

Leonard Smelt

Dec. 21 1776

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I dare not attempt to do justice to the grateful sensations of that friend of whom Sir, You have been pleased to write in such gracious terms, nor will I subject her to the difficult task of supplying me with words equal to what I know she feels - You, Sir, can better conceive than we, express what our duty, our gratitude & our zeal must awake in us, and the same goodreps which hath called them out will supply our defect of utterance; and there we must rest it from our inability to do our wives justice. - We arrived on Wednesday at this place; We parted with the bone-fighter (as you are pleased to call her and as I have always thought her) on the road about 2 miles from Dhill, where our routes divided, each to pass a long tract of wild moors but in different directions, she, to pursue the road to London by slow and interrupted stages as Mr. C. was to meet some friends on the way; We, resting one day at a relations at the foot of the mountains, and reconciling our loves as well as we can to a separation of at least six months; but indeed Sir there is no end of the contrary indulgence, We found our loves left disposed to part the last day than any of the preceding ones, and in attachments which can not satiate, we must resign our selves to the necessity of the absence, since no degree of philosophy can ever make it a matter of choice - We had the comfort of leaving her in better health than we dared for many months to hope for,

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and we flatter ourselves that the mildness of a Southern Winter will perfect what the bracing summer sea-breeze had so well advanced, for thro' the goodness of Providence we are the beginning to D. Sebb. When I saw the subject my heart burst with gratitude for the benevolent attention which you, Sir, and you, Madam were pleased to show to our distresses -

I have been to day to Langton and when I saw the places which I had desired to ask you to ornament I felt a conviction such as if I had taken a liberty which etiquette would deem unpardonable; but I had a superior judge, whose benevolence is not bounded by the form but the reality of the case for it. I certainly could want nothing to remind me of that goodness which every duty must make me awake to as long as I have a sense left, but the idea of having the pleasantest spots of my hermitage, & where we should oftrest sit, graced with your immediate protection was a happiness I could not resist for it seemed as if your arms were extended to support and bless us even at the distance of 200 miles - As you are pleased, Sir, to command me to mention the size of these seats, the utmost the situation will allow is that of the seat upon Richmond terraces as it was before two of the sides were doubled. -

I am flattered, Sir, that Coraetans afforded you entertainment, as I have always admired both the poem and the author; there is a purity, and delicacy, as well as strength in the sentiments and expressions of Coraetans and Elfrida which will lead ^{them} wings to reach a very remote eye - How admirably just, Sir, are your reflections upon this subject? The simplicity of the plans and conduct of these pieces may not suit

the present volatile taste, but this should not, nor will it ever, discourage a real genius who is born to mend not to follow the age he lives in. The sea, extended plain, Atlasian Mountains, do not at first please a mind accustomed to be amused with little variety and sudden changes, but a little attention scars of its puerility, and like the eye emerging out of darkness by degrees it opens to simplicity and day light. To write for the times is the business of a man who must live by it; a real genius writes to truth, to man in his aggregate character, neither to an Englishman, a French man nor a Russian, neither for the year 700 nor 1700, but to all places and all ages, & all will be better for what he writes - The busy bustling plots of modern compositions remind me of Swift's Scotchman's description of the Cathedral service at Dublin, where amongst other excellent remarks, speaking of the perpetual changes, and amongst the rest of the vergers shirring about, he says and a buzzy child was he, that day, but the Lord forgive me, for spending my Sunday so ill. - It is true that Shakespeare hath many busy plays full of every branch of the Unity, but his characters are so realized & his sentiments so just and noble that his bustles do not offend - The pictures are always fine, It is Hill & Dale, Rivers, Lake & Sea, Valley and Mountains, of which the parts are so fine that we scarce ever consider whether the whole might have been more so - What task a genius might have done with the Greek play, where all its powers could have been collected and directed to one object, and where true melody & harmony would have lent their

inescapable

irresistible aids, is easier to be imagined than expressed, but surely I am
trespassing upon that indulgence with which I have been honoured; enter
my usual goodness Sir and pardon to. L. J.

H. M. Bonville.

21st Dec. 1776.

Mr. Smith.
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