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April 20th 1823-

My Dear Maria

Our Brother Jo has returned home so full of delightful anecdotes of you, & Benj, and your boys, that I almost defy absence to separate us. Ellen & I kept him up till midnight for almost a week until we had gained all he had to relate, and we enjoyed dear little Froth's smartness as much as his parents daily do, and fancied his very look and manner as exactly as most lovers of children do, when they either read or hear tell of their entertaining indications of genius or cleverness - O what a pity one could not live always near those they love - since the world is so big and so full, it would surely be the best arrangement to change places with those who do not care to be one neighbour and yet next to those who do. but perhaps a little patience may bring that about, I will live in the hope it may be so, and in the mean time, try to be satisfied with hearing how happy you are, and how many sources of happiness are growing within your reach. Next Year Jo, promises us a visit from you, and he sometimes talks so earnestly of changing his single state for a better one, that I have taken a notion he means to employ the present one in seeking a wife, and means hopes to introduce her to you when next you come to Phil^a - Jo had no sooner arrived, than Hyman took his departure to Pittsburg, and Joe threatens to be off tomorrow for some canal business. I will give it in charge to him, when he is in the best possible humour while contemplating the most beautiful objects in nature, at

this most beautiful season, to think of your young son, and fix on a title appropriate - but as you have threatened to make a Jacob of him, do not let him commence by stealing his brother's birth-right, and ere the name comes from Lebanon, have one prepared for the elder born. Grato is certainly a very pretty name, you have chosen it for life and I have retained, but I do not know that it would be improved by doubling, and we are too far removed from Patriarchal life to adopt the simple style of transposing the surname of the father, and make him Grato the-son-of-Benjamin,

Our sister Rachel is full of nursing cares. Her four youngest children have the whooping cough, and as her usual habit involves her in more trouble than most mothers think necessary to bestow on their children, you may suppose her present burden very much increased. Gertrude is a lovely little chubby girl, & bears it much better than Horace, who has a lordly spirit, and has been accustomed to full health, good eating, and his own humors. He feels very much insulted at the tyranny of the cough, & is obliged to leave his meals untasted, ~~and~~ gets into a great passion as he is carried away from his plate. Sarah does not suffer much, and she has a pride in bearing it well, and managing for herself, while the rest are coughing under the care of nurses - for you know the sympathy which liketh gaping, sets them all coughing at the same time -

Have you ever seen 12 or 13 hindered people all laughing? at this is certainly the most amusing sympathy, and if you have never witnessed it, I hope the first winter you spend in Philadelphia may be here likewise, for then I could ensure you such a sight. The most grave & dignified personages in this grave community have been in this predicament. Dr. Physick & Judge Telfer have been in the same box. Rufus King & a brace of senators in another - all with distended jaws showing their teeth, or lack of teeth, before the

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Mrs Benjamin Grate

Lexington Kentucky

Rebecca Grate
Wm Seward Jones
1823