

Philadelphia Dec^r 11th 1825.

And so my dear Maria you have determined to prove yourself worthy the name of Great, inasmuch that even one of their lineal descendants may not dispute with you the palm of obstinacy, well, be it so, for I am so well pleased to think you one of us, that I will this once yield with the best grace imaginable. But let me tell you that I shall expect to be rewarded immediately for this piece of condescension and indeed I do not believe I should ever have overcome my diffidence about writing just had it not been for the envy I felt at Aunt Becky's receiving all your charming letters and I have started forward to claim a few without reflecting upon the temerity which would offer my scraps as an equivalent for such treasures. But then my dear Maria I cannot believe you less charitable than many others who receive me with kindness, and as with me it is from the fulness of the heart that the mouth speaketh you must be content with the overflowings of affection instead of the bright beamings of imagination or sparkles of wit. Well well child (I suppose you will say) I am very willing to listen to what you have to say only do

not talk ~~so much~~ about yourself. With all due deference
to your wishes then dear Aunt I will endeavor to discourse of
things more agreeable, but what have I to relate? nothing ab-
solutely nothing we just get through life pretty much as when
you were here, except that we have not your brightness to en-
liven our pathway, and the gloom of lost pleasures casts a
deeper shade upon our former sorrowful feelings. But we have
grace enough to be grateful for what we have enjoyed, and
your visit supplies us with a thousand recollections which we
love to cherish and to talk over. Poor Uncle Jack has ^{no} op-
ponent at the chess board Uncle Hyman no one with whom
he may indulge in reminiscences of his Western Paradise, nor
Uncle Jo any political disputant; so that they have no amuse-
ments but railing at the hard times all day and playing
Whist nearly all night. Nor are they the only ones ~~that~~ Maria
who feel the loss of your society the female coterie bear witness
how much they suffer from being deprived of the ready hand
the kind heart and the quick wit of their former beloved asso-
ciate, and all unite in the hope that it be not very long
ere she be restored to them. My Mother desires me to mention
her to you particularly and most affectionately; she is still
silent and sad but makes every exertion to reconcile her grief.
The girls of all the families are well and cheerful as usual.
Miriam and Becky returned from a short visit to New York

a full blown rose - which then won universal acceptance - but I do not know whether such contributions would be satisfactory to your Western churches. tho' they are sentimental enough to make flowers except those welcome to their friends - pray what need will you make emblem of a Caldwells. I am sorry you should have got such a name from Phil - it must be the climate or habit they hold in Kentucky which makes them obstreperous - here they are humble - we never hear the claims mentioned at all - but I hope the young offender may be reclaimed - and that all the snakes which have injured the fame of your state, will serve rather as lessons than examples - embrace my beloved Brother for me, and pray

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Miss Benjamin Gates.
Lexington
Kentucky.

Keep me in the memory of your sweet boys - our children never weary of talking of them - Horace has so many recollections, that something every day awakens. he is afraid Gates will get the share of him, as he says two lessons a day, and because he loves so dearly - and Horace is such a sweet little fellow. that Aunt Pessy is as fond of listening as he is of talking about them. - God Bless you all my much loved friends
Tell Ben. we have made much progress
was surprised this afternoon - } believe me ever with affectionately to Ph.