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LETTER OF WM. MILLER TO HIS SON CONTEMPLATING MARRIAGE

Cornwall, Jan. 13, 1835.

My dear Son,-

I received your letter, notifying me of your engagement to Miss Hulett and requesting my consent, to your nuptials. As it respects the character of Miss Hulett I know nothing, neither is it necessary that I should in order to give my consent. You must be your own judge concerning that:— You are choosing for life, and possibly the choice you now make may have a bearing in eternity on your future welfare. If you choose one who is qualified to make home agreeable, to make the domestic circle happy, it may serve as a check to the mind, that may otherwise rove into the giddy maze of the world—to find pleasures in novelty, noisy revelry, or vain and wicked employments, to drown our sorrow at home or to pass away some tedious hour of domestic broils or that might have been spent in this manner if at home. But my son, your worldly happiness or domestic enjoyments depend as much on yourself as on your partner. In the first place we must not expect perfection in any— and therefore must calculate, to be possessed of much, very much charity. In the second place, we must not expect an even genial and calm temper, but the passions of the human heart are like the weather, sometimes boisterous as March winds, then like April showers, and again like the cold snows of December or warm sun of July. And you my son, I have long perceived are subject to these uneven bursts of passions, which will make your partner unhappy and even miserable unless she is more shielded than Ajax— with a coat of patience. I therefore advise you to be determined to rule your passions, with an absolute sway, and let your partner have it to say at the close of your lives, that she never saw you angry nor ever received an angry word from you. And you must be guarded by clothing yourself with patience under all vicissitudes of life, remembering that to be fretful or peevish will only add to your misfortune or misery—not remedy the evils. And let me tell you my dear son, if you or your companion lead miserable lives it will be owing to your not governing your tempers and passions. But let each one of you strive to make your family circle, the most pleasing company you can meet—and your fireside the happiest place on earth, and then all the good and virtuous will seek your company, and enjoy your fireside with pleasing anticipations of the past or future. But in order to secure this blessing, you must store your mind with knowledge, I mean that practical knowledge which is brought into requisition in all our daily concerns of the world.

One thing more to secure happiness here and hereafter is a knowledge of your own breast. Examine closely, let every motive which prompts you to action be weighed in the strict balance of Justice. See that you do not act from selfishness to the injury of others. Love your neighbors so much at least, as to rejoice in their prosperity or to feel for them in adversity. There are many men with whom we ought not

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to associate lest we be tempted away from the strict rules of propriety and virtue. Never make a companion of a drunkard, gambler, swearer, Sabbath breaker, liar, tattler, nor a betrayer of innocence or virtue. Have no fellowship with these unfruitful works of darkness. Have a few friends and let them be well selected--So that you will never be ashamed to be seen in their company.

And above all things seek an interest in Christ. Be religious and the world will have no darts that can destroy or wound your peace. Be religious at home, and abroad and you will have no compunctions of conscience, no fearful forebodings of the future. Then I advise you to be a Christian. Delay not. I rejoice that Miss Hulett is pious, and I hope her prayers may be fervent for your salvation.

You have my consent and I hope and pray that none of us may ever have reason to repent or lament the connection. I shall be at home as soon as I can get through lecturing in this place. If you can come after me the last of this week to Orwell I shall be glad.

I remain your loving father,

(Signed) Wm. Miller.

(Copied April 24, 1924. BY L. F. W. )