

Plainfield October 18, 1799

It is now late in the evening and the family have all retired to take their night's repose but my dear friend I have chosen to spend a few moments in (writing) you rather than to follow their example. But my dear what shall be my subject thou various subjects are before me. I know not what I can amuse you with for you are not amused with trifles - but I presume to proceed and offer a few lines on virtue for the path of virtue is the only road to happiness and in the same attendant of vice. The person who is in possession of true virtue possesses an invaluable treasure. The riches of the world cannot equal it. He has it within his breast and cannot be deprived of it. It is a balm through life, a guide through danger and a protection in temptations. It renders life pleasant and death a comfort. A person tho of any natural gift and accomplishments but of a vicious mind cannot be esteemed by others or happy in himself. Virtue indeed in the glory and beauty of the human mind. Time will not allow me to use my pen much longer but I, too, must retire to sleep alone - remember me my dear and depend and I cannot forget you while life and sense remain for whether I sleep or wake you are still in my mind - but I shall not at present attempt to describe the tender feeling and emotion of my heart toward you since since I have seen you - for it is not in the power of my humble pen to express them - nor can I express the pleasure with which I received your letter dated October 6. You may judge that I want to see you more than in my power to express and that at present I see not much prospect of it. Yet I indulge the fond hope that I shall before many days are passed - but here I must stop tho I am not and myself your sincere and affectionate friend.

L. Richards to Miss Charity Bryant