June 11, 1809

Dear Francis,

My delay to answer your two most acceptable favors hangs on my mind with a sensible weight to remove which I am so determined that I shall not go in search of a larger or better piece of paper lest some excuse should deprive one of the momentum whence I must have, not disturbed by any embarrassed or concluded views by fatigue of body. It would puzzle me to express the reasons of my neglect of your last unless the great exercise I necessarily take in the daily visits to my farm and the inspection of it may have left my mind for correspondence so I feel it clear for conversation. The enquiry it leaves even during the time of rest my feeling towards you, though as they appear not been able to dispel it and the fact does not dispel them, for I find myself sometimes in the same cause neglecting the most urgent business. From this past a counsel may be drawn which will help me in filling up my letter although I am certain it will be useful to you in life for you have commenced with an order and moderation in every thing which will waken you from the evil, while the nature regalia of your temperament and the struggle of your reason will seem to you from the present time. My moral is, treat the mind as a material existence on whom you may lead it to be. To strengthen it, give it regular exercise which be caution to not fail it suddenly to any new exertion which you are not convinced beforehand is complete, and completely. If the exertion is not fully equal to the resistance you call on it to overcome, it must suffer in its elasticity. One that can be increased to a degree far beyond your expectation by a gradual increase of its task and a care to exclude all demands of any other nature from its proving, must to proceed less divided as the time between different objects, be the exercise be constant and moderate but its final exertion not only frequent and usual when it is not in its full vigor. The value of a mind, will even be estimated by its powers and one kept in constant study, even two without stretch will
in proportion that is to its natural pro vinc e more than one held commonly in sharing but sometimes past abruptly to great exertion in the degree that the body of the actives is more productive than that of the inactive. But to connect myself completely with the fact let me observe that the issue of the body when pursued in vague health by attention to air exercise that is but in fact the strength of the mind while the tool of the power is its weakness The ancient philosophers who were now means to nature than one has it seized consisted the rest of the body spiritual to the bottom of the mind and they remained in the shade of their readers neither exposing it to the tests of exercise or digestion.