

Lydia Richards to Charity Bryant Sunday Evening, January 3, 1800

Permit me once more to address you my dearest friend, and to inquire after your welfare - I want language to express my sensations and my sincerity to hear from you - the long absence of so dear a friend is still painful, but let me tell you that since I have been deprived on your company I have, in general, been able to govern my possession so as not to let sadness dampen my spirits or spoil my present enjoyments, or caste a gloom on the promise of life. But my dear many anxious thoughts concerning you have possessed my breast and in my retired moments you are not banished from my mind nor is it possible in the nature of things that friendship so deeply rooted in the heart as mine, should ever come - or a friend so highly as you ever be forgotten. Forgive my freedom my dear and overlook whatever is amiss. Agreeable to my expectation when you were here I have entered on my study at Mr. Hallocks - but am happily disappointed by having company to study with me - which is the Misses Phoebe and Polly Nortons of Williamsburg and their cousin, Mr. Norton - but have entirely given up the idea of seeing Lester (?) this winter. Be so kind as to write to your unworthy friend the first opportunity -for my amusements in life can so take up my attention that I shall not rejoice to read every line my Dear Miss Bryant can afford me - but it must be condescension in you to hold correspondence with one so unworthy as myself - believe me my dear, it is a pleasure beyond expression to peruse the precious lines with which you have favored me and which express the sentiments of a virtuous and sincere heart and were it in my power it should be my highest endeavor to reward your goodness. Not having seen or heard from you very indirectly since I parted with you, I think it rather unlikely that I shall before you leave this country and indeed I know not but you have now left it - but it is my anxious desire that I may. If it is decreed that we shall not now see each other, may we be prepared for the changes which await us and though we should never meet while in this life, yet we know that when time shall be no longer we must meet before our judge - a solemn thought and an important scene - and no life contains then important and since it is certain and important, let us improve our fleeting moments, that it may prove a happy scene. Let us so improve the short and golden hours of life, that the long golden ages of immortality may be blissful and that though we should not meet here, e may meet in the regions of bliss. Please to accept these lines though they are unworthy of your notice. With my best wishes for your peace and happiness here and your felicity hereafter, I subscribe your sincere and unalterable friend.

Lydia Richards