

[Letter from Arno Knight to Olive Drinkwater]

Maysville Sept. 18
1879

Darling Ollie:

I received your sweet little letter yesterday and as usual eagerly perused its contents. Was glad to learn that you enjoyed yourself at Campmeeting and elsewhere, indeed I really hope your future life may be filled with innocent pleasures and purest happiness, and that I may be enabled to contribute something thereto. You say you are trying to be "good and to improve every day so as to suit me when I come back." Well my dear girl I have no doubt you will succeed even if you do not improve very much because I feel certain that I am not so difficult to suit but that that a sweet, true-hearted, lovable, woman as I deem you to be, would suit me, even if I do not wait 5 years for her to grow good. Why! do you think nothing less than the perfection of an angel would satisfy me? I really prefer a lovely woman who loves me to an angel, on this earth, at least or until I have time to grow a little better myself. Of course I desire a good and affectionate woman who really loves me, and I am striving and hope I ever shall strain to be, worthy of such a woman and her purest tenderest affections. Then you think I want you to be old, and quiet, like myself, ha! ha! ha! really I don't think I would like to have you so very old. You might be cross in your old age and scold worse than I do, in the letters you think so angry in tone. Two scolds together you know might make worse music than an Italian Opera Singer.

But seriously Dear Ollie your assurances of constancy and love are very sweet to me, and also your assertion that you are trying to grow good for my sake. Not that I care to have you much different from what you are but because it shows you really care for me when you show a desire to please, or, as you say to suit me. So you can sow your "Wild Oats" and flirt with all the fellows on the campground or elsewhere if you want to only look out some good working, stylish fellow don't get the best of it, some of these days There are some chaps in the world you know who like to flirt and are not easily fooled

Then you had a good looking, and good young fellow for company one Sunday night Of course that rouses my jealousy but I dont know how to get even just now unless I make a call upon some of the big footed Dutch girls of Colo. Just you wait till I go down to New Mexico and if I dont write you of some flirtations with those Spanish girls there you can think I dont know how. I really begin to think it is fun from your description.

Believe I shall try and learn how and if it is such fun as you and other young ladies say it is I shall believe in flirting hereafter and ask your pardon for all the lectures I ever gave you upon the subject

I don't know whether my mine troubles are not fairly settled there and I may have to go I still hold possessions though and intend to if the parties concerned fail to do as they expect whether it pays me or not I must submit But I shall struggle for success for my own sake as well as for those I love

I might have went into a mine the 15th but was unable to do so and I gave my chance to Thomas He is at Monarch 7 miles from here so I am all alone now Then you are afraid it wont pay me this trip to Colo.? Well one ought make pretty well to pay them for living like a barbarian in such a country but I am here and if God gives me the health strength and courage to endure reverses and overcome obstacles I mean to make it pay before I return to Maine God knows I would gladly return to home and those I love and you know how hard it is for me to remain so long away from your loved presence but I feel I do not want to come back until I can I have an object to come for Even it be ten years but I hope the time will be brief even more so than you think Money! Is the key to every wordly gavel in the eyes of the world at least and poverty is worse than crime, a degrading demoralizing curse that the bravest cannot overcome, but by the magic touch of gold

Write at once I think some of going to New Mexico Good bye darling for this time

[margin]

I have not done a days work since I was hurt Expect to go to work next week
Was unable to get off from my bed for 6 days