

Valerius Armitage to Robert and Mary Milroy, [fragment, 1853?]

population here. The lower order consists of Kanake's Greasers, Grizzlies, Digger's, Niggers, Skunks and Chinese. these kick up a shindy every now and then that creates considerable excitement and fun, particularly the Chinese. Of all the peculiar ludicrous, and obnoxious creatures on this earth, that long-tailed, forked animal John Chinaman stands pre-eminent. Never out of a scrape, never where he ought to be. Hated wherever he goes, perfectly harmless, he pushes himself into everything and everywhere, if he sometimes gets a boot application he takes it like a philosopher- looks a little surprised and walks off to try his fortunes elsewhere.

Yes! I have a 'slight regard' for the three gentlemen named Armitage you mentioned and was glad to hear of them. Dory, I see, is still the same, a mere machine. And so John has rose to the dignity of pill vender, and is likely to get married. I never liked his partner. I would ask you if John had nothing to say about me, but I suppose you and he are a little belicose towards each other yet.

I shall certainly send a letter to George since he wishes it. By next mail. His peculiar situation renders him clear to me. Were he to strike me now I would still love him.

I have watched pretty closely the political turmoil in Hoosierdom this year (I take the Lafayette Weakly Courier)

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Like the woman I cried 'go it husband, go it Bar' I
dont care which whips! I laughed to see the sover-
eigns rise in their virtuous indignation and
achieve a 'Glorious victory' over- they did'nt know
what and cared less, but supposed it to be all right
for the 'dear people can never be in the wrong.'

Thank you, Robert for you compliments
concerning my 'courage and determination' &c, though
I think I deserve no praise, what else could I do
when it was 'Root little pig or die.' I have nothing to
boast of yet in the way of success. Yet still your words
flattered my vanity and fell refreshingly upon my heart
as dew-drops upon a flower. It is something to know
that we have friends who though far distant watch
us and feel interested in our welfare.

An idea has just struck me – it is'nt often such
a things happens, when it does, it comes like a brick-bat
it is this, If I fail here, to return to Indiana an turn
out school teacher. I think in a year or two more you
and George could furnish – with a liberal contribution
from Dr Beck – enough scholars to set me going.
Would'nt I make an excellent Pedagogue to teach
'young ideas how to shoot' and to give the rising
generation a good California education , that is – learn
them to lie, cheat, steal, swear and bet at Faro,
I'll reserve this idea for a second and third cogitation,
for the present I'll put it where Congressmen put their
wisdom – under the table.

I expect – before you get this – you will have sent me a thundering letter in answer to my last one. that is if you dont get mad at it and throw me off as a bad egg, and stop writing, which I hope will not be the case. Don't judge from that letter that I am worse morally than I was when I left Indiana, that – being under no restraint here – I do not restrain myself, such is not the case, I lead a far more moral, orderly life than I did there, it is pleasant to control myself when nor forced to do so.

Now, Mary! I'll answer your part of the letter, the little marginal sermon you gave me, I had to laugh 'right eout' – as the Yankees say – at your words 'that you would gladly screen me from the hardships and trials of life if it were in your power! Why, what a milksop you must take me to be. You make me feel quite boobyish a regular bread and butter saphead, Now dont you be uneasy about me, I can take care of myself while I've health as well as any of them, and better than many others do, I think I have managed to get along so far through life pretty easy I've always had plenty of the best to eat, drink and wear, if I where it could be got by any one, I've had my share of fun, hugged the girls, smoked good cigars and laughed at the Devil, I've been foot loose – independent – went and came when I pleased – threw phy[s]ic to the bow – wows; scoffed at everything in general and my fellow creatures in particular, never had any fears of the

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future – never cared whether Sir John Franklin were
found or not, never grieved myself about the ‘poor
heathen,’ nor ever reached over the heads of naked, shivering
wretches anear to give a book or shirt to a naked savage
in the torrid zone. What more could you ask? I
had rather be forty miles beyond the north pole
chawing a frozen Moonbeam than to feel myself in want
of a sheltering arm, such as yours would be, so no more
of that my Dear Sister. if you love me,

Yours affectionately

Valerius

P.S. Robert, when I return I shall certainly
take advantage of your kind invitation and
corral myself on your ‘ranch’ awhile, I intended
doing so long before I got your letter. I think if I were
there I should lay back and take awful big chunks
of comfort. is there any pretty girls there who would like
to marry a swaggering Californian fresh from
the mountains? Sabe?

Adios, Amigo Mio,

Valerius

Oregon has about ‘gone in’ dried up.
defunct served them right. the infernal
mean scoundrels. wheat there 50° per bushel
common labor \$15 per month and everything
else in proportion.

Valerius Armitage to Mary (Armitage) Milroy, 6 June 1853

Oposite Fort Laramie June 6 1853

Dear Sister We arrived here this minute[?]
the river is so high we cannot get to the
fort the train have passed on I am in a
tent writing this. it will be taken to the fort
I've had some pretty rough times I assure
you, but my health is better than ever
I think it will lengthen my years. for my
breast is sound as a dollar now
I think we will get our wagon and team through
but we may run short of provisions.
We are with Congle & Greys train from Lafayette
My friend John Ewry is with them also.
I have plenty money left for any emergency
Give my respect to all inquiring friends and
believe me this is the shortest and most sensible
letter I've ever written to you

(is that right) Your Brother

(sister mine) Valerius Armitage

I will write
the first opportunity
I would have had a letter prepared for you but I had not
time. We get up at 3 ½ in the morning and when one walks and
drives all day and then has to pitch a tent cook supper, grease
wagon, boots, and ox necks keeping him busy till 10 at night, and
then two hours more taken out of that every other night, there is but
little time for writing

Valerius Armitage to Mary (Armitage) Milroy, 6 June 1853

We have had cold rains all the time nearly since we left
the Bluffs. and the worst kind of roads nearly all
the way. we were a week crossing the Elkhorn
I've been in cold water on a cold rainy windy day
up to my waist all day building bridges and getting
wagons across, and that frequently.

Our tent burnt up with nearly all my clothes
at the Elkhorn since then I've looked very democrat
ic, I've only a linen pair of pants left and a fine
pair so you see your amiable brother is in a considerable
fix but he has a constitution like the United States
and an appetite like a saw mill. and is determined
to see Oregon next fall prepare yourself for a
Big letter

Direct Yours to Portland City

I Remain Your affectionate brother

Valerius Armitage

I will probably overtake the train by 8 oclock