

Paris Nov^r. 7th. 1786

My dear [Sir](#)

Among the many pleasures I have received at this place I count that which has been afforded me by your letter written the 10th. of January last & delivered here not long since. It is the first line I have received from you since my departure from Virginia. I think I wrote you soon after my arrival at Paris, but I do not recollect it with very absolute precision in this moment. however my letter of May the 9th. of May last will have informed you. Perhaps it may not be amiss to give you some account of that letter. It was to interest you in behalf of a [Lady](#) here of very great merit, & who does me the honor of an intimate friendship — don't suspect this friendship of any thing improper, since she is at least fifty years of age. She is very desirous to naturalise a great number of the American trees shrubs etc. at her beautiful country seat near Versailles— By the advice of <...> [M^r M^cQuinn](#), who was here we addressed this matter to a [M^r Watson](#) seedman near Charleston — I wrote to beg you would press the greatest punctuality on Watson (supposing you sometimes at Charleston) & even to advance him the money if necessary— I begged you at the same time to draw for the amount of it on [M^r Thomson](#) the Secretary of Congress to whom [M^r Jefferson](#) had written to desire he would pay your order for that sum, or the order of M^r Watson if he should draw for it. I send this letter by M^r M^cQuinn together with the last of the articles given me by the Countess de Tesse. M^r M^cQuinn left this place for L'Orient from whence he was to embark with a [General Duplessis](#) (to whom he had sold lands in Georgia) for America. I have since learnt by accident that at Lorient he changed his project, & went to Amsterdam. As Gen^l Duplessis continued his Voyage, I hope that M^r M^cQuinn forwarded my letter by him, & that they may have arrived before this. Not knowing his address at Amsterdam I cannot write to him on the Subject.

Your supposition that the scenes in which I am engaged are all new & filled with variety is very just— but whether I shall employ the time passed in them as judiciously as you imagine is not for me to determine— one thing only is certain, that I pursue a rule of conduct at present which I have always prescribed to myself— & which is to do whatever may tend to render me a better man, & a more useful member of society— supposing this the true road to "Happiness our being's end & aim" I have always pursued it from duty as well as inclination. It is under this point of view that I do not regret my voyage to Europe, although I foresee that it will be a fruitful germ of many uneasy moments. An uneasiness which must necessarily arise from having friends whom we love in a country w^h. we are never to see more. I shall find myself in this situation when I shall have returned to America, as the plan which I have marked out for myself hereafter will not permit my ever quitting that free & happy soil a second time.

You ask me about my return— although I cannot fix with precision the moment, yet it is not very far distant. I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing you very soon after my arrival in America. What I would wish would be to land at one or the other extremity of the United States & travel through them. At present I think it will be most probably at the northern end on account of the greater convenience of a passage; but this will not preclude me from the pleasure of seeing you & your amiable [lady](#) in your philosophical & rural retreat. I envy your situation, or rather I envy those who are happy enough to be near you. Were I sufficiently rich you might count upon me as a neighbour with very great probability. when I say sufficiently rich I mean rich enough to marry & settle myself as I would chuse, that is as well as my neighbours— for I think equality of fortune as well as similarity of sentiment essential to good neighbourhood. And a good neighbourhood of one's friends [living](#) under the protection of the laws of a free government & unconnected with its strifes & bustles— each in his own farm in the bosom of his own little family— each pursuing the most useful of all human acts, that of agriculture on a rational system,— this is, or at least I feel this for me, the summit of terrestrial happiness. It is a lesson which I have learnt in a school where one would <...> think it— I have been confirmed in it Sir, in this Paris, the

centre of Luxury & dissipation. I have seen as well what are the engagements of those whom fortune favors for a moment with her most benignant smiles here— I have been able to appreciate the pleasure of those who are most successful in their most favorite pursuits & I see they have no peace abroad or rest at home— The fear of losing what they possess of the favors of the day— **their** <...> of not **overtaking** what they pursue— & the folly of pursuing what they <...> that <...> is the <...> of the life of the most fortunate & most favored Parisians. Their **degrees** happiness depends on extraneous objects— The most rational among them [^] **has** <...> **are** <...> indeed after being tormented in this career— after having passed the prime of their life <...> **ched** on the thorns of ambition <...> & end their days where they <...> ought to have begun them— in the calm amusements of a country seat—

I have made some enquiries on the subject of French Authors on husbandry— I am assured there is nothing on the subject worthy the notice of an American farmer. I am very much disposed to subscribe to this opinion— & whatever I have read on the subject has been of the visionary kind— the <...> <...> of some head in a garret in Paris who never perhaps saw an experiment in the art. Their [Society of Agriculture](#) here will produce something in the end— & when they do, you shall be furnished with it. Their intention since I have been in France [^] **has** been almost entirely engrossed on the subject of Irish-potatoes— & lately a [Parisian](#) has **written** one of their **best** writers on rural æconomy has written a work, in which he attributes a thousand virtues to Indian corn meal, which we know it has not— our knowlege it founded on long & uniform experience— his on one or two imperfect experiments — with respect to the art of fattening cattle & sheep I must refer you absolutely to England— they excel this nation more in that than perhaps any other art.— I have lately seen an account of a work under taken by an [Englishman](#) whose name I forgot— He speaks of a [M^r. Bakely](#) a Farmer who fattens sheep to way 62^{lb} a quarter— & beaves in proportion. He is a grazier as well as a farmer & his researches on these subjects are very valuable. I have only seen a small extract from the work, but that has left with me a very favorable impression of it.— With respect to the seeds I have **to** not see any certainty of procuring them in the manner you mention; but should it be practicable during my stay here I shall make use of the opportunity with a great deal of pleasure. M^r Jefferson procured of a seed-merchant in Paris some seed of a **Saint-faix** of **Malther**, admirably adapted to your climate— He sent some to [M^r. Izard](#) I think, but certainly to some Gentleman in S^o Carolina— The seedmerchant was doubtful if it would ^{come up} succeed— but if it should I would advise you to endeavour to get a little of it. In the mean time should an opportunity offer I will send you some from here, as a very high account is given of it.— I have just cast my eye on the last paragraph of your letter where you mention what M^{rs} Eveliegh says of her [niece](#)— I am sorry not to have known she was in England when I was there about twelve months ago— — but I fear her beauty & her fortune design her for some more distinguished destiny. Resignation must be my cure for that as ^{for} all other evils— I should find less difficulty in this resignation if she was not the niece of the amicable M^{rs} Eveliegh.— I hope she will be assured as well as yourself Sir of the most sincere attachment of

Yours

W Short

P. S. This letter is enclosed in one, to [Co^{lo}. Carrington](#), member from the State of Virginia in Congress, with a request to put it into the hands of some of your acquaintances there.

Internal address:

Col^o Eveliegh.

Ed. note: The other letters mentioned by Short have not been located.

"Saint-faix" likely refers to sainfoin, which Jefferson eventually grew at Monticello and attempted to introduce into South Carolina. See "Memorandum Books, 1787," published by [Founders Online](#).

Document Information

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7 November 1786

Author:

[Short, William](#)

Recipient:

[Eveleigh, Nicholas](#)

All Organizations:

[Société Royale d'Agriculture de la Généralité de Paris](#)

All People:

[Tessé, Adrienne-Catherine de Noailles, comtesse de](#)

[McQueen, Don Juan](#)

[Watson, John](#)

[Thomson, Charles](#)

[Jefferson, Thomas](#)

[Mauduit du Plessis, Thomas-Antoine, chevalier de](#)

[Bakewell, Robert](#)

[Young, Arthur](#)

[Izard, Ralph](#)

[Trapier, Sarah Alice Shubrick](#)

[Carrington, Edward](#)

[Unknown Person](#)

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