

Letter from Augustus to Emeline Nov. 3, 1800

My dear Emeline,

Not having had an opportunity of conversing with you alone, I make use of this method of making known my feelings and the great love I have for you. There is nobody but you can satisfy me, nothing but your affections can make me comfortable any more, nor can I accept of anything less than you. You have too much sense my dear, not to see that it is the duty and interest of every young woman to marry. Parents do not live forever, and what is she to do in time of sickness, and difficulty, without anyone to take the least interest or care about her. She wants a bosom to lean upon, some friendly hand to wipe away the tear, to support and comfort her when the world turns coldly upon her. Look about Emeline upon the many around how cheerless, how friendless and forlorn must a woman appear when her friends are all gone and no husband to provide and comfort her. It may be said Emeline that we are too young, but in what book did you read that – all who know anything of the human mind recommend early acquaintance, as the great means of insuring happiness in life, their temper and dispositions become gradually moulded to one another, and their affections are stronger. The great thing a woman values is the love of her husband; this is what makes her happy, and the want of it makes her miserable. She likes the world to be cool and easy, but she does not like a cool calculating husband. And there is one thing a woman likes always and looks very sharp after, and that is her husband's first love. She knows very well that first love is strongest and most lasting, she sets a great deal more value on a young man's first love, than on the love of a man who has loved others before her.

Now my dear, what others look so much after and find so difficult to get, is offered to you. I never had acquaintance yet with anyone in particular, but offer you my first and honest love, the love of my youth. You know how much women prize this; a woman always likes to come first in the love of her husband, and likes to be the first and thus the only one that ever took possession of his heart. If she is foolish enough to miss, what there! In a few years some old man comes along seven or eight and twenty and coldly offers her about half a heart, which has loved others before her, and now by mere age has begun to turn already into leather, a cold cold courtship follows, without any tenderness or endearment. Then comes a cold marriage, to a man incapable of being sensible to the charms of a lovely and interesting wife. And this is the reason every woman looks out for first love if she can get it. I now offer you my first love, and I wish to know if you will consent to let me visit you as a lover, with a view finally, if we can agree, to make you my wife, at a proper and suitable time.

You know my family which is respectable and moves in the first circle in the neighborhood. I am about your own age. I have knowledge of a very lucrative business, which will enable me to get my living and yours too. My dearest Emeline, my father brought me up to get my living and living for my wife, when I should take one, and he is willing for me to have any girl I like, provided she is respectable and fit to come into the family. It is not like a match that sets nothing before you but poverty and hard work. So long as I have my health, I have within myself the means of keeping you my dear in comfort and respectability. All I want my dearest Emeline is you.

I am of good family and education, and good connections. I now leave it for you to decide whether or not you will make me happy. If you will allow me to come to see you, I will do all I possibly can to render you happy that you may never repent your choice. Two or three persons told Uncle of a report that I am not steady. If you have ever heard anything of the kind, my dear, you have been very shamefully imposed upon, by designing and interested persons who put it about. I can only assure you Emeline that I stand before the world without a blemish in that respect, as all know, who know anything of me - honest, upright, and industrious, of good character, respectable, with a knowledge of business, and business-like habits.

The thing is the young fellows in the place have often made advances wishing the favor of my acquaintance which I decline and --- offence. However wild I may be myself I will take good care. I will have no wild company. If I can't have good company, I will have none. So they represent me as wild because they can't make me so, and some because they can't make use of me, but you can have satisfaction on these points. I am too well knowing these things cannot hurt me, except my dear they deprive me of you.

I hope my dear you will weigh over this letter and give me your permission to come and see you and I will do all I can to make you happy, and I shall always try to be to your parents as a son, to cheer them in the midst of their trials, and to rock for them the cradle of declining age.

Anxiously waiting your reply

I am your ever faithful - Augustus