

Paris December 27 1835

Dear Uncle

I ought to be ashamed to confess that I received your letter four weeks ago, and have only now set down to answer it - but I delayed in the hope that something ~~interesting~~ might occur that would enable me to send you a more interesting letter -

And in this I have been disappointed - for my time is wholly spent between the Louvre and the life schools, where I see or hear little or nothing that can interest any but a painter

I was exceedingly sorry to hear of the heavy affliction that Robert and Catherine had suffered in the loss of their two children - little Robert had no doubt grown very interesting, and his death must be peculiarly distressing to his parents -

I am very sorry that I cannot give you a very flattering account of my improvement - which is so slow that I can scarcely perceive it - when I reflect on this, and your great kindness in affording me the advantage of so long a stay in Europe - it makes me very unhappy to see I have made such poor progress - but I hope for years to come to be benefited and improved by what I have seen and studied - It encourages me to remember that Sir Joshua Reynolds who spent three years in Italy did not give any evidence of improvement until some time after his return - when in his own work he made practical use of the ideas he had gained from studying the works of the old masters - The gallery of Versailles which I mentioned to you in former letter has not yet been