

HAM/1/7/1/10 Charges Street Philadelphia Jan^y 17th 1784

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Yes my good Friend, I reciev'd your Letter from Albano and you will I fear give me little credit both for saying how much I was delighted with its contents, & what satisfaction it gave me again to have accounts from one for whom I retain the most lively remembrance - I could give a thousand reasons why I have not written to you sooner, I will not stop to dwell on those reasons, but proceed to give you that intelligence you require, because I know you too well not to be certain that your wishing to be inform'd of any thing that relates to me proceeds from (what must be so agreeable to me) your kind sollicitude for my happiness. Before I can begin my little narrative, I must tell you how much I was pleas'd with the last kind letter you sent me by my Uncle Sir William Hamilton with the ingenious Specimens of engraving which I shall prize, because done by your hand - I must also inform you that my Uncle & I have talk'd much of you, what he has said to me on this Subject has made me feel happy that I possess the friendship of one who is so valuable a member of Society: & may I add? possessing Sentiments I so entirely approve.

Poor Lady Hamilton! - Sir William has shewn me letters which he found after her death, address'd to himself, which have affected me exceedingly & made me, if possible, still more sensible of her worth.

The alteration in my situation requires some explanation to an advent friend, if you find my letter too long, remember tis in compliance with your desire that I enter into a particular detail of what concerns me. I was not educated with a view of living in a court, and had not, consequently, every advantage which

which that brilliant & exposed station required. I had seen very little of the great world & my Father who had seen much of it had given me no favourable impressions. After his death my time & thoughts were wholly devoted to my Mother, who's ill health required every tender attention from an only Child. Some dear friends of mine whose partiality thought me equal to the important task of assisting in the Government of the Royal Children, and as the Queen was looking out for a third lady to be at the head of that establishment, they spoke of me — as my family was well known, the Queen soon gained the intelligence she required concerning me — all this was the work of three or four days & without my knowledge; it was then proposed to my Mother & me, & my friends urged me warmly to accept the offer. I took no part in the affair but resolved to do whatever appeared agreeable to my Mother, who was prevailed upon to desire me to accept the honor — in less than a week I found myself in a situation I had never had the most distant idea of — I endeavored to fulfil my duty to the best of my abilities & had the satisfaction of being approved of — I experienced great goodness & attention from her Majesty & distinctions which were not common — I soon found however that a constant exertion & a life of fatigue I had not been accustomed to afflicted my health, which tho' naturally good, was by no means equal to — it required a stronger constitution than I was blessed with — I had not time to possess my own mind, my health & spirits suffered very much from leading a life of constant restraint, I felt myself unequal to it & regretted my loss of liberty — the situation became tedious & I had few opportunities of enjoying the society of many most dear & valuable friends — for it was totally inconsistent with the place I was in to ask permission to live so much as I wished with those persons whom I loved. I therefore took the resolution to entreat

her Majesty to allow me to retire from Court — She was graciously pleased to write me a most affectionate letter and desire that I would not quit her family, & attributed my request to the effect of low spirits, — You may imagine that my affection for the Queen would not suffer me to press any thing in opposition to her wishes & I promised to remain some time longer, I continued near two years after this, & then again, from those motives I mentioned before, & others which it would not be proper for me to mention, I warmly pressed for leave to retire & as I made a point of it obtained my wish. In my next, if you desire it I will tell you in what manner I am settled, & every other circumstance which to a friend may be interesting. Now let me hear from you very soon & I promise not to delay answering your letter — tell me every thing which relates to yourself, for believe me, you have not a more sincere friend than