

New York. Friday Night
October 7, 1856

My dear Friend

When I say that you are the only friend I possess in this great city of two hundred thousand, I wish to be understood literally, and yet although I feel that to be the case as regards my conduct towards you, yet I do not for one moment entertain the opinion that there exists one common principle, which in your case can lead you to entertain other than the sentimentality of worldly feeling towards me, that this is the case is in my mind an irrevocable and settled truth, and it would require an unusual degree of sophistry to tear away that belief - Nor do I repine at this, there is a philosophy even in the most painful moments of my disordered range of thought which sustains present morbidities of imagination from utter misery, in examination of the materials of which society is formed, and when I investigate the mockery of his profession, and the promiscuity of all to deceive, I cannot hope that my experience will shadow forth the cases of honesty in friendship, which no one has ever been so fortunate as to encounter - From the very bottom of my soul do I credit the honesty of the fact, that Friendship is but a name, and although Miss Custerman may in after times pay the tribute of a passing thought to her quondam acquaintance, I am not so blind as to believe that the next moment of Caprice in the vicissitudes of the hour will not check the tide of remembrance, and cause a smile at the folly, rather than a kindly feeling for the deviation of him who now addresses her (her heart) for the last time. There is a crack brain'd enthusiasm, a leaning to the factious rather than the reality of life in my character, which makes me a sceptic upon the sincerity of my associates, and often this arises into a spirit of bitterness, which change to seas of fire, and melt in my brain with fearful power to denigrate & destroy - I love not mankind, and would willingly expatriate myself from revelations which bear me out in this, I do not Friendship, I care not for acquaintance, and it with the expression of my real sentiments that I now prefer a request singular in its expression, but since in the original principle, that henceforth we be as strange to each other - I would prefer not being brought within range of society, more than I am obliged to be through necessity - Let me indulge in my feelings, through the medium undisturbed - I write with the pen of my soul, I have not any intention in my peculiarities - I have it not in my power to serve you, if I would, for my interest is but trifling - I have willing feelings to do all in my power to aid you, but I desire to know - I would not turn on my heel to send a bullet, and I would not lift up my hand to name Miss Custerman from a general acquaintance - I am obliged to you, and ever the

and I would not have the first will of any, I have not any intrusion in my
peculiarities. I have it not in my power to serve you if I would, for my interest
is but trifling - I have willing feelings to do all in my power to aid you but I detest
the world - I would not turn on my heel to send a bullet, and I would not lift up my
finger to save man's kind from eternal damnation - I am crested myself, and every the
world its hollow pleasures and so purely selfish and I, that if a penny would feed the
hungry or clothe the destitute I would not give it - You may call this a base principle
but I care not what may be your views - I would as soon see your contempt as
your esteem, and when I say you I willingly include the whole human family - The
course of existence swallows up all former feelings, and though I was a big game sterner
and despised I would have exactly the same respect for myself, and pursue the same
course, hating the human race, and denying its honesty - I have but few things to
care for, and it is for them alone I wear the mask of society, these are those
so intimately interwoven with my best affections, that even the darkest night of my
misanthropy wears the living of peace and joy, when the forms of the few beings who
really love my cause upon the wings of fancy, and erect upon my heart - And I
do love them with an intensity of devotion proportioned to my hatred of all besides - But
when I reflect that they are but six in a community of six hundred millions, and
that all save that little circle are hollow headed egotists, conceited, dishonest, &
wary to slay all honour, it is not to be wondered that I am sad, very sad indeed
I am not saying, but thinking as I always do, and before Heaven I record here the belief
that apart from the love a mother bears her child, or a sister extends to her brother
there is not one, not one redeeming principle in the breast of any of the creatures to
whom God has given the semblance of Angels, but make them Devils without
it. Therefore you do not believe me sincere in my professions, you must hold me to be
an unprincipled liar, and if you do credit my assertions, you will readily yield
to my wish that from this time we remain, unknown to each, forget that we have
ever met, my folly, & my existence, and you will confer upon me a favour which
should you ever require my services, and pray God, you never may, will be a passport
to the ready tendering of my best energies to aid you in your plans.

all this you may say. Various of the ravings of a fool - It may be so, but I hug the folly
to my bosom and enjoy more selfish happiness in the delusion, if delusion it be, than you
or any of the Moths who flutter round the taper of friendship, and feed the fire that
eventually consumes you - I do not however hold these views with a wish to withdraw
myself from under, you the means of getting an idle honor when the world allows
you to enjoy one and as a proof of my sincerity - If you will inform me, through
your brother of your address in Albany, I shall from time to time send you such
reading matter as may in my opinion prove suitable for your perusal - My
situation does not preclude the Courtesy of life -

And now permit me to assume a character which I know will elicit your
rage, yet I care not; for your feelings towards me may pain me but cannot
make me more truly miserable than I already am. - The exposure is given, with
the purest motives, and although you may hold it impertinent, I feel my
self free from the charge - What benefit can you derive from an intimacy with
Miss Waring? You already know sufficient of her past character to judge
pretty accurately that her present cannot be of a character to warrant your
affection, or entitle her to your regard - Is your feeling towards her founded
upon the belief that she has emerged from the pool of pollution without its worst
poisonous waters having rusted the soul, and cankered the redeeming principle - No, No,
Woman once infamous but rarely recovers, the stigma of the sex is like a mirror
which once shattered, may never be rendered whole - There is no medium in your
sex, no half way stages of feeling, no reflections upon consequences, no patching
up of tainted reputations. Once straying from the paths of rectitude, and the
avenue to Virtue is forever closed by the obduracy of the Outpost, and the woman becomes
a Calypso, lost to Honour, Reputation & the dictates of Virtue. Nor is this all
Public opinion, that omnipotent engine before which all must bow, sets its very
finger upon the woman who has sinned, and is too apt to associate the support
with the supported - and suspicion throw its framing leaves upon the innocent sym-
pathizer with another view, I know your answer, and although I admire that noble
that glorious trait in your character which leads you to despise the world's doing, yet
reflect that you are but a woman, and defenceless against the arrows of Calumny -
Proud, noble minded & secure in your own unswerving integrity, you should yet be

that glorious merit in your Character which leads you to despise the world's Darts, you reflect that you are but a woman, and defenceless against the Arrows of Calumny. Proud, noble Minded & secure in your own Unswerving Integrity, you should yet be wary of the Withering malice of an imperfect world, and by a Course of Conduct as guarded as the Abbess of St Agnes prevent the blighting impertinence of a Scandal loving world. Miss Warren cannot have one trait that you can excuse - She is below you, far, immeasurably below you. She is deceitful, you are too lofty to stoop to dissimulation, - She has no Ambition, you are as aspiring as Genius ever is - She panders to the petty Rules of a petty profession, you scorn the 'lord of the green room' and must despise the Trade. In what then can you assimilate - In Nothing! And will you stoop from your lofty eminence to become the friend of such a thing I tremble Miss Mellina! What guarantee had you of her Sincerity? The word of a woman, twice dyed in - and the consequence was - such as might have been expected - yet there were reasons for believing that Miss M. might prove more trustworthy than the other can for she had the lucidity of the mind, which even in the most abandoned heart, asserts its sway and governs with a certain empire, the other has not, - Do you admit my arguments, or are you angry with me? The latter I expect - Well, be it so, and although such prove the case to your own heart, I leave the advocacy of my Motives - You dare not suspect me of a evil intention to insult you - I know I am discarding with one who possesses so strong and highly cultivated powers of discrimination, but you are too apt to judge mankind by the purity of your own heart, Alas! they should be viewed with doubt and fear - I may be wrong in my estimate of human integrity and boldly honour, - I am a depraived, miserable vagabond, but I fear me that but few of my fellows are better, and your sex may not claim entire exemption - With this expression of my opinion, ^{I close} and it would afford me much pleasure to learn that what I have said has had the effect intended, not that I wish to arrogate to myself a Mentor's right, nor do I care what course you pursue, further than that in looking on human nature, I ~~do~~ do not wish to see the County & talented becoming the tools of such a Creature as she is, who I have alluded to more discreetly than my opinion of her would allow, was it not for the original nature in (Miss)

Mrs Charlotte Cushman