

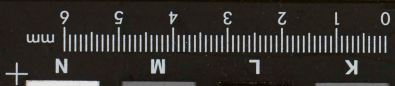
18
11/15/17

St James's December 5th 1786

a rambling life and a lingering painful complaint, has made
me pass the fortnight you had prescribed to me for directing
my letters to Sarah. This I shall address to you at Courtenthall
assured that ere now you are settled in my wife's neighbourhood
& that she will take good care of my letter & transmit it to you.
Unlucky, unfortunate indeed am I in again missing you in
Northamptonshire, but when was I otherwise, we are absolutely
like the man & woman in the weather house, meet out or in together.
I never had an idea of your having any of being confined at
Northampton. I am truly rejoiced to think that you will be under
Dr Hens Eye and care. I cannot ^{then} but feel perfectly comfortable
and easy about you. & this, and I cannot have even a figure of
seeing you, is a great satisfaction to me. You are at Northampton
by this time, I long to hear where you are settled & whether
comfortably, it must give you some of the joys of home &
recall those of early youth and enjoyment! I can hardly
represent you to myself in the character of a mother and a
nurse or fancy you making all your little caps & shifts but
I feel that in ~~that~~ ^{light} ~~circumstances~~ and in that situation, I shall
admire and love you at least as well as in any other I have
hitherto seen you in. The alteration in my plan & arrange-
ment respecting Norton was made in consequence on
account of Bell's state of health which required his absence
from that place, and frequent change of air and scene.
My Father always intending going to Bath about this time
so that tho' my Sister is quite recovered we had no opportunity
of returning ^{to Norton} ~~there~~. They were a set out of Bath on Tuesday
last - my Sister went from St Leonard's Hill where we had
been sometime, & met my Father at Oxford - they have got
a house in Brook street - the town is very full but not of
their acquaintance, I hope & imagine they will both
like their sojourn there, my Father the early & regular House
my Sister the dancing - as for myself I detest the place
dancing ~~but~~ ~~is not~~ ~~absolute~~ ~~is not~~ ~~absolute~~
my passion, tho' it is often pleasant in an impromptu
private way, and as to early hours, I keep them here -
what delightful mild weather we have had and have -
I cannot tell you how fixed I was to come to town & see

my pleasant walks and my pleasant society - I have been
flying from place to place the whole Autumn, & my equals
at leaving me friends for another have been lost in the
prospect of a quick return to them - I went again to
Mrs. Wilmore, to the Ly. Kim's - we had dancing & singing
& good sense and wit, a great deal of laughter and merriment.
I have been with the Hobarts, with the Carlisle & Kutney
again - with Madame de Kutenelau - at Richmond
Park at St. Leonard's - sometimes with the gay, then
with the unattached - for Mrs. Stuart is still so, & will not soon
accept the loss of an amiable, beloved Daughter - I have
alternately played a week, in a serious, or quiet tête à tête
& another in the midst of a circle of 20 people - I have
been graciously playing at whist & cribbage, & then laughing
& cheating at Pope Joan - I should whilst it was last
at Mrs. Watcous, I was appointed Lecturer to the society,
and every morning read a French Deame or story of some
kind, loud to a very attentive audience from which I
generally drew tears, for the choice of the lecture being
left to me, you may imagine it was of a serious or
afflicting nature - I was struck to death by a pain in
face (which I believe I have mentioned to you before my
death, & for which concluding it to be the toothache I had
two teeth drawn - I had been kept awake in torture so
many nights, that Mrs. Watcous & Stuart insisted
on my coming to see Dr. Tustin, who thinks it is rheuma-
tism from my being almost perfectly free, from it till I go to
bed - he comes every day, & is very attentive to me.
I hope my dear that I shall be able to give you a better
account of myself when I write again - I came on
Friday & have never left my room since then, how long
I am to be confined to it I know not, but I know that I
am not in the least impatient to be released - what
can be more comfortable than to be placed in a clean
warm cheerful habitation, with music, books, pen &
ink & every means of amusement - to be able to

breathe without difficulty, & to lie down when one is sleeping
to be spared the misery of sleeping twice a day & the
still greater one of keeping so disagreeable engagements
that friends who care for me & for whom I care will
certainly come to me - as for all others, I never wish more
to set my eyes on them - what a pleasant line to draw!
& how impossible to draw it, by any other means whatever.
They tell me that the Town is full of the Playhouses -
parties every night - thank God I only hear of them -
the amusement in the morning is, for Beales & Beller
soldier and old & young to shoot arrows at a mark!
at night they all play at too - & have a uniform
sparking the B. of W. - & Mrs. Pitt: the man & wife are not yet
tired of each other - they say he is more in love, more
attached & more entirely new than ever - what a crush
of all conjectures, probabilities, & wise predictions! je n'y
comprends rien, nor does anybody else. I believe - & I believe
is at this moment, at least she was a few days ago, quite
well - vastly better than she was - but I must not tell
accounts that the first severe weather will throw her
back - and a relapse cannot but be attended with the
utmost danger - everybody loves her - adores her - I
goldsworthy will I think break her heart if she dies.
Mr. Digby is not in Town, nor have I seen him since
June - he is very well tho' I hear - he seems to have been
extremely ill, but is now rather better - he is rather
out of spirits about her - I suppose he will be here for
new year's day - There is just a possibility of my going
to Bath, which on one account, and only one, that of
seeing my family, I shall be glad of. I have promised
Mrs. Watcous to go with her if her health makes a
journey necessary - she has been very unwell lately
but it seems to me that the Bath day to be practicable, if we
undertaken immediately - I conclude Col. Cathcart
is at Dallington - I have never seen him yet, to talk to him
about his friend Mr. Young, or to thank him for his
attention to me - he was so good as to call here in my
absence & to take a letter to which he has promised to
convey to India - if you see him thank him for me



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and ask him a little about my young. - I hear Mr. Ly. Cather-
 like Dallington - my sudden disappearance from Wotton
 presented me widely upon feet, which I shall take the
 first opportunity of doing on my return - My Brother
 has just left me, he came for a few days to Town to see
 me and tomorrow goes to Bath - so here I am, left alone
 it is very odd, that I never had any illness (my continued
 complaint in my stomach excepted) but in the absence of
 my Family - Charlotte is very well & pretty good - she gives
 me great pleasure & procures me great comfort - she is
 very very clever & quick - but is not very fond of work -
 I thank you my dear friend for your inquiry

To Mrs Dickens
 Cornhill
 Northampton



From Westbury
 Dec 14 1846
 No 1334

Dear my very dear friend, I beg to hear if bid in two
 words that you are settled comfortably - you have my
 constant & ardent prayers for that your conference
 may be attended with every favourable circumstance &
 that nothing may overcloud the joy which the event of it will
 produce to both you and Mr. Dickens - may every blessing
 & every happiness always attend you - the little unknown &
 expected being already proposed a strong interest in the heart
 of your affectionate Chas. - Remember me very kindly