

October 9, 1802 Saturday Evening Plainfield

Ever dear and ever valued friend,

Once more shall my pen address the friend of my heart and perform the task I have so long contemplated - Alas my friend is our correspondence reduced to one solitary letter in the course of a whole year? Must I wait the annual return of October to bring me the welcome line and assure me that I am neither abandoned or forgotten by the friend I hold most dear? But that evidence reigns long and uninterrupted. I could never harbor a doubt of the sincerity and constancy of your friendship. I chose rather to impute your neglect of writing to want of opportunity than inclination and I determined to improve the first opportunity of writing to you and then if I received no answer I should almost be induced to think you lost forever (at least to me) for I should have nothing to convince me that you still cherished the remembrance of a friend so unworthy or that you were in a situation capable of bestowing the smallest favor or even that you dwelt in the land of the living - but your tender and valuable letter of Sept. 26 which I received Oct. 7 banished those ideas which might otherwise have occupied my mind - how unexpected was the flower how welcome the reception ! but it was impracticable for me to write by your Father as he perhaps will inform you. I had no opportunity to speak with him but in the presence of Esq. Snell consequently I made but few inquiries - I did not see the old lady - I learned but little from him but that you were out of health and had a                    but were recovering. I perceive my dear you will allow me to sympathize in your affliction and loss of so worthy a friend as is now removed from you - May heaven be your protector and your eternal friend. I could wish you to have written more particularly had not the word on your thumb presented - I am much indebted to you ,my dear for the lines which could not be written but by the inflection of friend and as much your fortitude and resolution as well as your generosity and kindness - accept my thanks for so dear a pledge of tenderness and continued attachment. But my dear girl, I fear you are still unhappy. That you are silent respecting your misfortunes or your situation yet I fear a tenderness for me prohibited you from rendering to me your     and the burden of your loss, but a knowledge of your unhappiness should disturb my head.     when will please once more allow us a social interchange of souls, when no intervening rocks, hills, valleys, rivers, or mountains shall be permitted to separate us, but when these arms shall again enfold to my opening heart the object of its tenderest emotions - is not the happy hour in     can she not behold it in yonder     or will it never arrive - here stop these ideas. I have much to write, and must make haste I propose to send this to some of my friends at Abington and conclude the will convey to you - I think if you can convey letters to Mr. Branckley Shaw or other of my relations that I hall probably get without much loss of time as people are often traveling from Abington to Plainfield and especially at this season and in the winter - I have taught a school five months this season at Ashfield on the plain near Captain Norton's at whose store you purchased some articles when you resided in this place as I think I recollect you informed me - I return to other dear  
last week on Thursday. My task was long and     ,that my situation was pretty good. Miss S. Shaw spent the summer at     Miss Hannah Barton was called very suddenly from earthly scenes by the grim mesenger of death about 6 months ago. It is at present a general time of health and prosperity.

My paper will not allow me to write more. May you ever be the care of heaven and protected from  
future ills  
of your affectionate L. Richards