

Rebecca Gratz to Sarah (Sally) Gratz

September 28, [1800]

Philadelphia Sept 28th.

What my Sally has been the matter with you? you tell me that you have been indisposed, that our dear Sister has also been sick.

Your letter is evidently written in very bad spirits. but you tell me you have both recovered. I thank Heaven for it, and most fervently pray you may continue to enjoy health. when I wrote the letter you mentioned yours had neither of them arrived, the one Addressed to me, [dated] the 10th., came by the same post with the one dated 16th. it was ten days old before I got it. you will therefore not be surprised at our uneasiness.

I am grieved at the postponement of your return & our dear Sisters visit and sincerely lament the cause. I hope Mrs. Etting is better, and that her mind has recovered from the shock of her Brothers Death. by our papers there does not appear any abatement in the bills of Mortality. almighty God! when will that fatal disease cease its ravages. why does poor Mrs. Solomons continue in the city. surely she must be very wretched, all her family exposed to the same calamity, that has deprived her of a Husband. she must feel double solicitude for her little Orphans. Mr. Caldwell's [to] family too are still there Sally is not yet gone _ we have not seen her again _ I believe she sails today _ the weather has been very bad today the Sun has made his appearance for the first time since last Monday. it has Sally, been a gloomy week _ our letters from N York inform, that Ward Fenno has been ill. he is now thank God perfectly recovered the dear Girls you may suppose were very uneasy. we had a letter Yesterday from Maria.

I would apologize for sending you at such a time, the Ballad but know the tears excited by fictitious sorrow, [are] grateful to the heart they are the tears of Sympathy & compassion for an imaginary Object and subside in admiration at the happily conceived Idea of the Author his sublime taste, and tenderness of sentiment. no subject could rouse a greater interest in the humane breast [than] the situation of an Orphan left destitute as that is described _
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and we feel more for the Offspring of a Sailor or Soldier _ whose life has been spent in toil & hardships, labouring for their Countrys good. their rewards are small, and the benefits they receive, live chiefly in imagination _ enthusiasm possesses their souls. they talk of Glory with rapture. poor Souls _ when [these] danger is [over], Where is their Glory _ perhaps a crutch.. the merit of the Officer is alone considered [by the world]. he is promoted he receives the Plaudits of the world _ tho perhaps as brave a [spirit] may be found to inhabit the breast of the plebeian under his Command _ in Moore's Edward there are the characters of a Sailor

& Soldier, that displays the most noble [features] [of] the mind. a disabled Soldier living on his threepence a week and Blessing his Gracious [sovereign] for his maintenance, celebrating the [Anniversary] of conquest and entertaining the wounded sailor in his hovel _ as happy & as proud over his brown Bread & and [cann?] of [ale], [to] [tell] his tale, as the historian is over the best finished page _ or feasting at a banquet thus happiness appears equally distributed among mankind. the poor [have] smaller cares. and their enjoyments are found simple. but suited to an [untaught] mind. whilst the Great are sometimes [perplexed] with [difficulties] that might make him envy the meanest son of simplicity, and brings down [the] sum total of his [felicities?] to a mediocrity. that his splendid situation conceals from the world _

I was extremely sorry to hear of Mr. Rutter's death & commiserate the situation of his poor bereft family. Mrs. R when I was in Balt had to mourn a temporary separation which caused her much distress _ unhappy woman _ how will she endure a loss that leaves her thro' life to wander without a protector and struggle with three infants to rear, and shield from the hardships of this world _

Yes Sally, you are indeed exposed to many distressful scenes. at least you may daily hear tales calculated to rouse every compassionate feeling. but do not let them make too deep an [end of page]

impression. not to sympathize would bespeak a mind callous to the most amiable sensations we are capable of _ but recollect the Almighty Ruler _ is beneficent and Good. May He in Mercy spare the suffering inhabitants of Balt, and comfort those whom [He] hath afflicted.

You say I do not mention Sister Richea particularly, I always assure you of her health, I have not seen her these three weeks _ we expect her in town on tuesday _ I shall then return with her to Bloomfield _ you must excuse her not writing [remember] she is a nurse, and pray now find some excuse for not addressing her _ but let it not be ceremony _ she feels your silence, and is hurt it appears so like neglect. her dear Children are all well _ the family have enjoyed great health this summer. Ben is still with them he has been only once in the city this summer, has grown much. and possesses the loveliest disposition I ever met with in a child.

we are anxiously expecting the return of our dear Jac [you?] mention the day he was to leave the Cottage but the [wafer?] [...] [concealed] it, and we are quite ignorant of the [information?] [...] so much wished for

our Honourd [parents] tribute their tenderness & Affection to you all Rachel & our Brothers join _ to our loved Sister [say] every thing that can assure her of our love. and present fraternal Affection to her dr. Reuben _ embrace the lovely Children with the warmth you caress them for your self _ my heart pants to press them with affection, I hope they remember me still.

Give my love to Mrs. Etting _ Kitty, Hetty, and my [dear Sally]
to Biddy Kennedy. and [Messrs.] Taylor & Mickle _

How is uncle, and Cousin's family _ remember me affectionately
to them all ~~[the family]~~. we are going to lose our good neighbours
the Hamiltons they move in Sixth Street near Chesnut.
we spent thursday Evening with the Miss Jones's they & S Dallas
will be our only visiting neighbours _ I forgot Mary [Seckel] _ but
we see her so seldom, that tis no wonder _ Patty Leiper too is very
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domestic & does not come as often to see us as we expected,
Peggy Ewing has not yet return'd From Trenton, Mary Davidson
arrived a bout two weeks, she call'd to see us immediately on her return,
but shame to tell, we have never return'd it _ we want you home
Sally before we shall be good for anything. 'tis bad times my dear _
but Tomorrow we shall fast for our sins. and I hope we will grow
better & happier. God Bless you my Sally _ may all your prayers be heard
and answer'd, may you be written in the Book of Life, Peace, Content, Joy, & happiness
may the Blessing of Heaven be [op] upon you _ and [say] say ye Amen _ Adieu _ R _ G

Sunday afternoon,

we have just heard of our dear Jo's arrival at Lancaster
by a gentlemen who travelled with him from York _ on friday _
he has not written, but hope we shall see him on tuesday.
poor fellow he has had dreadful weather to ride in.
accept the tender affection of the heart of [yours?] God Bless you Adieu _
Rachel my love I will write soon Heaven Bless
you my Sisters with happiness _

[Address:]
Miss Sally Gratz
at Mr. R_ Ettings
Baltimore

[Editors' Note: The year of this letter is based on the death date of Myer Solomon.]