1796. MARCH 1 F.A. Bensley to [illegible]

SIDE TWO

Before I go to other matter - let me hope my Dear Brother your health is better, than the latter accounts have allowd me to believe - & that a good rattling fit of the gout has set your whole habit into a good state for many Months - I often think of you with anxiety, & seriously lament the mistaken plan you are upon of low living - depend upon it the contrary would be beneficial & keep the disease where it should be - in the extremitys - I shall beg to be informed whether or not you follow my advice, & thereby judge how you rate my medical skill - which I do assure you is generally allowd to be very good - I would not puff myself if you could learn my abilities from any body else — Pray drink good Madeira & enough of it - & in return I will tell you something that will I think give you real pleasure — Any time in the last three & twenty years - your plan of life has rolld on in such an unvaried course with respect to the main circumstances of it - that a diary of one would have been nearly a history of the whole - accepting the Chops & changes inseperable to this mortal life - such as sometimes loosing a friend, sometimes repairing the gap by a fresh one, & so on - My greatest cause for anxiety during this period has arisen from our supposed being derived by means ill suited to my Dear Mr. Bens state of health spirits or inclination - It was adopted from necessity & being obliged to continue it, from the same cause, did not reconcile it to him - but the contrary — However as nothing else arose to view he kept himself in tolerable humour with it - & I encouraged him all I could - till he was so severely affected in his limbs 9 years ago - the tenderness that left in his whole frame has since that period rendered it a most arduous task indeed - Tho he had the consolation of deriving a very fine income - it was not of magnitude enough to lay by anything like an independance from wone he to work till a hundred - I narrate all this that you may fully enter into the real true delight we feel at the prospect he has of I hope making his last bow to the public this spring — & sitting down quietly thus; a much less income, yet a permanent one - & the occupation easy - Thus the matter stands - Upon a plan of safety I believe in these troublesome times - Barracks have been erecting at various distances round the Metropolis, & also to relieve the Inn keepers it is said - there must be Barrack masters - which posts in general are given to old officers - Windham - the Secretary at War, we were formerly in habits of intimacy - with - our quitting London for a few years & his becoming a great public character put a check upon our intercourse - but we were always good friends when we met elsewhere - & one or two things I had solicited for others he had granted in a most friendly manner — But anything for ourselves had never once crossd our thoughts; Mr. Byng a friend of ours & an intimate of his - was in conversation with him & about Barracks & Barrack Masters & so forth - when suddenly it started into her recollection, that she had often heard Mr. Ben in a jocular way say get anybody to give me two hundred a year & I'll quit the stage the next hour - upon which she immediately wished Windham if he would give him one of them - He immediately answerd Yes & he happy to oblige B[illegible] She was serious in thinking it would be acceptable. He has accepted it & most thankfully, for though the income is not a third of our present, it [illegible] life which is a wonderful consideration - when you reflect how hardly our present income was earned - & how [illegible]petually liable to be rendered incapable of earning it from ill health & a thousand accidents - besides at best it is not a profession for any beyond the Prime of youth - Unless backd by strong inclination — our destination is not intirely fixed nor the exact time of taking possession - but we have strong reason to think the first will be only 9 miles from London at Croydon - good roads & pretty country & that the second will be about the end of May - all this we are just now very anxious to learn as we have much to wind up previous — ——

Now my dear Brother am I mistaken - don't you feel pleasure at this - perhaps you may feel some alloy - if it should occur to you that your sister stands within the danger of dependance on any county means should she live to old age & he left a solitary being - Thus then let me remove that - Mr. W. Bensley has settled upon me a thousand pound - which is invested in the Long Annuities as having better interest - himself & another gentleman trustees - this - with the few hundreds we have scraped together - as I am not ignorant how to be an economist, if nothing more arises, would set me down in my arm chair without an anxious thought —