

From A. Hill Rowan to Ann Eliza Foster, November 19, 1829

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From A Hill Rowan, Bardonia Ky  
to Ann Eliza Foster

Feb. Hills Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> 1829

I have scarcely had an interval of leisure for an attention to the business of my father preparatory to his departure for the city to comply with the promise made to my dear Ann Eliza through Miss Shamburg. I know that she had anxiously awaited its fulfillment, and perhaps been disposed, ere this, to accuse me of apathy & a want of sympathy to the distressed of herself & parents, or of a fading concern in those recollections of the departed which time, and the pursuits of life, are but too apt to superinduce. I beg her to construe me more kindly. Cherish the memory of Charlotte; and if one agony more could have been wrung out of my heart than that which her sad fate inflicted, it would have been for that sister and those parents who have sustained in her untimely death a bereavement so heavy & so lamentable. The truth is I knew not, and I know not what to write; I am sensible of the interest taken in the last illness and latest moments of deceased friends, and it would give me a melancholy pleasure to recount those incidents & observations as they occurred, or were made, if they possessed, intrinsically, any interest, or even they any thing more than vague, unconnected & "impassioned" remarks. The impulsions of a mind susceptible to all the varieties of influence - the vagaries & fluctuating fancies of a disordered brain - painful to her friends, & full of application to her parents. I trust that I will be pardoned the seeming prolixity, and I will I know be excused, by my dear cousin, the "sad recital" if I deem that promise by a general, tho' imperfect account of her dear, dear Charlotte. — I have in former letters already told you, that I believe her disposition was superinduced by fever, anxiety of mind for Mr. Barclay, and individual apprehensions of death from sickness in Louisville. — I do not believe that there was any other cause, if there was, it was perhaps a deep melancholy, not perceivable when she was in health, and which could not be traced to any certain cause in sickness, as it indicated its seeming existence alone in the wild, plaintive & touching tender song which she always sung, for she was generally cheerful, animated, vivacious & witty in her remarks, and in her deportment throughout. She preserved her complexion all beauty, suavity & simplicity of manner, and except to a few, whom I regret to say she could never tolerate, she was either bland & affable, warm & polite, or gentle affectionate & caressing, in the proportion which she loved them for she was ever to her friends, discriminating in her marks of attachment. In those moments that were not occupied with observations to her attendants, when her mind, unaided by the bewildering influences of surrounding objects, seemed to act on her own power for refuge & relief, the spirit of her disease would catch the hue of her dear affections, and indicate its mild supremacy in a kindly assimilation of those objects most valued around, with those most cherished in health, and at such moments she was frequently the most perfect Ophelia in every particular that I ever saw. — but Ann Eliza I must

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State the description. The review of such a scene is too painful. I will tell you of her death — The night of the morning which she died, I sat up & was frequently in her room. She was more tranquil, yet did not sleep, but seemed all attentive at any time during her illness to the movements of her friends, occasionally speaking to them, and about an hour before day when all were silent, she sang a song <sup>preferably</sup> with much melody & great accuracy, every note, but her voice held then the thickness that she did not articulate sufficiently plain for the words to be heard, or for the song to be recognised. It soon however became more distinct and she called for Josephine. Josephine had sat up with her the whole of the three preceding nights & perceiving that she was now <sup>about</sup> permitted herself to be propped up on a chair to retire into bed, she was sent for as usual, and Charlotte taking a ring from her finger, gave it to her. Josephine asked her enquiringly, if she must give it to Miss Simpson, Miss Lotens, or Mrs. Hopkins (all of whom she called Mrs. Hopkins she spoke much of & frequently asked for) receiving no answer to either of these enquiries. She asked her if she must give it to Ann Eliza, she immediately & with eagerness replied Yes. She then gave her some messages of an affectionate character to her Mother, herself & sisters & brother. They were prayed for blessings upon you all — after this she soon became lively & talked much & until within twenty minutes of her death, which took place at half after six o'clock in the morning, and then never have I seen any one die so easy, no convulsions, not the writhing of a feature — the marks of disease were scarcely perceptible on her face, and her eyes closed, and her position in bed easy and kindly & gracefully accommodating to the hovering spirit of slumber, which seemed as tho' shedding its shadow & falling influences upon & around her, that death might steal away her breath like unconsciously to her as to her friends, and so it did, for there she lay serene, placid & quiescent — all the movements of her soul completed out in a countenance which seemed chastened by the tranquillity of a sweet sleep; so lovely, that could her last breath have been observed by her friends they could not & would not have believed, that her gentle spirit had flown — Such my dear cousin were the last moments of the lovely & beloved Charlotte. The feeble influences of an insidious malady could not make her do violence to that gentleness, delicacy and propriety of conduct which characterized her life — The cold relentless hand of death could not abate the glow of innocence which suffused her face or distort the simplicity & beautiful regularity of her fair features — The ~~same~~ innate mildness of her disposition, counteracted the turbulent incitements of her disease, the lingering warmth of her sincere & ardent soul, repelled the icy grips of the ruthless Tyrant, and tho' worn, & conquered, she wrested the victory from death, by a quiet & unreluctant submission to the doom of mortality —

Then Ann Eliza he resigned to the will of providence do not permit unavailing yet corroding sorrows for her loss

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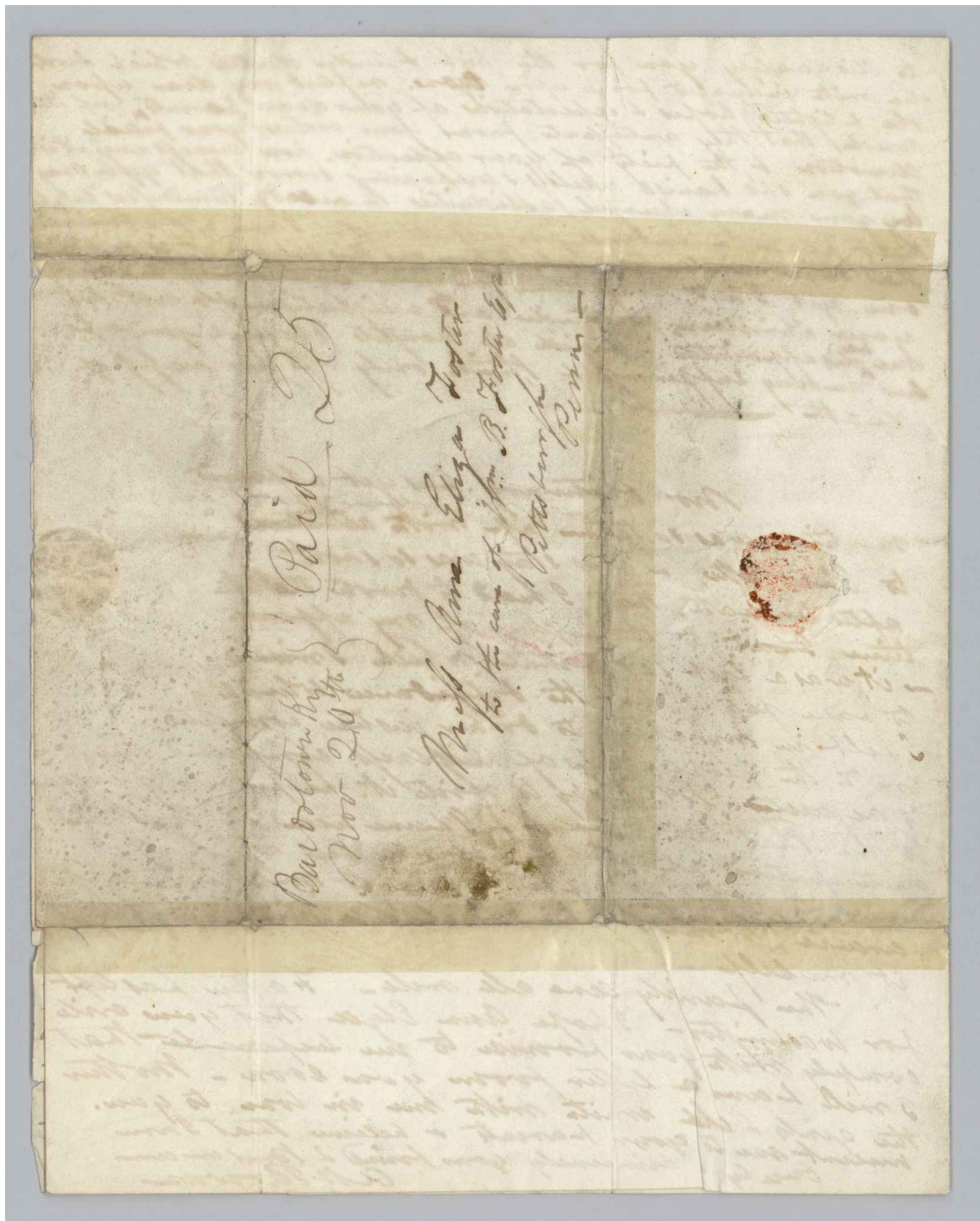
to disqualify you for the high & tender duties which devolve  
- we with increased force upon ~~you~~ us. reflect my dear upon  
the bright hopes & expectations of your dear parents, of the  
much that they anticipate from your virtues, your pious  
devotion & the piety of your affection. how necessary it is  
that you sh<sup>d</sup> banish wh<sup>o</sup>lly & unrelaxing sorrow that you may  
by your many cheerful assiduities to ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> necessary & necessary  
tasks place & induce forgetfulness. I am apprehending  
that I have written too much to you on this subject - it is a sad  
one. yet I had confidence in your equanimity - in  
your christian fortitude and resignation - do not let  
me <sup>be</sup> disappointed - banish all thoughts I believe you of  
her <sup>being</sup> suffering & think only of her happy  
death.

No obituary has yet appeared,  
my time was so taken up with attention  
to Charlotte & my stay was so short  
after her death, that I had to devote the little  
time I had to the urgency of my appoint-  
- it was a last sad tribute which I wished  
to have paid, but the diffidence which  
I felt in my ability to do her justice, connected  
with the perplexities of business, compelled me  
to request Mr. Cosby to write it. he promptly engaged  
to me that he wd do so & I have been in constant  
anticipation of it. I do not now feel at liberty to  
write it, but will if it does not make its ap-  
- <sup>pearance</sup> <sup>soon</sup> write to him & release him, & attempt  
it myself -

The family care all well - Father has left  
for Washington - I hope Ann Eliza that you will  
comply with your promise to me before that  
I will have a letter from you soon - Mother  
the girls & all write with me in love to you.  
wished me to <sup>write</sup> your parents & believe that I am  
truly, sincerely your friend & friend  
A. H. Rowan

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Barboursville } Paid 25  
Nov 20<sup>th</sup> }  
Messrs Anna Eliza Foster  
to the care of J. B. Foster Esq  
Pittsburgh  
Penn -