

FROM DAVID MERCER TO JOHN ASKIN

Reading (in Berkshire) 29th Ap^l 1790

My Dear Friend Do not imagine that my Affectionate esteem and regard for Yourself and family, is anyway diminished from not having written at an earlier period in the season but the probability of your hearing from us is greater by sending Letters seperately than together. I therefore fell on this plan purely that you might not meet with the like disappointment which we experienced the last Season it being the only Instance since our separation of not having the Satisfaction of receiving Letters from under either your own or Capt Grants hand, we can only Attribute it to the Chance of Loss which must be the consequence sometimes where the Conveyance is so precarious, however the Misfortune was partly Compensated by the pleasure which Phillis¹ received at the perusal of your daughters letter dated the 29 July last. nothing could be more desirable than the receipt of it especially as it brought those favorable accounts of the welfare of our very good friends in your neighbourhood, happy should we be, could it possibly be so circumstanced, that we could once more add to the number. God knows if that happy period may ever arrive, at any rate we are not without hope and some expectation of it. I assure you there are neither charms nor even Connexion in this Country should detain us, provided Circumstances for a future Subsistence could be obtained, be it in any shape or manner whatever, so as to cause the change to be eligible, but you know my good friend it would be imprudent in quitting that which I now enjoy, unless there was a prospect in some line of Life or another of meeting with that, which would make the Change desirable, in point of situation in Life, at present my circumstances remain as they were you have already been acquainted with them. I must say that we have some credit in keeping them as they are, as everything in this Country (& particularly this Neighbourhood) is remarkably dear, and you know, in our way of Life, there is no other possible method of adding

¹ Phillis Barthe, wife of the writer of this letter, for whom see *ante*, 77.