

19 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 25 March 1775

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, f. 43

PRINTED: Rutt, I, i, p. 267

[(Mar 25. 75)]

Dear Sir

I am at length, I thank God, got well home and find all my family well. The girl was fully acquitted, and the young man will marry her.<sup>1</sup> Judge Blackstone<sup>2</sup> was exceedingly civil, and took several occasions of paying me compliments; so that the disagreeable business went off better than I could have expected. The Grand Jury did not find the bill, which, tho it did not prevent a public trial on the Inquest, made the ~~fav~~ favourable issue of it ~~→~~ pretty certain.

~~The~~ Two fresh boils (one of them the most painful I ever had) are now in their most inflamed state, and two others have just made their appearance. I take my pills &c however very punctually, and attend much to my diet. My apothecary here presses me ~~of~~ much to take crude Antimony but I wish to have M<sup>rs</sup> Lindsey's opinion ~~of~~ on the subject. There is no appearance that any medicine I have yet taken has done me any good. At present I am absolutely laid up; for the boils are so situated, that I cannot bear no sort of motion, and I cannot bear a strait coat.<sup>3</sup>

I inclose a letter I have just received, and wish you would inform me whether the writer be not an author, and what he has written. Please to return it soon, as I have not answered it.

I have got a cheap method of making my new air in large quantities; but cannot pursue my experiments as I would wish, on account of my boils. Otherwise I have many very promising things in view.

Do not fail to let me know how your own affairs go on, and especially what yo[[u]] do about the ground.<sup>4</sup>

I am with my wife's compliments to you both

Dear Sir

yours sincerely

J Priestley

Calne 25 March 1775

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<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Schofield writes of this passage: 'Just how Priestley became involved in what appears to have been a domestic tragedy is hard to understand, for he had then no congregation to which he was pastor. Nevertheless, he was clearly involved, perhaps as a character witness, and appears to have given pastoral advice' (Robert E. Schofield, *The Enlightenment of Joseph Priestley: A Study of His Life and Work 1773 to 1804* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 28. Schofield conjectures that the incident was the inspiration for Priestley's *Considerations for the use of Young Men and the Parents of Young Men* (1775).

<sup>2</sup> ? Sir William Blackstone (1723-1780), see Mar 1770.

<sup>3</sup> This paragraph is omitted from Rutt's edition.

<sup>4</sup> For Lindsey's chapel at Essex Street, which had opened on 17 April 1774.