PART I

New York Episcopalian Daughter,
Wife, Mother (1793-1803)
Letters and Notes

1793'

In Part I Elizabeth makes frequent references to the following family members: her husband, William Magee Seton (Will, Bill, My William, Seton, W.M., Friend William, W.M.S., Willy); her father, Dr. Richard Bayley (Father, papa, Grandfather B, grandpa); her sister, Mary Bayley Post (my sister, Aunt Post, Sister Post); her brother-in-law, Dr. Wright Post (Post, Brother Post); her children Anna Maria Seton (Anna), William (little William, Will, son William, Bill), Richard (Ricksy, Dick, Dox, Doxie, Doxy, Pinté, Dicksy), and Catherine (Kate, Kit, Cate, Fin); and her sisters-in-law Rebecca Seton

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The following note (ASJPH 1-3-3-9:66a) appears with the notes and letters from 1793: "+ the old nameless writings of Miss Bayley—soon to become Mrs. Seton and years after—the 1st Mother of the Daughters of Charity truly models of light innocent writings worth preserving + Brute." Brute used Daughters of Charity and Sisters of Charity interchangeably.

Rev. Simon Gabriel Brute de Remur, S.S., (1779-1839), returned from France to America with Bishop-elect Benedict Flaget, S.S. and served at both St. Mary's College and Seminary, Baltimore, Maryland, and Mount St. Mary's, Emmitsburg, Maryland, where he developed deep spiritual bonds with Elizabeth Seton. He became the spiritual director and chaplain for the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph's (1818-1834) and later the first bishop of Vincennes, Indiana (1834-1839).

The Sulpicians were founded in Paris in 1642 by Jean-Jacques Olier (1608-1657). Their mission is the formation and education of candidates for the priesthood. With Pierre de Bérulle (1575-1629) and St. John Eudes (1601-1680), Olier is considered one of the founders of the French school of spirituality. Olier was a friend and colleague of St. Vincent de Paul (1581-1660) in the spiritual renewal of the Catholic Church in France after the Council of Trent.

While in Europe for his episcopal consecration, John Carroll invited the Sulpicians to open a seminary in the United States. In 1791 the first Sulpicians, led by Rev. Charles Nagot, S.S., came to Baltimore and began St. Mary's Seminary.
(Beck, my own), Harriet Seton (Hatch, Ha), and Cecilia Seton (Celia, Cely, Cele). No information is available on some persons mentioned in the letters in which case they have not been footnoted.

1.1 To William Magee Seton

[n.d.]

My dearest Will—

I have resolved to do my duty and go and see Mrs. Dwight this afternoon and If the weather remains clear it is my intention to pass an hour with Mrs. Wilks1 in the Evening where you may have the honor of seeing me if you please—

Your EB

1.2 To William Magee Seton

[n.d.]

Your Eliza is well—and would be perfectly happy if she could enjoy the Society of her Friend

1.1 ASJPH 1-3-3-9:66b

2William Magee Seton (1768-1803) was the son of William and Rebecca Curson Seton. He was educated in England for six years and served briefly in the Bank of New York. In 1788 he toured the important counting houses in Europe and developed a friendship with Filippo Filicchi of the Filicchi firm in Leghorn (Livorno), Italy. Upon his return he joined Seton, Maitland and Company. His marriage to Elizabeth Ann Bayley January 25, 1794, was witnessed by the Episcopal bishop, Rev. Samuel Provost. The couple had five children, two boys and three girls. Despite a sea voyage for his health, William Magee died of tuberculosis December 27, 1803, at Pisa, Italy, and is buried in the cemetery of St. John's Anglican Church in at Leghorn, Italy.

Mary Seton Wilkes (d. 1801) was the wife of John Wilkes and a first cousin of William Magee Seton. John and his brother Charles were nephews of John Wilkes, a famous liberal member of Parliament and mayor of London. They came to New York in 1780 with letters of introduction to William Seton, Sr., from the Berries, Seton relatives in England. Charles Wilkes succeeded William Seton, Sr., as cashier of the Bank of New York. He worked at the bank forty years, eventually becoming its president as well as being involved in a number of civic endeavors. John Wilkes was also a business associate and friend of the Setons.

1.2 ASJPH 1-3-3-9:66c
I have wished very much to see you, and knew that Indisposition only could have prevented my wish—Tomorrow I will wait in anxious expectation—

Believe me Your own

1.3 To William Magee Seton

[n.d.]

My dearest Will—

Mrs. Sadler is not going to the Concert and wishes very much to see us there this Evening—do not be too late—

Yours EB

1.4 To William Magee Seton

[n.d.]

Your Eliza’s Eye is very Ugly but not very painful, but it will prevent the possibility of my going out Therefore you must devote a great deal of your time to me—come as early as possible—We shall dine at one to day as Post is going out of town—

Yours EB

1.3 ASJPH 1-3-3-9:66d

'Eliza Craig Sadler was a cherished friend of Elizabeth Seton and wife of Henry Sadler. Elizabeth frequently referred to her as Sad.

1.4 ASJPH 1-3-3-9:678a

'Dr. Wright Post (1766-1828) studied medicine under Dr. Richard Bayley and in Europe in 1792-93. He was a prominent New York surgeon and professor at Columbia College. Beginning in 1802, he served on the medical board of the Institution for the Inoculation of Smallpox with the objective of instructing physicians in the method of inoculation, preparing the vaccine, and providing free vaccine for the poor. He married Mary Magdalen Bayley June 10, 1790, thus becoming the brother-in-law of Elizabeth Bayley Seton. He died June 14, 1828.
1.5 To William Magee Seton

[n.d.]

An unavoidable Something obliges Mrs. [Eliza] Sadler to drink tea with Mrs. Constable—if you are anxious to see your Eliza you will find her at Mrs. Atkinsons at the Piano

Your own—

1.6 To William Magee Seton

[n.d.]

My Father1 dined with us and has gone I dont know where—I do not think you will meet him until the Evening.—Your apology is already made for one who is most earnestly interested in his good opinion of you—Your E will be in Wall Street2 by five o'clock and you shall then know more on the subject—

1.5 ASJPH 1-3-3-9:67b
1.6 ASJPH 1-3-3-9:68

1 Dr. Richard Bayley (1744-1801) was the son of William and Susannah LeConte Bayley. He studied medicine under Dr. John Charlton and three times traveled to England to study, twice under the famous Dr. William Hunter. He married Catherine Charlton January 9, 1767. The couple had three children, Mary Magdalen, Elizabeth Ann, and Catherine who died as a young child. After the death of his first wife, he married Charlotte Amelia Barclay June 16, 1778. They had seven children, three girls and four boys. A well known surgeon, he had a special interest in public health and was one of the first health officers of the Port of New York as well as a noted authority on yellow fever. He died at the quarantine station on Staten Island August 17, 1801. See Appendix A-1.6a for a description of Richard Bayley in Elizabeth's handwriting.

Catherine Charlton (?-1777) was the daughter of Rev. Richard and Mary Bayeux Charlton. Rev. Charlton was the rector of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Staten Island, from 1747 until his death October 7, 1777. Catherine died at Newtown (later Elmhurst), New York, May 8, 1777. At this time Newtown was in the hands of the British. Her brother Dr. John Charlton had a home there.

Dr. John Charlton was the son of Rev. Richard and Mary Bayeux Charlton. He studied medicine in England and upon his return became a prominent New York physician. Becoming head of the Medical Society in 1792, he oversaw its reorganization in 1794 as well as taking an active part in pressing for public health regulations. In addition he was active in Trinity Church. He married Mary de Peyster, the daughter of Abraham and Margaret van Courtlandt de Peyster.

2 According to the 1790 census, Dr. Bayley resided at 51 Wall Street.
Oh my dearest treasure how my heart does bless you for those two dear affectionate letters, and think of my not receiving either 'till six this afternoon, the person who left the first one said he had entirely forgot he had it. He little knew the happiness it would give or he could not have been so Inhuman as to have neglected sending it, while my eyes were riveted on it and I was revolving in my mind all the circumstances of your absence and the fatigue and vexations you might experience from the frenchman etc. in came Jackson\(^1\) with the other letter and then I was too happy and most grateful for your attention to the wishes of your little girl, ah my dearest Husband how useless was your charge that I should "think of you," that I never cease to do for one moment and my watery Eyes bear witness of the effect those thoughts have for every time you are mentioned they prove that I am a poor little weak Woman—

I dined with our Father\(^2\) and was so fortunate as to meet Mr. Fisher,\(^3\) He is really the most charming company that can be and I think I never was in my life more pleased with a stranger—We talked of you, you may be sure and he said that I must learn one thing which few women could acquire the first year of their marriage which was to let their Husbands "Act for the best"—We drank a bumper to-

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\(^1\)Probably one of the household servants

\(^2\)Elizabeth often used this term to refer to her father-in-law, William Seton, Sr., (1746-1798), who married Rebecca Curson March 2, 1767. The couple had four sons and one daughter. Seton was a principal in the import-export firm of Seton and Curson. After Rebecca Curson Seton’s death William Seton, Sr., married his sister-in-law, Anna Maria Curson in 1776. They had eight children, six girls and two boys. Anna Maria Curson Seton died August 22, 1792. Even though William Seton, Sr., was a Loyalist during the Revolutionary War, he retained most of his holdings after the war. In 1784 he became the cashier of the newly organized Bank of New York, a position he held for ten years. In 1794 he became a principal in another mercantile firm, Seton, Maitland and Company. He died June 9, 1798, as a result of a fall on the ice several months earlier.

\(^3\)Probably a friend or business associate of William Magee Seton
gether to your health and speedy return⁴ and He addressed me with all the familiarity and affection of Old friendship “Well Eliza if thee should ever visit Philadelphia come and stay with us” etc. You don't know how much he delighted me for it was certainly Complimenting my Husband in being so kind to his wife whom he can esteem only from her being such—for he cannot judge me worthy of his friendship on any other ground

I drank tea with Mrs. Fitch⁵ at Mrs. Whites (my neighbor) and from there went to papas, not finding him home I went [to] your Aunt Farquhars⁶ because I knew you would wish it and from there returned to papa’s ate our Supper and here we are at 1/2 past ten, Eliza’ Asleep and your little Darly⁷ cheerful as may be gratifying her self for I am sure you will be tired of my small-talk

Oh my love think of our poor little friend [Eliza] Sadler[.] She has been ran away with and thrown against a tree by the Crazy horse and almost Bruised to Death, Post happened very fortunately to be at Mrs. M. Hoffmans (at Mr. Willetts) where she was going and gave her every possible assistance but he thinks (altho’ no bones are broke) that she cannot be moved for some time. I hope to go and see her tomorrow as I pass the day with Mr. Fitch and then I will tell you more—It really makes my heart ache to think of her melancholy Situation—

If I could have but one peep at you to know you were comfortable—but the Idea of the Inconveniences you may be suffering while these arms Heart and bed are all forlorn without you—I will not go to bed as I did last night for altho it was twelve I did not close my Eyes ‘till three there fore I will take my Bible and read till I am sleepy—Heaven Bless and Protect you—

Thursday morning—

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⁴William Magee Seton was on a business trip to Philadelphia.
⁵Mary Fitch, an intimate family friend, became one of the godparents of Elizabeth’s first child.
⁶Elizabeth Curson Farquhar was a maternal aunt of William Magee Seton. Elizabeth often referred to her as Auntie F.
⁷Elizabeth Seton Maitland (1779-1807) was the oldest child of William and Anna Maria Curson Seton and a sister-in-law of Elizabeth Seton. In 1797 she married James Maitland (d. 1808), a business associate of William Magee Seton. She was known as Eliza and left five young children at the time of her death in March 1807.
⁸Elizabeth herself
I tremble for you my Darly on account of the weather the day will be almost insupportably hot, but I must trust that Mercy which alone can preserve you from every danger, it is past nine and I think you arrived or near it, and if you write by today’s post tomorrow I shall have a letter, in the hope of which I will be as cheerful as possible—My father just past in a Charriage and nodded his head I suppose he is just arrived, ‘tis strange I’ve seen nothing of the letter you mentioned—

the little picture surprised you I scarcely know what I meant by putting it there, I wish it could express what the Original does, you must fancy it smiles and is continually beckoning you to return—Your picture is so melancholy that I don’t love to look at it in your absence, it indulges too many fancies which my dismal imagination is ready enough to represent—two days are quite gone thank fortune and the third begun. I must look forward to tomorrow and tomorrow—O [unclear] desires his love to his dear papa. Hope travels on nor quits us till we die—love your dear little girl and give her as much of your leisure time as you can without fatiguing yourself—good-by

Your Own E.A.Seton

1796

1.8 To Eliza Sadler

New York 8th February 1796—

At last I have received your letter by Morison and as it is nearly five months old I hope I shall receive a fellow to it soon—and really Mrs. Sad il facto you go to Balls on Sunday night, you depraved creature, and what Balls or amusement can compensate for that quiet calm tranquility which Sunday and particularly Sunday Evening affords with Husband shaking his Slipper by a good coal fire and a volume of

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9Elizabeth herself

10The signature is enclosed in a box and a circle.

1.8 ASJPH 1-3-3-7:1

9Eliza Craig Sadler, who frequently traveled to Europe, was in Paris at the time.
Blair opened on the table. But avast, I am an American savage; I suppose and should not mention these dull insipidities to a lady in the largest metropolis in the world and who can go to see Blond Perugues on Sunday Eve and I suppose jump among the gayest and after all my sad the effects of their manner may be as useful as ours and as I think the first point of religion is cheerfulness and harmony they who have these in view are certainly right.

According to my calculations with Post counting our fingers to the names of the months you are on the Eve of your departure from France, and so much the better for tho' you may be settled as if seven years had passed since you are there yet I would rather hear that you were almost anywhere else, peace and a potatoe for me I care not for rooms as big as a church, great buildings, busy servants or Perugues and as for your Boule[v]ards I dare say they are very inferior to the pure air, fine prospect and gliding cement of our Battery—I grant that the society of it might be improved but never mind, that we will form that to each other—but certainly my sad I almost envy you the view of so fine a country and your description of the people awakens what formerly was a reigning passion in my breast, a curiosity to see the world and Europeans in particular, but all that is long ago laid aside—a half a dozen form my World—

At this moment William is playing "rosy dimpled Boy," "pauvre Madelon return," "enraptured hours" and "Caermignol" all as fast as the violin can sound them in rotation so you may suppose my thoughts have a great deal of consistence—as they are addressed to

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2 A book of sermons by Hugh Blair, minister of the High Church and professor of rhetoric and belles-lettres at the University of Edinburgh. In their original publication the ninety-one sermons formed five volumes.
3 Wigs worn by men of the period
4 A section of New York at the tip of lower Manhattan at water's edge. Beginning in 1789, the city of New York began a program to refurbish this area which was the site of the original colonial fortification. By 1793 a spacious walk ran along the water's edge shaded by elm trees. It became a popular promenade for "genteel folk" as well as a fashionable residential area.
5 William Magee Seton, Elizabeth's husband, brought the first known Stradivarius violin to America. William Magee enjoyed playing the violin while Elizabeth was accomplished on the piano. Throughout the years of their married life, music brought a great deal of enjoyment to their family.
you it is no matter how they are formed, they must all tell that I love you—

Respecting a certain pair of eyes, they are much nearer to black than any other color which with a small nose and mouth, dimpled cheek and chin, rosy face and never ceasing animation, and expression forms an object rather too interesting for my pen. Her grand Father B will tell you that he sees more sense expression, intelligence and enquiry in that little face than any other in the world, that he can converse more with her than any woman in New York, in short, she is her mother's own daughter, and you may be sure her Father's pride and treasure—So some little Beings are Born to be treasured while others are treated with less attention by those who give them Being than they receive from their hirelings—but it is all right, and often those who want the fostering indulgent bosom of a Parent to lean on, get cheerful through the world whilst the child of Hope will have its prospects darkened by unthought of disappointments—and so we go, there is a Providence which never slumbers or sleeps—but as my husband begins to gap, the clock strikes ten, and my fingers are cold. I must say good by tho' suddenly for my friend William only gave me 'till tomorrow, or the vessel will go without this my assurance that neither time or absence can change my unvaried affection for you—

My William says he waits impatiently for the letter you promise for which you shall have a very long N.B. The Box which contains my music is not yet opened, I shall learn it I am sure with very little difficulty as Simplicity is your taste—

My very best regards to my friend H—Yours ever E A Seton—

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6Anna Maria Seton (1795-1812) was born May 3. She was the oldest child of Elizabeth Bayley and William Magee Seton and accompanied her parents to Italy in 1803. She came to Emmitsburg in June 1809 with her mother and expressed a desire to die as a Sister of Charity of Saint Joseph's. She made her vows shortly before she died March 12, 1812. She is buried in the original cemetery at Emmitsburg.

7Henry Sadler, husband of Eliza Craig Sadler, was a wealthy English merchant who had settled in New York. Located at 215 Water Street, the firm of Sadler and Bailie was a dealer in "cloths, wines, indigo, and tobacco."
To Eliza Sadler

11 August 1796

Do you not think that after all the anxiety I have lately known on your Account, I kissed the letter and placed it in my Bosom, which told me that you were quietly living among all the tumults which surround you. The first of June was also a later date than I expected, and from some other circumstances also this dear letter conveys a greater Joy to my Heart than any I have received since we parted. You love me, and yet call me dearest—The longer I live and more I reflect and know how to value the realities of Friendship, the more precious that distinction becomes, and I look forward to the dear Hope that my Sweet Child will also enjoy it—You need not fear to lose me—no my Sad every hour I pass shows me the Instability of every expectation which is not founded on reason. I have learnt to commune with my own Heart, and I try to govern it by reflection, and yet that Heart grows every day more tender and softened, which I in great measure I attribute to the state of my Williams Health, that Health on which my every Hope of Happiness depends and which continues me either the most perfect Human felicity or sinks me in the lowest depths of sorrow—That Health certainly does not mend and I often think very much decreases, and altho’ it is my fixed principle both as a Christian and a reasonable Being never to dwell on thoughts of future events which do not depend on myself, yet I never view the setting sun or take a solitary walk but melancholy tries to seize me, and if I did not fly to my little Treasure and make her call Papa and kiss me a thousand times I should forget myself—This disposition is also increased by the expectation of another precious Sharer of my self whether it be

1.9 ASJPH 1-3-3-7:2

1Elizabeth may have been referring to the fact that military and political tensions between Britain and France in the 1790s led the French to declare that all United States ships en route to Britain were subject to search.

2Anna Maria Seton, Elizabeth’s oldest child

3Tuberculosis ran in the Seton family. William Magee Seton was beginning to show signs of it.

4Anna Maria Seton

5Elizabeth’s second child was due in November.
happy or the reverse; therefore my Sad I am become a looker-up which is certainly the only remedy for my description of sorrow. Yes dear Sad I shall have an Ang[el] in each hand to receive you—and how will you express your emotion—who will you fix your eye on—how often will you say dear dear Eliza—

Next November will be the month of my confinement and in that time how many thoughts of my Sad will be mixed with others dear and interesting. Mama Fiter has no longer the same cares and attentions for me, without being particularly the reverse. My William dines and sups with her constantly and every office of good will and kindness is fulfilled quietly and uniformly. It is all right and perhaps the failure on her part is greatly owing to my not having the same leisure I once had for Intercourse of a different description—But on my Part my Sad (You are not to be deceived) I am Irrecoverably lost to Her and where Esteem does not exist how can I express friendship—the moon might as well meet the Sun—but be assured I never will forget that she is in Years—a Stranger—and has fought many a hard battle for me added to which her kindness and attention have been those of a Mother, feeling these things as I do, do not fear—

Julia is a little vain Shadow and never Interests me but when she is in sickness or sorrow—then I fly to her, hold her in my Bosom till the Storm is past, and only care enough for her to hold the chain together until it comes round again W.C. is the best and most valuable Male Friend I have in the world except my two bests; I do not know his equal and never before saw a man who I would so readily choose for a Brother[,] every body who knows him thinks well of him and he rather seems to enjoy the respect given to a man of forty, settled in Life than

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6Juliana (Julia) Sitgreaves Scott (1765-1842) was the first daughter of William and Susanna Deshon Sitgreaves. She was born in Philadelphia and after her marriage to Lewis Allaire Scott January 15, 1785, she lived in New York. The couple had two children, John Morin Scott and Maria Litchfield Scott. Julia moved from New York to Philadelphia in 1798 shortly after her husband's death and lived with her sister, Mrs. Charlotte Sitgreaves Cox. She was a lifelong confidante and benefactor whose friendship Elizabeth Seton cherished. They carried on an extensive correspondence until Elizabeth's death in 1821.

7William Craig was the brother of Eliza Craig Sadler. He later married Elizabeth's half-sister, Charlotte Amelia Bayley.

8William Magee Seton, Elizabeth's husband, and Dr. Richard Bayley, her father
the passing Approbation generally bestowed on men so young and in-
experienced—

Do you know that it is two months since I have written to you
and yet those months are spent in scenes familiar to you and which
forever remind me of you. I cannot Spell you the place that is past
my art, but it is certainly one of the pleasantest and best calculated
for real retirement of any I ever met with. You remember your situ-
ation on Long Island\(^9\) with Mrs. White[.\] \(^10\) I am about two miles
nearer the Narrows, \(^11\) enjoying every comfort of the country with-
out a single Interruption of visitors, servants or any other diffi-
culty—My Will\(^12\) comes three times a week, and when the moon
shines every evening—

You are surprised to hear we are not at Mr. [John] Wilkes or rather I
believe you forswove it would be so—however my William has man-
aged it so as not to give offence and my Daughter having the Lax\(^13\)
with cutting her teeth made the necessity for Sea-air evident—I never
before enjoyed the pleasures of the country so perfectly. Sister Post\(^14\)
is within a hundred yards on one side and if I but had you my Sad,
the other I should have every charm of society—My Father is Health offi-
cer of New York and runs down in his Boat very often to see us, and
when he meets me and little love he says there never was such a pair,
that he sees no such cheerful welcome expression in any other eyes in
the world—You may believe it for there never was truer affection in
any Heart than in Mine towards him—

You do not tell me if you preserve your Health—I well remember
those violent head-achs you used to suffer and my friend H[enry
Sadler] is he merry and cheerful as ever? You must tell me many many

\(^9\)The Sadlers had a summer home on Long Island, an island roughly parallel to the shore of New
York and Connecticut.

\(^10\)A neighbor of Elizabeth

\(^11\)A strait connecting upper and lower New York Bay and separating Staten Island from Brooklyn

\(^12\)William Magee Seton worked in the city while Elizabeth and her daughter were at a summer
home on Long Island.

\(^13\)A nineteenth century term for diarrhea

\(^14\)Mary Magdalen Bayley Post (1768-1856), Elizabeth's sister, was the oldest daughter of Dr.
Richard and Catherine Charlton Bayley. She married Dr. Wright Post in 1790 and had nine children,
seven of whom lived, Edward, Lionel (Leo), Catherine Charlton, Richard Bayley, Eugene, Mary,
and Emily.
things my Sad, if we are still to be so long separate—and may you long enjoy the singing of sweet Birds, but not in Europe, come here and hear my Bird sing, it has the sweetest voice—and you may take it Home and enjoy it both Summer and Winter—

I am very glad that I have written you to day as I find a vessel sails on Sunday and so much I have at heart your Remembrance of me as your Dearest that I would not have missed the chance of your hearing from me on any account W[illiam] C[raig] was to tell me where to write you, but he is a man of business and I forgive him, tho’ in future I will write if only five lines by every opportunity as I am sure you will have many anxieties for me—

Dearest Sad may every blessing of a contented mind be yours think of me as one who often thinks of you and who hopes notwithstanding all the changes and chances, to meet you soon with the welcome of true affection—

most Sincerely Your E.A.S.

1797

1.10 To Dr. Richard Bayley

New York 13th February 1797

My Father

This is to intreat and implore you to smile on me when we meet, and not to punish me with the well merited reproof my Conscience has prepared for me. as an Apology is useless when the person who is to offer it is convinced of the fault committed, and as it often occasions embarrassment and additional error, I hope you will admit in its place the plain Truth, that I am well My Husband better my Son and
Daughter! Admirable etc. etc.—that the most pleasant day I have yet experienced or anticipate in this month of February is the one which will return you to me, a circumstance very generally wished, but most particularly by your very affectionate Daughter E.A. Seton.

The Soap Boilers and Tallow chandlers talk of petitioning the Legislature for a removal of the Health Officer.

1.11 To Eliza Sadler

Long Island 18th June 1797

My Precious Sad—

as I scarcely know any thing necessary to the completion of my present comforts and satisfaction but the assurance of your Health and safety, I mean in the course of general events, for if instead of hearing from you, you were with me, I should be too well contented. The mild, peaceful flow of the river before our dwelling,¹ always inspires me with ideas of you, and increases the melancholy of regret which thoughts of absent friends inspire, but I have no friends to cause that regret, and no bosom to sigh for but yours, for I have none which calls forth the same kind of affection with yourself, none that I would unite with my William to increase the delight of my Evening hours.

¹Anna Maria Seton and William Seton (1796-1868). He was born November 25 and was the oldest son of Elizabeth Bayley and William Magee Seton. He attended both Georgetown College in Washington, D.C., and St. Mary’s College in Baltimore and was among the first students at Mount St. Mary’s College, Emmitsburg. From 1815 to 1817, he learned mercantile procedures under the tutelage of the Filicchi family in Leghorn, Italy. He served in the United States Navy (1818-1834) and married (1832) Emily Prime (1804-1854), the daughter of a New York banker. They had nine children of whom seven lived. He led the life of a country gentleman, dividing his time between travel and residence at his wife’s beautiful estate, Cragdon, in Westchester County, New York. He and some members of his family are buried in the old cemetery at Mount St. Mary’s near the entrance to the present National Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes.

¹¹Dr. Richard Bayley, health officer of the newly created Board of Health Commissioners, was responsible for public health issues. In 1797 the powers of the Health Office commissioners were strengthened by conferring on them the right to make ordinances for cleaning the city. Standing water and sewage in the streets where the soap and candle makers worked were the objects of part of their attempts to clean up the streets.

1.11 ASIPH 1-3-3-7-3

¹They were at a summer home on Long Island facing the East River.
You may probably recollect a House of Mr. Livingstons\(^2\) on the East river opposite the Battery and facing Governors Island\(^3\)—Sister Post divides the House with us, and the pleasure of recieving our Husbands together in the Evening, the company and protection we are to each other, when they are detained from us, counterbalances every inconvenience which a union of families always occasions,—we have as yet recieved nothing but pleasure and comfort from our Establishment and the offering of fresh Bread, Butter, and coffee to the dear well beloved Father of us, after a fatiguing sail in his Health Office employment is a satisfaction of which you can well form an Estimate.

Last Evening when my William, Sister, Post, and some Gentlemen were walking, I was detained at Home to put my Boy\(^4\) asleep, sitting on the sill of the door with my Baby sleeping at my Breast, the Heavenly tranquil view of every thing round me—you will readily believe when I tell you that I felt my face wet with tears whilst thinking how far distant you were from what we could so well enjoy together—I am always anticipating pleasure, and in my imagination I have painted scenes for next summer which far exceed even these, which I so well know how to value—

29th June

I have been too melancholy and depressed this week past to attempt writing for I should only unnecessarily distress you by communicating feelings to you which time and reason only can alleviate. Catherine Cooper with whom so many of my past days have been spent in friendship and affection is dying in the most melancholy manner, unconscious of the change she is making of this world for the next. Can there be a subject of more sorrowful reflections. Miss Colden\(^5\) is passing the same scene with her, which she has already done with Mrs. O. Hoffman\(^6\) and I really believe her to be a far greater sufferer than my poor friend in all the horrors of the cramp and a rapid

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\(^2\)There were several prominent Livingston families in New York at the time.
\(^3\)The southern tip of Manhattan and a small island in New York harbor
\(^4\)William Seton, Elizabeth's oldest son
\(^5\)The Coldens, a prominent New York family, were neighbors of the Setons. Miss Colden later became Mrs. E. W. Laight.
\(^6\)Possibly Mrs. Ogden Hoffman, the wife of a prominent attorney
consumption. Sweet amiable girl, may her latter days be more peaceful and fortunate than the present. I have much to lament in the loss of Mrs. Cooper for it is not easy to meet with such unreserved affectionate attachment as she has always expressed to me more by manner than by words—but my Sad I have already made the estimate of Human life too-well to grieve for her fate unconnected with the distressing effect it must have on those she leaves behind her.

—W[illiam] C[raig] has passed one Afternoon with me since I have been here, and I very much fear, that without great care he will suffer in his Health, as he is scarcely ever without pain in the Head and uneasiness of the Breast. When I caution him, he gives that throw of the chin which expresses, “and what matter is it”—he is too good and too valuable not to excite the greatest interest in his friends when his health is in question. He confirms the Hope you have given me that four or five months will end our separation, and I am sure I have no expectation more cherished and indulged than that of meeting you again—My Father says Heavens how I wish I could see her, and my William in his mild manner answers Yes I wish we had them well over their dangers and difficulties, your friend smiles on them and secretly prays, Heaven grant it—

I am rocking the cradle with one hand, with a book on my knee to substitute my cabinet which is left in New York. Anna Maria is close by my side putting her Dolly to sleep and I will cut a lock of her beautiful hair for you which curls in a thousand ringlets over her head. She is one of the loveliest beings my Eyes ever beheld. Yours may have seen many more so, but a Mother sees thro’ a vail which renders the object as she wishes it—My father says you will take her from me, but I deny it for she does not possess those gentle expressions of sensibility which you so much admire—I only have the least influence with her, because her disposition is exactly my own.

Give my affectionate Rememberance to my friend H[enry Sadler] and may the best blessings of Heaven be Yours—

Your E.A.S.
The great length of time since we heard from our dear Sad has now become a serious concern to me, and if our friend H[enry Sadler] had not written to one of his correspondants in N[ew] Y[ork] I should certainly think that some new evil had separated us still further from the desired point, for if ever we meet again it will be gaining a point to me on which hangs many of my favourite expectations—A Mr. Lawrence also has told my William that Mrs. S[adler] was well two months ago, enjoying the agréments de Paris,\(^1\) more in earnest than any one there, that she was in one continued scene of amusement—This was repeated at the Breakfast table, on which my Sister addressed me with a look of sagacity “there you see what your gentle, sentimental friend has come to.” I observed that it was one of the fixed sentiments of my friend, to submit to all matters of necessity with a good grace and that as you probably would never see Paris again you were right in enjoying all the good it affords. It has several times been insinuated to me that in your absence you will lose that interest you once took in a little retired uninformed personage, who possesses neither fashion nor fancy, but the idea has never given me a moments pain, for when I received the first carresses of my Sad she knew as much of the world as she does now, and I dread no alienation from a Heart that values candour and nature more than refinement and grace, where they are not to be found—the only subject of reflection with me is, that you will find me in a situation which I fill with all the carelessness of an old possessor, whilst to you, unaccustomed to see me in it, every blemish will be instantly discovered, and of them (Heaven knows my consciousness and desire of doing better) there are too many—

My little Daughter\(^2\) is the object of all others which I most fear to present to you, tho’ I dare say she is the one you most wish to see, she possesses from her Mother a most ungovernable temper and with all

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1.12 ASJPH 1-3-3-7:4

\(^1\)The pleasures of Paris

\(^2\)Anna Maria Seton, Elizabeth’s oldest child
my endeavours is past all management. My William leaves her to me, My Father tells me, conquer her by gentleness. Post and my Sister recommends Wipping, which is to me an unnatural resource, and the last I shall have recourse to—Send me a word of advice on this subject, or rather make hast to set me right, and assist me in a case which demands more resolution, than any situation I have hitherto experienced—

10th August—

And where are all my dreams and fancys fled, you again delay your long wished for return,—and next spring promises what so many seasons have disappointed, that I scarcely dare look forward even to that—The happy Evenings I have pictured to my Imagination music, reading, all must be given to the winds, for I will not indulge expectations which it is in the power of chance again to deprive me of—You speak of me as independant of you; do you not know that there is not an hour of my Life in which I do not want either the advice or soothings of Friendship, and I sacredly declare that you Eliza S. are the only person to whom I could commit the guidance of my conduct in preference to the impulse of my own Judgement, therefore never again say that you are not necessary to me, for it is utterly impossible that any one else should fill that place in my estimation which affection and experience has assigned to you. I know that this declaration is unnecessary but my heart has so often made it, that I can not refuse myself the indulgence of expressing it—

15th August

My beloved little William was very unwell when I wrote the above, and he has since been so ill, with inflammation in his bowells that my Father thought he could not recover.—Could I speak to you in the language of my feelings, should I attempt to express what passed in my Heart in any moment of that time whilst his recovery was uncertain, you would lament that Heaven had allowed me the privilege of being a Mother, for what is there in the uncertainty of human happiness to repay the agonizing convulsion of those twenty four hours in which I witnessed his sufferings.
yet it is all past, and he is quietly sleeping in his cradle—[unclear]
forgetfulness of sufferings and appears as well as if he had not been ill. My bosom is yet trembling and dares not trust itself with the joyful
emotions which present themselves, and takes the pleasures of the
present hours with the same silent submission with which it has
endured the past.—

I will write again very shortly, and tho' time and chance and sorrow
comes to all, and I must take my share, they all united will only draw
me nearer to that friend to whom I look for comfort and Sympathy in
all events, and with whom I hope to share much Peace and pleasure in
time to come. in the meanwhile may they attend you every where—

E.A.S.

1.13 Draft to Mrs. John Seton

Surely my dear Grandmother will not be surprised at my writing to
her, to express a small share of that sincere affection I have always felt
for her since I have been the wife of her W. M. and the Daughter of a
son who so affectionately loves her, and thro' whom I have had the
happiness to receive her good wishes for our <happiness> welfare.

<My William> If we could but be so happy as to present our Son and
daughter to you, then indeed we should show our claims to your love
for there never was two sweeter children. little William is all a moth-
ers heart can wish in health, Life, and Beauty and from his promise of
goodness sweetness of temper I have reason to hope he will indeed be
a third William. Our little Anna Maria is Our<companion and> hearts
delight and already our companion and dearest amusement<she
promises>

1.13 ASJPH 1-3-3-7:70

1Elizabeth Seton Seton (1719-1797) was the paternal grandmother of William Magee Seton. She
and her husband, John Seton (1712 - ?), had two sons, John and William, and five daughters, Isabella
Seton Cayley, Jane Seton Symnot, Elizabeth Seton Berry, Margaret Seton Seton, and Barbara Seton
Seton. Elizabeth usually first wrote her formal letters in draft form before copying them. Many times
this draft is the only extant copy of the correspondence.

2William Seton, Sr., Elizabeth’s father-in-law
Elizabeth’s extensive correspondence with Julia Scott began in 1798. In these letters she frequently referred to members of Julia’s family: her siblings, Charlotte Sitgreaves Cox (sister, Sister Charlotte), Samuel Sitgreaves (Brother Samuel, Brother S.), and John Sitgreaves (Brother, Brother John); and her children, Maria and John (Jack) Scott.

After the death of William Seton, Sr., in June 1798, Elizabeth and William Magee Seton inherited responsibility for William’s younger half-sisters and -brothers, Mary, Charlotte, Harriet, Samuel, Edward, and Cecilia. Elizabeth made frequent references in her letters to “the girls” and “the boys” who were away at school. She also frequently referred to her sister-in-law, Elizabeth Seton Maitland (Lidy, Eliza, Sister Maitland, Lize, Lize). Household workers of whom she spoke are Mammy Huler, Malta, Phoebe, Luke, Sukey, and Pete.

1.14 To Eliza Sadler

My own dear Sad—

Friend William has just left me, and with him has carried Hopes which has for many days been cherished with more than usual delight, for the certainty of seeing you in the spring has for some time past so forceably pressed on my mind, that you have been concerned in every plan of comfort, and a sharer of every certainty of pain (which I know must come) in the approaching season. But now he tells me that he will not be surprised if the next letter from London declares your intention of remaining in Europe—He is perfectly sick at the idea, nor do I ponder, for a state of Uncertainty is terrible indeed—

The last time I wrote you (almost two weeks ago) I meant to have had a letter ready for whatever opportunity presented, but Fate orders all things, and since that time has ordered the Husband of my poor little Julia Scott, to the regions of Peace—I have not left her night or day

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1.14 ASJPH 1-3-3-7:5

1This letter is not extant.

2Lewis Allaire Scott (1759-1798) was the oldest son of Helena Rutgers and John Morin Scott. He served as secretary of state of New York from 1789 to 1793. He married Julianna Sitgreaves January 15, 1785.
during the excess of her Sorrow and such scenes of terror I have gone thro’ as you nor no one can conceive—’tis past—little Julia goes to Philadelphia next week, where she is to fix her residence, as her Family connections are all there. and I am once more Home ten thousand times more delighted with it than before, from witnessing the Horrors of a Separation and derangement in that of my friend.

My precious children¹ stick to me like little Burrs, they are so fearful of losing me again, the moment I shake one off one side another clings in the opposite, nor can I write one word without some sweet interrup­tion—the Charlotte sails to-morrow, and I was determined to tell you myself that we are well, and that dear Aunt Sad is lisped by both my Angels on every occasion which conveys an idea of future pleasure, and that the thought of seeing her is one of the dearest Hopes of E.A.S.

1.15 To Julia Scott¹

New York 16th April 1798

Colonel [Aquila] Giles² has just called to say that his Deputy leaves New York for Philadelphia at three o’clock. My children are both in my charge poor Mammy³ being sick a bed, but nothing shall ever interrupt the course of my affection for you or prevent my expressing it whenever it is in my power. I am very anxious to hear of your arrival and I hope you will satisfy me, if it is only by putting the pen in Maria’s⁴ hand, who will be an excellent Substitute when you are either busy or lazy, with the advantage also of giving her the habit of writing, and do

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¹Anna Maria and William Seton

1.15 ASJPH 1-3-3-6:1

¹Julia Scott’s husband died in March 1798. Elizabeth spent many hours with Julia in her time of sorrow, helping her to pack her belongings and close her house in preparation for her and her children’s move to Philadelphia. Until the time of her death, Elizabeth maintained a correspondence with Julia.

²Colonel and Mrs. Aquila Giles were New York friends of Julia Scott. Aquila Giles was a lawyer and wealthy landowner in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn.

³A servant in the Seton household

⁴Maria Litchfield Scott (1789-1814) was the daughter of Lewis Allaire and Julia Sitgreaves Scott. In 1812 she married Peter Pederson, consul general and chargé d’affaires of His Majesty, the King of Denmark, to the United States. She died in Copenhagen, Denmark, November 7, 1814.
not fear to lessen my pleasure in hearing from you by so doing for you
know that one of the first rules of my happiness is to be satisfied with
good in whatever degree I can attain it, besides which it is very material
that absence should not efface me from Maria's remembrance as I have
not yet lost the Hope that my Anna may one day be as dear to her as you
are to me—difference of Age after a certain period is very immaterial
and rather adds to affection by creating that kind of confidence we have
in those who are at an age to Judge of our particular feelings, and yet
have more experience to give weight to advice—I forget that Futurity
has no part in your calculations, but where it is the source of pleasurable
Ideas I am very fond of dwelling on the good it offers—

You meeting with your Family must have been a scene of so much
pain to you as well as pleasure, that I please myself with the Hope that
it is over—And may Heaven grant you Peace in return for all the sorrow
and confusion you have passed thro' Here—

Poor Miss Chippy⁵ will write I suppose by this opportunity—She is
a proof with respect to myself, how liable we are to err in our Judgments
respecting others except we thoroughly know the motives of their ac-
tions for unfeeling and unkind as I must appear to her in affecting not to
understand her oddities of behaviour I really and truly pity her Situation—She was at church yesterday; tho' I had not the pleasure of meeting
her Eye—My Father is murmuring still at the manner of your
departure, and never comes in without saying something about you—

Give my very best love to dear Sister Charlotte,⁶ and tell Brother
John⁷ that I never shall forget him.

Kiss your children for me and think of me as I am,

Yours most affectionately E.A.Seton

⁵ Probably Miss Shipton, a mutual friend of Elizabeth and Julia
⁶ Charlotte Sitgreaves, sometimes called "Lott," was the daughter of William and Susanna
Deshon Sitgreaves and the sister of Julia Sitgreaves Scott. After her sister Mehitable's death
Charlotte married her widower brother-in-law, James Cox, January 4, 1787, at St. Paul's Church in
Philadelphia. James Cox was the president of the Pennsylvania Insurance Company.
⁷ John Sitgreaves (1763-1798) was born in Philadelphia, the son of William and Susanna Deshon
Sitgreaves and brother of Julia Sitgreaves Scott. He never married and died of yellow fever.
Dearest Julia

I received your precious letter last Friday, and it added a particular share of pleasure to a day which I always appropriate to Content and Peace, the 20th of April is the Birth day of Him who gives me every thing1—Your letter proved to me that I sometimes look on the dark side of the question as well as my neighbours, for nothing but the assurance from yourself could have persuaded me that you would have arrived in Philadelphia in any other state than that of serious Illness; I bless the Merciful Providence Who has granted us this Indulgence and implore the care of your good angel for the future, who if it should ever be inclined to remissness or inattention in your concerns will receive many a check from mine—Perhaps you do not believe in the Doctrine of Angels But I think I can trace the truth of it both from Reason and Scripture; and a certain proof I had of it on Friday night—I went thro’ all the storm, with my sister to the Theatre for a frolick, we came out in a violent thunder gust and got in our Hack with carriages before behind and a side—the coachmen quarrelling, first one wheel would crack, than another, and we passed a full half hour in the embarrassment, you know how much I like such situations, but my Guardian Angel landed me safe in Wall Street2 without one single Hysteric—indeed I think [I] ought to take a review of my adventures last week for your Amusement as I know every thing I can say about your friends in New York will please you.

—Poor Nany Brown received my first visit and I declare to you that she perfectly made me love her by her affectionate kind expressions about you—her situation is deplorable but I believe is getting

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1William Magee Seton, Elizabeth’s husband, was born April 20, 1768, on board the ship Edward while his parents were returning to America from a visit with relatives in England.

227 Wall Street was the Seton residence from 1795 to 1798. The Wall Street of the 1790s was lined with splendid private residences and the walls of the rebuilt Trinity Church rose after 1790 to grace the upper end of the street. The beauty of the remodeled City Hall made Wall Street the focal point of all civic and official life.
better every day—Mrs. Giles and Miss S. received my next attention, *(all in due order)* and shewed me the very extremes of Civility and good humour I mentioned with all the necessary expression, your message of regards, which was received by Mrs. G. with a Bow of infinite Grace, but very few words. Miss S. indulged her tears indeed she has had quite a fit of sickness which she attributes chiefly to the struggle of separating from the only friend she has in America—this she communicates to everybody. Mrs. Arden was there—She says we must be good neighbour[s] on Long Island next summer—Alas!—

Mrs. Governeur and Mrs. Startin* I* have also been to see, and now the *heavy labour* is over, I feel Home more sweet as its pleasures are not interrupted one moment with the thought of what I have to do—Colonel G[iles] is so good as to call whenever he has news direct or indirect, from Philadelphia and I now feel a regard for him from a *combination of Interests* which is as real as his own goodness of Heart, and I hope my dear Julia it is on as sure a foundation—My dear Seton was delighted with Brother John’s kind attention in writing to him, and would have told him so before now, but my Father’s indisposition has so much increased and with the additional distress of Jack* being intirely confined to his room for this week past, that my poor Hub has been in a worse situation than any Slave—

My Father was very anxious to see your letter, but you had forbid my shewing it, and therefore I told him that Maria had bruised her cheek, John* had the mumps, and my dear little Julia was very much

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3 Wife of Colonel Giles and probably Miss Shipton
4 Sarah Startin, the widow of Charles Startin and godmother of Elizabeth Bayley in the Episcopal Church, was a rich and childless widow. She provided financial assistance to Elizabeth when she returned from Italy, but after Elizabeth’s conversion to Catholicism, Mrs. Startin excluded Elizabeth from her will.
5 William Seton, Sr., Elizabeth’s father-in-law, had had a bad fall on the ice the previous winter.
6 John (Jack) Curson Seton (b. 1772) was the son of William and Rebecca Curson Seton. He married Mary Wise in 1799 and lived in Alexandria, Virginia, until she died in 1809. He later married a widow, Mrs. Gorham, of Boston. After his death she became a Catholic in 1816.
7 John Morin Scott (1789-1858) was the son of Lewis Allaire and Julianna Sigreaves Scott. He moved to Philadelphia with his mother after the death of his father in 1798. He was educated there and at Princeton after which he practiced law and served several terms in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. He married Mary Emelen (1795-1881) May 15, 1817. She was the daughter of George and Sarah Fishbourne Emelen, a prominent Quaker family. John and Mary Emelen Scott had seven children.
distressed (You know he always declares against long story's) —He said he foresaw it all He knew that in the course of things you must meet with many difficulties, and prayed heaven to avert them in future earnestly wishing that it was in his power to alleviate or lessen them—When I wrote I was to tell you that neither time or distance could lessen the Interest he takes in every thing that relates to your happiness—And my Interest dear Julia do you think it will diminish—no my little Soul—without any professions vows or resolutions, I tell you from my Heart, that you are inexpressibly dear to It—that I would give the greatest share of any good I enjoy to add to your comfort—but what I most desire and wish for you now is Peace that first and most perfect of all earthly attainments. In the arms and affection of our dear Charlotte I Hope you will regain it, tell her she must guard my priviledge until we all meet, and not leave room for any new Friend (for I know there will be enough to solicit it) to charm themselves into that place which I desire always to retain in your Heart.

Remember me Affectionately to your dear Children; and to every one of your Family, particularly to my Brothers. I will soon write again as I know you wish it—time is very precious to me, I write this at seven in the morning for I had not written one side to you yesterday, before My Father, Brother, Hub, and the Colonel [Giles] called me away in rotation—Heaven Bless and Protect you—

E.A.Seton
24th April

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8John and Samuel Sitgreaves. Samuel Sitgreaves (1764-1827) was the son of William and Susanna Deshon Sitgreaves and a brother of Julia Sitgreaves Scott. He was a lawyer in Easton, Pennsylvania. From 1794 to 1798 he served as a member of the House of Representatives and from 1798 to 1802 as a commissioner representing the United States government to the British government. He married Mary Kemper.
I think that by this time my dearest Julia You are in some degree settled, and your mind as far as present circumstances can affect it, reconciled in part to the inevitable decree—

I was always sensible that I loved you truely, and that I could not be absent from you, without the power and priviledge of enjoying your Society, without the knowing if you were well or sick, and not feel a pain peculiar to my Affection for you, but my love I had never fancied that moment when I should pass that door I had been so constantly accustomed to stop at, when I should wish to take little Anna a walk and not know which way to direct my steps—and altho’ I have passed sometimes a week without seeing you, now that I have not the choice it is a constant source of melancholy reflection to me—Anna is now begging me for a pen to write and when I refuse her, she says “do let me write to poor Aunt Scott[“] I cannot resist the demand and she has the pen at all risques—the Good Col[Giles], who I believe is always on some errand of attention and kindness, has called to tell me that Brother John had written to him without mentioning one word of you or your children’s Health, therefore as I am always willing to believe the best I Judge that you and they are at least as well as usual, and that there are no serious consequences from Maria’s fall, or Jack’s Indisposition—Your mind I know must be in that state of gloomy sorrow that neither the fine wheather nor Spring nor exercise can be more than partial relief, but I hope that these blessings will do a great deal in re-establishing you and preventing the effects of the Struggles and Agitations you have endured. I think I have heard you say that in former days you had a Physician in Philadelphia who you could confide in and I hope you will not trifle or delay asking his advice when you find it necessary, if it is for even a trivial occasion, for you have been

1.17 ASJPH 1-3-3-6:25

1 This letter was written in 1798. It refers to Julia’s brother John who died later in 1798.
accustomed to that care and attention my love, and you must yet use
the good that is in your power—

Poor Miss Chippe is going to leave her dear Friend and adviser.
She has actually, and past the power of wavering, taken her passage
with the Berry’s and will sail in one week at furthest—only
think—poor Soul, she flatters herself that she is flying from trouble,
but (as I have candidly told her) she carries the sting in her own
bosom, and until she conquers self she may as well live with Mrs.
G[iles] as any one else who I really begin to have rather a better opin­
on of, for only in the Quarter of an hour I was in her house, she
received reproofs and marks of ill humor from Miss Chippy with that
kind of Graceful forbearance, that I could not sufficiently admire—

I have met Mrs. Platt at the Widows Society, and she shewed me
so many of her sweet Fascinations, that I shall be ten times more care­
ful than ever I was, not to form opinions of people at a distance, for no
one can ever persuade me that she is not truly a sweet woman, and let
those who have no faults of their own, indulge themselves in speaking
of hers—

how is dear Charlotte and her hopeful family, lovely little souls, I
should not murmur any more at two than I shall at one. All are wel­
come as long as I am capable of fulfilling all the duties—

2Probably Miss Shipton
3Elizabeth Seton’s compassion for the poor and her commitment to social justice shows itself as
early as 1797 when she and other public-spirited women met at the home of Mrs. Isabella Marshall
Graham to form a society to aid destitute widows with children in New York City. They established
the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children, and Elizabeth served as treasurer for
a time. Many of her friends, including Catherine Dupleix, Rebecca Seton, Sarah Startin, and Eliza
Sadler, took an active part. This association was the first charitable organization in the United States
roots to this society.

In a 1798 letter Isabella Graham described the work of the society: "... I mentioned in my last that
we had planned a society for the relief of poor widows with small children, the success has been
beyond our most sanguine expectations. We have now a hundred and ninety subscribers, at three
dollars a year, and nearly a thousand dollars in donations. We have spent three hundred dollars this
winter, and nearly all upon worthy objects. The poor increase fast: emigrants from all quarters flock
to us, and when they come they must not be allowed to die for want. There are eight hundred in the
almshouse, and our society have helped along many, with their own industry, that must otherwise
have been there. The French, poor things, are also starving among us; it would need a stout heart to
lay up in these times..." (The Unpublished Letters and Correspondence of Mrs. Isabella Graham
... selected and arranged by her daughter Mrs. Bethune (New York, 1838.)
Whenever you see Brother S., Harriet’s give her such a kiss, and press her to your Bosom as you know I would do—I have an Interest in her which seems to have become a part of myself—and your dear Children and Charlotte—I am already longing for the time when I shall see them, and fetch you to William’s Musquito-Hall—this time next year Julia—according to custom we are always looking forward—it is the pleasure of my Life, tho’ I already enjoy more than I can expect should continue at least without [the usual Interruptions of the good of this world—but my Affection] for you I hope will meet no Interruption

truely yours E.A.Seton—
good Miss Brown is much better with Broken ribs—

1.18 To Julia Scott

New York 9th May 1798—

At Eleven Oclock my dear Colonel [Giles] is to call for a letter,—Yours my dearest Julia I recieved when I came Home from Church last Sunday, and I found it a delightful addition to the excellent Ideas I had recieved from Mr. Moore—Yes my dear little Soul you must learn the severe lesson of Submission, and that once gained, all that follows becomes Easy,—to resign our dearest Hopes, and console ourselves with reason in the hours when anguish rends the Heart—to rouse from the torpor of grief, and enter into scenes in which the Heart has no concern, or at best can recieve no comfort, is the lot of Virtue, and Superior minds—Have I not before remarked to you that this World would have too many Sweets if we did not view disappointments forever in the back ground and often pursuing us in

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*Samuel Sitgreaves’ daughter*

1.18 ASJPH 1-3-3-6:3

1Rev. Benjamin Moore (1748-1816) was at the time assistant rector at Trinity Episcopal Church. He later became rector of Trinity and bishop of the Protestant Episcopal church of New York. He also served for many years as president of Columbia College.
our most favorite haunts of happiness—do you remember the day we rode as far as Hornbrooks on the East River, when we had ascended the Hill and were viewing the delightful scenery in every direction I told you that this world would be always good enough for me, that I could willingly consent to be here forever—but now Julia—since that short space of time, so thoroughly is my mind changed, that nothing in this World were all its best pleasures combined they would not tempt me to be otherwise than what I am—a Passenger—

You will recieve with this a letter from Miss Shipton. She has been on Board the Vessel, and obliged to return because they cannot find the Sailors—Heaven defend me from her threatnings which are that She would make me love her in the course of one twelvemonth at furthest, surely if so, it would be against both my reason and conscience, but there is no answering for what a Woman might do—She tell[s] me she will send this, that, etc—I tell her I cannot recieve her gifts, that Obligations must be preceded by Affection, and that I never had deceived her with the idea that I entertained more for her than was necessary to make me her Well-wisher. She says she likes candour, and that I shall not forget Her—Poor soul, may she have Peace, if so Heavenly a guest can reside in her bosom—Where passion reigns—

I have been on Long Island, and with due ceremony, with proper Witnesses, (and dearest Julia I cannot tell you with what sensations of Pleasure and delight)—I have marked your room and Heaven grant that I may recieve you there—with tranquility, and Health your Son and Daughter. I heard more satisfactory Intelligence from my friend than from my Father, respecting your purchase, I believe he would rather have purchased a Situation on our Batterey for you, for all your friends here are of opinion that the Heat of Philadelphia will incommode you very much—there is the expected rap—I left writing to the last hour for Miss S_ for a week past has not allowed me any other—May Heaven Bless you and yours—my best love to dear Charlotte—

E.A.Seton.

I will write very soon again and mind my pen—
Dear precious Julia—

Your letter was handed me last evening by our ever watchful Friend, who never loses the opportunity of giving pleasure, and at the same time was informed of Miss G_'s intention to visit Philadelphia tomorrow—and she will see you, and perhaps for a moment hold you in her arms—could I ever wish to be her?—Yes for that moment I would give ten thousand other precious ones, for I wish extremely and of all things to have if it was only for one hour, the satisfaction of being near you, but I must be content with the comfort yet left—that of writing to you, at this time when pain and a thousand nameless anxieties remind me continually of that hour in which the soul wavers between its future and its present Home—mine is transported at even the probability, for the bonds that hold it have scarcely strength to restrain it, and sure I am if it does escape, it will not be to any state of Medium, it is too active in its exertions ever to be disappointed, and if reason and the best Affections of this World did not withhold, and draw back with more than common force its flying propensities I should have renounced every other desire and aim long ago.—and is your dear little Heart yet throbbing?—unable to procure tranquility. Well Julia dear if it must be so, let these hours of Affliction lay a foundation of future enjoyment, and let the same hand which gave the blow heal and embalm it—Sorrow exhausts itself, and afflictions will find alleviations from time, if there are no other sources, but you my love have many, and have also good sense and strength of mind to profit by them—All I wish for you is that nature may take its course, and Affliction be allowed its advantages, as it certainly has the power of giving the mind a Peaceful course, and procuring future tranquility—the sweet Miss Bowdler¹ says, “that Fortitude

¹The first edition of *Poems and Essays* appeared in 1786 as the work of the late Miss Bowdler. By 1798 nine editions had been published. Later editions identified the author as Jane Bowdler, and her work was printed for the benefit of the General Hospital, Bath, England.
does not consist in being insensible to the afflictions which come upon us in this World, but he who when his heart is pierced with sorrow can still love his God with unabated fervour, and submit with intire resignation to his Will,—who can struggle with his Affliction and resolutely persist in a constant endeavour to perform all the duties of his Station—that man acts with real fortitude, and when the time shall come that all his trials are drawing towards a conclusion, when from the brink of the Grave he looks back on all the various scenes of his past life those seasons of Affliction which once appeared so severe will be then what he can recollect with the greatest Satisfaction, and the remembrance of them will afford him solid consolation when all the little pleasures of this world are vanished and forgotten.”

—I have returned Miss Bowdler to Mrs. P_ but not without transcribing in Anna’s Book all those Observations I thought most valuable, and which we will read together on Long Island in happier days, indeed I have written almost half the Volume. Miss G_ will tell you every thing about New York, and about our fears for Poor Chippy—a person has returned from a Vessel which sailed a day before hers who was taken by a Privateer which he left in chase of another Vessel which is supposed to be the one she is in—how queer it would be if after all the figitations she should be returned to us—oh—oh—oh—

My sweet Treasures are quite well, a little drop of Aunt Scotts Lavender on the little HKf [handkerchief], or a short story about John and Maria will delight my Anna for an hour, and keep her as quiet as a mouse—Will listens too very attentively and every new and than calls out Anté-ca. My W.M.S. is very anxious about your sufferings from the heat, tho’ I with all my love of air have been Obliged to keep the House shut this week past—I am more anxious about your threats from those French Scounds, tho’ I think if Brother John is awake you need not fear—

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2Elizabeth kept a copybook of quotes, passages, and poems for her daughter Anna Maria.
3Probably Miss Shipton
4Anna Maria and William Seton, Elizabeth’s children
5Beginning in November 1798, the United States and France were engaged in an undeclared naval war which continued for two years.
I took both my children to see Mama, and delivered your message. She said that Mrs S. had written, but that I must tell you she was going to try and recover her health at New Rochelle—I stayed an hour with her, and endeavoured to impress on her mind that you leaving us so suddenly was a matter of Necessity, but the poor old Lady’s passions are irritated, and she does not try to calm them. She is much to be pitied, but her sorrows will soon have rest for she looks I may say shockingly. She spoke a great deal of your children and of yourself very affectionately—

It is nine o’clock, and I have yet a letter to write to Richard before I sleep—My W. is at the Theatre, and my dear Dad I have not seen to day—My truest love to Charlotte dear Julia

your own Friend E.A.Seton.

1.20 To Julia Scott

[Postmarked May 29, 1798]

My dear Julia

I write tho’ only a few lines, because I know it will satisfy you more than any thing Mr. Ogden could tell you respecting us—and should have written before but have been obliged to receive my share of the prevailing Fever and Sore Throat which confined me for a week; you will almost dread to receive my hand writing any more for it seems it is no longer to express any thing but sickness and disappointment. My children are so reduced by the Dissentary that I have been persuaded to consent to quit My Husband and take them for a fortnight to Long

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6 Julia Scott’s mother-in-law, Mrs. John Scott
7 A city in New York, northeast of New York City on Long Island Sound.
8 Richard Bayley (1781-1815) was the son of Dr. Richard and Charlotte Barclay Bayley and half-brother of Elizabeth Seton. He married Catherine White in 1812.
1.20 ASJPH 1-3-3-6:5
9 Abraham Ogden, a business associate, who was possibly traveling to Philadelphia. He was the brother of Gouverneur Ogden who later married Charlotte Seton.
Island where Mrs. [Eliza] Sadler will accommodate us with a room, until our little summer residence is in order to receive us. —Do not think by this account that we are ill, They are running about and I am almost as strong as before—I long to hear from you, Julia, and pray that you may be now enjoying healthy breezes somewhere. I have never had a line from you since you mentioned your Malancholy forbodings of Evil—Heaven avert it, and preserve my precious Friend, and do write, and tell me particularly every thing that concerns you—in great haste but always

Yours E.A.S.
Wednesday 10 Oclock

1.21 To Julia Scott

New York 3rd June 1798

I have had the Satisfaction and comfort in the midst of all my Sorrows and perplexities to hear that you and your precious children were well, and that you were very much occupied which is a good antidote against the sadness and depression of your Spirits. I think I have never in my life suffered so much from the Anticipation of Evil (as it is a source of uneasiness which I never indulge) as during the last fortnight for in that space of time we have every hour expected to lose our dear Papa Seton and dreadful has been the hours we has passed for my poor William has been lost I may say in mute anguish. his disposition is of that kind which does not admit of the soothings of sympathy, but wraps its grief in the stillness of despair which but little suits the anxious solicitude of my cares for him, but I Hope now that we shall have at least a temporary relief as Papa appears considerably better tho’ I think by no means out of danger—

So you see dear Julia the debt we pay for this beautiful creation and the many enjoyments of this life, is to be borne in some degree by us all. Human life and sorrow are inseperable—

1.21 ASJPII 1-3-3-6:6

\(^\text{1}^\text{William Seton, Sr., Elizabeth’s father-in-law}\)
My children are well and that in itself is so great a good that I can never be sufficiently grateful. We are decidedly not going to Long Island this summer, at least not until my confinement is over as my Husband could give me so little of his time on account of his Fathers ill Health, that I could expect very little comfort there—

Colonel Giles leave[s] us tomorrow, and expects to be with you the day After, and he will present you with the long promised little pictures which I hope you will like;—not the lively animated Betsy B. but the softened Matron with traces of care and anxiety on her Brow, and this is much more expressed in the large Picture than in the small ones—Present one pair to my Brother Samuel and one to the Batchelor [John] and tell them I wish they may recieve half the pleasure I do when I contemplate theirs; they shall always retain their place over my darling cabinet.—

Eliza Maitland was this Morning brought to bed of a Son. a Warning for me to be ready, I have laid a mat on my drawing room and put up a misqueto net, and there I may comfort myself, and happy I am it is no worse—[unclear] to be sure ours is the hottest House in the street having no draft thro’ it—I do not know if I mentioned to you that Maitland has brought your china. Knowing you did not want it at present I believe I neglected mentioning it in my last—William did not tell me if he meant to send it or if it waited your orders—if you should not recieve it by the time you write to me, say what you wish respecting it—

Heaven Bless you dearest Julia, with my Kindest remembrance to my Friends.

I am Your E.A.S.

My William’s likeness will strongly remind you of a Manager at the Assembly, he committed the same fault as Brother John, not having his hair cut—

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3Elizabeth was expecting her third child in July.

4James Maitland was a business partner with William Magee Seton in the firm of Seton, Maitland and Company. He married Eliza Seton in 1797.
1.22 To Julia Scott

New York 5th July 1798

It is really true my dear Julia, that tho' I have not written to you, my pen has been scarcely one hour out of my hand these few weeks past except to sleep, or rather to weep for I have had much more of the latter than the former—My poor William has kept me constantly employed in copying his letters and assisting him to arrange his Papers for he has no friend or confident now on Earth but his little wife; his attachment to his Father was so particularly affectionate and uniform that his loss is one of the most severe afflictions to him that could possibly have happened—most men have the resource in an event of this

1.22 ASJPH 1-3-3-6:7

William Magee Seton's father died June 9, 1798, and was buried in Trinity churchyard. Following is the death notice and a brief eulogy which appears to be a brief note to young William Seton. There is a question whether these documents are in Elizabeth Seton's handwriting.

Death Notice ASJPH—Died New York on the 9th of June 1798——

William Seton Esquire in the 52nd year of his age, a Native of Great Britain and a resident of America for upwards of thirty years. From his earliest youth his time was occupied by pursuits of commerce in which he soon acquired and invariably preserved the fairest reputation—with the most persevering assiduity he combined the most generous conduct. Never addicted to Vice of any kind nor to Pride nor to ostentation, his heart was replete with every virtue, a real friend, and a friend to mankind—his whole life was marked uniformly by Sincerity of Heart, dignity of Manners, and Active Liberality of Mind. but alas he is no more! the destitute Orphan is deprived of its kindest patron, the helpless widow, and the unfortunate of their best friend—his afflicted children of an indulgent and beloved Parent, and the community of a citizen who in early life gained and never lost their confidence and approbation, their affection and esteem, and one they will never cease to Lament.

Eulogy of William Seton, Sr. ASJPH 1-3-3-18:1 [June 9, 1798]

My dear William

This is not one of those efforts of Friendship which endeavors to shade the defects of a Departed Friend by bringing his Virtues in a conspicuous point of view—but the genuine truth imperfectly and feebly expressed in comparison with the merits it attempts to describe—it is necessary to have seen him in the several situations of Husband Father Friend Protector—to form any just idea of the perfections of his character which bright example impress indelibly on your mind—You bear his name—and I pray to Heaven with all the fervor of a Mother's Hopes that you will preserve it as unblemished and yield it to the author of your Being as spotless as he did.
kind either of particular friends, or habits to disipate sorrow but my Husband has neither, for he has been so long accustomed to leave my Society only for his Fathers, and his Fathers for mine that all now center in the survivor and you may Judge if I do not try to sustain myself and reconcile every decree of Fate—to be sure for me who so dearly loves quiet and a small Family to become at once the Mother of six children and the Head of so large a Number, is a very great change, and Death or Bread and Water would be a happy prospect in comparison when I consider Self—but you well know how long ago I have accustomed that to yield to Affection for my Will and when I consider his vexations and cares I bless my God who allows me to share and lessen them—

9th July—Monday—

My Friend I did propose writing you a long letter, but find myself so woefully fatigued, and so unwell that I must defer it till another opportunity—I have this Morning dispatched our two dear little Boys to Connecticut where they will be in the family of a Respectable clergyman and get a much more regular Education than this city could afford them—If my confinement was over we would soon get arranged, but I cannot expect to move to Stone Street until the last of August—and then—

—but Julia could I have expected a Life of such happiness as I have known these four years past?—I trust all to the Mercy of Him who never forsakes those who confide in Him—

You cannot think how much I was hurt at my thoughtless behaviour to Sister Charlotte—I can only say that the trouble and confusion

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3Elizabeth and her husband inherited the responsibility for William’s younger half-brothers and sisters upon the death of his father. They were Mary, Charlotte, Henrietta (Harriet), Samuel Waddington, Edward Augustus, and Cecilia.

3Samuel Waddington Seton (1789-1869) and Edward Augustus Seton (1790-?) were sons of William and Anna Maria Curzon Seton and brothers-in-law to Elizabeth Seton. Edward (Ned), a talented artist, went south and married Bazilide Balome in Opelousas, Louisiana. Samuel served as an agent and superintendent of the public schools in New York.

3Elizabeth and her family were planning to move to the Seton family home on Stone Street in New York after the elder Mr. Seton’s death. She and William Magee had lived there during the first year of their marriage and were now planning to return in order to assume responsibility for William’s younger half-sisters and brothers. After their return to Stone Street, the house at 27 Wall Street was occupied for several years by the Wright Posts.
of my mind at that time was such, that if she knew only one part of it she would forgive me—another reason, I recollect that my Seton brought only the three pair which were struck off expressly because the Colonel [Giles] was expected to set off immediately—if there had been more copies I might have had more reflection.

Kiss your precious children for me, and tell Maria that Anna is happy as the day is long with her dear Dolly she calls it dear Mariva and takes it in her crib every night—

I see my Father very seldom and when I do my Family is now so large that I never see him alone, but I am sure I may venture to say that he always will be Interested in your Health and comfort.

—Heaven Protect you my Julia—E.A. Seton.

1.23 To Lady Isabella Cayley¹

New York 6 July 1798

My dear Aunt Caley.

We received your letter No.2 written to our dear Father² the 3rd of April last and happy should I be were it in my power to offer you the kind affectionate [unclear] contained in it. but alas we have every thing to lament and deplore without one source of comfort but that submission to the disposer of all events which we know is our duty to pay even when the heart is rent with anguish—and how shall I rend yours and what can I say to prepare your mind for the sad and distressing intelligence that our beloved one, best of parents, is no more—You have heard of the melancholy accident he met with on the 25th of January by a fall at his door, since which he has never been free

¹Isabella Seton was the daughter of John and Elizabeth Seton of Scotland and the sister of William Seton, Sr. She lived in England and married Thomas Cayley, a Yorkshire baronet, in 1763. The couple had two children, George and Ann who married George Worsley.
²William Seton, Sr., Elizabeth’s father-in-law, had died June 9.
from pain, and almost constantly confined to his room, except now and then riding to his country retreat for exercise, of which unfortunately he had never been in the habit of taking enough—His complaint increased rapidly with the warm season and he so entirely lost his spirits as to think himself in danger some weeks before the event took place—He died on the 9th of June after several hours of severe pain but possessing his senses to the last, and with him we have lost every hope of fortune, prosperity and comfort, and shall feel his loss irreparable

Perhaps there never was an instance of any person being so universally beloved and lamented. Nearly five hundred people attended him to the grave, chiefly dressed in black with every mark of unaffected sorrow—those in the higher station of life regretting a friend and social companion—the Poor mourning a father and benefactor always their resource in misfortune and their assistant in every difficulty—and by us his children who were accustomed constantly to receive his dearest affection and to look up to him as the soul of our existence, his loss will be forever severely felt and deplored.

My dear William who was ever his favourite and most beloved child, his partner in trade and the one in whom he placed every confidence and trust feels himself at once the Provider and head of a numerous family. Rebecca\(^3\) is the eldest daughter unmarried and there are six younger than herself, but our beloved father brought up his family in such harmony and affection and they have such good and amiable dispositions that if William can but make them a comfortable maintenance we shall yet have some hopes of domestic enjoyment when the family gets in some degree settled, but in these hours of sorrow I have not only my poor husband's spirits to support but also to sustain myself expecting every day the birth of another little dependent in addition to our son and daughter—How my William has come thro' each severe trial and anguish of heart as our heavy loss has caused him, particularly being the one on whom the weight of the blow has fallen is only

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\(^3\)Rebecca Seton (1780-1804) was the daughter of William and Anna Maria Curson Seton and sister-in-law of Elizabeth Seton. A dear friend and confidante of Elizabeth, she died immediately after Elizabeth's return from Leghorn, Italy. Elizabeth often referred to Rebecca as her "soul's sister."
to be accounted for by referring every thing to Him who gives us
power to support those evils which every Human being must endure
their proportion of. As yet his health has not suffered much but his
mind is in a state scarcely to be endured for besides our family sorrow
the situation of our affairs with the French and the constant prepara­
tion for war makes every one uncertain how long they may be permit­
ted to enjoy their homes or what their future prospects may be—

Our dear Father unfortunately did not leave a will which places my
husband in a difficult and uncomfortable situation with respect to his
property, which tho’ not very great may with Williams industry and
unremitting care prove sufficient to maintain and educate a numerous
family, if he can but arrange and collect it. But in these melancholy
times every thing is scattered and uncertain—and all we can do is to
keep united and contribute as much as we can to each others happi­
ness of which Heaven knows we expect but little share, until time
which softens all things shall reconcile or rather accustom us to a
change which is now the loss of all we valued most. My Williams un­
remitting labour in the arrangement of the business of the House, which
is very extensive and the disturbing confusion and perplexity
of his mind at this moment prevents his having the power to write to
you himself tho’ he very much wishes it, but the constant expression
of his affection and g[rateful] remembrance of your goodness to him
when he was with you has so familiarized me with the Idea of your
family that I hope it will be a sufficient excuse for the manner in which
I have ventured to write, and he anxiously wishes that you will from
time to time have the goodness to let him hear from you as every thing
which interest you will be interesting to us and to him particularly
who knows and remembers every branch of your family so
well—When circumstances of hurry or necessity prevent his answer­
ing your letters I can promise that they shall not remain unanswered as
I am always happy to be his scribe and should be particularly so in this
case—our father received a letter a week or two before his death from

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4Seton, Maitland and Company, an import-export mercantile firm, was managed by William
Magee Seton and James Maitland after the death of the elder Mr. Seton. At this time the company
was beginning to experience financial difficulties.
Lady Synnot announcing the death of Hon. George Seton which was a very great shock to him, as likewise that of our Grand mother for tho’ he could not expect to see her, her letters and the certainty of her fond affection were his greatest pleasures—And in short he had no other gratifications than the happiness and welfare of all his numerous friends and relations, and altho we who were in the constant enjoyment of his affections have reason most to feel his loss there are many who sincerely share with us our sorrows who only knew him for his virtues—and to you my dear Aunt who so well knew and estimated them I can not help again lamenting that the sad tidings should come from my pen—My William desires his affectionate regards to your self and Lady Synnet and Sir Walter and the rest of the family in which I beg leave sincerely to join and remain yours most truly—

Eliza Ann Seton.

1.24 Draft to Julia Scott

New York 20th August 1798

If wishes and thoughts could form letters without any assistance from the Pen you would have received at least some thousands since I last wrote to you my Julia—My Pains and Aches are all over and I have one of the loveliest Boys,¹ to repay me that my fond Imagination

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¹ Jane Seton, a sister of William Seton, Sr., had married Sir Walter Synnot of County Armagh, Ireland.
² The husband of Barbara Seton, a sister of William Seton, Sr.
³ Elizabeth Seton, William Magee Seton’s paternal grandmother
⁴ A note beside the first line of page #567 states, “word obliterated in original by the seal probably ‘grateful.’” The following note appears at the bottom: “Addressed to the Dowager Lady Cayley at Sir Walter Synnots Dublin or Balanoye Newry. Copied by E.S. [or G.S.] Cayley Jan 20, 1816?; great grandson of the said Lady Cayley. the original letter being in the possession of Sir Digby Cayley.” According to Robert Seton, the copy was made for him by E.S. [or G.S.] Cayley.
⁵ ASJPH 1-3-3-6:8

Richard Bayley Seton (1798-1823) was born July 20, 1798. He was the second son of William Magee and Elizabeth Bayley Seton and attended both Georgetown College in Washington, D.C., and St. Mary’s College in Baltimore and was among the first students of Mount St. Mary’s College, Emmitsburg. He later served in the United States Navy (1822-23) and became the United States Assistant Agent in Monrovia. He was serving in this capacity at the time of his death which was a result of an illness contracted while nursing the first American consul in Liberia, Jehudi Ashmun, who recovered. Richard was buried at sea.
could have formed, not a little additionally dear to me for bearing the name of Richard Bayley which softened by Seton at the end are sounds which very much delight me and are the promise of much future Hope and Comfort—

My Illness was so severe that both Mother and child were some hours in a very doubtful Situation, and to save the Mother the child was nearly lost, but the Grand Father (think what were my sensations who had just enough life to see it) on his Knees blew the Breath of Life into its Lungs and by his skill and care restored it, and need I say doubly endeared it—dear Julia what a subject for my full Heart.

1.25 To Julia Scott

20th August 1798

If wishes and thoughts could form letters without the assistance of the Pen you would have received at least some thousands from me within these last six weeks, but from a variety of troubles, such as my nurse leaving me before the time expected, Mammy Hulers sickness during which time I had the care of my three, and little Will and Anna both ill of the dissenter which has obliged me to send them out to Mrs. [Eliza Seton] Maitland at my Father Setons country place with at least a half dozen other reasons the worst of the[m] the loss of my fine eyes for some weeks from excessive pain occasioned by the severity of my pains in the Birth of my Son, all combined to prevent my writing to you, but believe me my friend not from often very often, anxiously thinking of you—

I have so much to say that I can scarcely Know how to begin the half I have to tell you—I was so terribly ill in my hours of sorrow that

1Dr. Richard Bayley, Elizabeth’s father, attended her in this childbirth.
2Grand Father
3The children’s nurse employed by the Setons
4Anna Maria, William, and the new-born. Richard Seton
5Cragdon at Bloomingdale, located at approximately 78th Street on the west side of present day Manhattan, was the Seton’s summer home. The Bloomingdale Road, opened in 1703, ran between what are now 23rd and 147th Streets and followed roughly the route of the present Broadway. Elizabeth went to Cragdon the last week of August because of the illness of her two older children who had been sent there during her confinement. The infant Richard did not do well there, so she returned to the city about August 29.
my Poor Father could scarcely perform his office, tho' every exertion was necessary to save me. The dear little son was for some hours thought past Hope and the Mother within one more pain of that rest she has so often longed for—but which Heaven I hope for good purposes has again denied—my Father may truly be said to have given the breath of Life to my child for when it neither Breathed or moved he went on his Knees and placing his Mouth to its lips breathed or I may say forceably blew it into its Lungs—and now the little Soul is the most lovely healthy Being you ever saw, and not a little additionally dear to his Mother for bearing the name of Richard Bayley which with Seton at the end are sounds truely delightful to me—

30th August

I was hastily summoned by my William to go with him to see our poor little Anna who has been extremely ill, and have been ever since with her until yesterday, when the ill effect of the sudden change of weather on my Baby obliged us to return Home where the first and most wellcome object that met my eyes was your letter which might well reproach me for not writing—

Your dear children I Hope are better but I shall write a note to my Father (for fear I should not see him) to tell your wish, and will send my letter by tomorrows Post. You do not say one word of your own Health therefore I will indulge the Hope that it is as I wish it to be. I have not heard any thing latterly of the Fever in Philadelphia,\(^4\) whether it will not be as bad with us Heaven only knows, but I am sure it bids fair to be as bad as it can be—My Father says it is the most deadly kind and more like the Plague than Fever and that the mischief in[cre]ases fast—Ah Julia this Life is not worth one ha[lf]th anxious moments that I suffer in one single day. Husband[,] Father and my good Brother [Post] are continually in the midst of it—Our moving is deferred for some weeks, as Stone Street\(^5\) is the very center of the Fever therefore I can say but little of my Family—the girls\(^6\) are all with

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\(^4\)Yellow fever was currently rampant in Philadelphia.

\(^5\)The location of the home to which the Seton family was moving.

\(^6\)William Magee's four younger half-sisters, Mary, Charlotte, Cecilia, and Harriet, for whom he and Elizabeth had assumed responsibility.
me and as yet have given me much more satisfaction that I can express
to you, for it is impossible to meet with more amiable dispositions—I
wrote Our Dear Charlotte six lines some time ago in answer to a most
Affectionate letter she wrote me to thank me for the Engravings I sent
her by Seton—Heaven Preserve and Bless her—

My Julia do not tell me that Family or occupations, or chances or
changes shall hinder me from giving you the only proof that absence
and Fate have left me of expressing to you my Affection—I will write
again very soon—

Yours truely and affectionately

31st August—My Father particularly directs me to tell you that
there is no cure for the Hooping Cough†—Nature must have its
course—but if they have pain in the Breast & oppressed Breathing
you must have recourse to [unclear] and Blistering‡ as in any other
complaint of the Breast. [He would] have written this direction him­
self but he has scarcely time to Breath and never pretends to sit down
except at meals—[I tell] you as he bid me word for word—E.A.S.

1.26 To Julia Scott

8th September 1798

My Darling Julia,

It is now indeed that I feel the bitterness of Our Separation, While all
your Sorrows are renewed and your Heart is again torn with affliction, I
fear too much for you to bear. And is our poor Brother† gone—Almighty
Disposer of all events we must bow in Silence to thy decrees,—but I
tremble for the Consequences of this unlooked for blow to you my
friend whose future comfort and satisfaction in Life seemed so nearly

†A highly infectious respiratory disease
‡Blisters on the skin were formed by applying a sharp, irritating ointment, plaster or other
application.
1.26 ASJPH 1-3-3:6-10
†Julia's brother John Sitgreaves died of yellow fever September 3, 1798.
connected and dependant on those affectionate attentions of which you will so much feel the Want, and that never failing cheerful mind which extended its happy influence to all within its Sphere, Oh Julia I could indulge myself in reflections which are too unavailing—but it seems the last tribute within our Power to the departed worth of one whom we have Affectionately loved—our Brother will long receive that tribute and I have fully paid it accompanied by many tears—

You are I am sure very anxious for your friends in New York in this season of horrors—and I believe we are the only ones who remain—Poor Seton is chained, and where he is, there am I also—our little Darlings are out of Town with Mrs. Maitland² and so are all the family occasionally, but our neighborhood is entirely deserted—We are all perfectly well how long we shall be so Heaven only Knows for several have died in this street, one Person three doors off—I have not seen my Father for a whole week until last Evening and he then told me that he spent every hour in the Hospitals and Lazaretto³—While one so dear to me is so much exposed I infinitely prefer remaining in the City Independent of my William being here

—Julia I cannot say more until I hear from you which I pray and intreat you may be soon, and very soon—

My affectionate remembrance to Brother Samuel and your darlings—

Yours most truely—E.A.Seton—

1.27 To Julia Scott

Bloomingdale 28th September 1798¹

My Beloved Julia,

I have experienced nothing but sorrow and anxiety since I received your letter of the 15th it arrived at a moment well calculated to give force to the melancholy it expressed, and which has affected me beyond

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²Elizabeth's older children, Anna Maria and William, were with Eliza Seton Maitland, Elizabeth's sister-in-law, at Cragdon outside the city.
³A place where the sick were confined during contagious epidemics

1.27 ASJP 1-3-3-6:11

¹Elizabeth was often not consistent in her spelling as in this letter in which she uses both Bloomingdale and Blooming Dale to refer to the location of the Seton home, Cragdon.
measure that you are suffering both in mind and Body and so far from the reach of that affection which at this time would so much contribute to soothe the pangs of sorrow—that affection so entirely your own—Oh Julia how bitter are these days of separation to me—When you are well, in Health and cheerfulness I can resign you and persue my path without regret and think it is for the best, but when you are in sorrow I feel an exclusive right and could fly over mountains to support that aching head—if I thought your situation in mind and Body was as you describe it, habitually, I should think it almost insupportable, but I hope from self experience that your sensibility to your present misfortunes will exhaust and destroy itself, for believe me my darling Julia you were not born to be unhappy, or Heaven would never have given you such a Brother [Samuel] as is still left to you, and tho’ I well know that it is impossible to reconcile you to the distressing afflictions that have attended you, I also know how capable he is of lessening their weight—look up my love and be thankful for the Good that yet remains.—how much I wish again to hear from you, and to hear that those distressing sensations you describe to me are past.

—I should have written Immediately on receiving your letter but my William my Husband and My All was at that time ill with the prevailing Fever—he has happily had but a slight attack but sufficient to terrify me for the consequences, particularly as our Being at Blooming Dale prevented my Father attending him—He is now most happily entirely restored and is going to stay some time from the city which is in a state truly deplorable—My Sister and Brother Post have also both been attacked but are on the recovery and gone to Long Island—My Father resides entirely at Bellvue Hospital. Dear Julia consider the lot of Humanity is to suffer and bow with me in Patient submission to our All-Wise Director.—I am in extreme pain while I write occasioned by a Bile on my arm therefore must say Adieu

4th October May Heaven restore you to Peace prays your E.A.S.

2There was a yellow fever epidemic at the time.
3Bellevue Hospital was a municipal hospital opened in 1736 as the almshouse infirmary on the site now occupied by City Hall. Later, in 1794, the city bought a building at 26th Street and First Avenue to house victims of epidemics. Dr. Bayley was associated with Bellevue.
4Probably a boil
My best Beloved Julia

I wrote you last week, and should have again written you as I feel how anxious you must be for our present situation, but really it appears to me that I am not to be myself again. I have been almost blind of my best eye, and had a gathering under my Arm occasioned by cold which settled my Milk there, besides which my head is absolutely turned with anxiety about my Husband who is obliged to go every day in the city, and my Father who still resides at Bellvue and has almost exhausted himself with the excessive fatigues he daily endures. I would have returned Home long ago if I could have gained permission from my Father as our House having been open all the summer renders it much safer for us than Others who left no one at Home. You may imagine that eighteen in Family, in a House containing only five small rooms is rather more than enough, and I cannot help longing again for the rest which I have never known but in Wall Street—

But my love what are my troubles compared with your Perpetual Sorrow—could I but share it with you, I could willingly quit Home and all its charms with only the privilege of my little nurseling with me, if I could be allowed the comfort of being with you in the season of Affliction,—dearest Julia—a thousand times nearer to my Heart than when in the days of Ease and cheerfulness, what would I give to hold you to that Heart which shares with yours every pain, how much I long to hear of Our dear Charlotte—May Heaven shield her from danger and spare her the anguish of witnessing the sufferings of those she loves—

1.28 ASJPH 1-3-3-6:12

1 This number included Elizabeth’s immediate family as well as her husband’s younger half-brothers and sisters.

2 Wall Street was Elizabeth and William Magee Seton’s residence prior to the death of William Seton, Sr. They were now residing on Stone Street.

3 Richard Seton, Elizabeth’s third child
My Julia, you must not indulge the extreme dejection which I am persuaded you have resigned yourself to. You have two precious Objects sufficient to tie you to that existence you now seem careless of possessing. You must nurse yourself and look forward, at all events this life is worth possessing if it were only because while we have it we are candidates for a better—think of your Daughter my love, think what is the difference to her if you preserve your Health or lose it—you never knew the want of a Mothers tender care, or you would tremble at the thought that your child should ever want it.

Sunday Evening 14th October

You say my love that you wish the latest Intelligence of the Health of your friend, could I save you one moment's anxiety it would be the source of hours of pleasure to me therefore you may suppose how willingly I obey your request. This day has been clouded and Melancholy as the present season, and nothing but the smiles and Health of my precious Children could have saved me from its Influence, but I am so entirely occupied with them having only Mammy Huler to assist me, that I have no time to indulge reflection. If I retire one moment I hear a half dozen voices calling Sister, or Mamma,—My Father has been ill the last week and altho' now better, I cannot help feeling great anxiety.—My Sister was last Friday in momentary expectation, and I have not heard from her since—Imagine Yourself in my situation in its extent, for a few moments, and you will find that there are yet many sources of regret and disappointment that you have not experienced and I hope never may;—but the Merciful conductor of All—mixes the sweet with the bitter, and whenever the Evil has most force; he throws the veil of Peace over the Soul that confides in Him—May He Protect you my beloved Prays

your E.A.Seton

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1Julia's children, Maria and John Scott
2Mary Bayley Post was pregnant and close to her time of delivery.
I have two letters to write, one to My Sister and one to Richard,¹ but I cannot take hold of my Pen, but my thoughts fly to you, and to you they shall go, tho' without any new occurrences to give rise to them—We are, and are likely to be in a state of confusion, and where there is not Peace, the mind loses all those delightful communications and Reflections which mine so much delights in, and which I fear it has lost for many years to come, for if I get thro' my task with the Sacrifice of the most incessant care and attention, and in the end feel the Satisfaction of having performed it well, it is as much as I can expect, and more than I dare to Hope—but this is a subject it is vain to Indulge, for who shall dare to look into futurity—how different were my prospects in the last year, from the present, and if I now plan the futurity it may never be realized, and if it is, the causes for apprehension may be lessened—perhaps removed—therefore to intend the best, and be thankful for the present, is the only plan I can resolve on—

Sunday Evening

My dear Julia I can only add good Night to the above which I was interrupted in writing this morning, and assure you that you are inestimably dear to the Heart of

Your E.A.S.

The Fever is better—

¹Richard Bayley, Elizabeth's half-brother
My darling Julia

Saturday Night always brings to my recollection that it is in my power to do something you wish, and if it is not then in my power to accomplish it, I am restless and dissatisfied until I can procure an hour of leisure that indeed is but seldom, for I am constant Nurse to my Infant and when he is out of my arms the two padlers are always after me praying to go in the Garden the Woods or the Bread and Butter closet, so you may imagine I am well occupied and happy for me it is so, for reflection in these times can only augment the evils we have to endure.

My William lectured me for half an hour last Sunday for sending you so short a letter as I wrote you on that day—he said it was not worth its postage, but I would give something at this moment to have one from you if it contained only half the number of lines, for I am extremely anxious to hear of our dear Charlotte—What a sorrowful reflection for me, who loves her so well that she is in the very center of danger—may Heaven avert it from her and her family; for any one being ill would afflict her more than any Personal suffering—Julia dear when shall we meet in a State of Certainty, surely the next blessing in our future existence to that of being near the source of Perfection, will be the enjoyment of each others Society without dread of interruption from evil—no separation, but free communication of affection unshackled by the why’s and wherefores of this World—Who that is toiling thro’ the scenes of vexation that this life continually presents, but must sigh for futurity, and yet it is thought wonderful and even incredible that a person free from Poverty and the greatest ills of Life, should wish to change this for another—I resign the present and the future to Him who is the Author and conductor of both—but most

1.30 ASJPH 1-3-3-6:14

1Richard Seton
2Anna Maria and William Seton, Elizabeth's two young children
certainly I have no enjoyment so great as to induce me to remain Here one moment longer, if it depended on me to make the change—even as the Mother of my children I would not stay if I were sure they would not be deprived of the Protection of their Father.

—Why do I tell you all this? how it is that I never can preserve any consistancy in a letter to you, but always involuntarily express my thoughts as they arise?—I write some letters where the words drop so heavily that I can scarcely form them at all, but when I begin "Dear Julia" they flow faster than the pen can write them.

Well to tell you what I ought to tell, and what you will wish to know, the Evil that afflicts us is lessening, tho' the very uncommon weather renders the degree of it very changeable and uncertain, one day every Hope is revived, and the next the number of Deaths is again doubled—Heaven only knows when it will end—My poor girls are all getting the Fever Ague and my children take colds which keep me in continual alarm which added to my William's fatigues, and the very great inconvenience of being here, has determined us to go to Town to-morrow, We go to Wall Street at first and arrange our Winter habitation as fast as possible—My Sister Post is happily delivered of a Daughter—on Long Island at the Narrows where her husband remains with her—you may easily imagine their Joy on the occasion—My Father still resides at Bellvue Hospital if I were taken ill tomorrow I should wish to go there. Richard has arrived at Leghorn in perfect Health and de[lighted] with his situation—Emma is engaged to marry Craig, and they only wait the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Sadler who are hourly expected—it rejoices my Heart that she is chosen by so good a man, for tho' he is very far from those brilliant...

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3The yellow fever epidemic
4An attack of fever accompanied by chills or shivering
5Mary Bayley Post's daughter Catherine was born at this time.
6Dr. Wright Post
7Richard Bayley, Elizabeth's half-brother, went to Leghorn, Italy, to work in the firm of Filippo and Antonio Filicchi, business associates of the Setons.
8Charlotte Amelia (Emma) Bayley (1779-1805) was a daughter of Dr. Richard and Charlotte Barclay Bayley and the half-sister of Elizabeth Seton. She married William Craig, the brother of Eliza Craig Sadler, June 19, 1799, and died giving birth to a child in 1805.
qualities which the World so much admires, he has those of a true and upright Heart with a very well informed mind.—May she be happy.
—and for you my Julia my wishes have not a name, the only Word that approaches their meaning is Peace It is what I covet, and oh that we may one day share it together. I have not recieved a letter from you since the sixth October—pray write soon—

Yours ever affectionately E.A.S.

1.31 To Rebecca Seton

31st October [1798]

How glad you will be to see the heads of old Speeds Horses'—come my Rebecca and enjoy the comfortable coal fire and every thing in my power to make you happy.—I send every thing I can muster to make you warm coming home, and be sure to wrap Harriet well up in the Shawl and coat, and bring the Blankets I sent yesterday with you for fear we have not enough without them.—We would have sent Speed immediately but he was not at Home—

Willy says be sure to bring all the Girls

Yours most Sincerely

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1.31 AMPH Seton-Jevons #1-2

1A coach was sent to Bloomingdale to bring the Seton girls back to the city.

2Henrietta (Harriet) Seton (1789-1809) was the daughter of William and Anna Maria Curson Seton and the half-sister of William Magee Seton. She accompanied her sister Cecilia to Baltimore in 1809 for a visit with their sister-in-law Elizabeth Seton. Once engaged to Elizabeth's half-brother Andrew Barclay Bayley (d.1811), Harriet broke the engagement after her conversion to Roman Catholicism. She made her profession of faith July 22 and her First Communion September 24, 1809.
Once more returned to my happy Home, and doubly enjoying its sweets from the long privation I have endured, my thoughts turn to you dear Julia with whom I have so often shared the cheerfulness of the blazing fire, and the feeling tones of my sweet Piano. I could not help falling on my knees the moment I entered the dear scene of past happiness and shed tears as Abundantly as if I was the next moment going to quit it. Oh Julia, Julia never again.—those hours are past which tho’ I enjoyed them, I never knew their value. Who can help looking back on Innocent and past pleasures without sorrow, I can more forceably say anguish, I could cry like a child at the thought of them, but resolved to brave the future, I turn over the Page with rapidity, and looking towards Heaven there fix my aim—there is no change.

My Father is in perfect Health, and in a state of exultation at his escape from Bellevue, and the recollection of all the Good which his resolution and undaunted spirit has effected there—you may imagine how much I was rejoiced to see him after the many dangers he has past.—Dear Julia, how much have I to be thankful for—Post is also well, and my William enjoying better Health than for many months before. but our long residence in the country, and without proper winter cloathing has given Our Girls the fever ague and little Anna a serious illness, which she is but slowly recovering from. Richard has also had a fever and rash—I am well Occupied, and expect notwithstanding these difficulties to be peaceably sleeping in Stone Street by this night a week.—We have painted Papered and White-washed, so I hope there is no danger, tho’ the Man who took care of the House was ill there with Fever, and not one House in the neighbourhood escaped.

1.32 ASJPH 1-3-3-6:15

1The Setons had been living out of the city because of the yellow fever epidemic.
2Dr. Richard Bayley had been working at Bellevue Hospital during the epidemic.
—You say that “No news is good news”—thank Heaven, for you do not mention either Yours or your childrens Health. I am therefore to Hope that those disagreeable symptoms you wrote of in a former letter are past. I am rejoiced that our dear Charlotte has had so fortunate an escape, I know no one except yourself I have been more anxious for, that you may both enjoy Health and Peace is the sincere prayer of her who never can forget you—

E.A.Seton.

1.33 To Julia Scott

New York 25th November 1798—

My dearest Julianna

Three Saturdays are past without writing one line to you; not that you have been thought of less than usual for I have been in trouble, and it is then I think most of you. at Bloomingdale my right arm was visited, and this fortnight past I have been unable to move my left, from a similiar gathering which my Father was obliged to operate upon, and was so painful as to cause a constant slow Fever. Since my recovery Pantrys, closets, store rooms, cellar etc have Occupied me well, and I suppose I shall have the same reason from you for not writing, for I hope by this time you are settling your Home, or rather your House Julia, for I cannot think that you will make Philadelphia your Home, Brother [Samuel] being with you is I am sure a very great consolation, but he cannot devote so much of his time to you as to compensate for the many disadvantages you will experience, for my William says your House is a long walk for you to your Family, and except you enter in the trouble of keeping a Equipage¹ you might better be in New York. I rejoice that Harriet² is with you, I wish extremely to see her

1.33 ASJPH 1-3-3-6:16
¹An elegantly equipped carriage
²Julia’s niece
and to know if she is that kind of disposition which wants nothing but a short residence with Madam Particular to perfect it—if she is, she is not my sort,—I am more interested for her than you can imagine, and have always felt a presentiment that I shall one day know more of her.

Your children you never mention; for want of time I suppose, poor Julia you have always a great deal to do, or make a great deal. Suppose you had a Nurseling and half a dozen besides—Suppose the providing and arranging my family—and suppose yourself a teacher of Reading, writing, sewing etc for I devote the whole Morning—that is from ten till two to my three Girls5—Going to school thro’ snow and wet will give me more trouble than keeping them at Home[.] I have tried it one week, and as yet it has been only a pleasure at all events I shall go thro’ it this winter—the two oldest girls are at Brunswick at Boarding School, which is a very great relief to me—Girls of twelve and fourteen are much more difficult to manage than at any other time of Life, and I am sure it will be greatly for their own advantage they are all sweet amiable children, and I love them as my own—Rebecca is without any exception the most truly amiable estimable young woman I ever knew. her Virtues are such as would ornament any Station, and does honor to the Memory of my poor Father5 who was her only Director in every thing. her Society is a source of pleasure to me, such as is altogether new and unexpected, for until I was under the same roof with her I always thought her an uninformed Girl, with many good qualities, but very much neglected—but I prove the contrary every day—

And Myself—am jogging on Old style, trying to accomplish every duty, and Hoping for the reward—without that in View heaven knows this life would be a scene of confusion and vexation to me, who neither values it nor desires it. I always thought and ever shall, that Husbands

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5Elizabeth’s sisters-in-law Harriet and Cecilia Seton and her daughter Anna Maria Seton.

5Elizabeth’s sisters-in-law Mary and Charlotte Seton were attending a boarding school operated by Miss Hay in (New) Brunswick, New Jersey.

Mary Seton and Charlotte Seton (1786-1853) were the daughters of William and Anna Maria Curson Seton. Mary married Josiah Ogden Hoffman. Charlotte married Gouverneur Ogden (1778-1851). He was from a prominent New York family and graduated from Columbia (1796). He entered the legal profession and was a partner of Alexander Hamilton.

5William Seton, Sr.
can be consoled, Children sometimes prosper as well without, as with Parents, and at all events Life has such varieties of disappointments that they may as well proceed from one cause as another,—but when Existance is the Gift of Heaven in order that certain duties may be fulfilled, and the path that leads to a state of Immortality and perfection—in this point of view I am Grateful for the gifts, and wait with cheerful Hope. Good night dear Julia, Kiss dear Sister Charlotte for me and believe me

Yours most truely. E.A.S.

1.34 To Julia Scott

Sunday Evening 19th December 1798

Dear Precious Julia—

Whilst I was dozing over a volume of Sermons (such is the frailty of Human nature) I recollected that I had not written to you these ten days—and in one moment my eyes were open, thoughts awake and every tender affection of my Heart in exercise, dear precious little friend—I never will even in appearance neglect her.—Your last letter gave me much uneasiness as it regards my Brother Henry, ¹ who I am extremely Anxious should have some provision and altho’ I knew him to be sometimes irregular in his conduct, I had no Idea that it had ever excited so much attention as materially to injure him—My poor William is indeed to be pitied and has a dreadful struggle with them all—how he will get thro’ it I know not, and it is well for me I have a perfect reliance on Superior Providence, or my Spirits would be unequal to the task of supporting His—Our Friend G[iles] and his Brother from Baltimore passed an hour with us this Morning, I always feel in his company an interest I never do in any other persons since

1.34 ASJPH 1-3-3-6:17

¹Henry Seton (b. 1774) was the son of William and Rebecca Curson Seton. He became a lieutenant in the United States Navy and accompanied the Setons until they left the New York harbor en route to Italy in 1803.
your departure He speaks so much of our Poor Brother John, and all
your affairs that he seems more nearly connected with the Idea of you
than any other Person I know—

With what mingled and various sensations I touched the rapper of
your door this Morning, inquiring for Mrs. Laight the Bride—She is
there as Mistress of the House at present, and will be I suppose if Mr.
Hoffman remain[s] unmarried. I had not the melancholy pleasure of
entering it and did not know whither or no to regret her not being at
Home, but think I should have liked to have viewed the scene of so
many past hours, and some very happy ones—

If I do not conclude my letter to night, you will not receive it in sev­
eral days, for Monday is a busy day with me, as it formerly was with
you and Tuesday a part of the family dines with us and of course make
more to do than usual. When you speak of me to Brother Samuel, as I
am sure you sometimes will, remember to remember him, that I al­
ways was and believe ever will be of the number of those who dearly
love him—

Kiss your precious children for me and take the prayers and fondest
Affection of

your E.A.S.

1.35 To Anna Maria Seton

December 31, 1798

The last the first and every day of the year my thoughts and time are
yours my Anna,—but I enjoy a peculiar pleasure in devoting an hour
generally appropriated to Amusements, to you my precious Child, in
whom my greatest delight and amusements are centered. May the

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2Julia's brother John Sitgreaves had died in September 1798.
3Formerly Miss Colden

1Anna Maria Seton was three and a half years old when this was written. It appears on a piece that
had a rather moral subject, which has been crossed out, presumably by Elizabeth, and the page has
been cut; clearly the moral piece was longer.
Giver of all good, grant his Protection to you, and assist me in my Endeavours to promote your future good and Advantage. The Blessing and attentions of the tenderest Parents and most affectionate friends are constantly yours, and by your conduct you will confer the gratification of our fondest wishes, or inflict the most Bitter disappointment. In you I view the Friend, the Companion, and Consolation of my future years—delightful Reflection

1799

1.36 To Julia Scott

3rd January 1799

My Julia

The last year has been to us the reverse of Our dearest Hopes, the Grave of every enjoyment—yes to us my Julia, I feel a melancholy satisfaction in the expression, and the first pleasant thought I enjoyed in the opening of this year was that the terrible ninety-eight was past—but the effects of those events which are past with it, must remain as long my existance—may the similitude fail here my love, and Heaven grant you that Peace you covet—and Bless your children who I am sure are real Blessings to you—

The Colonel [Giles] has been terrifying me with apprehensions for your Health and is sure that you are ill because you have not written, but I am so well accustomed to your Lazy pen that I have better Hopes tho’ I cannot altogether divest myself of fears for you as young Giles mentioned your having been Indisposed—do write one line to clear the cloud—for dearest Julia absence does not shake Affection, and Friendship Make[,] it strengthens. I write only to wish you a happy

1.36 ASJPH 1-3-3-6:18
New Year and to beg that you will soon let me hear that you are well; for Rebecca Seton¹ is very ill, and I am just going to lay a Blister on her Breast, but will write again next week. I am

Yours most truely and surely E.A.S.

1.37 To Julia Scott

New York 20th January 1799

Mrs. Julia

I should be happy to know if the key of your memory is lost, or if you have a Felon¹ on your Finger—something certainly must have happened to make you so very indifferent to my wishes on the subject of hearing from you. the Colonel [Giles] and even his amiable lady are favoured but as you have not business to transact with me I can excuse you on the score of your numerous correspondants provided you could have substituted Maria or John, for I have really been unhappy about you, having once heard you were ill, I did not know how far that illness might have extended until the Colonel called to inform me that you were neither dying nor Dead. thank Heaven for that and whenever you have leisure please to remember me.—

I have had a siege of Sorrow these three weeks, but it is now happily past, and my poor Sister is better and my children who were all down with a cold the most violent they ever had, are quite recovered. Mrs. [Eliza] Sadler is also arrived after being four months at Sea, and my Poor Sister Emma² is released from her terrible doubts and anxieties, and I suppose her Wedding will now take place as soon as she pleases—for myself, I can but reflect on the perverseness of Human Affairs for Mrs. S’s arrival once so much my earnest wish is now

¹Elizabeth’s sister-in-law had tuberculosis which was flaring up.

¹¹An infection at the end of a finger near the nail

²Charlotte Amelia Bayley, Elizabeth’s half-sister, was engaged to marry William Craig, Eliza Craig Sadler’s brother.
converted into, I could almost say a misfortune, except as far as respects her Personal Safety; for my Father perseveres in his resolution that I shall never admit a reconciliation with Mrs. B[ayley] and in that case my Intercourse with Mrs. Sad[ler]—will be so much mixed with vexation, and our difference will be a source of so much mortification to her, that I can never visit her without expecting to meet those I do not wish to meet, and would now rather wish to avoid what was once so great a pleasure—my Home too is changed Julia—I am now never alone, have no leisure hours, and care less than ever for the World or its enjoyments.

Your friend told me that you were in the cruellest state of depression of Spirits, but Julia I know you well and if you are not changed I do not care for your expressions at the moment of writing to an Absent Friend, for I have known you to write to your Father¹ or Brother in the morning on the most melancholy Subjects, and in the Afternoon dress, go visiting, and be the most cheerful of the company—this you may remember and I hope it is so now, tho’ your mind has been but too much exercised I believe, and I fear Sorrow has gained but too great an ascendance over it. Cheer up my love, remember the Storm is in part blown over, and the remaining cloud may pass by harmless—O Julia if my wishes or exertions could gain you Peace you should enjoy it in its most perfect state, but Heaven alone can bestow it for it is Heaven.

How is my Sister Charlotte and her prosperous train, how much I would give to see you both and those that belong to you—If my Son² gets well over his Innoculation in time nothing is more probable than

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¹The stepmother of Elizabeth Bayley Seton, Charlotte Amelia Barclay Bayley (d.1805), became the second wife of Dr. Richard Bayley June 16, 1778. By 1799 Dr. Bayley was estranged from his second wife and had instructed Elizabeth not to associate with her. With the impending marriage of Elizabeth’s half-sister to her friend Eliza Sadler’s brother, she found herself in a tense situation.

²William Sitgreaves (?-1800), Julia’s father, arrived in Philadelphia in 1729 and became a prominent merchant. He married Susanna Deshon.

³Richard Seton, Elizabeth’s infant son, had a mild case of smallpox due to his inoculation and was quarantined in the nursery. Dr. Edward Jenner had publicly introduced the use of cowpox vaccine to create immunity to smallpox in 1798. This use of the inoculation would have been among the earliest in the United States.
that I shall surprise you with a visit—Heaven bless and preserve my Julia—

E.A.S.

1.38 To Dr. Richard Bayley


Should you be in your Retirement, unoccupied by cares and Solicitudes that generally accompany you, a letter from your Daughter will be very acceptable—if otherwise, it will be read in haste and the Idea “Bett is a Goose” will pass your mind,—I send it to take its chance, hoping as the children say, it may find you well, as I am the same. It is currently reported that you are gone to New London to inquire the origin of “the Fever,” and that you are to proceed to Boston to see your Children, but I hope you will very soon return and convince the Ladies who chatter on the subject that the origin is not the object of your pursuit, but the remedy.

I have passed one of the most Elegant Evenings of my Life. it is now Eleven oclock, and since seven I have never quitted my seat, and scarcely changed my posture. Part of my Family are asleep, and part abroad—I have been reading of the “High and lofty One who inhabits Eternity,” and selecting such passages as I wish to transmit to my Daughter. How the World lessens and recedes—how calm and peaceable are hours spent in such Solitude, they are marked down for useful purposes and their Memory remains—

I close my Evening Employment with “Orasons for Thee.” Peace be with my Father.

E.A.S.

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1 A city in southeast Connecticut on Long Island Sound, forty-five miles east of New Haven
2 Probably some of the children of Dr. Bayley’s second marriage
3 Anna Maria Seton
My dearest Julia

Your last letter filled me with Sorrow and renewed every recollection of former days. that fate which has seperated you from those who love you so well can never reconcile me to your absence except I could call you to my imagination happy, and in the enjoyment of more than you left behind you in N[ew] York, but Julia sick and in sorrow are images which are too painful to dwell on, and my imagination always on the fairest side, loves to pourtray you in the midst of those whose society you used so much to covet, your tranquility restored and all those little family arrangements made which are so necessary to your repose—it is a melancholy reflection. And no one can make it oftener than I do, that our Peace and pleasure should so much depend on hirelings and circumstances so trivial, but it always will be so while artificial wants and habits affect us as much as they now do

Oh Julia how happy must have been the former days of Simplicity and ease, when cooks and Waiters had their proper rank in existance and had not the power of overturning whole Families and tormenting us poor little Ladies until Life is almost a burthen—but better days will come—there is another and a better world, and as my Poor Father says “hail, to the period when we will be at rest.” I recievied a very long letter from Him Yesterday, He has been dancing attendance on the Legislature these three weeks and is likely so to do, but he is well and in a situation perfectly agreeable to Him, at the Lieutenant Governors where he finds those attentions and formalities he is so fond of recieving. I also have a long letter from Miss Shipton who I suspect is on the road to Matrimony or Disappointment, for I think it very evident by her expressions respecting Mr. Morgan that if he regains his

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1.39 ASJPH 1-3-3-6:20

1From 1798 to 1801 Dr. Bayley made regular trips to Albany each winter to report to the New York State Legislature in his capacity as health officer of the New York City Board of Health Commissioners. He usually stayed in Watervliet and received his mail in care of Lieutenant-Governor Steven van Rensselaer.
Health and returns from Lisbon he will marry her but Mr. Ogden who saw him embark says that he was the picture of Death and scarcely able to stand without support. She has sent dear little Anna the Scripture lessons such as Maria has—Anna is extremely altered since you were here and has grown[n] a most lovely girl indeed she is every thing you would most wish in a child, Will is a Bouncer and would rule the house if permitted, but my little Richard rules all Hearts for you never did see a lovelier Baby, very like Anna but a much milder expression—

Col[onel] Giles has promised me that he will send this letter—Oh Julia how it grieves me to hear that you have so much vexation on account of Mr. Grien and that miserable Sam Smith, I wish you may not find these mortifications too much for You, and I hope you will exert your mind and look forward to better days. Mrs. G[iles] says she has pressed you to pass the summer with her at Long Island, but whether it will add to your happiness or not you are the only Judge, happy should I be were it in my power to make you a similar proposition—but alas I am out of my proper Sphere, clogged and shackled, without the power of one free act of the Will, in a narrow path from which I never expect to step until I arrive on that blest shore “where weary travellers rest.”

dear Julia rest assured that small as your portion of happiness may appear to you,—you have not more than almost any person has to contend with who has suffered a reverse of family affairs, to feel all our Old habits infringed or altered, to extend our ideas to the affairs of other people and make exertions we are unaccustomed to, is not so easily to be reconciled—but acting well our part in present difficulties is the only way to insure the Peace of futurity.—Kiss your precious children for me and remember me most affectionately to Sister C[harlotte] and Brother Samuel and believe me ever

Yours—E.A.Seton
1.40 To Dr. Richard Bayley

New York 24th February 1799

Your most Welcome letter arrived safe, but not before it was too late to answer it by the next Post. It was also without a date which deprived me of the pleasure of knowing when it was written, but the good intelligence it contained of your Health and expected return was as much pleasure as could possibly be afforded by any circumstance, and exhilarated my Spirits to so great a degree that Madam Olive who had passed the day with me, declared that her chere fille was charmante and gave me mille baisers.1 She has confided her eldest Son to my care, a confidence so flattering from one who is so particularly attentive to the Morals and Manners of her Children that I purpose on our return from their neighborhood next Summer to leave my Son William with her, as it will be the means of his gaining the French Language with facility and giving him a Knowledge of it which with practice will be permanent, an advantage I think incalculable—besides weaning him from Old Mammy [Huler]

—Your Friends are all well, Mrs. F. is better Mr. Forbes from Jamaica dined with us Yesterday and says the long-looked for Gentlemen will certainly be here this year if the Crops are good. If you should have any leisure moments think of my Brother, dear Sir—You are a Philosopher—I rejoice in your acquisition of Firmness, Stability, O my Father treasure up the Blessed Spirit, and place me in the Path to attain it. Mr. Olive says I am a Specimen of Philosophy, one who reasons and reflects on the Consequences of actions, and superior to exterior appearances, “pas une femme savant c’est ci que je deteste le plus”2—He little thinks how the frail Bark is tost by contending commotions, and how dearly earned is that spirit of accomodation he thinks so great an ornament. I wrote Julia [Scott] this

1.40 ASJPH 1-3-9:80

1That is, “her dear daughter was charming and gave me a thousand kisses”
2That is, “what I detest most is a woman who is not wise.”
day. She is well. and so are all my Darlings, and your Own dear Daughter E.A. Seton

Who made the Heart, 'tis he alone
Decidedly can try us,
He knows each chord its various tone,
Each Spring its various bias:
Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted.

1.41 To Julia Scott

15th March [1799]

Your letter my Julia afflicts me beyond measure—And have I added pain to your Accumulated causes of vexation who would do any thing in this World to lessen or sooth your sorrows—I have also had my Share, notwithstanding my resolution to bear up against all evil with Patience and fortitude, but Alas, Nature will have its vent and maintain its ascendency in every Bosom unarmed with apathy—a blessing I fear I never shall attain—but it is all in vain to think or grieve, my cup must be filled, and when all is over, when the Silver cord is loosed, and the Spirit returned to Him who gave it, then He who has witnessed its struggles will give it Rest.—in the mean time exertions and sacrifices must be made. in the midst of your sorrows you have the sweetest Consolations your Daughter particularly will soon supply a thousand sources of happiness—

I think if mine could possibly ever approach her in the amiable qualities of her mind and temper I should think Her unequalled—but my Julia, she is of a different mould and tho' a pliant good disposition she possesses too much of that lively genius which tho' flattering in its
first appearances very often is the ruin of its possessor—Perhaps you may in a future day be permitted to assist me in my duty towards Her, and I feel the most perfect assurance of your rediness to do so—My Father in addition to his former uneasiness has new sources of distress which make me tremble. two of my Brothers have already shewn the most unquestionable marks of unsteady dispositions—We cannot Wonder—but this is a sacred subject, and appears to have affected him above all other Evils. Richard begs me particularly in his last letter to remember him to you—My Father has obtained permission from the Legislature to perform all the plans he has contemplated on Staten Island—He is building a Hospital and dwelling House but I fear not to recieve his family— Emma’s Marriage will be, but when, is uncertain I have not time to write more before the Post goes and if I detain my letter you will not recieve it in two days, and I fear you have already expected it.

tell my Sister Charlotte that one of my most favorite Hopes is that of seeing her again—remember me also affectionately to my Brother and Harriet. tell me something of your Father and Mother, Julia, in your next letter. how they bear their sorrow, and if ever I am mentioned before them, remember me respectfully to them. If you are not [well] enough do not write. let Maria write for you if it is only five lines—Kiss my J[ohn] Scott for me and be assured of my truest affection. E.A.Seton.

15th March

My Father this moment enters the room—“have you any message to my Julia” “tell her I wish I had her at Quarantine”—

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1Elizabeth’s half-brothers Richard and Andrew Barclay Bayley. Andrew Barclay Bayley (d. 1811) was the son of Dr. Richard and Charlotte Barclay Bayley. At one time he was engaged to Harriet Seton. He pursued a mercantile career in Jamaica and the West Indies and died there.

2Dr. Bayley’s hope was to establish a health station on Staten Island to improve public health and to serve as a quarantine.

3Charlotte Amelia Bayley Craig, Elizabeth’s half-sister

4William and Susanna Deshon Sitgreaves
1.42 To Julia Scott

New York 27th March 1799

My dearest Julia

I wrote to John' Yesterday—and altho' I have nothing in particular to tell you, yet feeling a presentiment that I may not be able soon to write again cannot help repeating what I have so often said, that I am your own. my little darling Richard was a few days ago Innoculated, and it is impossible to surpress the anxieties of such a period, happy I shall be when it is over—tho' the Season is very favoured and, my darling in perfect Health. the time is now approaching when your promise of visiting New York must be fulfilled—the idea fills me with a thousand pleasant reflections, yet I am convinced there are many reasons why I should not anticipate too much happiness from seeing you, as your unavoidable situation and Engagements with Broadway will be a sad reverse to the former happy expectation of having you all to myself.—

2nd April—

My poor Rebecca has again been ill, and my whole attention is requisite to support her when she is sick, as her mind is in so feeble a state that without it she would be in perfect misery. You would suppose that at such a time all her friends would be round her, but their attentions are messages and visits, and those are not sufficient to comfort the sick and desponding Soul, or to relieve the aching head which requires the Bosom of Affection for its pillow and the soothing still voice of friendship to sustain it—

that you my Julia should feel the want of these while the one whom affection habit and the most sacred ties has bound to you, while she is far away is an idea insupportable, and which tho' I feel the certainty that it is so, I try to drive away, for when will it be otherways, and where is the remedy?—Charlotte cannot be a great deal with you for

1.42 1-3-3-6:22

1Possibly John Curson Seton, Elizabeth’s brother-in-law
she has many duties to fulfill—if she could—you will need no other Comforter—

Richard is not yet sick, [unclear] but there always is a difficulty in my children [unclear] the small Pox—my darling Julia fare­well—may Peace be with you—

E.A.Seton.

1.43 To Julia Scott

New York 20th April 1799

My Precious friend—

I have the happiness of knowing that your long silence is not in consequence of Indisposition but of the remaining pain in your fin­ger—and also that your former expectations of visiting us are less­ened, in other words that you cannot make Sufficient exertion for so serious an undertaking—

23rd April

so much I had said dear Julia when I was called away, and have since seen Col[onel] Giles who says you have not written to Mrs. Pintard as you had promised and consequently we have reason to fear that you are not so well as when you last wrote. pray do let us hear from you as soon as possible.—How impossible it is to form any idea of realizing future plans, I never will trust myself again, even with the most probably appearances, for was I not in this month to have brought you from Philadelphia to have settled you in my Home at least for a season—and how many Etceteras might I add, which it is wrong to dwell on because it only embitters the disappointment.—but in this

1.43 ASJPH 1-3-3-6:23

The Pintards were a prominent New York family of the time. John Pintard was a wealthy merchant, scholar, and philanthropist who was the guiding light in the founding of several important civic and cultural organizations in New York City during this period.
month I have had every variety of disagreeable circumstances, as sick ch[amber], dressing blisters, etc—

all our Boys at Home and two strangers they brought with them to pass their Vacation; added to all, being without a servant, have been obliged to set my own table and do all the work of a servant man except cleaning knives, as Richard being in the small Pox the two women were obliged to confine themselves entirely to the Nursery, and little Sandy was so far in decline we were obliged to send him a sea voyage—but Richard is now well, Rebecca is better and all goes well. I tell you these things that you may form some idea of my manner of getting thro’ my new situation, and to give you the comfort of knowing that your friend is in the very same state of affairs with yourself. You can have no derangement no difficulty that I do not endure every day, but I fear Julia that you do not bear yours as lightly as I do mine, you do not feel the same Spirits, indeed not enjoying Health how should you. You will scold me for that word comfort—and when you do, reflect on the soothing power of Sympathy. and also that I rather welcome these Evils than wish to avoid them, for they bring the scene nearer to a close.—

26th April

On my Breakfast table I found a letter from You dated 13th April which the person you intrusted it with thought proper to keep until yesterday—it has the Post Mark of the 25th on it—and I have been all the while persuaded that you were ill—

You speak of my Visiting you as a thing that could be easily done—could you see the exact situation in which I am at this moment writing you would acknowledge the Impossibility. sitting between two sick beds, on one Rebecca is laid with an ulcerated sore throat covered with 2 blisters, and Harriet in the other with the same complaint, and I think it highly probable that it will go thro’ the family as they caught it from Mrs. Farquhar.² if we fortunately should escape, this sweet girl is evidently in a decline and requires the most attentive care to soothe the remnant of her existance, and I adore that Power that

²Elizabeth Curson Farquhar, William Magee Seton’s aunt
gives me the sacred charge of doing so. added to this the two Eldest girls are to be Home from Boarding School on M[onday] with a little friend they are to bring to pass the Vacation which will last a month, and then it will be more than time for my children to be in the Country—so we go—to take it as quietly as possible is the only remedy.

I am sure the approaching Season as it will render your intercourse with those you love more frequent, and agree so much better with the state of your mind and Body, will restore you in some degree to the tranquility you have lost.—Heaven in Mercy grant it and give you rest my Julia

I am always truely and surely your own E.A.S.—

this is worse than Patch work but if you can understand it I am satisfied—

1.44 To Julia Scott

New York 14th May 1799

Dear Precious Julia

If it was possible to love you more than I did, how much nearer would it now draw you to my Heart to find you in sorrow and Inquietude, struggling with the vexations and cares of a mind Oppressed—could I relieve it, was it my lot to speak Peace to your Afflicted Heart. —but I am fulfilling my destiny, and I fear will never be permitted to share yours, if I could even Hope to do so, I would rejoice in the change that permitted it, if it were even in other things for the Worse—Your Spirits Julia are too low, your mind so greatly oppressed will sink under its weight, and your promissing amiable children will be deprived of that protection and Guideance so necessary to their future happiness; If your situation at Easton is in no way

3William Magee Seton's younger half-sisters, Mary and Charlotte

1.44 ASJPH 1-3-3-6:24

1The home of Julia's brother, Samuel Sitgreaves
particularly disagreeable, I am sure you ought to go there, for Brother ever must be the most proper and effectual comforter of your Heart, he knows all those secret springs so thoroughly and has been so much accustomed to your disposition. I think it very probable that he has himself prevented the visits of his Wife and Sister knowing the deranged state of your family and that it would be too much additional trouble, but all these things You alone can Judge of, and I only pray that you may not remain in Philadelphia during the Summer[.] let what will be the consequence of leaving it. I am persuaded you will never have any pleasure in a visit Here except it is to a friend, your living at lodgings is entirely out of the question—Oh Julia why cannot I be that friend.

—Every Soul of our thirteen children except little Will has in turn had the Intermitting Fever, they are all recovering but my faithful Mammy [Huler], my attentive friend, the constant companion of all my changes and chances, is sinking fast in the Grave; and she will be a loss not easily repaired—the Second Mother of my Children.—"THY WILL BE DONE"

16th May 1799—

Little Richard has been lying in my arms ill with a violent Fever since the day before yesterday, and this is the first moment I have quitted him—I am very anxious that you should receive this letter by to days Post and therefore write when I should be sleeping. I dread the shock that you may probably too soon sustain—but Julia endeavour to strengthen your mind, and use that resolution which on a former melancholy occasion you exerted so well, your Father with his precautions and the favourable Season may soon recover, but in course of Nature and his complaints there is every Reason why you should expect the worst.—Heaven preserve and sustain my Julia thro' all her trials, for without that support, all other is of little avail—

I will write very soon again, very often when I read my letters over I almost resolve not to send them I find so many inaccuracies and mistakes of expression. but Julia there are no mistakes of meaning when

\(^2\text{Matt. 26}:42\)
they express how much I love you and how much I am your own E.A.Seton.
Your letter is dated the 9th and I received it the 14th—

1.45 To Julia Scott

Sunday Evening 2nd June 1799

I begin my Long Island Expedition on Tuesday¹ and as Col[onel] Giles is to visit you and will see your dear little self I cannot resist writing a line tho’ without one word to say except what I have so often repeated. My Sister² is to leave me to-morrow for Dover on a visit to Mrs. V[ining].³ I do not think you will see her as she is too weak and ill to call on you if you are in Town, which I hope and pray you may not be, for it is time my love that you should be in a situation of safety which I am sure Philadelphia cannot be during the Summer—I hear from the Col[onel] that his dear Lady is not in a travelling situation, and that she has relinquished her plan of visiting you—so goes that hope—for with him I cannot expect you to come. My Julia I am tired of Hopes and fears and will take all as it comes tho’ I cannot help being very much disappointed in thus losing every hope of seeing you

Monday. I have received your dear letter of 31st of May how it wrings my Heart Julia to see it has been wet with tears—this is too much tho’ I fear you shed many in silence and sorrow—My Brother [Samuel] has too many engagements to satisfy your Heart, and remembrance recalls the image of one who would have been all a Brother could be.⁴ with respect to your Father,⁵ you must be resolute,

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¹Elizabeth was planning to leave the city for the summer.
²Rebecca Seton, Elizabeth’s sister-in-law
³Anna Maria Seton (b. 1775), daughter of William and Rebecca Curson Seton and elder sister of Rebecca, had married (1790) John Middleton Vining (1758-1802). He was a member of the United States House of Representatives from Delaware from 1789 to 1793 and a United States senator from 1793 to 1798. Their home, “The Oakes,” was near Dover, Delaware.
⁴John Sitgreaves, Julia’s deceased brother
⁵William Sitgreaves
and not indulge melancholy reflections, for you must be persuaded
that from his General state of health having been so long impair[ed]
that separation from you will not be sudden, and he may yet retain what
strength he has for many years—think Julia how many we have
out-lived whose lives we calculated upon as certainly of longer dura-
tion than our own, and how unable we are to Judge of Future
Events—and if your fear is realized Remember the sure the never fail-
ing Protector we have, but he will not divide your Confidence[.] rely
solely on Him, and from experience I can declare that it will produce
the most Peaceful sensations and most perfect enjoyment of which the
Heart is capable.

Julia I can speak freely to you what I wish to say, you will not call
me Preacher or Moralizer, your own Bosom has experienced that
Peace, and you have not seen so much sorrow in this World without
being convinced that our best employment while in it is to improve
those sentiments which produce that temper of mind which inspires
confidence in Him who has the guidance of our concerns; and without
which confidence of a Friend and Father, there can be no enjoyment of
that intercourse with him which is to form our greatest felicity in fu-
ture and I am sure Here is the most perfect Peace to those who are
blessed with it—What sorrow what vexations and tumults has it car-
rried me th[r]o' and with a peculiar propriety and resolution, that any
natural Passion of my Heart was combatting—for this last year—Oh
Julia when I look back upon it I tremble.—and now I am free for a
while—and we, you and I, might yet pass our Summer together if I
knew where it was to be passed—

My Husband purchased a long lease of a little place two miles from
the city, and after altering it as we wished, the Sheriffs have offered it
for Sale because there was not a proper title to it; William is now so
Angry that he declares he will give up the purchase, but I think by the
10th of the month when it is to be decided he will alter his Mind, as the
House and street we are now in, is an insupportable Summer resi-
dence—Oh Julia if I could now say there is a room for you and your
Darlings—come with the Col[onel Giles]—instead of which I cannot
tell if I am not to remain in the city all summer for if we lose our first
prospect, there is little chance of another as places on the Island are so
much in demand and such exorbitant prices that it is next to impossible to procure one.—

I hope my children may get such a stock of Health at the Sea Shore as will enable them to buffet it a little, they now want it very much or I would not take them; for Mrs. [Eliza] Sadler has but a garret room for us, and I cannot see my poor William while I am there so you may suppose it will not be for long—Heaven Bless you my darling, and make all for the best I am your own

E.A.S.

1.46 To Rebecca Seton

Long Island 8th June 1799

My dearest Rebecca,

I hope your Journey to Philadelphia is finished, and that you have born it as well as the first days Journey, which Ogden\(^1\) says was past even Jacks\(^2\) Sanguine hopes—tho' I do not know how to believe all that was said, as I know your never complaining makes them think you much Stronger than you really are.—Heaven grant the best, and guard you thro' it, to Health and Peace. William brought us here on Tuesday and left us the next Morning with a heavy Heart for littleWill was very sick, but he is now the merriest of the party and runs on the Beech like a Bird. Ricksy is absolutely Rosy and when he goes out he lifts up his little hands to the trees and says do, do with such delight and astonishment and when the wind blows in his face, shuts his little eyes and laughs as he used to when you blew at him. We have every thing very comfortable and the children and Mammy [Huler] enjoy themselves as much as possible.

1.46 AMSJ A111 005 (Seton-Jevons #3-6)

\(^1\)Possibly Abraham Ogden, a business associate of William Magee Seton's

\(^2\)John Curson Seton, Elizabeth's brother-in-law, escorted his sisters Rebecca, who was ill, and the young Cecilia south. He remained in Virginia and later married there.
—and you will enjoy yourself my Dear Rebecca for tho’ I am sure you felt a struggle in quitting Stone Street. I am fully persuaded that the change of air, the carresses and attentions you will continually receive, the affectionate endearments of Jack, (and many etcetera’s I could mention) will soon reconcile you to it, and make you feel the change much for the better, and when you return you will bring with you Health, and that tranquility of mind You so much covet, and deserve so well. Sometimes read Sisters little Book, and remember tho’ there are many ways of expressing affection You have hers in full, signed and sealed.—

I am more anxious about your hearing from the children than anything else, as I know you cannot be happy without it; if you have any particular wish about it, name it, but I know no way better than to tell the Boys to write once a week or fortnight and let it be immediately forwarded to you—You have doubtless arranged all with the Girls—You will easily hear from them. I will write to them to day, I long to hear how they are.—owing to the badness of the weather William did not come yesterday and I do not know when you will recieve this—

How is dear little Cecilia. Write me every thing particularly but do not write when it hurts your chest for I know you will have [unclear] to write to, and I should recieve no pleasure from your letters if I thought you were in pain while writing them.—I have just recieved a large package from our dear little Boys, and have written them a long letter which I will send with the cage and Inkstand they write for. Mr. Som[e]body has sent a bag of nuts and I will make up a little Box and send them some. they shall not feel the distance you are from them more than I can help—Heaven preserve my dear Rebecca and restore her to her affectionate E.A.Seton.

this is the 11th June, and we are all well—

[3] 61 Stone Street was the Seton family residence.
[4] Cecilia Seton (1791-1810) was the daughter of William and Anna Maria Curson. She was a half-sister of William Magee Seton and a convert to Roman Catholicism (June 20, 1806) despite strong family opposition. She joined Elizabeth in Baltimore in June 1809 and shared the life of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Joseph’s at Emmitsburg until her death April 17, 1810, in Baltimore where she had been taken for medical treatment. Known as Sister Cecilia or Cecilia Theresa, she was elected to the first council of the Sisters of Charity in 1809. She is buried in the original community cemetery at Emmitsburg.
The very name of this place must recall many recollections to the mind of my Friend for many it renews to mine who have not passed so many pleasant hours here as you have. I was walking in the wood near Bennets and found the name of Julia Scott written, and fastened on a tree. it really seemed as if I had seen your Ghost—dear precious little name! my companion (no matter who) felt nearly the same effect that I did, and put it in his pocket book saying he would carry it to Flat Bush. How I long to know if you will come, I am sure if you tasted the sweet breezes and delights of the country as I now do, you would think yourself fully paid for any trouble it might cost you to possess them. tho' I feel almost sure and yet I cannot tell why that if you fall on no other plan but that of going to flat-bush, it will not be—We are yet doubtful about our future destination for the Summer. Oh Julia if it could be that I might have you and your children in all the ease and freedom of a country Life, they surely could be precious days—Polly would come with you, you could share as much of your time with other friends as would hinder you from tiring of Solitude with me, and in so near a tie as we are, trifling inconvenience would be lightly passed over on your part and on mine[,] it could not be felt if I should have the little Box to myself

—I return Home on Monday next as Emma’s marriage takes place on Wednesday the 19th and I hope notwithstanding all difficulties I shall be present and forget the past as far as possible.

May they be only half as happy as they expect for their calculations are beyond all bounds—

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1.47 ASJPH 1-3-3-6:27

1Elizabeth was at the Sadlers’ summer home on Long Island.

2A section of Brooklyn where Julia Scott had friends

3Charlotte Amelia Bayley, Elizabeth’s half-sister, who was about to be married to William Craig, Eliza Craig Sadler’s brother

4Elizabeth is referring to family tensions as a result of Dr. Bayley’s estrangement from his second wife, Charlotte Barclay Bayley, the mother of the bride.
I have all the enjoyments of Books, Music, walking, etc that my most romantic fancy every formed, for Mrs. [Eliza] Sadler always possesses them as naturally as I do the air I breathe as she has nothing else to employ her, but to me who has so long been tied to sick rooms and a large family it appears like a change to some better region.

My children are perfectly wild with the change, and if I could see my William oftener I should be in no haste to give up my room to Craig and Emma which by the by I am obliged to do as this is to be their retreat on Thursday—Little Dick calls me—

Heaven preserve my Julia and give her Health and Peace—

I am yours most Affectionately E.A.S.

1.48 To Eliza Sadler

Blooming Dale Sunday Morning 23rd June 1799

I do not know Why, but I have never thought of you for a moment since our Separation without the most melancholy Sensations—are you well my Friend?—I do not ask if you enjoy yourself—it would be like asking you if our fortnight was not happy—It was one of those small portions of time never to be forgotten and which never can come again. I have a dear little retirement to share with you, but not one prospect to expand the Soul—nothing but Shade and quiet, and is not that a great deal—and it will be Ours—

My William continues his determination of going to Baltimore,¹ I cannot be left alone, and if dear J. Jacques I find it—Rousseau!!!² and you are my company I shall have a reproach to make myself I never felt before, that of being satisfied in his absence—and if your Visitors are not gone—it will surely be sufficient excuse—

¹The newlyweds were going to use the room at the Sadlers' summer home after the wedding.
²Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was a French romantic philosopher and author of *Emile*, a popular novel of the period.

1.48 ASJPH 1-3-3-7:13

¹William Magee Seton, Elizabeth’s husband, was going to Baltimore to visit his maternal grandfather, Richard Curson (1726-?), to discuss business affairs.

²Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was a French romantic philosopher and author of *Emile*, a popular novel of the period.
Mrs. [Julia] Scott talks of going with Mr. Seton and returning with her children when he returns, but she has not decidedly said so—if she should I shall have the pleasure of making a Season agreeable to her which otherwise would be passed in the heat of Philadelphia and perhaps in the danger of the Yellow Fever for she has no country house—You know the privilege of giving a friend what no one else could give—how sweet it is—but as She once wished herself Mrs. Sadler, there can be no harm in saying, I wish she was.

tell me when you have seen my Father[,] if Helen¹ is restored—and a thousand other things I wish to know which you can easily imagine—every time I receive Mr. Seton I shall ask for your Note the first question. Peace to my Precious Sad—

E.A.S.

Dick is quite well. Anna and Will also.

1.49 To Rebecca Seton

Craigeldon 27th June [1799]

My friend A[braham] O[gdenn][¹] often asks after you He slept here last Saturday and staid till Sunday Evening[,] took a nap on the Big Rock²

My Dearest Rebecca—I have had the most busy bustling Week you can imagine or my first employment on my arrival in Town would have been writing to you. We came two days sooner than we expected to be present at Emma’s Wedding³ which went off charmingly, and they are at last happy—then was the question whether Bussby Hill or Craigdon would be our summer habitation as Mr. Corp having

³Helen Bayley (1790-1848) was a daughter of Dr. Richard and Charlotte Barclay Bayley. She married Samuel Craig June 1, 1814.
1.49 AMSJ A111 006 (Seton-Jevons #276-279)
¹A business associate of William Magee Seton
²This introductory note is written at the top of the letter.
³Charlotte Amelia Bayley, Elizabeth’s half-sister, married William Craig June 19, 1799.
purchased Mr. Pollocks place [unclear] William again to take the latter, and as there was yet the difficulty about the title to Bushy-hill and little Ricksy had a violent dysentary, it was determined we should come to Craigdon\(^1\) and here we are—all Nature Smiling—the children and my Husband well—Rice and milk and stewed cherries from morning till night—and every body pleased with the novelty.

—last Sunday Aunt F\(^6\) dined with Mary Wilks and after Dinner came to see me. She asked a great deal about you and seemed to expect you had written oftener to me than to any one else—I told her I had but the one letter, and we both agreed that you ought when you are well enough to write once a week a few lines if you cannot more to some of the Familly but not to make it a task to write to all, for writing is of all things the employment least suited to your feelings, and might injure your health if you do too much—

1st July 1799—

I defered finishing my letter anxious to inform you that you would recieve your cloaths but when I went to Town yesterday to put up WM’s things for his Journey to Baltimore, I found that yours had not yet been sent, and Caty to whom I gave your Key of the door thinking that she would make it a point to get them ready I found had not been to the house. We stoped at Eliza’s\(^6\) and I asked her if she had not time If I should do it, She said no that Maitland\(^7\) was to let her know when there would be an opportunity. indeed my child you should not wait for them if I knew where to get at the things, but your not having worn them since we have been together I do not know more than the Man in the Moon, and if I was to look till I found them I might not perhaps send half what you want and make it worse than your waiting for them. the black and white muslin I laid on your bed to go in the Box 9 yards was the half, and it must be washed very carefully and dried immediately or it drys thick and a red cast—

\(^1\)William Magee Seton was negotiating for a lease to Bushy Hill as a summer home, but due to legal complications, the property was not available. Cragdon was the Seton family home in Bloomingdale.

\(^6\)Elizabeth Curson Farquhar, William Magee Seton’s aunt

\(^6\)Eliza Seton Maitland, Elizabeth’s sister-in-law

\(^7\)James Maitland, Elizabeth’s brother-in-law
I have received charming affectionate letters from the Girls, and from the Boys, without number—I have sent them both a Box with sweetmeats and nuts[,] Mary a keg of crackers, the Boys chains for their Squirrels and Harriet shoes—William wrote the Boys since I wrote them—and will call to see the Girls tomorrow—he sets out at eight in the morning and will dine at Brunswick—He says he has not time to see Maria and means to make his jaunt as quick as possible as the Fever is very much talked of in Philadelphia—I must say it is a Sorrowful jaunt to me and I have felt melancholy Since the first moment it was talked of—I have ten thousand things to say to you but there has been such combustion[,] cleaning house[,] packing and unpacking and such a monstrous packet I dare dispatched to Aunt Caley in answer to one we received since you left us that I have not had many moments to myself but you shall soon hear from me again—

3rd July—

W.M.'s departure has been deferred till to-morrow—he left me this morning and sleeps in Town to night he wrote me a little note this evening in which he says, “Write Beck that I shall be in Baltimore the 7th and that she must write to me certainly and that the longest stay I make will be ‘till the 12th”—Heaven grant it.

I have this evening a letter from both Charlotte and Mary—they are very anxious about You but perfectly well—Charlott says “Miss Hay is very good to us we have cherries currants and Rasberrys very often—but Harriet wishes very much to be Home”—I have also your letter of the [unclear] for which my Sister I more than thank you and will soon reply to it Kiss dear little Cely a thousand times for me and tell her Anna keeps a part of every thing she gets “to put by for Aunt Celia”—Eliza’s [Maitland] last son is a lovely fellow very like what Seton was at his age—and she looks wonderfully well—the little darlings are perfectly well—Ricksy wistles to little Tufty fifty times a day, who has taken his station in the hall and eats his sallad and sugar all the while he sings—Java and the Eagles are also well—

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8Site of Miss Hay’s school in New Brunswick, New Jersey.
9Isabella Seton Cayley, William Magee Seton’s aunt
Heaven bless my Beck and give her a good nights rest—

E.A.S.

1.50 To Eliza Sadler

[n.d. 1799]

“My day has been, and may be again” so says Mrs. F’ at whose Desk I am writing, and I pray that my day may be again and that my Sad may be released from all Engagements and Visitors and come to her friend any day after Thursday the sooner the better. on Thursday my William takes his departure and I am in Town to day to prepare his little Packet, stopping at the Lady’s to see our Ship Northern Liberties² Salute, she pressed us in “her way” to meet Post at three and take a family Dinner—Here I am Dinner past, on the moment of setting out for my little Home and every thought full of you sharing it with me—Oh come, come, come friend H[enry Sadler] says he will come every night, that Long Island is too fatiguing

E.A.S.

1.51 To Eliza Sadler

[n.d. 1799]

My dear Sads pains are I hope all past. a great big tear swelled when we left New York which really was inexplicable, as every sweet was full in view, and therefore I call it Sad. She is suffering and I am

1.50 ASJPH 1-3-3-7:6
1Elizabeth Curson Farquhar, William Magee Seton’s aunt
2One of the vessels of the Seton, Maitland and Company’s fleet
1.51 ASJPH 1-3-3-7:7
happy—The Darlings are too precious, too lovely, and their mother too happy—that you may soon share is one of the first wishes of your E.A.S.

1.52 To Eliza Sadler

4th July 1799

Your precious little letter was received with truest Joy—but disappointment followed at finding the time of our meeting yet undecided—is it that Helen detains you—but you say I will be satisfied with your reasons tho' I must acknowledge if that is it, I shall be only mortified—W. M. is gone the Roses are done blowing the cherry's and strawberry's are past, but—Heaven—all Nature smiles on me, I have never known such intire content as since I have been at this little Home—if I had you Eliza and J.J. it would be like a pleasant dream, or an April Sun-shine for my Husband is gone but to get Health and a release from business therefore I am satisfied with his absence—

As to little Julia I cannot answer one of your enquiries respecting her intentions the last time I saw her she was yet undecided but talked of my Husband bringing her two children to her as the Fever is said to be very much dreaded having certainly made its appearance in Philadelphia—But surely her movements need not influence you. She is with the Persons for whom her visit was originally intended and if she does stay, will probably pass the greater part of the Summer there, for my Solitude will ill suit her disposition—at all events let not your Visit be deferred come while W.M. is away, and come when he is here—for he says he will never forgive you if you do not give as much time when he returns as you will while he is away—His longest stay

1.52 ASJPH 1-3-3-7:14
1Possibly Helen Bayley, Elizabeth's half-sister
2Their summer place at Cragdon in the Bloomingdale section of Manhattan.
3Jean Jacques Rousseau, whose works she was reading
4Julia Scott was visiting in New York at this time.
will be 'till the 14th.—Oh come come come come I could say 'till I see you— your own E.A.S.

1.53 To Julia Scott
5th July [1799]

My dear Julia

I have looked for you both yesterday and today supposing you would take me in your ride and let me [know] how my W.M. and you had planed your change to him. He was a good deal alarmed at the accounts of the Fever, and I believe will be back again sooner than he proposed—Before I thought of the probability of your not going with him to arrange your House I appointed the time of his absence for Mrs. [Eliza] Sadler to return my Long Island visit and therefore my love until she returns I cannot give you your room which I have occupied since my Husband left me and will continue to until its future mistress takes possession—Am I not a pretty one to be up a 1/2 past 12—Good night—“Peace be with you”—pray let me see you soon

Your EAS

1.54 To Rebecca Seton
Craigdon 10th July 1799—

My Dear Rebecca’s letter gave me great pleasure particularly as it expressed much Affection for old Sister—not that I wanted the assurance, but to tell you the truth since I heard from Aunt F ¹ that your

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¹Elizabeth Curson Farquhar, William Magee Seton’s aunt
staying the winter with Jack was decided, I have felt as if all former
days should be forgot for I so well know his decided opinion of me that
I am sure if you once get under his roof you will never again call mine
your Home, and you cannot know my Sister the melancholy thoughts
that presses on me whenever I consider myself without you in Stone
Street, it seems to me as if I could as soon enjoy Home without a limb
or a part of myself. this no one else can understand, but I am sure you
do—and I hope you will consider it in your plans of next winter, tho’ it
would be very selfish in me to wish you to <consider my> think of my
desires yet think of the children, for no one but yourself knows how
necessary you are to their happiness and to you only would I mention
the circumstance. as for Mary, She will be miserable without you—You have I am sure weighed it all, and am as sure will act for the
best.—

My William writes me that I must direct my letters to Dover as he
thinks it very probable he will visit you tho’ his plan was not yet
made—Richard he says is much better than he expected, and the poor
old gentleman perfectly overjoyed to see him—I hope he will be able
to go to you for m[a]ny reasons.

The girls all three wrote me very handsome letters and I answered
them the same day—Harriet is wonderfully improved in her writing.
they say they have all they want. I had a letter from both the dear little
Boys last week and if William had not said decidedly he should not
see you I would have sent you some specimins of their writing which
would have pleased you exceedingly. tell my dear little Celia I have
some beautiful Books for her to read when She returns and kiss her for
me—the most Affectionate Brother could not shew me more attention
than A[braham] O[gden] has since William is absent—every day I
recieve a kind little note from him to know how we are, and if he can

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2 John Curson Seton, Elizabeth’s brother-in-law, who had married Mary Wise in 1799 and lived in Alexandria, Virginia.
3 Location of the Seton residence in downtown New York
4 Mary Seton, Elizabeth’s sister-in-law and Rebecca’s sister
5 Home of Anna Maria Seton Vining and United States Senator John Middleton Vining, where Rebecca was staying in Delaware
6 Richard Curson, William Magee Seton’s cousin
7 Richard Curson, William Magee Seton’s grandfather
do any thing. Mrs. [Eliza] Sadler is to stay with me till my William returns—She is delighted with my children and to be sure she could not be otherwise particularly Your Boy who is ten times more lovely than when you left him—I am persuaded he never sees the Birds without thinking of you, for he lifts his little hands and makes that expression of wonder you learnt him, and looks all round as if he wanted Somebody—it was a curious thing He put out his arms to Mrs. [Julia] Scott the moment he saw her and after she took him he hung down his head and cryed to come to me, and looked at her as he does at all other Strangers. I am sure her being entirely in black as he was Accustomed to see you deceived the little darling, and he would not go to her again [page torn] Will, and Mammy [Huler] are very well—we often talk of you—and wish to see you, My Dearest Rebecca take care of yourself, and may Heaven bless you—Remember me to Maria

[Yours] most Affectionately E.A.S.

1.55 To Julia Scott

Sunday Evening 16th July [1799]

My dearest Julia

It is very long since I have heard from you, are you well, and enjoying this fine weather

—My W.M. wrote me yesterday that he was to write to Charlotte the day he set out for Philadelphia as he proposes staying there only one day and that he would be here the 18th or 20th if he did not go to Dover which he was undecided about—

Mrs. [Eliza] Sadler will leave me the day after his return, and I hope to see you immediately with your dear children—my darling Dick has

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3Richard Seton, Elizabeth's third child
1.55 ASJP 1-3-3-6:49
1William was en route to Philadelphia from Baltimore.
2Delaware home of William’s sister and brother-in-law, the Vinings
had the dissentary which alarmed me very much but is getting better[.]
Ann and Will are well and the little place looks charmingly but I fear
Long Island will spoil your enjoyment of it—Peace is here dear
Julia—that is Something and I hope the Affection and attentions of a
friend will in some degree make up the rest. I am

your most truely and sincerely E.A.Seton

1.56 To William Magee Seton

Craig Don 16th July 1799—Sunday evening

Your letter my Dearest William which I recieved last Evening
made me as lively and happy as a Bird—that you pass your time so
well, so free from cares is a pleasure quite new, and makes me feel
selfish in wishing your return—I also pass my time at least pleasantly,
for our little Solitude is so beautiful and Mrs. S[adler] so much
pleased with it that between walking reading and our Darlings the
time is very well divided, and when Mr. S[adler] comes the laugh and
storys never ceases for he has the talent of being pleased or seeming so
wherever he is—the Menage\(^1\) goes on very well—and quietly enough
but our tranquillity is sorrowfully interrupted by the daily visit we
make poor Mr. Olive who has ruptured a blood vessel and reduced so
far that I should not be surprised at any hour to hear that all is over—so
many things combine to Interest me for him that you may easily imag­
ine how melancholy it is.

I am persuaded you are now at Dover,\(^2\) and hope your visit may
give you as much pleasure as the last one you made there—[Abraham]
Ogden wrote me that you was to return the 22d you say 18th or 20th
come when it may it will be a happy day to your little Wife—Mrs.
S[adler] says she will stay to shake hands with you and then Adieu. I

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1.56 ASJPH 18:2
\(^1\)Household
\(^2\)Delaware home of William Magee Seton’s sister and brother-in-law, the Vinings. William was
en route from Baltimore back to New York.
have neither seen nor heard a word of Julia Scott since yesterday week, I will write her what you told me, I suppose she is on Long Island

—little Angel Richard has had the summer complaint all last week, but is very lively and lovely as ever, call Papa and he looks ever where for you—Anna and Will are perfectly well, he has had his small cloaths on and cockade on his Hat all day—Sadler perfectly doats on him. Post dined with us and says the city is remarkably Healthy, but Mr. [John] Wilks nurse told Mammy [Huler] that our poor Eliza Maitland is in a great deal of trouble with a gathered Breast and little Seton is suffering with the Disentary. Post did not say a word of it and Stone who was here to day knew nothing of it, so I hope it is not true—

Good night to you, my Dear love may Heaven Bless you, and return you safe to your own

E.A.Seton

1.57 To Eliza Sadler

[July or August 1799]

I am a bond woman, and you are free.—You must come to me, for little Darling' is not to be fed, and I am to be faithful to him 'till October. this is in consequence of a derangement of his little stomach last week, which has with great care and anxiety been remedied, and still requires great care to prevent in future. but I have had some sweet lonely walks while the little friend was sleeping and discovered many beauties that quite escaped us. last Sunday morning before breakfast I retraced the honey-suckle walk and to my great astonishment found

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3Eliza Maitland’s infant son.
4A business associate of William Magee Seton

1.57 ASJPH 1-3-3-7:12

1Richard Seton, Elizabeth’s infant son who had been ill. It appears that Elizabeth had to continue nursing him for several months, hence her reference to being a “bond woman.”
that those bushes with buds on them which grow near the honey suckle and in great quantities in other places, bear the sweetest flower you can imagine with the greatest profusion. its fragrance is beyond any wild flower I ever saw. I brought home a load of it on my back—Mr. Olive says its name is Cletera but whether major or minor he does not know—Oh how it would delight me to send you a branch of it, for like other sweets its season is passing but I will transplant a great deal of it next month—

I told Anna I had written to Aunt [Eliza Craig] Sadler that she was a good girl her instantanious exclamation was “then she will tell my Uncle [Henry] Sadler and he will love me dearly and not scold me any more.” how much I wish they could see him again for there never passes a day but they call out something about him and whenever a chair turns up the lane they wonder if it is uncle.

—precious little souls they are in most perfect health, and realy seem as if they are relieved from some spirit of contradiction so different are they from when you were here. it was not to be too sweet—little Lady is to stay but four weeks longer—she says she must be with Mrs. G_ on an interesting occasion—and then—take great care of the valuable consignment I send you, and take care he does not expose himself too much to the sea-air

Your own own—

My Heart leapt with you at the Sunday Event—thank Heaven for it—

\[^{2}\text{Sweet pepper bush}\]
\[^{3}\text{Probably Julia Scott who was visiting in New York}\]
My dearest Sad—

From your Note which I received this afternoon I think you did not get the few lines I wrote you on Friday. My W. M’s Indisposition which has prevented my having my usual thoughts about me is the reason why you have not received your Watch etc.—

I can easily suppose how great your enjoyment must have been on once more hearing the Dash of the waves and feeling the renovating Breeze—my enjoyments have been very cursory, Mrs. S[cott] staid but three days, and I proposed enjoying absolute retirement when Mr. Stone¹ took it in his hand [to] Keep me company ‘till she returns—Well—Patience—Resignation Heavenly Virtues exercised in little things that keep the Soul in a sense of its dependant State, for I assure you I do not possess them on this occasion without a struggle—

Anna is a perfect Angel. I am about persuaded her fancys are somehow governed by the Moon, for she is as different from what she was, as the present darkness is from the beautiful light of that period when she perplexed me most—

Little Darling stands quite alone, but he does not walk, and Mr. Will² is also very much improved—You shall soon hear from me again—bless you my Eliza—

Your own E.A.S.
Wednesday Morning

¹A business associate of William Magee Seton
²Richard, Elizabeth’s infant son, and William, her older son
My Dearest Rebecca

Our Dear William arrived last night—He left Philadelphia Sunday 3 Oclock, and was much better on the road than he expected tho' he does not look so well as when he left me—I think he shall not be off again in a hurry, and I do not know how to express My Joy that he is here—You will hear from me again very soon but for the present must only tell you the good news which you will not receive this Post if I do not send it by Mr. [Henry] Sadler to go today, and they are waiting Breakfast—the dear Girls all came running to the Tavern to meet Wm. they are perfectly well—he left them at 10 Oclock Yesterday Morn[ing] I had a letter from Edward yesterday and they too were very well—Will[iam] is delighted with Marias children particularly little Charles—He will write himself tomorrow—and proposes taking a day of rest to day which he wants very much, the moment Ricksy opened his eyes and saw Papaty he began kissing him and would not quit him a moment—we are all well—

Yours affectionately—E. A. Seton
To Eliza Sadler

[July or August 1799]

My own Sad—

I believe my last Note to you expressed very much the hurry of my mind for I had very serious alarm for my William and several other reasons interrupted my tranquility, but that is past, and all is again going its usual course. the Little Lady returned here last Saturday and her good little daughter,¹ who answers all the good I had anticipated for my Anna who comes down every Morning after Breakfast with the clean hands and Frock, and gets on her ribbon bracers then sets down with her needle. and as the needle is the task of the day I have been mending old shirts these three Mornings which has its use I assure you, for it requires the force of example to induce me to do it. Julia called me out to look at the New Moon the night before last, and I cannot account for the abruptness with which I answered “I do not want to see it”—it has marked two periods of past pleasure, but I do not wish to recall the unavailing regrets that will come when I look at it. when are we to meet again. I wish to come to town some day within a fortnight and if you have any errand name a day supposing it a fair one and then I can pass at least some hours with you. one branch of your honeysuckle yet lives and I nourish it with a nurses care. the little plant is in a volume of J J.² and I will bring the kerchief with me to town. —All goes well I hope—do you ever see Helen³ or my Father. think Eliza how long since I have seen him—my Heart is full when I think of him.—

there is no reading no rambling the mornings are busy and the afternoons we part to read or sleep, or write, or Something, and altogether I am very well satisfied that things are as they are, especially if we are all the Summer to be so far seperated.—

¹Julia Scott and her daughter, Maria
²Jean Jacques Rousseau
³Helen Bayley, Elizabeth’s half-sister
Dear little Dick might well be cross while you were here, he all the while was suffering with the sprue which is a terrible complaint and is NOT yet over the effects of it. Mammy [Huler] is well and Bill as strong as ever.

Heaven Bless you remember me to friend H[enry]

E.A.S.

Wednesday Morning 7 oclock—

1.61 To Rebecca Seton

3d August 1799

I have often told you my Rebecca that I had determined never again to allow myself the enjoyment of any affection beyond the bounds of moderation—but really your affectionate letters, the rememberance of past hours, and the thousand thoughts of you that strike me every day at this place, makes it not an easy matter to restrain my expressions when I write you. I never sweep the Hall, or dress the flower Pots, or walk round the Pear-tree walk, but you are as much my companion as if you were actually near me, and last Eve[nin]g finding myself Accidentally by the Garden fence at the head of the lane where we once stood at sun-set last Fall anticipating What we would do this Summer if Willy hired Cragdon, I was so struck with the recollection and the uncertainty of when I should see you again, that I had a hearty crying spell, which is not a very common thing for me, nor do I suppose would have happened but that I have ever since the first moment you left me had a strong presentiment that our seperation was for a long while—my spirits too were very much depressed by a letter I recieved from Aunt Caley with a Box containing the Legacy’s of her Mother, one is her Watch left to Mrs. Andrew Seton, and to her

4A chronic disease characterized by diarrhea
5A note at the bottom of the letter, probably written by Rev. Simon Gabriel Bruté, reads “+ Jean Jacques alas!”

1.61 PAHRC MC 44:1,1 (Seton-Jevons #11-14)
1Isabella Seton Cayley, William Magee Seton’s aunt who lived in England
2Margaret Seton, William Magee Seton’s aunt who lived in Albany, New York, and her daughter, Elizabeth Seton
Daughter Elizabeth at her death—the other the Picture of our Father which is left to his Eldest Daughter unmarried, consequently is yours my love. I suppose you remember the Picture it was done by Ramage and sent to your GrandMother in the year ninety.—I am to deliver it in your own hands is the direction.—

James, and [James] Maitland were here yesterday Afternoon—Eliza has been very unwell—but is now better. She passed the day with me Sunday week with her darling little Babe and Dick was very Jealous of him as I had him most of the time—it is a fine lovely child.—James says his Darling Spaz has had the Dissentary, and seemed very low Spirited. I advised him to give her Rice water, which has cured Richard every time he has had it. poor Mary has really more trouble than she can bear. I have not had a letter from the Girls since Williams return, I suppose it is owing to their want of Quills and Paper. [Abraham] Ogden promissed me he would send them a good stock to Aunty and she was to forward them. the Dear little Boys has sent a letter for Cecilia and have both written to me and to Willy also. You dont know how much uneasiness I have had about William since his return he has been so often unwell, tho’ nothing very serious, yet enough [to keep] me in constant alarm. Your little Angel too has [had the] Sprue and suffered very much I send you a little curle of his beautiful light hair cap. it will not be more precious to you than Celia’s wreath is to Anna, all the Gold and Silver in the world could not be half the Value to her—Kiss the dear little Puss for me a thousand times I wish I could send her something to remind her of her Birth day—but

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3William Seton, Sr.
4John Ramage, an Irish artist, lived in New York from 1777 to 1794. He was considered the best miniature painter of his time although he was also skilled at making life-size portraits in crayon and pastel. Many prominent people, including President George Washington, had Ramage record them for posterity.
5Mrs. Elizabeth Seton, William Magee Seton’s grandmother
6James Seton (1770-?) was the son of William and Rebecca Curson Seton. He married Mary Gillon Hoffman March 20, 1792. He was an insurance broker with offices at 67 Wall Street and a business associate of William Magee Seton.
7Eliza Seton Maitland, Elizabeth’s sister-in-law
8Possibly his spouse, Mary Gillon Hoffman Seton (?-1807), the daughter of Nicholas and Sarah Ogden Hoffman of New York, or one of their children
9Richard Seton
I will not forget her here—I suppose William told you Mrs. [Julia] Scott is to spend some time with me—She is in very low spirits poor little Soul, and as I am not very high so we jog on but heavily, She came last Saturday, with her Daughter about Harriets\(^{10}\) age, who is a very fine girl and delights Anna exceedingly for since little Aunty has been away she has been very much at a loss—

Farewell my dearest Girl remember me to Maria—and Believe me yours Most Affectionately

E.A.Seton

\[1.62 \text{ To Julia Scott} \]

[August 1799]

My dearest Julia—

your dear little Note surprised me as I had written you the second Evening after you left us but it now appears that it was left at the compting House and that you are all this while uncertain respecting the pains etc—which are all past and gone and every things goes on in the old way. Mr. Seton has become so perfectly at home that I keep my room as much as I please—but Mrs. W[ilkes] keeps a room ready for him therefore you need not be afraid of dislodging Him. My Husband expects you in time for the Races, do not disappoint him for he anticipates a great deal of pleasure—I send Maria’s Book and a thousand kisses from the Darlings for her—my companions talk so fast they confuse my brain Heaven bless you

E.A.S.
Sunday Evening

\(^{10}\) Maria Scott, Julia’s daughter, was about ten years old.
My own dear Eliza

You should have heard from your Darlings and your friend three days ago, but our W.M.S. has given us those last three days, and our opportunities to the city are not very frequent for the consternation here is generally felt, and particularly here since poor Mr. Morgue who is at Mr. Olives has been ill—it is truly sorrowful to hear all that I am obliged to hear, whilst you and my friend H[enry] I hope are quietly secured where Peace only abides—Peace—Peace—oh the very sound is harmony—but we have some enjoyments when we get poor Willy out, for himself and the little friend¹ never tire with Romps and Jokes which is so unlooked for a pleasure and gives me so much liberty that take the all in all I am well content

Your sweet Dick for the first time, stept this day four steps alone to get to my arms, and you cannot conceive a sweeter expression than When he finds the danger over. He is perfectly well and as merry and busy as his sister and Bill who never passes an hour without naming his Uncle² and asks every day if he will come again

Now the cold and comfortless blasts begin I send many a sigh to Staten Island and when I play all the little favorites, which is indispensable every Evening it is impossible to chase the thoughts of that life of danger and severity, which my poor Father endures.³—but how vain are thoughts and wishes—could they avail I should be for stealing many an hour from Dick—Heaven bless my own Sad—surely we have sufficient trial of our dispositions to make the most of necessity for the distance does not lessen between us—May Peace be yours prays E.A.S.

¹William, Elizabeth’s oldest son
²The children referred to Henry Sadler as uncle
³Dr. Richard Bayley, Elizabeth’s father, was at the health station on Staten Island, caring for poor immigrants. When Elizabeth played the piano at Cragdon, their summer residence, she thought of him.
9th September 1799—

My own dear The little letter was forgot yesterday—the sun shines bright this Morning and all are well but the death of Poor Morgue has brought the prospect [nearer], that the whole family are in [danger] W.M.S. is very well and on the continuation of that little sentence depends the All of comforts—he goes to town every day—but Heaven is my trust.

Wednesday Morning

1.64 To Eliza Sadler

[n.d. 1799]

My dear Sad was well yesterday at Col. Giles’s thank Heaven for that and the comfort also that we are all enjoying good Health, good spirits, and every good you could wish us except the Society of a few which privation to be sure is not easily compensated. but there is no choice—

my heart was with you last Sunday[.] five minutes with the dear Sad and my Father would have been the happiness of ages to me.—I share all your pain and anxiety for my friend Henry [Sadler] for I am sure you never see him depart for the city without suffering—how much we have both to fear is terrible to think of. My W.M.S. has passed the three last days with us and I have played the Piano more than in a year before and my little Lady1 who you would never take for a romp throws handkerchiefs, sticks needles in him and chases him round the room fifty times a day, a kind of mirth he delights in, so that all goes well—every half hour I can catch goes to Emilius2—three volumes I have read with delight and were I to express half my thoughts about it particularly respecting his Religious Ideas I should lose that circumspection I have so long limited myself to and be

1.64 ASJPH 1-3-3-7:18

1Anna Maria, Elizabeth’s oldest child
2The novel, *Emile*, by Jean Jacques Rousseau, whom she spoke of as “J.J.”
E.A.B[ayley] instead of E.A.S.—dear JJ. I am yours—and my Sad you have your share of E.A.S.

Your Anna Maria is all we can wish her and never forgets her Uncle and Aunt Sadler—

1.65 To Dr. Richard Bayley

Blooming Dale 10th September 1799

My Very Dear Mr. Monitor

That you are in the enjoyment of Health, in the midst of Dangers toils and Death, is a subject of high exultation to me—and if the prayers of a good quiet little Female are supposed to be of any avail it will be long continued to you, with the Hope that the visual rays of our fellow citizens will in time be brightened by your labours, and their attention awakened by the voice of truth and conscience

—I had the pleasure to hear a Mr. Delmas a French Phisician refer a number of strangers, both French and English, to a publication called the Monitor as the best thing written on the subject of yellow Fever and as the only one that pointed out its true cause and Origin, he said he did not know who was the author but he must be the best friend of Humanity, and should be considered by the Americans as their best adviser—I imagine my Eyes were large and blacker at that moment than usual.

It is impossible my dear Sir even to fancy finer Grandchildren than you have—but little Richard Bayley is the center of all Harmony.

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3Rev. Simon Gabriel Bruté added this note at the top: "Oh Read at the End O providential 1799 - 1805 - 1821"

1Dr. Bayley's efforts as public health officer were not supported by all the citizenry.

2Dr. Bayley was the author of the article, written in 1796, to which Elizabeth referred. It was entitled An Account of the Epidemic Fever Which Prevailed in the City of New York During Part of the Summer and Fall of 1795. He also wrote Letters From the Health Officer to the Common Council of the City of New York in 1799.
Is my Helen well, and will she be pleased to remember Her Sister with affection—Your old friend Mrs. Juliana [Scott] is reading by my side—I ask her comment to you, she says tell him that “if the great Gods be Just they shall assist the deeds of Justest Men”—Maria is without exception the most amiable Being I know—

—if you would sometimes direct Helens pen to Blooming Dale it would be a most grateful substitute for your own which I cannot expect to claim in this season of occupation,—and it would always be punctually replied to—

Your Child. E.A.Seton

1.66 To Eliza Sadler

Wednesday—2nd October 1799

And is it possible my Sad, that you have been so long without hearing from me—My Father presented me the little travelling Note the day before yesterday. Imagine how much his visit surprised and delighted me. he said you were well and on Long Island, O that I could see you too—but my Fate seems to be fixed this Summer, and I fear that nothing less than snows and Nor-westers will again bring us together. Mrs. Scott is gone to Long Island for a week, and Mr. Stone fearful that the time Mr. [William Magee] Seton and myself were to pass together should be tedious, has kindly taken her room until she returns, if Mr. and Mrs. Maitland does not turn him out which they have some thoughts of doing—

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3 Helen Bayley, Elizabeth’s half-sister
1.66 ASIPH 1-3-3-7:16
1 The Sadlers had a summer home on Long Island.
2 Elizabeth and her children had to stay at Cragdon, away from the city, until the cool weather removed the danger of yellow fever.
3 Julia Scott had gone to visit her friends Col. and Mrs. Aquila Giles.
4 A business associate of William Magee Seton
5 James and Eliza Seton Maitland, Elizabeth’s brother- and sister-in-law
Well—internal Peace is mine, let them go round and round—the sweet Children are sweet indeed and enjoy this fine weather so much as even we could—if you can only imagine Dick running over the grass and garden, tumbles down and turns to see the countenance that is watching him to know if he shall cry, then off again as merry as a Bird—precious Beings—If their Father is preserved thro’ this Terrible Fever, we shall do well—He goes every day to Town but only in Broad Way—Heaven will show the Event, but my mind is in a most cruel state of apprehension.—Friend H[enry] of course remains with you therefore your fears are at rest. remember Us 5 to him

—A Mr Zerleder from Hambro',⁶ has told me a great deal about Pitcairn and his Pamela⁷—I suppose he brings you letters—he particularly knew Mr. Thierry, and your “very good Friends” was his expression—

tell me something about who is with you—how the time goes—and how your dear little Self is above all—

Your E.A.S.

Mrs. Scott said she certainly should go to see you—

1.67 To Eliza Sadler

[October 1799]

My own Eliza is I hope enjoying this precious Morning Sun which is really delightful—surely you have reason to rejoice that friend H[enry] is so secure in this terrible se[a]son of danger—Our little breathing flute is no more and every note of your favorite air is recollected with melancholy pleasure—Poor Gamble—but his death has not been felt in comparison with Mr. Monique’s¹ which was in all its

⁶Probably a business associate of Seton, Maitland and Company from Hamburg
⁷The Pitcairn family was related to the English branch of the Seton family.
¹Every day, news of deaths from yellow fever in the city increased Elizabeth’s fears for her husband’s welfare.
circumstances inconcievably distressing and the daily visit I make Mrs. O[live] has impressed me with more sorrowfull thoughts than I ever voluntarily indulged before. My W.M.S. goes to Town this Morning and the exercise of all my chearfullness and courage is necessary to hide the apprehensions I always feel when the cabriole leaves the door—but the Banks must be attended and Bills paid.

—Yesterday you thought of me, you saw my Father I wrote a little letter to him last week and dreaded that it would not please him for it is difficult to meet the train of his thoughts;—mine are in a tone sufficiently elevated, for trouble always creates great exertions of my mind and give it a force to which at other times it is incapable.

—Your JJ. \(^2\) has awakened many ideas which has long since been at rest, indeed he is the writer I shall always refer to in a season of sorrow for he makes me forget myself whilst reading, but leaves the most consoling impression on every thought—I hope we shall often enjoy his society together—Oh how far preferable to—

—the children of the Abbey as a Novel\(^3\) is superior to many, indeed I could not name more than half a doz[en] I would rather read—but without your commendation I believe I should not have been so well satisfied—Your Richard stands by my side with the smile of a little Angel he pads cautiously from room to room delighted with the new power—Anna is a precious Being and attaches me more every hour. Bill is quite a Man, and very much improved—Uncle Sadler is sure to be named whenever there is a romp and whenever I tell Anna she is a good girl she asks, “wont you write it to Aunt Sadler”—All goes quietly and that is saying a great deal Peace be yours.

E.A.S. Monday Morning

William is hurrying me

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\(^2\)Jean Jacques Rousseau

\(^3\)The Children of the Abbey was a Gothic novel by Mrs. Regina Marie Dalton Roach. Popular in England, it was first published in America in 1798.
My dear Rebecca—

I received your letter of the 22nd September an hour ago, and altho' I make it a rule never to answer letters whilst under the influence of the first impression I receive from them, I cannot refrain from immediately replying to it and it is not a very easy task to preserve my usual sincerity with you, for recalling the past is useless and vain, and to pass it over in silence is doing injustice to the truth of my affection for you; but I believe even that is best[,] for my mind is in a state of anxiety and distress which does not admit of any calculation respecting the enjoyment of this life—in one short week sisters, friends, and the whole world may be nothing to me there never passes a day but some family is deprived of its support, children of their parent and the wife of her husband even in the number of my acquaintances;—My William' goes every day to town and is more exposed than many who have lost their lives—that he should escape depends on that mercy which has never yet failed and which I have reason to bless every hour of my life—if he does not the greatest probability is that you and I will never meet again, for never can I survive the scene.

I hope you have written to Eliza, she has seen a great deal of sorrow this summer, and Maitland' told William the day before yesterday that they were all unwell—yesterday morning I wrote Eliza a note such as I would have written you in similar circumstances, that is the most affectionate I could pen, intreating her to shut up house and to bring her family to us until they were recovered—William gave it to her, but she has not said whether she will come or not—I hope she will for my heart aches to think of the fatigues and distress she goes thro'—Mr. Stone' at present occupies the room Mrs. [Julia] Scott has

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1.68 ACS Seton-Jevons #15-17

1Elizabeth was referring to the effects of the yellow fever epidemic and her fears for the safety of her husband, William Magee Seton.

2Eliza Seton Maitland, Elizabeth's sister-in-law, and her husband, James Maitland

3A business associate of William Magee Seton
left—she has gone to Long Island to Mrs. Giles—the Darlings are in perfect health and very much improved, Richard pads all over the grass and walks, down and up again, and is so delighted with his New power that he is as good as a little angel—the Girls were very well last week—Mary has written me charming letters this summer, and the Boys have sent three or four Packets—I shall write them this week—

I saw all James Family and Aunt Farquhars last Sunday they were all well and Mary’s children look delightful[.]

Mr. Stone and William are reading the Papers and request to be remembered to you. William says I must tell you “he is glad you are so well pleased with your situation,” and Sister prays that Peace and content may be yours. E.A.S.

Kiss my Cely for me, tell her there never passes a day but Anna talks of her, and is all ways picking nuts and apples for her Aunty.

Miss Hunter is forever asking about her Books. do if there is any opportunity send them even at the risk of losing them for then we might get her another set—She has mentioned it to Stone, Mary Wilks, and to myself five or six times.

1.69 To Julia Scott

New York 20th November 1799

I have not been able to steal even an hour from sleep to write to you my dear Julia, for I have not been in bed for more than two hours any night this week past, and this is the first hour even in the day I have claimed from my Darling Dick who has not been well since you left me, and has for many days had a complaint in his bowells which threatens the most serious consequence, but as my Father has now come to Town I have many Hopes in his care and power to save, tho’ I may be very soon obliged to resign the dear little angel who has

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4James and Mary Hoffman Seton and their family; William Magee’s aunt, Elizabeth Curson Farquhar

5This letter is addressed to Rebecca in Alexandria, Virginia, where she was staying with her brother John and his new wife, Mary.

1.69 ASJPH 1-3-3-6:28
become so more than ever attached to me that it is only while he sleeps that I venture to leave his room—So we go dear Julia—and the Merchants are in such trouble thro’ the Hambro’ and London faileurs that I have to use every exertion to keep my poor W.M. ¹ alive, his present plan is the back woods where we shall not calculate the dollars per load, but I hope tomorrow’s sun will be brighter, and then we shall be going to Washington City² which will be all in your way, I am sure only such a great event will realize your expectations for you have entirely forgotten the 17th September of which there is now no doubt,—if my poor Dick’s illness does not change the prospect—the Girls have returned with nothing but their chemises to their backs, so that I have cut up a piece of Dimmity, Flannel, and two of Calico to great Advantage besides the endless variety of other necessary purchases, among which I paid 13 dollars for their three Hats, which illy comports with the “times” so that if you compare Your crosses with mine I think you will sit down quietly in your dear little Home, and bless yourself. things indeed are changed when you can stand cold and wet better than Maria—“Providence allways [fits the] burthen,” I hope she is now well and happy with the dear cousins—my love to her and John

—Will and Anna are well, and indeed it is a miracle how we have escaped for the back part of our house has been so offensive added to the circumstance of poor Samuels death that we have been obliged to shut up as much as we could and live in the front.—Col[onel] G[iles] is to forward your Trunk to-morrow; If wishes would do you should have peace—I did not tell you I received your dear little letter, for which I thank you a thousand times.

Remember me to Brother [Samuel] and Charlotte—and write as soon as you can to

your E.A.S. in great haste

¹William Magee Seton’s business was suffering because of shipping conditions between America and Europe.
²Washington, D.C.
³Elizabeth was now certain she was pregnant with her fourth child.
My [last] letter to you was written from our habitation in Wall Street which we were drove from by the Yellow fever and came with all the children to the place we are now at for the summer, which my father had leased and furnished where my poor William had a small touch of the Fever tho not so much as to give us very serious alarm, and I believe the leisure he enjoyed in consequence of an entire cessation from business was more advantageous to him than the Fever was injurious—tho’ I should be very sorry to make such another trial. He was the only one of the Family who suffered in the least which as it is so numerous was almost a miracle.—We did not dare venture to Town as inhabitants until the first of November. When we removed immediately to Stone Street the Family House—My Husband with the advice of his friends and the general consent of the family sold the greater part of the furniture as most of it had been in use ever since my fathers first marriage and our keeping it might have created disputes besides which we have abundance of our own all new when we were first married those things that were not sold, were valued by competent Judges, and the plate was divided—

Mary and Charlott the two girls next Rebecca are placed at an English Boarding school established in Brunswick[,] state of New Jersey about 30 miles from New York and the two younger Girls passed the winter at Home where Rebecca and myself taught them reading writing and spelling until her ill Health made it impossible to give them the necessary attention—When Mary and Charlott returned

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1.70 AMSJ A 111 004 (Seton-Jevons #452-453)

1Isabella Seton Cayley, William Magee Seton’s paternal aunt, residing in England
227 Wall Street, where William Magee and Elizabeth Bayley Seton lived prior to the death of the elder William Seton
3Cragdon, the Seton summer home
4William Seton, Sr., married Rebecca Curson March 2, 1767.
5William Magee Seton’s younger half-sisters for whom he and Elizabeth had assumed responsibility after his father’s death.
6Harriet and Cecilia Seton, Elizabeth’s sisters-in-law
7This was Elizabeth’s first experience at teaching girls.
from their Spring Vacation took Harriet with them to school and Cecilia the youngest accompanies Rebecca—she is a very delicate child, and one of the most amiable little creatures in the World—Samuel and Edward who my Father used to call his little Pillars, and always had one on each side of him at table are the most Promising lovely Boys that ever were they have even a marked Elegance and Grace in their appearance and manners that distinguishes them from any Boys of their Age I ever saw—and a Sweetness of Disposition Unequalled

1.72 To Julia Scott

New York 20th December 1799

My little Son is quite Well the Girls gone, and I can once more sit down in Peace and call my thoughts to their old course—My Julia is then their first object, and I feel that her affectionate letter has been too long unanswered, but if you could have seen my poor little sufferer, and know half the distress I have had to endure, you would not even in thought reproach me—the girls too were to be arranged for the succeeding six months, their cloathing to be measured and managed by me with Dick in my arms for he would not go to Mammy [Huler] night or day for three weeks more than to a Stranger—but “the storm is past and I at rest”—and so much for I.

how does your poor little self do, I dread the effect of your terrors from this terrible fire tho’ I can form no idea of the situation of your House, which being in the same street with the buildings destroyed must have made your Situation terrible while the danger lasted—is Brother with you—I am sure you should not be so unprotected as you discribed in your last letter—if you are to be, I should wish Charlottes Suspicions realized that you would form an engagement[,] tho

8Samuel Waddington Seton and Edward Augustus Seton
9William Seton, Sr.

10A longer version of this letter appears in Robert Seton’s *An Old Family* (New York: Brentano’s, 1899), pp. 286-288. It is reprinted in Appendix 1- A1.71. His version of Elizabeth’s letters are usually modifications of the original and are therefore not always reliable.

1.72 ASJPH 1-3-3-6:29
independant of that[,] were I you[,] nothing on Earth should tempt me for new schemes of Life are not the thing except there could be more certain of the future, and the very best of these men (one is writing opposite to me) are so unruly and perplexing that nothing should induce a reasonable Woman to wear the Chains of two of them, and that is the plain English of Matrimony Julia—

Old Stone¹ says the extreme cold nights obliges him to wear all the cloaks and great coats he can find and if you could muster a few old flannel petticoats and send them by Post—it would be an estimable favor—he continues to be the Shadow of my Good man² but I have had something else to think of besides them therefore they have it their own way—I shall never dare look the Col[onel Giles] in the face again—when he came in Richard and Bill were both figgiting for their soup, and he asking me more questions about you than the little things allowed to answer, I very innocently drew your letter from my Pocket—but oh what a circulation thro’ every vein when after he was gone reading it again myself I recollected the September calculations³—he must think me the most compleatly impudent Mortal alive—but alas, like many more of my follies it is past recall, and I dare say you are laughing at me with all your heart—You mention your wish to be kind to my poor Beck,⁴ but she will not give you the opportunity till the Spring—she suffers so much pain in her breast that she dares not venture travelling at this season—that you can scarcely imagine a more lonely [person] independant of my trio, than I am—Seton is more Engaged than ever, my sister indulges old habits, and Mrs. [Eliza] Sadler and Emma Craig so distant, that they can only get to me in fine weather—so that I have all my pretty Library and musick to myself—Father often comes but as soon as he has five minutes rest falls asleep—Anna often says Mamma play you are Aunt Scott and Bill and I Jack and Maria how do they do how is the Piano, look up Maria or you will never play by note—My paper is very

¹A business associate of William Magee Seton
²William Magee Seton
³A reference to her pregnancy
⁴Rebecca Seton, Elizabeth’s sister-in-law, had tuberculosis.
cross—Heaven Bless you—best love to Charlotte when she behaves well, and the flame that never dies to Brother Sam!—

Your own E.A.S.

1.73 To Rebecca Seton

New York 23rd December 1799

Well my dear Rebecca,

you say you have made up your mind to every thing that can happen—and that happiness can never again deceive you—but how will you make up your mind to hear of my poor W.M.S. misfortunes—that Maitland¹ has stoped payment in London and that we are obliged to do the same here—it is a cruel event to William for altho’ he has every consolation a man can have under such circumstances, that it is not from his own imprudence and that no part of the blame is attached to him, you may imagine the distress and perplexity it occasions to all—James² has been almost crazy but on examination finds less cause of apprehension than he imagined, and it is the general decision of all William’s friends and the Directors of the Banks who have been consulted that he must absolutely suspend payments—but you will hear all about it from Jack³ who has doubtless received letters from some of the family[,] bad news travels fast—make the best of it—is an old lesson—

You may think it fortunate that you are so happily situated, and that your wish for action was prevented for if we were a melancholy family last Winter we are something worse this, and Heaven only knows where our troubles are to end—I should have written to you my Sister,

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1.73 ASJPH 1-3-3-8:1

¹Mr. Maitland, head of the London branch of Seton, Maitland and Company, stopped payment as a result of the loss of a ship off the coast of Amsterdam.

²James Maitland, Elizabeth’s brother-in-law and William Magee’s business partner in the American branch of the firm.

³John Cursen Seton, Elizabeth’s brother-in-law.
but for six weeks little Dick never left me night or day, and would not go to Mammy [Huler] more than to a stranger—and when I was released every thing as you may suppose was in such confusion that I had hard work to bring it round again—

I hope the Girls have written to you since their return—Mammy took care of them, and says Miss Hay is beyond every thing kind and attentive to them, and that they seemed very happy—So they seemed at Home there was but one complaint that they were obliged to go out more than they wished, and I did not controul them in any point except their wearing Hand Kerchief—Mary with a pain in her Breast and Charlott with a cold to which you know she is liable usually wore their thick Jackonet Handkerchiefs in the Morning and were out in the Evening without any, because it was the fashion—but the moment I represented the imprudence to Mary she was convinced and I gave them Muslin of a finer quality and they were perfectly satisfied—I mention this particularly to you as you may also have another Account of it from those who thought it "foolish to muffle girls like old women"

—well I think we are all muffled now, and shall not be puzzled to follow the fashion, but my dear Beck[,] Hope must go on with us, for it will not do for hearts and fortunes to sink together—Kiss my little Darling for me, and remember me to your amiable Companion[,] who I hope will now exert herself more than ever to make you forget Sorrow—Heaven Bless you—E.A.S.

The dear little Boys are well; I have sent their Coats and a Box since I came from the country and yesterday sent Aunty a package of Raisins and almonds to put in the Christmas Box with a letter—

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Mary and Charlotte Seton, Elizabeth's sisters-in-law, were attending a boarding school run by Miss Hay.

Cecilia Seton and possibly Anna Maria Seton Vining, Elizabeth's sisters-in-law