

Wmsburg June 14th. 1786

My dear [Short](#)

Before this reaches you, ^{^you} will have rec^d. my acknowledgement of your's of July 25th. 1785, & another of date, which must have been written about the end of Sept^r. or beginning of October from it's mentioning circumstances ~~which~~ ^{^that} occur'd so late as the 15th. of Sept^r.— These letters I answered about the 8th. of April & our friend [Monroe](#) has sent my letter on. I have since rec^d. y^{rs} of the 27th. of January.

I have generally kept something like a Mem^o. of the dates & subjects & bearers of my letters as you recommend, and will do it universally in future. You complain, my dear friend, that I do not say enough of myself. My last is filled with this subject, & with the loss of my better self.— [Littlepage](#)'s information as to my little family was right— My dear [Polly](#), before Heaven took her to itself, blest me with a [son](#).— His countenance is almost as amiable as his mothers, and, altho' he has had some violent attacks, at present he seems likely to live & to add his consolation to that of my sweet little [Bess](#).— Some consolation, \longleftrightarrow ^{^believe me,} ~~your,~~ is necessary, notwithstanding the doctrine of natural causes & events, the certainty of her happiness (for her virtues were but inadequately rewarded here),— & the expectation of seeing her hereafter.— Tho' grief be selfish, I feel that I have sustained a loss, & if the loss of happiness, which is the object of every pursuit, be not cause for affliction, surely none can be found on earth.— Sometimes I reflect with calmness on this subject, but at others, and particularly when I attempt to unbosom myself to a friend,— this calmness deserts me.— Nor do I find that it increases with time.

I am much occupied by keeping up a necessary correspondence with the clients, & preparing for the business, which [M^r. Tazewell](#) left on my hands. This employment is perhaps a fortunate alleviation at present,— when leisure, unemployed by books or sweetly trifling with my little ones hangs very heavily on my hands.— As to books, ^{^the mind} is not, \longleftrightarrow ^{^nor} can it always be brought into a tone for them, and unless attention be added, application is a mockery of study & only serves to kill time.

As to my stand at the bar, I have rec^d. more money than I expected (tho' but little, I assure you). However, I do not find myself so well qualified for the profession as the vanity of nineteen or one and twenty whisper'd in my ear I should be. To speak to circumstances, to arrange evidence, or to harrangue a jury tolerably, I find no easy matter. Indeed I have scarcely an idea of success in it.—

Believe me, this is a candid account of myself. Travel or a political life, w^d., no doubt, be agreeable to me. It w^d. at least afford more active pleasure than any thing that I am now sensible of; but the engagement ^{^wch.} I have made to finish M^r. T—'s business,— the difficulty of leaving my relations— particularly my little family,— and the uncertainty of business on my return seem to check this idea; yet, I assure you, my inclination is rather to cherish it.— I am not in the assembly and it is uncertain whether I ever shall be. [Prentis](#) & my [brother](#) represent York— [Innes](#) Wmsburg, and I do not chuse to offer for James— City, as I ^{^shd} feel something like remorse at having ~~left~~ left the legislature when they elected me before, and might be upbraided with it, were I to offer.

As to your great attention to dates, remember there is none to that letter, in which you give me a very entertaining and particular account of your tour thro' Holland— You say you staid in London 'till you were tired of it. This requires some explanation, tho' I easily conceive that Paris w^d. be more agreeable to an American than London, and particularly to one in such a circle of excellent company as you are.—

[Doctor Lyons](#) arrived a few days ago. He has left your letter for [Maj^r. Edmunds](#) with me. I shall take care that it be safely delivered to your sister, ([Miss S Short](#)), who, I understand is at Swan's point. She received the letter you inclosed to me, so that I complied with my friends request and made his relations happy. Remember me to [M^r. Mazzei](#). He promised to write to me.— Let me know if there is any thing new in Paris in the literary way. ~~in P~~ No doubt there are many such.— I do not speak of such laborious (tho' excellent) works ~~of~~ as the Encyclopaedia. I wish you w^d. give me some account of what is doing in this line— Does chemistry & Air-balloons ~~solely~~ ^{alone} occupy the literati?— Adieu! my dear Short, you ^{know} I am

Yr's— with the greatest
sincerity—

[WmNelsonjr](#)

Internal Address:

W^m. Short Esq^r. Paris.—

Envelope:

À

Monsieur

Monsieur Short

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Cul de sac de la Rue

Telebout

à

Paris—

d'etre envoyèe— }

par le paquebot }

du N York à L'Orient. }

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[Monroe, James](#)

[Littlepage, Lewis](#)

[Nelson, Mary Taliaferro](#)

[Tazewell, Henry](#)

[Prentis, Joseph](#)

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