

WILLIAM LISTER, M.D.

Paris July 30. 1702

There are bounds to benevolence & charity
itself - how I hoped them - I shall know this from the reception
of my letter - which whatever it may be I will not complain
of - tho' I shall lament it forever if it be a mark of the loss of that
friendship which I value more than all around me & which has
been my comfort & best enjoyment even while I have neglected
the means of cultivating it -

I have wished to make this letter in some measure
entertaining to my friend by recounting to her some of the
late incidents of the life in which she has taken an interest - &
I have attempted frequently to gratify my wish - My paper has
been chosen & I have begun to address you - but my eyes have soon
filled - my hand has let fall its pen & I have been hurried
away in a train of melancholy reflexions - as amazed & confounded
with the dreary ~~uncertainty~~ ^{uncertainty} of my prospects till my memory
& imagination quite fatigued have left me to feel the solitude
& the misery which is present. A mind that is filled with its
own feelings is little able to attend to what happens about
it & is utterly incapable to recollect those which have happened,
so as to give them in any order & connexion that may render
them amusing to others. They are either not connected with its
feelings & they are not remembered, or if connected they only serve

to rouse ~~themselves~~ them & they are forget themselves. You must not then expect from me any thing of detail, but if you will accept my correspondence you must be content with such unconnected reflections as the present disposition of my mind shall enable me to have. You must forgive me if they are sometimes of a melancholy cast. - I am agree with the people I am with for nothing so much as for their leaving me under the necessity of being either gay or illhumoured. There is a kind of melancholy which is natural to me, & which because it is habitual I have ceased to regard as any thing but seriousness. It is not attended with any painful feeling. I am not perhaps quite satisfied with myself - & I have not any great respect for the ordinary things around me at that time. Yet these dissatisfactions are not of that violent humillious kind which cause uneasiness. It is in my situation, & I am content in it. It is the situation of my fellow creatures, & I feel for them the tenderness which fellow ship in sorrow inspires. & if I have any selfish reasoning upon the subject I know ~~how~~ I can better myself only by acts of kindness & benevolence to others. ~~With this~~ With this disposition I could enter into society with ease & pleasure - I could hear & tell the tale of misery & of happiness & sympathize with every one who was concerned

in either. I could listen even to what has nothing in it to interest my feelings considerably. & I could even sit, if I might be allowed to sit silent, without uneasiness at the movement of others in which I had no share. - By degrees perhaps I might be able to surmount the tedium of my company - but I cannot do it suddenly. & this is what Pascalians want & what they attempt to produce by a sort of reasoning or of rallying. - Monsieur est triste - Vous avez grand tort. & then they think of a hundred reasons of my sadness or of my worries which never entered my head. I assure them that I am perfectly easy & attentive, but that I am an Englishman. They know that the English are an odd set of people. They have noticed that they can be so strange as not to laugh when they are in company & not to laugh they are not unhappy. - They are therefore sure that I am ~~wretched~~ sad & what with their reasonings about it & their attempts to cure it they frequently make me so that I am obliged to retire to recover my spirits which they think have been lost there. - I shall make no apology to you for ~~the~~ subject of my letters even when I write of myself. -

I have heard of our friends at Newington who gave me the good news of the welfare of all at Wilham. - Remem-
ber to each of them in such a manner as will be acceptable by no means forgetting my friend Wilham. - With my remembrance

P.S. I have had a letter from Miss Crisp with such an account of
 her & her sister's health as has made me shudder. Do you not
 give your advice - It would certainly be attended to - I would
 compel them to pay attention to what at present they
 may ^{be} least solicitous about -

July 17 1822
 PAYED
 William
 England
 Miss Crisp
 per Ostende

accept & distribute the best wishes for every thing with
 which this life is comforted or blessed -

Yours in sincerely affection
 W. Denton