Box 2 Folder 16

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[*Addressed to*] Mr. John Grant
Colebrook
Conn. [*Connecticut*]

Politeness of Mr. Gaylord.

[*A diagram showing the orbit of earth and the comet is drawn on the first page.*]

New Haven [*Connecticut*], Nov. 3, 1837.

Dear Brother,

I have written to Daniel promising to give you a short account of Prof. Olmsted's theory of Meteoric Showers. I have but very little time before Mr. Gaylord leaves and must therefore be very brief. I have drawn a rude figure which may perhaps give you a better idea of the thing than any mere description. S is suppose to represent the Sun, E the earth in its orbit, which you know is very nearly circular, B a body of the nature of a comet revolving round the Sun in the same period with the earth, and coming very near it on or about the 13th of Nov. The orbit is very far from being circular and is supposed to be nearly like that represented in the figure. This body is now to be seen by those who have practiced looking for such things, and I have seen it this morning, but it is of such a nature that I very much doubt whether any of you would be able to discover it. It is sometimes seen immediately after sun down <at> appearing something as is represented in the following figure

[*Here follows a hand drawing in pencil, showing what is being described in the letter.*]

Horizon

The little round spots which I have made are intended to represent stars, and the body of which I am speaking runs up from the Horizon in much the <*wa*> same way with the pencil marks I have made over a part of the stars. It is now to be seen before sunrise, and best about 4 o'clock in the morning. If you were acquainted with the constellations I could very easily tell you in what part of the heavens to look for it, but as I suppose you are not it would be very difficult <*for me*>. It reaches now above the Sickle <*cons*> which is in the neck and shoulders of the Lion. It is evidently very thin and light from the fact that most stars are very easily seen through it. Its form is very nearly that represented in the figure.

But I have not yet told you in what manner this causes meteors. On or about the 13th of Nov. this body comes very near the earth and a part of its matter is supposed to drawn from it into our atmosphere where it takes fire and forms what are called shooting stars. Prof. Olmsted says he has observed every year since the great meteoric shower of Nov. 13th 1833 and has seen the same phenomenon occur each year on the very same day. <*thou*> Though the number of meteors has been very small in comparison with those of 1833, yet they have started from the same point in the heavens, and have exhibited the same appearances. If I have succeeded in making myself understood in these explanations I think you will very gladly make some observations and see if any thing remarkable occurs. It is only by repeated observations that the truth or fallacy of the theory can be ascertained.

I have no time to write any more, as Mr. Gay- leaves in a few minutes. Give my love to Martha and Marcus, to Uncle Luther's folks, and all the rest of our friends. Write to me as soon as you can, conveniently, and let me know how things are going on at home.

Your affectionate brother,
Joel Grant.

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[*Addressed to*] Mr. John Grant
Mill Brook
Litchfield County
Conn. [*Connecticut*]

Via Hartford.

Poplartown [*Maryland*], March 18, 1838

Dear Brother,

I received your letter of Feb. 24 about a fortnight since, but have been prevented by a variety of circumstances from answering it till now. I was hardly prepared for the news which it bought, as I had concluded there was no insurmountable difficulty in the way of your coming here. I had made my plans for many particulars of pleasure and business, which I hoped to perfect after you came, but the perusal of the letter put an end to all such

ideas. True, none of them could be considered of very great importance, and it did not cost me any very great or lasting effort to lay them aside, but I surely need not tell you it was a disappointment. Upon reflecting however that if you came here you would wish to return at least as soon as next August, that the climate here during the summer season though not decidedly unhealthy is more so than any part of Litchfield County [*Connecticut*], that besides all this sister Mary will probably be leaving home before Aug. for the last time, I at last concluded that it perhaps was the best plan for you to stay at home. As for your assistance in my school though it would be very gratifying on many occasions yet I never considered that it would be worth while for you to come here on that account. My school is very pleasant and very easily managed. I do not think there is a place in any part of Conn. [*Connecticut*] with which I am acquainted where children in school are so easily managed and where there is so little impropriety of conduct among the scholars, whether in or out of school. The cause of this is, not that there are no bad children here (though I believe there are as few as any where) but that the children who come to me are from the best families, from families which, though possessing in many cases immense wealth, and having at their command every luxury heart can wish, have never yet seen fit to adopt the practice of leaving their children to themselves and allowing them to grow up without restraint. The pride of family and rank which exists here much more than in Conn. [*Connecticut*] has too an influence. All the wealthy feel that they have a station to maintain in society, and there is nothing which here tends more to raise the poor from their degradation or to enable the rich to keep their rank than a serious effort to keep <*one's*> their children from improper company, and to teach them subordination to parents, teachers and all who are considered worthy of respect. The consequence is that all who come to my school, have been taught such subordination at home that they are very easily managed. There is however connected with their bringing up rather more aristocracy than can be found in Conn. [*Connecticut*] The people here are generally of the old school manners having no mixture of the <*loco-focoism*> democracy which has possessed to some extent all the people of New-England. I do not say that <*it*> this is any thing to their praise, but that it has some advantages there can be no doubt.

I have no particular intelligence to communicate. My health is very good as it has been all winter. I think I have suffered less from colds this winter than I have during the same season of the year for several years. But winter is now gone here. Grass is beginning to start very considerably, the sun shines very pleasantly , birds of all kinds are returning to take their summer abode & all things indicate that warm weather is nigh. I would like to have you notice and record the dates of the blossoming of peach and apple tress and also of any other trees or plants that you may think proper. I will do the same here and thus we shall be able to obtain some more definite knowledge of the difference of the climates. The winter has been very mild here, but I suspect that the spring is not proportionally early.

I received two or three days since a letter from Phelps. He and his family were well at the time, though he stated that Mr. Griswold was quite sick.

You may perhaps have noticed in some of the papers the death of one of my scholars by the accidental explosion of a gun while he was hunting some three or four weeks since. It was truly an affliction to his parents, to myself, and to all the scholars, to whom he was endeared by his affectionate disposition and industrious habits though I do not think we have any reason to suppose he was pious. His mother who is I think one of the best of women feels the afflictions severely though she is perfectly willing to resign herself to God. I think a more affectionate mother cannot often be found or children who more richly deserve such a mother. The father is not pious. The boy's name was Edward Henry son of Zadock Henry he was about 15 years of age. His death was instantaneous.

I hope during this summer you will <*do y*> make your best efforts to be "dilligent in business." As you will of course labor you must not let any one have occasion to say that because you have thoughts of studying you are unfitted for work. Whether you will come on here in the fall we will leave for future determination.

March 20. Last evening I received a letter from you and brother Daniel which gave me information that sister Mary had left home for the last time. How could you have suffered her to leave home without even giving me an intimation that preparations were making for that purpose I cannot imagine, unless it be that the hurry of preparation prevented your writing to me. When Mary last wrote to me she said she should perhaps leave in May, but I was hardly expecting she would be ready before August. The news was surprizing to me, but as both I and you have been accustomed to the idea of her leaving home for some time, it did not occasion any particular new sensations. She has left her country and her kindred in the service of God, let us rest fully resigned in the belief that he "will be with her always even to the end of the world." I also see that you find some fault because I did not answer your letter of Feb. 24, sooner, but that I have already explained. I will however state that I sent you a paper which had you received it would have relieved your anxiety but I expect post masters have not yet learned the best way to send to "Mill Brook." [*Connecticut*] You will not I hope neglect your Algebra or Geometry, or reading good books, especially the Bible which I entreat you to make your daily study.

If you know I wish you would inform me where I can direct a letter to Mary I wrote to Brother Phelps <*two days*> three weeks ago, and shall send one to Elizabeth in two or three days,

Yours affectionately
Joel Grant.

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[*Addressed to*:] Mr. John Grant
Mill Brook
Litchfield Co.
Conn. [*Connecticut*]

Berlin [*Connecticut*], July 22, 1839

Dear Brother,

I can render no apology for the long delay which I have made in writing except a multitude of business. I myself have been well and cannot but hope you enjoy the same blessings <*thogh*> though the fact that you have not yet written <*to me*> to blame me for my delay has sometimes almost led me to fear that you cannot do it. But I have some news to tell you, which perhaps from what I have written to you before you may not expect. It is that I have closed my school no more to commence it. The reason of this is that the teacher of the English <*scho*> school here whom I have before mentioned to you as taking a part of my scholars from me, has now advanced so far that he is not content with the tuition of the scholars he can fairly obtain, but wishes that his school may be united to mine, and he has so many friends among the Trustees of the Academy of which I have charge that the Trustees <*of the*> are of the same mind. Such an arrangement which would take from me half the state donation ($150 per year) together with the absurdity of attempting to unite two independent and to some extent rival schools <*could*> induced me to decline having any thing more to do with the school. I closed my school a little more than a week since, just one year after commencing. I have spent the time since in visiting among my acquaintances and friends here, and have passed the time very agreeably. I am now ready to start and am waiting only for a vessel to go to New-York. Unfavorable winds detain those which are now absent from returning but as soon as they come there will be no delay on my part. The greater part of those who own vessels here do not choose to run them at present for <*corn*> corn the chief article of trade, has fallen to so low a price that they cannot make any profit by it. There are however one or two which are going again as soon as possible after they return. As they charge but 25 cents a day for board it is possible that I may stay in New-York several days as I can <*by*> be almost at home in the vessel. It may be may be that I shall stay there and at New-Haven [*Connecticut*] till after Commencement at College, but I will write more of this after I reach New-York.

I believe I have the esteem of nearly all if not all, the people here. Even those who were unwilling I should stay on the terms of last year would gladly have employed me on their own. Every scholar of my school shed tears on the day of our separation, and some fairly cried. But I could only wish they might have a teacher who <*cou*> would serve them better and better deserve their affection. I must say that I am more and more pleased with the people here. The acts of kindness and respect which, times without number, they have performed towards me none but the most ungrateful <*can*> could ever forget.

I received a letter a few days since from sister Elizabeth the first I have received for a long time. She says she is looking forward with a great deal of pleasure to the time when she expects me to visit her, which I fear is distant. I have heard nothing from sister Mary since she left home.

I should like to have you write soon and direct your letter to New–York

In haste
Your affectionate brother,
Joel Grant.

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[*Addressed to*] Mr. John Grant
New-Haven
Conn. [*Connecticut*]

Boston Nov. 2, 1839

Dear Brother;

I am now able to forward the money I borrowed of you, which, though it is <about> all I borrowed, will not I fear be enough to pay your expenses. If this should be the case you must borrow of Wm. [*William*] Gilbert and

send it to him as soon as you get home, or perhaps you can be trusted till you can send the money, or perhaps again, you may not be well enough to leave New-Haven [*Connecticut*] at present and you can write to father and have him send you some before you go home.

The only item of news I have is that our ship is to visit New-York before she leaves the country, and it is probable she will make the visit some time next week. She is getting into pretty good trim now, and I suppose we go to New-York principally to take on board Com. Ridgeley, who is to be our commander, and whose dignity might be hurt if <he> we were not obliged to go to him, rather than he to come to us. But whatever the reason may be, I build upon the fact some additional hope that I shall be able to visit home before we go. I think I can make arrangements so that I shall meet the ship at New-York, and while it is going from here there I will go home. If such should be the case I will visit you at New Haven [*Connecticut*] if you are not well enough to <go> meet me at home.

We are making arrangements for our "Mess" as it is called, that is for our boarding establishment. I have paid $70 towards furnishing it with necessary food. I expect the expenses for board will be rather large. If I can get along for $5 per week it is as cheap as I expect. Provisions are quite dear I am told in that part of the world to which we are going. On the whole I think I shall make out to spend my time very agreeably, though I am well satisfied I must look to other sources than my associates for happiness. I must be shut up with 500 or more men, all of them from the lowest ranks of society, a compound of ignorance, indolence and vice. The offices are certainly entitled to rank better, for they are men from the better <*raks*> ranks of society, but their education is not I expect very good, at least not so good as it ought to be, - and their principles such as we might expect from persons who from early childhood have had no religious training, who seldom or never the voice of prayer but daily listen to oaths till they almost become their natural language, such must be my associates, and though I see good evidence that they are desirous to treat me with respect, yet I rejoice that I have always cultivated a habit of seeking my happiness in my own bosom, for now I shall have occasion to look to that source, rather than any other. My situation is not <*to be*> like that of a person who goes to teach school on land for he is situated among a moral & religious people a great portion of whom can agree with him on subjects of a moral nature. But I am not discouraged. No, were it not that I wish to see home once more I would gladly set sail on Monday. I wish to see our vessel "ploughing the foam of the sea with her brazen beak" I long to see her sweeping over the waves in "light majestic beauty" though from her size I should suppose she could never sail very lightly. Still they say she can outsail any ship that was ever built; though one of the first ships built by the United States she is <*one* > the best. There were however two or three frigates built about the same time which are said to be nearly as good. The Brandywine, <*however*> which was built in 1825 cannot hold a candle to the United States, for a few years since they tried their strength by racing together and the United State beat the Brandywine "all hollow" But I am in a hurry, so no more at present from your affectionate brother

Joel Grant.

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[*Addressed to*] Mr. John Grant
Mill-Brook
Litchfield Co.
Conn. [*Connecticut*]

U. S. Ship Potomac
Monte Video [*Uruguay*] Oct. 21, 1840
Dear Brother,

It is now one month since we sailed from Rio to this place where we arrived after a passage of eight days. We are obliged to come to anchor at a distance of five or six miles from town on account of the shallowness of the water, a circumstance which renders my situation rather unpleasant as it gives to the ship much more of the nature of a prison than is agreeable. My school of course occupies me generally during the five days of the week, and the only days which I can, without express permission, spend on shore are Saturday and Sunday, upon which days the weather is very likely to prevent my going. As there is no land to the south and east of us and none within a hundred or more miles to the west the waters are much affected by the winds from those quarters, so much so that it is often with the greatest difficulty that boats can reach the shore or come from the shore to the ship. Of course on many days a boat does not leave the ship at all and I am sometimes unable to go ashore <*when*> my duties on board would permit. I have however been on shore once, and will endeavor to make known to you some of the impressions I received. Monte Video [*Uruguay*] is a city with a population of about 15,000 principally of Spanish descent. Its houses are all of brick or stone and built in such a way as to resemble a city of forts or prisons rather

than the residences of peaceful people. The following figure will give you some idea of their form.[*Diagram of a floor plan for a house is drawn in the corner of this page*]

The outside wall is built very strong and in some instances the only opening it has is the entrance the <*light*> windows all opening inside towards the court, which is an open space paved with marble brick or stone according to the wealth or taste of the proprietor. In the middle is a cistern so fixed as to receive all the water which falls upon the roof, and as this means is universally resorted to procure water for use it is a matter of much importance. The roofs essentially differ from any I have ever seen. They are nearly flat and like all the floors of the house are built of brick supported by wooden sleepers and plank.

The top of the house being then made safe by the height of the outer and inner walls becomes a very pleasant place for the gambols of children, the dances of <*the*> light hearted youth, and the thoughtful walks of soberage or youthful gravity. In this country the advantage derived from them is inconceivable. The seasons do not vary here as they do in Colebrook [*Connecticut*]; the winters are not cold the summers are not intensely hot, consequently there are but few days in the year in which a promenade on the roof will not be agreeable. By this means every parent can afford to his children a play ground without the necessity of sending them into the street. <*for amusement*>. If there are any windows opening into the street they are defended by strong iron gratings thus rendering entrance against the will occupier impossible, without the use of battering rams or some like instrument.

Montevideo [*Uruguay*] is at present the capital of a province which claims to be independent called Banda Oriental or Uraguay [*Uruguay*]. <*It calls its*> They call it a republic, but I doubt its ability to govern itself well. It was originally a province of the Viceroyalty of Buenos Ayres [*Argentina*] but was eventually claimed by Brazil as a part of its territory, and became the occasion of a protracted war between the that empire and Buenos Ayres [*Argentina*], which resulted in a treaty that the disputed territory should be left to itself for five years at the end of which time it might choose for its master whichever of the contending parties it saw fit. <*for its master*> The result was as might have been expected; the province after managing itself for five years concluded that it would never more acknowledge a master. This is rather a bold step for a people like this numbering it is generally supposed not more than 70,000. But in South America every body seems disposed to be independent, and to live rather by war than the arts of peace.

The people here retain many of the customs of their original country Spain. Bull fights are exhibited usually as often as once a week, and what will surprise you they are made part of the religion and are exhibited on Saint days, in honor of the Virgin Mary St. Paul etc. I am told that these exhibitions take place oftener on Sunday than any other day of the week and that the good Catholics attend them as their afternoon service. I shall if possible attend one <*if I can d*> and if I do I will write a description of it for you.

The French still keep up their blockade of Buenos Ayres [*Argentina*], though there is now a prospect that a few weeks will put an end to it. The more I learn of the affair the more I detest the conduct of the French, and the more I admire the conduct of Buenos Ayres [*Argentina*]. The matter is now in a very doubtful state, as it seems not unlikely that the French will bombard the city. The inhabitants who do not carry arms are leaving the city in great numbers, and it is though that there are not less than 5,000 women and children, in this city from Buenos Ayres [*Argentina*]. The soldiers with <*their*> General Rosas at their head are determined to die rather than yield to the claims of the French. To the original claims which occasioned the war France now adds about $4,000,000 which have been expended by her carrying on the war, a circumstance which presents a double barrier to the making of a treaty. But of these things I will endeavor to write more then I know more.

While I was at Norfolk Va. [*Virginia*] I met an old <*child*> friend of mine, a graduate of Yale College, who had just set up a school there, and who was pressed for money. As I knew his noble spirit would not stoop to ask me any pecuniary assistance and as I knew likewise he was in debt I offered <*him*> to lend him $50 or $60 if he wished it. This offer he accepted and though I do not think he will be ready to pay it for some time to come yet as he may be I will state that I have his note for $60 dated April 17, 1840 and that I gave him a certificate stating that a receipt from my father, Elijah Grant or from Wm. [*William*] Gilbert (now a member of college) stating that the money with interest due had been paid should cancel the note. The name of the individual is Samuel Bailey. Perhaps it will never be paid (though I have no fears, if life and health are spared him) but if it should be this explanation will enable you to understand the transaction.

Our Commodore has gone to Buenos Ayres [*Argentina*] in one of our sloops of War. It is impossible to tell how long we shall remain here but probably two or three months longer at least. The country and the people here differ as much from those at Rio as those at Rio do from the country and people of Norfolk Va. [*Virginia*] and I doubt not I shall be much interested. Beef here is very abundant, the best selling for no more than two cents a pound, and a fat sheep ready dressed for cooking may be bought for a dollar. Beef and mutton however are the only cheap articles of food, as flour sells at about $20 a barrel and potatoes at about $8 a bushel. These prices are not I presume permanent ones.

I now say I cannot be content more than six months longer without hearing from you. My father and mother how can I endure to remain in suspense concerning them. Perhaps they may one or both, be sleeping in their graves. Let me assure you that, notwithstanding some faults, they, like other human beings have, never were children blessed with better parents than we. Often let our prayers ascend that as the prime of their life has been laborious, self denying and prayerful their old age may be peaceful and happy from the virtues and character of their children and their death the sweet repose of the righteous.
My brothers and sisters too how I long to know their situation. And as from time to time I run over the list of uncles and cousins which it is my happiness to have, I feel that none but those who like me have wandered can like me feel the worth of home. It is now summer here or rather it corresponds to your month of April. The winds called pamperos blow here with great violence and last night we had one which drove off to our ship 15 or 20 poor birds that could not (or did not) resist its force

Your affectionate brother Joel Grant

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[*Addressed to*] Mr. John Grant
Mill Brook
Litchfield Co
Conn. [*Connecticut*]

U. S. Ship Potomac
Rio de Janeiro
June 28, 1841
Dear Brother,

Within the last two weeks I have received from you and Mother two letters the one dated March 13 and the other April 10. They make five letters that I have received from home since I came here and I can assure you they seemed to make the distance between me and home, shorter by at least 4000 miles. Your letters have all arrived safely and I had no idea that communication between this country and ours was so frequent and safe as I find it.

We had heard of the death of President Harrison, a few days before your letter arrived and I think we have every reason to regard it as an almost irreparible national calamity. From all that General Harrison has shown of his character since he appeared as a candidate for the Presidency, and from all that the warm discussions of a political contest have bought to light respecting his life and principles, I had flattered myself that we once more had a man at the head of government who united the wisdom patriotism and honesty of Washington and I cannot doubt that the people were beginning to regard him in the same way. It is possible that the government may be administered by Tyler on much the same principles but Tyler can never obtain the confidence of the people like Harrison

You write that you have attended the school at Norfolk [*Connecticut*] a short time. Of this I am very glad and from your description of the teacher I cannot but regret that you did not attend it longer. It was however too late for me to give advice and now I can only urge you to pay the strictest attention to the instructions you may receive at college

Upon more mature thought I have also concluded that the course you have adopt of entering Freshman is wise. There is much [to be] learned, and next to my desire to see [you a] good, useful and happy man is my desire [.....*page is cut*] you a learned one. You will I trust never [be] one of those who study merely to recite your lessons, nor one who is satisfied because you know as much as three quarters of your companions. It would not be surprising if you should find some of your classmates much more advanced than yourself, but let not that discourage you. If you will properly apply yourself, I will warrant you will ere eighteen months have passed outstrip many of them. Let me caution you against <*bout*> thinking your studies hard. This is a complaint you seldom hear from good students, you should rather rejoice that your studies afford you so good an opportunity to try your powers. Above all never let your aversion to a hard lesson prevent your using your utmost efforts to conquer it.

Be not hasty in forming acquaintances. You will find that those who please you at first will in the end be most disagreeable in many cases. In a few weeks however you will be<come> able to judge with considerable certainty, and till that time is past you had better not attempt to make acquaintances. You will not seek (and if you should seek probably will not obtain) a room in college the first year.

I trust you have some correct ideas of the importance of selecting good associates. In your case you should be careful not to associate with any one who uses profane language or who spends any of his time in dissipation, or who neglect <*their*> his studies to indulge in light and trifling conversation, or in light reading. Many more things of this kind I might say, but at present let me finish with <*my*> the earnest injunction to read a portion of

the Bible every day, and to pay the strictest attention to the sermons of Prof. Fitch of which I would earnestly advise you to take notes from the beginning of your College course. Do not make them too long <*but*> for fear that you become tired of the undertaking. You would do well to get a blank book and set down the text and heads of discourse always, and whenever you feel disposed such of his remarks as you choose, but never neglect the heads of discourse.

I suppose there will be no difficulty in obtaining the money you need as I think either Mr. Battel or Father will furnish you on my account. I think my credit for $200 or $300 ought to be good by this time.

The coronation of the emperor has been put off till 18th of July and it is very probable that we may leave here before that time a circumstance I shall very much regret. The Emperor is still popular and the preparations for the coronation are going on upon a very extensive scale.

Give my love to cousin Maria Pettibone Margaret Nettleton, cousin Elizabeth P. and to all in any way connected with them. Also tell cousin Wm. [*William*] I am verily guilty in not having written to him and will try to write to him soon. I wish you would let me know where James Cowles is; I have sent two letters to him and have received no answer. I can write no more for I expect the master-at-arms to come every minute to extinguish my light which I am not permitted to burn after <*nine*> ten o'clock and the vessel sails to-morrow, by which I wish to send this.

Your affectionate brother

Joel Grant.

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