

Rebecca Gratz to Benjamin Gratz

March 24, 1819

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My Dear Ben

We were quite regaled yesterday by the receipt of your charming letters, and your friend John Biddle came in the evening to boast of his, what can be more grateful to the heart _ than news from a friend in a far country? I verified this feeling to excess and return thanks to God for the blessing, that attend you in health & cheerfulness _ You [are] certainly are a most excellent traveller and accommodate yourself with such facility to the manners of the people you sojourn among, that I have no doubt you buy favour every where _ courtesey is the jewel of life, in every clime, & perhaps none prize it more than the rough independent people of the west _ they who acknowledge no superior, love to have their pride flattered by the consideration of their more polished friends, and I suspect they do not often meet with citizens so well bred, if we may judge by the anecdotes our Kentucky acquaintances sometimes relate. Vincennes must be a dull place to stay so long in _ yet the beauties & richness of the country will compensate you for other deprivations _ and it is so interesting to explore those distant regions, and still to recognize the same laws & language and government that is so dear to us at home _ I hope you will succeed in your business _ and not be too long detained _ the Illinois & Wabash claim, of which I have all my life heard so much, seemed like a romance _ I never expected to see any thing but maps & pamphlets of the subject or that it would cost us your society for so long a time _ but since it has proceeded so far _ I catch a little of the mania and [frame?] wishes for its success. at any rate hope you will not permit it to engage years of toil on an uncertain event & that after satisfying your curiosity with every thing worth visiting you will bend your course home ward.

You are very lenient to Jona. Guest, people here are more severe in their censures on his conduct. It is probable that he was assailed by temptations, and he was unprepared to resist them. his engagement with Miss P. was hastily concluded after a very short acquaintance and his attachment must have been of a nature soon to consume itself _ the forsaken damsel looks very pensive, but she is pretty & interesting & may consider herself fortunate in being left with her friends _ hardships such as settlers in a new country must encounter, requires at least the steady affection of a kind companion _ to make
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tolerable, and by the bye among the crosses and perplexities of such a situation there should be a solid foundation to ensure domestic comfort _ a man would be very apt to feel cross towards those who gave him so much additional anxiety and as Jonan. found the loss of his picture so fatal to his love, what a desperate dilemma he would have been in with a wife who made so so [slight] an impression. Mr. & Mrs. Fisher embarked from Pittsburgh the beginning of the month.

Our brothers write to you so frequently that I suppose you a pretty well informed

of every thing passing here, and few things occur in our domestic circle, we have generally enjoyed very good health, last week we were distressed by an indisposition of Rosa Hays' from which however she has almost recovered _ she had an attack very similar to Maria's. but the vigorous remedies applied by Dr. Chapman have been successful & I hope in a day or two she will be able to resume her studies without further detriment either in health or appearance, she has not suffered in the least from the disease, tho' some thing from its remedies. all the rest of the children are well _ you will scarcely know little Sarah again she is so grown, and as she is very accomplished in the tricks of her age. you will consider her wonderful as the rest of her Uncles do. Miriam last week got another prize at school for improvement in french. they are all pursuing with great attention their studies, Miriam is very anxious for the arrival of your letter. they all send a great deal of love to you.

Our friend Mrs. Meredith has added another daughter to her ample family I saw her a few days ago, and received a message of affectionate remembrance for you. Your alarm respecting Harry W. & Julia is premature nothing has transpired in their case yet. but the Dr. has succeeded in winning a rich prize, in [the?] smiles of Ann Ridgway. they have been the amusement of Tea parties for some time _ exclusive attentions in public, was the trial this lady deemed necessary. and the poor Dr. so often a candidate before to the fair expectants of wealth, was a mark for the witty & the sarcastic but his doubts are at an end. they are engaged. visits of form exchanged between the families and every thing settled. Miss Griffith has canceled an engagement that was talked of when you went away. which is no doubt agreeable to her quondam admirer Saml. R. as her delinquency in this instance takes away in the opinion of many the censure due to him on a former occasion - tho' it is very probable were the truth known, her first disappointment may be the hidden cause of this indecision _ there is some truth in the song "For once when love's betrayed, the heart can bloom more"

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and the influence of friends is sometimes improperly used, to induce girls to forget disappointment, and by hurrying them into a new engagement urge them to take revenge on their own hearts and become victims to the fault of another.

Two of your old friends are on the list of matrimonial candidates I hear but as I have no other authority than the chit chat of morning visitors, do not require you to place confidence in it. Logan, & one of the Keppels _ C. Norris & Miss Clapier. J. Norris has been the [devotee] of Caroline Sims, but he is not in the way of promotion - the affairs of Gallantry has not [thriven] this winter, it has been a dull season in the fashionable world, the weather was so fine during the months of January, February that walking was more agreeable than dancing. and the evening appointed for the last Cotillion party the Masonic Hall took fire and was entirely destroyed. we were in some peril, but thank God was preserved, and no other building was injured. the Girls were dressed for the Ball _ indeed some ladies had already arrived in the room when the fire was discovered. You may imagine what a right of consternation it was here _ those who watched the progress of the destroying element say it exhibited a most beautiful spectacle _ the most splendid part of it involved too much anxiety to be enjoyed by us. the falling of the cupola, on which the fate of our house depended and we

were told it would most probably crush our back buildings but it happened otherwise (do not think I attribute it to chance) it fell in, on its [own roof and] the lodge alone was consumed. "He who walketh in the whirlwind [directs the ...] [has an eye to] the small concerns of human destiny [and even ...] to avert this evil also. Logan & J. Biddle and many others [were here to ...] [...] the danger. seeing pretty soon that we should escape, we set [about] making those comfortable to whose exertions we were indebted, and had the house open all night to give refreshments to the fire men. many a merry fellow, whose loquacity was assisted by a dram, made enquiries for you _ some of the Niagaras I suppose, or your old soldiers who thought to fare better by naming you as their acquaintance _

Jo has just returned from Mrs. Bartleys recitations. you have seen her name in the papers I suppose a Theatrical phenomanon, who has been treating our cities. she came highly recommended and has redeemed her pledges.

Charles Nicholas has broke up housekeeping. Ann goes to spend the summer at the Lake with her brother in law, the loss of his mothers assistance has reduced their income, and motives of economy induce this arrangement.

Ellen is reading aloud, to amuse Jo, who is puffing his last segar the rest of our brothers have gone to bed. I do not know that I could offer any thing to amuse you, but the medley of Ellen's book with what I have to say. will surely prove tiresome to you. so good night my dear Ben, may the Lord bless & preserve thee _ and all good [end of page]

journey with you, whither so ever you go. our sisters. Nieces. Aunt Bell and our brothers. all send best love to you. I hope you will be at Lexington on Passover. we shall pray for you. believe me with the utmost affection your sincerely
attached Sister. RG.

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[Endorsement:]
R G.
March 24