

I thank you most sincerely My Dear Maria for
 your kind letter. you are always so good in writing when
 there is no cause for silence that you must not wonder
 at my inopportunity after every long interval - besides
 I felt that you were sad - sympathy has its signs as well
 as free masonry. When I took Henry Noel by the hand I could
 have wept at the thoughts of your meeting with him -
 but now my sister, you must be happy in his society. he
 loves you so warmly. and you are of so much consequence
 to him that you must revive your spirits to teach him
 how to regulate his feelings. he must have wonders to relate
 of his various travels by field & flood. and the beautiful ter-
 minals of his remembrance from every shore round the world's
 surface will afford histories to win your pleasant ear. It will
 be worth while to arrange & clasp these shells so as to afford
 a kind of maps for the ocean navigator and his young
 contours. While to you they will have a value beyond their
 scientific worth in the recollection that they were gathered for
 you. Have you seen John Randolph's letters? Jacob is
 reading them aloud to her sisters & me, as a no hour's exer-
 cise of a morning. and we are much pleased with them -
 there is much affection, and rational domestic kindness,
 in which we never gave that sensitive genius credit
 the nephew to whom they are addressed was a frequent visitor
 at our house, and was warmly attached to his uncle. it is
 a pity subsequent caprice should have separated them.
 I am glad these letters are published - for they vindicate

Randolphs character from the charge of heartlessness. he was so deeply interested for his sisters children, and took upon him to provide for so many young destitute boys that he must have been by nature tender, & generous. compare the character of his mind during this period, with that exhibited in public later in life, and just before his death & I think there can be no doubt that he laboured under occasional aberrations of mind, which were as decidedly a disease as any that afflicted his body - If he had been blessed with a tender wife, how different might have been the colour of his destiny! - Whatever the trials of the creation may imagine they are infinitely the most helpless beings in the decline of life unconnected by the ties of family - the sedentary habits of women keep them only dependent for a few comforts on their friends - but the man who has no one to influence, and console ~~this~~, when vehement passions, painful diseases and disappointed pride cross ~~these~~ vexed spirits is a sad spectacle of suffering & helplessness. I should be frightened for our own single brothers when such a picture is presented to my mind - if it were not for the hope that I may be able to repay all their goodness to me - by keeping up a domestic home ~~with~~ those charities alive, which may rescue them from the worst effects of bachelorship - a care-for-nobody independence -

This is giving a new turn to self-importance ^{is it not?} my dear sister; and if you did not know that the spirit of humility had set her stamp on my character I would not venture to take such a view of my situation - but indeed, we who have neither fortune to support, nor other right to an establishment must endeavour to set up a claim to usefulness in some subordinate way, to reconcile us to the idea of ^{not} being a burden to our relations - you will remember I have six single nieces besides, for whom to think provided - Mr. Moses has been again indisposed, he has recovered, but looks ill - our sister

William Meredith & his wife are also very handsomely fixed - there is but one more to be married in the family - and then I hope long engagements will be discarded from fashion in Phil^a - It is so long since I have known James Hale, that I hardly knew him at all - but I am glad to hear you speak so well of him, he is the only one of my old friends, I was deserv'g of her talents - and the one perhaps from whom least was expected - there were 2 or 3 considered geniuses, who are little better than adventurers - James went to the West - married & has turned out a Judge & an Author - Give my love to my dear Brother, and embrace your darling boys for me - I hope you are all well again -

It was about when dear Ben's letter arrived - he returned on Tuesday - We were all pleased with Cary & Fry, & when you see him

The Henry Hunt "Loyal Preacher" sends his love to him, and is very kind of his relationship.
July 30th

Leaving for Eng.

Mrs Benjamin Gratz



24

and bids me say he will answer it in a few days - he sends his love to you all, and to Mr Horace & Sarah - and the girls next door, Sarah May's is in the country - & Betty Blair at Washington - God bless you my own dear Sister, you do not know what comfort the sight of your loved writing in Jos letter, gave to the heart of your Eliza