

February 21, 1801

Plainfield

My Dear And Amiable Friend,

Since the parting hour at Abington, which was more than three months ago, I have been an entire stranger to every scene thro which you have passed and thus you may have passed thro the most trying and important ones yet I have been insensible of them. Whether you are yet an inhabitant of this earthly prison or of ethereal regions whether you are blessed with health or frowned on by sickness whether you live in domestic happiness or in felicity, whether your noble soul rises above the tempetuous ocean of terresteial things or sinks in the billows of dormant grief, are entirely unknown to me and yet there are matters in which I am deeply interested for my happiness is nearly connected with that of yours. When reflecting on the train of evils which have followed you from your birth to this day I insensibly breathe forth in sighs.

I ____ a secret ____ to gracious and implore his pity and blessing on one whose heart is swollen with grief and whose days are spent in sorrow. My dearest friend can you be sensible of my anxiety on your account. My wakeful hours and nightly slumbers do not pass that life of yours nor without the most sincere regards and fervent wishes for your welfare. Could it possibly be I should most earnestly desire the pleasure of a personal interview but this I give up at present as what there is but little prospect of and since this cannot be let us improve every opportunity of writing. I readily conclude that you have had no opportunity to convey letters this winter (at least if you are able to write) or I should have received them and I think it quite uncertain whether you have received any from me. I wrote a letter in the fore part of January to send by Mr. C. Beals but unfortunately as he was crossing the river the ice broke and his load sank into the water. Then by the exertions of several men it was saved. At this misfortune he turned and came home and brought the letter which I had hoped you would soon receive. Abe has since been to Abington and I think it not impossible that it has reached you before now tho I think it uncertain in whose hand it is and that it may have fallen into the hands of the mean and the vulgar, yet it contained by which they might inquire or even by breaking the seal.

My dear charity, write freely to me respecting important affairs which relate to your own felicity as well as to the happiness of particular friends. Such sentiments as are of too delicate a nature to be treated on paper must however be omitted. I have nothing particularly interesting to write. I am in haste and must conclude. I hope to send this by Mr. J. Shaw Our friend S. Shaw was in health the last I heard from her. I expect a visit from her and several of her friends next week. Perhaps I promise myself too much pleasure in her visit so that I shall be disappointed and lose the happiness. She is

the only female friend I have in this part of the world to whom I can freely and unreservedly open my heart and tell my secret griefs in whom I find a virtuous breast, a benevolent heart and agreeable friend. Oh, that I might also freely enjoy the favor of opening my whole soul to you, my dearest friend, but this pleasure denied me by placing us at such a distance. May every blessing which omnipotence can bestow attend you both here and forever. May guardian angels protect you from future ills and bring you to those heavenly mansions where sorrow is not known. Yours sincerely,
L. Richards