

Nov 20th 1822

We have both been so long silent my dear
 Maria that it would be difficult to say which is
 the sinner, but as you have been visited by affliction
 I take great blame to my self for not having told
 you before, that my heart sympathizes in your sorrow
 and would have offered consolation if I had not
 felt some diffidence in intruding upon you - Your
 dear & venerable Aunt was called away in the
 fullness of years, and but that affliction ever removes
 such deprivations, she has only exchanged the in-
 finities of nature for that more perfect state, to which
 our best hopes and wishes would conduct us - and
 where we all trust to meet when the duties and
 trials of this world are finished. Our dear Ben's letters
 report you and the darling boy well, at which I rejoice
 and now can almost retain as good accounts from
 hence - Sam is in Belafonte with Gatz Etting, who has
 really been a most distressed & distressing sufferer
 for six months. He had a nervous fever in the spring
 which sunk him into a state of despondency, that
 appeared to resist every effort - he passed greater part
 of the summer in town with us but was always melan-
 choly and dejected, at length however, he consented to

go home, and every letter brings more favorable accounts. The mail to-day brought one from him self to his Mother and we now hope, his uncle will leave him perfectly well. Mr. McLanaine has no doubt told you what a desolate state all our neighborhood was in - but now we begin to see something like bloom on the cheeks of our belles and the season is truly delightful - the city begins to look gay with many colored garments floating about the streets. The beautiful new theatre is finished, concerts and parties have commenced - and the busy throng are in full preparation for winter. but I hear the girls say there are so many of the fashionables in mourning that tea-parties will be dark & thin - and I am sure you would be grieved to see the change which has taken place in the happy face of Mrs. John Lugeant. I met her this afternoon, in the deepest black, her countenance pale & sad and her visage so thin you would scarcely have recognised her. - She has been very ill - her husband was at the point of death - but was mercifully restored and her son, in whom she so dearly prided, her only son was taken from her! her friends say this is the first sorrow she has known it is a very keen one - but she is recovering from it and I hope will be as happy again, as she was wont to be.

I wish Mr. McLanaine had been able to have taken the "voice from St Helena" to you. You would have been so delighted with the exiled Napoleon - he was great to the last, and would you believe it - he was none over a good man! - What a strange bug bear he used to appear to me in the height of his power, because we never got a sight of ^{the} man, and the tracts of blood thro' which his

Robert Smith

Nov. 20. 1822

Lexington Ky

Mrs Benjamin Smith

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