled with mining stocks, Saw mills, Real Estate transfers etc. Don't want you to become a Lawyer just yet But I thought you did not realize how hard it was, or is, for a young man to make a start unaided and alone I thought you might expect more than I could accomplish; that you might be wearied with your lot, and discouraged with your prospects, and finally wish to forget me. Young ladies you know are generally romantic and fickle. Helen is on the anxious seat, is she? Well I presume she and some others thought it was incumbent upon me to give Public Notice of my intended departure I did not consider it necessary to notify them specially as I was not encumbered by debts to any one "Let them rave! What do you care as long as we know our business and they think they do but don't?

Olly dearest I don't want you to speak of enjoyment as pleasure again as you did in your last If you were placed as some of the other women here are placed you might speak of not having pleasure but you are in a civilized country in the midst of

society, refinement, and culture, surrounded by friends, relatives, and admirers. Do you think I wish to deprive you of the pleasure of these? If I did I should say at once "come out here!"

I want you to be happy to enjoy yourself every day of your life and not wait 2 or 3 years before you can have any more pleasure Ride, sing, dance and flirt if that is necessary to your happiness only give me the purest thoughts and undivided love of your heart and I care not who receives the meaningless flattery and empty nothings of society manners Now Birdie I guess that will do for lecture No. 1. So go and enjoy yourself whenever you can or wherever you like

The true "Philosophy of Life" is to make the most of the means at our command for our own and the happiness of loved ones I have shot wide of that mark myself many and many a time But life is short and our sorrows many and the few enjoyments and happy moments of our existence should be thankfully received Many a person's life would be less miserable if they only appreciated the means of happiness at their command and made the best of those means for present and future enjoyment instead of aspiring to lofty heights seldom reached Ambition is ever restless, ever unhappy Gods decrees must be right and submission to His will can alone give contentment peace and rest Be true to yourself and the purest impulses of a womans heart and you will be happy even if I do not succeed my misfortunes shall not drag you down

(Continued)

So you thought I was discouraged when I wrote you before? Not so my sweet little Blossom I am resolved to deserve success if I do not win it And with the vision of a Golden-headed true hearted little woman awaiting my success I am bound to succeed.

You wished me to give you a description of the Country and people That is difficult to do every one sees differently But the Country is mountainous with barren rocky hills interspersed with Valleys almost as barren Not much can be raised except Oats and Potatoes No fruit whatever The male population are mostly rough uncultured brutes with now and then a man of refined appearance who is perhaps the biggest rascal of all A few true hearted men The women on the Ranches are the "big feet Dutch" Know just enough to milk and do the drudgery The American women are of the lowest type of what is known as "fast women"

Don't you suppose for a moment any one is going to read your letters written to me but myself So my little darling write me often for I am in a position voluntarily so of course where my pleasures are in anticipation and the only realization is a letter from my little Golden headed beauty

Sweetest happiness to you Arno

[Notes in margin]

Chas. Moody is 9 miles from here on a Rancho Coleman is working a mine

Fred Wiley and Chas. M. are together

Don't you think Chas. Will read my letters of would if he was here