

It would really be a shame, my dear Maria, if I did not speedily acknowledge your frankness, and accept your apologies. We are selfish creatures, Maria, and in our best feelings do not lose sight of our selves. For I should never have made a calculation such as you accuse me of in your last letter, to know that it was in my power to give you pleasure, should be motive enough to induce me to write, and reward enough too for a perfect friendship. such as it has been the pride of my life to fancy ours. and yet you see how far short I have fallen. but I know your goodness, and sometimes take advantage of it. which I believe is too general - by the practice in this working-day world

Our friend Mrs Meredith is recovering, she has been very sick and is still weak and coughs a great deal, but a few days more I hope restore her. a miscarriage followed by a severe cold was the cause of her illness. and the unfortunate death of Mrs Channery from a similar accident affected her spirits a good deal. but I saw her this afternoon, and think she is in no peril. Early I hear has been sick too. we have had a number of deaths this winter. the heads of large families have been taken away. many very suddenly. Mr Keppelle last week who was only sick two days. old Mr Willing died before any of his family knew he was sick. Mrs Ralston's death also was very unexpected - but these are events which frequently occur in large cities

and one is only surprised they make so little impression on the survivors. I think we frequently see the virtues and duties of religion pushed to such an extreme as to fall into their opposites. resignation to the dispensations of providence is a duty which the wounded heart finds its only refuge, under affliction - but it is often a pretence too for immobility and one is often scandalized by seeing mourning habits worn with the most perfect indifference. The newspapers last week announced the death of Mrs William Seton of Emmetburg. and the obituary notice bore testimony of her virtues and usefulness. few persons have passed thro' a greater variety of trials I believe than she did.

You mention your boys but not Julia in your last letter is she from home? or does your living so high in the city, induce you to send her to boarding school? I hope some of the girls take your husband's place during his absence, and assist you in a game of cribbage of an evening. it is long to sit by the fire-side alone at this season. I hope you have good neighbours. a female gossip is quite as agreeable as a politician in my opinion. tho' I know you have too refined a taste for the first & too feminine a one for the other.

I have reread your letter over and over again but cannot find one word about your own health. and many of our friends are particularly inquisitive on that subject. will you enable me to answer them according to my wishes. that you are quite well? I had letters to day from my brothers in Kentucky and hope to see them both in the Spring. a brother-in-law of Ben's is here, who gives very agreeable accounts of his situation and happiness. indeed his letters express the same. he is quite an enthusiastic lover, and extols the domestic comforts.

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