

GRATZ PAPERS

1836. REBECCA GRATZ, PHILADELPHIA, TO MRS. BENJAMIN GRATZ, WASHINGTON. THE WRONGS OF THE SEMINOLES AND CREEKS. EXCITEMENT OVER THE BEGINNING OF WAR. NEWS OF THE FAMILY.

Saturday Evening, February 6th, 1836.

You have been so good this week, my dear Maria, that I am ashamed of having ever complained, and I had a letter too from my dear Ben., a sweet letter which made me proud and happy. You know I have such a high respect for your husband's opinions that an expression of approbation from him goes directly to my heart, and if I cannot honestly appropriate it, I give credit to his love and try hard to deserve it. You have acted very wisely in postponing your journey to Richmond until milder weather would make traveling more safe and convenient. There is no inducement to run such hazards as you are obliged to encounter now in the commonest road, even between this city and Lancaster; our brother, Jac., had to walk several miles to a tavern through the snow last Sunday, where he passed the night, and I expect his next letter will tell of further sufferings on his progress to Bellefort. When Henry Etting left, it was intensely cold too, and I was rejoiced that we determined the boys should not accompany him, for on Monday, Howard was taken with the mumps, which has confined him to the house the whole week. He did not suffer as much pain as is usual in the disease, but his face was swelled to an awful size, and is not yet reduced to its natural dimension. The great difficulty of getting him to take medicine increases his trouble by frequently obliging him to repeat his dose. Dr. Hays and Sally dined with us today. They expressed great satis-

faction at being so kindly remembered and desired most affectionate returns. The girls and Bernard have gone to Sister Hays's this evening, tho' poor Sara has been very sad all day on hearing of the death of one of her young friends, (name doubtful) married last Spring and only nineteen years old.

I had a visit from Mr. Shaw last evening and was much pleased with the account he gave of both his pupils. Howard he thinks greatly improved both in deportment and studies and of Bernard, he observed he always behaved well. I told him we did not wish to keep them unemployed, and as the weather might not admit of their leaving town, we would be willing to keep them at school as long as they were here, in which he acquiesced. Bernard is much pleased with this arrangement, the more so as his father approved of their continuing at school as long as was consistent with their plans; but had your letter been here before H. Etting started, I should not have been willing to keep you separated from them. I hope, however, my dear Sister, you are reconciled to the delay; as soon as the weather and roads become comfortable, they shall be sent by the first opportunity, and you have only to express your wishes to our brothers, and one of them will attend you either to Virginia or home. Isabella had a letter a few days since from (?). She is still well, but I think it probable before you are ready to go to Richmond, she will be in her chamber. They are very desirous to see you, and I think it would be a pity not to perform your intention, though I am afraid it will keep you a much longer time from Philadelphia than I thought to have spared you. I have sincerely felt for Mrs. Blair's sore trial in parting with dear Montgomery,--sweet L....(?) too, and his kindhearted father have all been

severely tried. I confess I should find it hard to reconcile such a duty to my feelings. This is a hateful war. The poor wretches who have done such mischief as to have sealed their own doom, may rise in judgment at the Great Day against this Nation for the wrongs and outrages committed upon them in their own wilderness and wigwams, the home in which God placed them. What plea can we make to Infinite Justice for invading them in their peaceful possession? That they were savage and we civilized; that they had lands which we wanted and could cultivate, and build cities? And because they would not give all, we hunt them like beasts of prey; and they are a fearful enemy to encounter, savage demons in their revenge. It is hard to send out our young braves to encounter them, but I hope the sacrifice will be over before Montgomery reaches the seat of warfare. Numbers from the Southern states have volunteered and are posting to the scene of danger. Sally's letters say the Georgians are in great excitement. Her little brother, Theodore, laments he is not old and strong enough to carry a gun and go to the war. I hope my sweet little pets, Hyman and Cary, are well and sometimes think of us. Tell them Bernard.....(?) goes skating along the streets as fast as any of his brothers and that from one end of the city to the other, aye, and across both rivers. It is easier to get along on skates than in any other way except in gum elastic shoes or sleighs. Miss Peters says you are faithless to her, not having written one line though she sent you a pen that a poet would not have disdained. She enquires about you with much interest, notwithstanding. Every one sends love to you, my dear Sister, but you must take it in a heap, as I have no space to

name all the parcels with their particular directions,--only your sons, who are quite as desirous of seeing you and their brothers as we are to have them. We shall take very good care of Howard and hope to tell you in a day or two that he is quite well. Gratz and Mr. Norval (?) came in on Thursday evening. The latter, you know, is very amusing, and Howard enjoyed his visit to the utmost. The "prince" jeered him on his round face and thought the whole of his dimensions a subject of mirth. They went home again yesterday evening. Gratz has a very pretty sleigh and his country equipage quite in character. He is in good spirits and looks much better than when you saw him last. God bless you, my dear Sister. Always believe me

Your affectionate R. G.

Our little Sara will not let her love be included in the heap. So you must take it alone and entire.

Monday morning:-- My dear Sister, Howard is quite well today. He is down stairs and as merry as usual. Bernard has not taken the mumps. He is in school. R. G.

Addressed: "To Mrs. Benjamin Gratz, Washington City, D. C. "

-From a letter forwarded, December 1st 1916, by Mrs. Joseph C. Bryant, West Line, Mo., immediately after its receipt from Miss H. M. Hays, of Philadelphia.