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Feb 26th 1826

Thank you my dearest Brother for your kind letter - and
a thousand thanks & congratulations for the heart cheering intelligence
it contained. one does Maria's communication threw us all into extases
but - with my usual ingenuity & in cases of such deep interest. I
began to entertain a multitude of fears - lest her exertion in writing
might have injured her - and your letter was a most welcome
assurance of safety. Long may you my dear brother be so happy
with your lovely family. and may every addition prove a new blessing
and may God prosper you in all things - and keep you worthy
of all the bestows. my heart overflows with gratitude & affec-
tion as the picture of your domestic comforts is presented to it -
your admirable wife is greatly beloved by all your family. and
the gratitude we owe her for your happiness, brings her daily &
lovely recollections to our hearts. The children are quite in a noise
that Howard should have a younger brother - and Horace was very
much concerned at hearing some one say his "nose was out of joint"
and came to enquire of me "if it hurt him". every day he talks
of his little cousins and is very much afraid as Gracie goes to school
that he will soon get before him in learning. They are all well, and
cheerful. Becky very desirous of a few additional inches in height for
which I believe she would willingly perform a pilgrimage. both the
& Miriam have improved in good looks. our sisters are well and expec-
Isabella - all have recovered from the influence. Aunt Pelt & the girls
beg you & Maria will accept their love and good wishes. Aunt Pelt
has passed so anxious a life since Abraham's lameness that

she looks as if ten years had been added to her age. She is however
well - and I am rejoiced to tell you that our Brother Myman is
much better and begins to look well again. If it were not for the
journey to Pittsburg in perspective I should have hopes of his continu-
ing to improve. he talks of going next month. Stage traveling & tavern
fare do not agree with his rheumatism. Simon has been laid up with
the gout for a week past. but is better. he was in town on Friday.

Our Brothers I suppose keep you informed of all that is doing
out of doors. and a gloomy world no doubt ^{it} is of the merchantile world.
(The rich men have gone off the stage last week. paid their last
debt. and left large fortunes behind them. Gen. Dale & Henry
Wikoff - and thus. as Shakespear's fool says "the world bags"
the latter lived meanly from loving his money too well to enjoy it -
and has left it ~~with his name~~ in a manner that reflects
no honor on his memory. one is easily reconciled to live without
fortune. when such examples show that riches sometimes fail not
only to make ones own life happy & comfortable. but destroy
the noble pride of making it serve the purpose of benefitting
others. and transmitting an honest fame - what short sighted
fools men are. My dear Ben - who hide their vices from those around
them. and blazon them forth to their successors. so that if they
have any virtues to redeem their faults they do not take the
benefit of them. if another generation hears of Henry Wikoff
it may only be to know how badly he bestowed \$130,000 -)

I begin to hope that Dr has given up all thoughts of New Orleans
for this year. he has ceased to talk of it. and the winter being over
he will have no further complaints to make of the climate. indeed
we have had so little cold weather that I doubt whether he could
have been better off in a more southern latitude.

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Benjamin Gratz Esqr

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Benjamin Gratz
Feb. 1826.