

Pennsylvania Is a Good Country

ROBERT PARKE

Chester Township the—of the 10th Mo. 1725.

Dear Sister Mary Valentine:

This goes with a Salutation of Love to thee, Brother Thomas and the children & in a word to all friends, Relations & well Wishers in Generall as if named, hoping it may find you all in good health, as I with all our family in Generall are in at this present writing & has been since our arival, for we have not had a day's Sickness in the Family Since we came into the Country, blessed be God for it. My father in Particular has not had his health better these ten years than Since he Came here, his ancient age considered. Our Irish Acquaintance in general are well Except Thoe: Lightfoot who Departed this Life at Darby in a Good old age About 4 weeks Since. Thee writes in thy Letter that there was a talk went back to Ireland that we were not Satisfyed in coming here, which was Utterly false: now let this Suffice to Convince you. In the first place he that carried back this Story was an Idle fellow, & one of our Ship-Mates, but not thinking this country Suitable to his Idleness, went back. . . . He is Sort of a Lawyer, or Rather a Lÿar as I may term him, therefore I wod not have you give credit to Such false reports for the future, for there is not one of the family but what likes the country very well & wod If we were in Ireland again come here Directly it being the best country for working folk & tradesmen of any in the world. But for Drunkards and Idlers, they cannot live well any where. It is likewise an Extradin. healthy country. . . . Land is of all Prices Even from ten Pounds, to one hundred Pounds a hundred, according to the goodness or else the situation thereof, & Grows dearer every year by Reason of Vast Quantities of People that come here yearly from Several Parts of the world, therefore thee & thy family or any that I wish well I wod desire to make what Speed you can to come here the Sooner the better. We have traveled over a Pretty deal of this country to seek the Land, & [though] we met with many fine Tracts of Land here & there in the country, yet my father being curious & somewhat hard to Please Did not buy any Land until the Second day of 10th mo: Last and then he bought a Tract of Land consisting of & five hundred Acres for which he gave 350 pounds. It is Excellent good land but none cleared, Except about 20 Acres, with a small log house and Orchard Planted, we are going to clear some of it Directly, for our next Sumer's fallow. We might have bought Land much Cheaper but not so much to our Satisfaction. We stayed in Chester 3 months & then we Rented a Place 1 mile from Chester, with a good brick house & 200 Acres of Land for [—] pound a year, where we continue till next May. We have sowed about 200 Acres of wheat & 7 acres of rye this season. We sowed but a bushel on an acre, 3 pecks is Enough on new ground. I am grown an Experienced Plowman & my brother Abell is Learning. Jonathan & thy Son John

drives for us. He is grown a Lusty fellow Since thou Saw him. We have the finest plows here that Can be. We plowed up our Sumer's fallows in May & June, with a Yoak of Oxen & 2 horses & they goe with as much Ease as Double the number in Ireland. We sow our wheat with 2 horses. A boy of 12 or 14 years old Can hold Plow here, a man Comonly holds & Drives himself. They plow an Acre, nay some Plows 2 Acres a day. They sow Wheat & Rye in August or September. We have had a crop of oats, barley & very good flax & hemp, Indian Corn & buckwheat all of our own Sowing & Planting this last summer. We also planted a bushel of white Potatoes Which Cost us 5 Shills. & we had 10 or 12 bushels Increase. This country yields Extraordinary Increase of all sorts of Grain Likewise—for nicholas hooper had of 3 Acres of Land & at most 3 bushels of Seed above 80 bushels Increase so that it is as Plentiful a Country as any Can be if people will be Industrious. . . . All Sorts of Provisions are Extraordinary Plenty in Philadelphia market, where Country people bring in their comodities. Their markets are on 4th day and 7th day. This country abounds in fruit, Scarce an house but has an Apple, Peach & cherry orchard. As for chestnuts, Wallnuts, & hasel nuts, Strawberrys, Billberrys & Mulberrys they grow wild in the woods and fields in Vast Quantities. They also make great Preparations against harvest; both Roast & boyled, Cakes & Tarts & Rum, stand at the Lands End, so that they may Eat and Drink at Pleasure. A Reaper has 2 Shills. & 3 pence a day, a mower has 2 Shills. & 6 pence & a pint of Rum beside meat & drink of the best; for no workman works without their Victuals in the bargain throughout the Country. A Laboring man has 18 or 20 pence a day in Winter. The Winters are not so cold as we Expected nor the Summers so Extreme hot as formerly, for both Sumer and Winter are moderater than they ever were known. In Sumer time they wear nothing but a Shirt Linnen drawers Trousers, which are breeches and stockings all in one made of Linnen; they are fine Cool wear in Sumer. As to what thee writt about the Governours Opening Letters it is Utterly false & nothing but a Lye & any one Except bound Servants may go out of the Country when they will & Servants when they Serve their time may Come away If they please but it is rare any are such fools to leave the Country Except men's business require it. They pay 9 Pounds for their Passage (of this money) to go to Ireland. There is 2 fairs, yearly & 2 markets weekly in Philadelphia also 2 fairs yearly in Chester & Likewise in new castle, but they Sell no Cattle nor horses, no living Creatures, but altogether Merchant's Goods, as hatts, Linnen & woolen Cloth, handkerchiefs, knives, Scizars, tapes & treds buckels, Ribonds & all Sorts of necessarys fit for our wooden Country & here all young men and women that wants wives or husbands may be Supplied. Lett this Suffice for our fairs. As to meetings they are so plenty one may ride to their choice. I desire thee to bring or Send me a bottle of good Oyle fit for guns, thee may buy it in Dublin. . . . Dear Sister I wod not have thee Dought the truth of what I write, for I know it to be true Tho I have not been long here. I wod have you Cloath yourselves well with Woolen & Linnen, Shoes & Stockings & hats for Such things are dear hear, & yet a man will Sooner Earn a suit of Cloths here than in Ireland, by Reason workman's Labour is so Dear. . . . I wod have you bring for your own Use 2 or 3 good falling Axes, a pair of beetle rings & 3 Iron wedges, for they are of good Service here. Your Plow Irons will not answer here,

therefore you had better bring 1 or 2 hundred Iron. You may bring your Plow Chains as they are also a good—Iron. . . . Dear Sister I desire thee may tell my old friend Samuel Thornton that he could give so much credit to my words & find no Iffs nor ands in my Letter, that in Plain terms he could not do better than to Come here, for both his & his wife's trade are Very good here. The best way for him to do is to pay what money he Can Conveniently Spare at that side & Engage himself to Pay the rest at this Side & when he Comes here if he Can get no friend to lay down the money for him, when it Comes to the worst, he may hire out 2 or 3 children. & I wod have him Cloath his family as well as his Small Ability will allow. Thee may tell him what things are proper to bring with him both for his Sea Store & for his Use in this Country. I wod have him Procure 3 or 4 Lusty Servants & Agree to pay their passage at this Side he might sell 2 & pay the others' passage with the money. I fear my good will to him will be of Little Effect by reason he is So hard of beleif, but thou mayest Assure him from me that if I had not a particular Respect for him & his family I Should not have writt so much for his Encouragement.