

Letter from Sophia Graves to President Routh, 23 Jul 1819 PR30/1/C2/11 no 12

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To the President & Fellows of Magdalen College

Honoured Gentlemen,

My Father William Graves

having held for about 30 years the office
of Porter at Magdalen College, I am inducted
to take the liberty under circumstances of
peculiar interest & distress to make my situation
known & to appeal to your liberality for
assistance. But before I proceed to those
circumstances which have given rise to this
address, I think it right to state for your
satisfaction that soon after my Mother's death,
I put myself under my Brother's protection,
whose conduct to me was so unkind, that
I was driven to the necessity of leaving him
& returning to this country. I hope I shall
be excused entering upon a detail of the very
painful situation in which I was thrown
by my Brother in France. Since my

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arrival in England, I have endeavoured to
obtain by industry & diligence a respectable
livelihood in the Dress Making line, at Streatley
in Berks, but the business in which I had
engaged has failed, & I am consequently totally
unprovided for. My very destitute & friendless
condition has interested a Clergyman & his
Family who are in this country for a short
time on account of their health from India,
& who purpose very soon to return there.
They are kind enough to say that they will
give me as asylum in their family, if I

can obtain the means of defraying my passage expenses out, which they inform me, they hope the Captain of the Ship in which they intend to sail, may in consideration of my helpless state, be prevailed on to grant me for about 50 Pounds. I know not where to look for help, and to lose their favourable offer would expose

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me to unspeakable distress. These statements I humbly trust will be my apology for intruding myself on your notice & casting myself on your Charity & benevolence, which I am the more encouraged to do from having heard it was your wish & intention to assist me had I made application on the death of my revered Mother. I shall feel most truly grateful for any thing which in your honesty you may be pleased to grant me. The clergyman I have [alluded] to is the Reverend Henry Davies one of the Chap[lains] to the Hon E. I. Company at Bombay; of whom or Mrs Davies you can make any inquiry which you may deem proper or necessary. The Reverend Dr Witherall rector of this place has permitted me to say that he also will reply to any reference you may be pleased to make concerning me; soliciting your indulgence for this intrusion I beg with the utmost respect to subscribe myself, Honoured Gentlemen

Streatley Your most obedient Respectful Servant

Sophia Graves