

Chinoook Altn.
Sept. 11, 1919

Dear Mother:-

I was glad to get your letter. I felt very badly about your not having written before, especially as you had answered part of the letter showing that you received it. I thought likely you had done so on purpose as you quite likely have had information from Coral & Selden about Miss Rogers. When I told them I had asked her to marry me they made no comment of any kind whatever. I'll try to explain what they seem to think of her before I finish.

As to your telling the girls, of course I knew you would. I'm glad you haven't yet told any one else. I've long ago got over telling people especially women anything and asking them not to tell ^{intentionally} but if there is anything I can't stand to have repeated to anyone ^{anyway} ~~my~~ my confident choice is to tell I keep it entirely to myself in the first place.

You asked about Edna Harzer. I saw her quite often this winter. She looks scarcely a day older than ten years ago. I wrote to her for a few months when I was in Oberlin and for ~~only~~ ^{over} a year after I came out here. When I was on the Coast ten years ago she wore a diamond on her left ring

finger. I doubt if she were engaged however as I never hear
of the fellow and I used to get teased about her. She wore the
ring on her right hand when I was out there this time. Ethel
is a very nice girl and always has been very friendly to me
as she is to every one. What she thought of me I have no
way of knowing. The fact that I thought possibly she
might like me pretty well was probably one reason why
I never took on special interest in any other girl since
I first went back east but I never could decide to
try to get on more intimate terms with her than with
her sister when I was with her and when I was away
for a length of time I always was glad I hadn't. What
I missed in her was ambition. She's too much like an
opiate. She's smart mentally and not lazy and very sym-
pathetic and an ideal housekeeper and would make an ideal
wife for some man if he should notice her but she
would never stir herself to attract a man as she seems
so absolutely satisfied with everything.

As you say in your letter, I realize that any person may
be mistaken in judging another person's character. I told
Mary when I asked her to marry me that I didn't know
whether I loved her or an imaginary girl who only
looked like her. She is a very hard person to understand
and I know I like her a good deal for what she
could be instead of what she is now as she hasn't
had the right environment to really bring out the
qualities she has. She is not a deep thinker and
and there is not a great deal in the rather barren
intellectual or social life of the prairie town to
help in forming ideals and opinions. However I

really like her better for being undeveloped as that is my nature. I wouldn't like to marry a completed product of culture & refinement like one of my own sisters though I like well enough to associate with that kind. You can't imagine Evelina or Mary falling in love with a man like me either can you? They'd be ashamed & irritated very often and my real place certainly wouldn't be head of the family but sort of an independent supernumerary. I realize, as you say, that I may be mistaken and especially in this case. I certainly was mistaken in this country to which

I pinned so much faith but it is hard to judge things that are not fully developed. You know I still am very much attached to this country in spite of the way it has failed us. I don't believe I would ever want to form anywhere else at least it wouldn't have the same romantic appeal to me.

You say you hope I will be happily married. I don't expect to be very happy whether I am married or not. I don't think this is a very happy world. It seems to me that really the only very happy people are those who are thoughtless, or those who use the solace of religion to close their eyes to the unhappiness of the world. That's one reason why it may be easier for me to give up the idea of marriage if it becomes necessary, because sometimes it seems to me almost wrong to consider bringing children into the world to go through the same round of a little thoughtless

pleasure in youth followed by the awakening and disillusionment of later life.

As to the success of my suit. Possibly it is all over now. Mary's family have decided that she is to have no intercourse at all with me. In fact she has to choose between them and me. I guess she couldn't go back home if she attempts to be friends with me. I remember asking you once if you would have married Papa if your parents had forbidden and she said you thought you wouldn't have. Papa however said that he would have married you in spite of his parents.

Mary thinks a great deal of her family. Her mother is a very determined woman and has worked her fingers to the bone to give her daughters the best advantages she could. The family has not spent borrowed money like most farmers here and have attempted to keep the two girls in school with Mary teaching without borrowing. (I guess all this) Mrs. Rogers made nearly \$500 from butter money last year. She milks the cows her self & churns. Often she has to pull water (by windlass), when Mr. Rogers is away, for the thirty odd head of stock they keep. Everything is unhandy (because of lack of capital) on the farm. Often she used to drive in the seventeen miles (each way) to Chiswick sometimes in the coldest weather to sell butter and maybe bring in some laundry to the girls though they did only a way part of it and always their own sewing. One thing likely that the elder Rogers do not approve of about me is that apparently I spend money

This feeling of my heart
has ever been sure I have told in 1839

that I don't have in buying a car & the boy
 section near town etc. It really isn't good morals
 to go into debt the amount we have done. I've heard
 Mrs. Rogers criticizing severely people who spent
 beyond their means while Mary more or less (she doesn't
 argue) stood up for them ~~for several years~~ in
 Mary's sisters lived with her in a little shack in
 Chinook for several years. The sisters are really pretty
 homely girls although they are charging for the father. They
 used to wear pretty unattractive clothes (due I suppose
 to money shortage). On the other hand most people would
 consider Mary quite pretty (Selden said so but he
 thinks the other girls very homely). Naturally people that
 would find Mary the teacher attractive and interesting would
 not always care so much for the society of the
 gawky youngsters who by the way are the more talkative
 of the family but Mary has always thought a great
 deal of the girls. She expects to share all her friends
 with them and doesn't care for any other kind of
 friends (I get this by watching not by being told). The girls
 on the other hand have evidently often felt slighted
 no doubt some times with reason and sometimes this
 feeling has caused them to make enemies of those
 who would be Mary's friends. and often it has taken
 itself out in jealousy against Mary. As for as I can
 see Mary has done everything possible to disown

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This feeling. She's always praising of the girls and taking second place herself whenever it is possible which isn't always the case of course. Of course this really often makes the girls feel more slighted and more jealous. I don't believe they realize it themselves. If we come in the house from a motor ride and their hair is disarranged, both girls are nearly sure to exclaim "Mary look at your hair you look like some old Squaw" but none of the three ever criticizes the appearance of the other two. That's the only reason I have for believing that Mary knows how much prettier than the other girls she is, because she always says nice things about them. She sometimes remonstrates with them about some thing ~~they~~ ^{she} does, she is likely to say "did I wish you wouldn't do that, I know what you mean is right but it doesn't give the right appearance."

The two sisters are likely to criticize severely anything which Mary doesn't do well. For instance I used to often let Mary drive the car. She is a bit reckless but pretty good. Ruth particularly claims ^{she} is ^{the} only nervous when Mary is driving and begs me not to let her drive. She ~~also~~ says (at other times) "Florence is certainly a dandy driver". Well Florence is the better driver but the reason is because she has had more experience and it came about in this way. I'm a school where Mary taught before she came to Chimook ~~the~~ favorite pupil had an older brother

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who was attracted by Mary and he had (with his
brother) a nice the Laughlin car. Mary liked the car but
I believe didn't wish to give special encouragement
to this fellow, at least after she knew him
better. Any way it wasn't long till it was quite
common for this fellow and one or two of his brother
to take the three girls out riding. The nicest one of
bunch I think might have interested Mary possibly
if it had been possible but of course he didn't
wish to compete with his brother. At the same time
this nicest one, Bert, liked to help things along and
was willing to be shoved off on Florence. I suspect
Mary rather thought that there was more to the
friendship between these two than Bert intended,
anyway I believe it kept her going with that
crowd longer than she would have otherwise. Bert was
the driver generally and taught Florence to drive. Mary
took a back seat and also was shoved off with a
fellow she hadn't very much use for.

Well I think the girls are jealous that I like
Mary though perhaps they don't realize it. In some
ways they are justified. I'll write more later. I must
go

Will

Bert is married now
to a school teacher he met at school at
some acquaintance before that

who was attracted by her and he had (with his
 brother) see the young man. They liked the car but
 of course didn't want a girl. After the dinner
 to this fellow at least. After the dinner
 letter. Any way it would have been a
 common for this fellow and one or two of his
 to talk to the girls and riding. The interest
 took about night but interested they finally
 if it had been possible but of course to check
 with to confer with his brother. At the same time
 this night one, but tried to help things along
 was willing to be shaved off a few. I suppose
 very with thought that there was more to the
 friendship between the two than just interest.
 any way I believe I left the party with the
 about paper that it would be interesting. But was
 to drive generally and tapes to drive. They
 took a look out and also was shaved off with a
 follow the party but not use for. But I would not
 Well, I think the girls are interested but I
 something perhaps they don't realize it or care
 says they are satisfied. All with more etc. done
 so

But I would not
 to a point where I was feeling
 some affection for him.