

My Dear Francis

Williamsburg Sept 1. 1783

The Appearance of our Friend Soft Amate
no Doubt will surprise you, the Desire of seeing
Home, "like a Contagion communicating its Effects
to every Person that approaches it," is so prevalent
among the Students that we are threaten'd with
a total Desertion: There are only five of us left to
guard Colledge and our out Posts does not amount to
more than that Number, if an Insurrection should
take place shortly I dont know what would become
of us. We attend to our Studies with unremitted
affiduity determin'd to improve to the best advan-
: tage the favourable opportunity that now offers -
all the Professors except M^r Wythe have declin'd
their Lectures, the Assembly has adjourn'd untill Oct:
so that if we do not eagerly embrace an opportunity
that now invites us, it must proceed from our own
insensibility of the Advantages that we may ac-
: rive from it and blind Inattention to our future
Prosperity. When I look around me and see so
many Men of moderate Capacities, shining so far
superior to the common Herd by a steady Resolution

and an unshaken Determination to arrive at the Goal
they have prescribed to themselves, I am lost in Amaze-
ment to see ~~an~~ commendable an Ambition, (an Ambition
equally advantageous to ourselves and Country) oc-
cupied or sought after by so very few - Chesterfield
declares we may arrive at whatever Height of Greatness
we please in the political world, if we will keep that
Object always before us & let all our Actions tend to
the Accomplishment of it - Theorick and Oratory (the
Steps by which we are to ascend to the highest Em-
ployments in a Republican Government) he affirms
to be mechanical, that Practice and an assiduous
Attention to them, will most certainly surmount
every Difficulty, and the many Obstacles Demosthenes
conquer'd and the Summit to which he at last
arriv'd by his Resolution, Steadiness and Perseverance
should be an instructing Example to us, as well in
the common Transactions of life as in the Pursuit of
Literature, not to let our Schemes be baffled ^{and} of overthrown
by every Disappointment, but rather (if they are not
impracticable) we should rise superior to them, and
let them serve as a Sting to stimulate us to Magna-
nimity and Perseverance - I am as well convinc'd as
of life, that the many Miscarriages, Mankind daily
meet with, proceed rather from a Mutability in their

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Disposition and a Dejection of Spirit at the least Wrinkled
in the Boon of Fortune, than at any real Disaster that
befalls; ~~as~~ many's at the most trivial Disappointment
they ignominiously stoop under the Misfortunes
their timid Imaginations had suggested to them, when
perhaps a few Exortations would have brought them
to the Summit, from whence they might perceive
the golden Harvest, their Levity had deprived them off
and descend by easy Gradations to the Enjoyment of
the Advantages and Pleasures which their Resolution
of Stabilities of Mind ^{would} justly intitle them to ^{enjoy}
Young Fellow before he enters upon his Studies ought
carefully search into and diligently consult his ^{own} ^{best} ^{interests} ^{and} ^{Genius} (for that we are form'd by Nature for ^{best} ^{advan-}
Professions and Occupations must be appear ^{best} ^{advan-}
contemplative Mind) and let him pursue ^{an} ^{offer}
to which he perceives himself best adapt ^{and} ^{declin'd}
he will prosecute that alone, with Vigor ^{and} ^{activeness}
and Determination he can't avoid some ^{best} ^{advan-}
Degree of Perfection more than will ^{compensate}
for ^{his} ^{labour} ^{and} ^{trouble} ⁱⁿ ^{Good} ^{Heavens!} ^I ^{have} ^{our} ^{own}
finish'd a half Sheet of Paper without saying on ^{our}
word of intended when at first set down, however it
is immaterial, it is as good as any thing ^{can}
say, so it will resolve ~~the~~ what at first intended
for another Letter in Sam ^{Dr} ^{Harris} ^{Yours} ~~of~~

Ms. intended to have sent this by Mr. Voss but he could not wait
until I finished it as I expect you will be at the Mountains
on the receipt of this be so kind as to present very respectfully
fully my Compliments to the two Col^{ls} Thornton and
their Ladies, to Col^l Chapman of his Lady —

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Mr. Francis Thornton Jun^r

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