

**Rebecca Gratz to Benjamin Gratz**

**February 27, 1825**

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I scarcely know how to regret the defection our brothers  
My dear Ben, since it has procured me the happiness of receiving  
a letter from you \_ I have nevertheless chid them for their neglect \_ and  
as speedily as possible sit down to remove the evil of which you com-  
-plain but I confess now the pen is in my hand \_ I am at a loss where to  
begin. my heart & eyes overflow at the idea of the long long separation from  
my beloved brother \_ and a family record would be too full of feelings  
which have a home in every breast but may not be uttered without  
realizing what Byron says of "the mirror which [Affliction] dashes to the  
ground, and looking down on the fragments \_ sees its reflections multiplied" \_

I am not disposed tho' to indulge such sad thoughts in return for  
the grateful pleasure your letter afforded. least I should "weary you  
in well doing" \_ and deprive myself of the advantage of hearing again  
particularly as you mention your dear Maria is not well. and I shall  
anxiously desire to hear of her recovery.

I am surprised to find you have had no account of the  
consecration except from the news paper. as it was a subject engaging  
universal attention, the article you mention was written by your old  
friend Thos Wharton who was a spectator on the occasion \_ I have never  
witnessed a more solemn or impressive ceremony or one more calculated  
to elevate the mind to religious exercises \_ the shool is one of the most  
beautiful specimens of ancient Architecture in the city, and finished  
in [the] [Stricklands] best manner \_ the decorations are neat yet rich  
and tasteful \_ and the service commencing just before the Sabbath  
was performed by lamp light \_ Mr. Keys was assisted in the service  
by the Hazan from New York Mr. Piexiotto, a venerable learned & pious man  
who gave great effect to the solemnity the doors being opened by  
our Brother Simon and the blessing pronounced at the entrance \_ the  
procession entered [with] the two Reverends in their robes. followed by  
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nine copies of the sacred rolls. they advanced slowly to the Tabah whilst  
a choir of five voices chanted the appointed psalms most delightfully  
when the new Hazan had been inducted into his office and [took] his  
place at the desk \_ Mr. P. in a slow and solemn manner proceeded the Sephers  
in their circuits round the area of the building between the desk and  
the ark \_ whilst such strains of sacred songs were chanted as might  
truly be said to have inspiration in them \_ between each circuit, the  
prayers appointed (as you will see in the book our brother sent you,) to be  
performed by the Hazan & congregation were finely said. and among the  
most affecting parts of the service \_ Mr. Keys' [has] in a fine full tone \_ and

the responses by Mr. Piexiotto in a voice tremulous from agitation and deep feeling \_ I have no hope of conveying by description any idea of this ceremony \_ you must have seen the whole spectacle \_ the beautiful ark thrown wide open to receive the sacred deposit, with its rich crimson [curtains] fringed with gold \_ the perpetual lamp suspended in front with its little constant light. like a watchman at his post \_ and the humble yet dignified figure of the venerable Mr. P. as he conducted the procession in its seven circuits and then deposited the laws \_! after which Mr. Keys recited with an effect almost amounting to eloquence that impressive prayer of King Solomon \_ the whole Audience were most profoundly attentive \_ and tho' few were so happy as to understand the language \_ those who did \_ say they have never heard the hebrew so well delivered as by Mr. Keys \_ the bishop expressed this opinion \_ and all who were there acknowledge there has never been such church music performed in Phila. you will wonder where "these sweet singers of Israel" were collected from \_ the leader \_ teacher and principal performer is Jacob Seixas \_ and his female [first] voice his sister Miriam, they were fortunately on a visit to [their] sister Mrs. Phillips and induced a class to practice for some weeks \_ Miriam & Becky Moses contributed very considerably and all in the congregation who Mr. S. found teachable assisted \_ he is now resident here, and we hope by his assistance to keep up a very respectable class of singers in the synagogue \_ the service continues [end of page]

to be finely performed and the congregation behave with the utmost decorum and propriety during the service \_ I scarcely know how to answer your questions respecting Mr. Keys \_ I do not believe he is a learned man \_ nor indeed a very sensible one \_ but he is a good hebrew scholar \_ an excellent reader, and a good man, he is more over very popular with the congregation, and reads the prayers in such a manner as to make his hearers feel that he understands and is impressed with their solemnity \_ perhaps his usefulness is not lessened by his diffidence \_ he is modest and unassuming, which suits the proud, the ignorant & the presumptuous \_ these require most reformation and he is so respectable on the Tabah that he gives general satisfaction \_ Mr. P. is such a man as you describe \_ he was a merchant before the death of Mr. Seixas, but has since his clerical appointment studied and become as learned as he is intelligent \_ Mr. K has had a congregation who only required him to perform his short duties \_ now he is among more intelligent people he too will feel the necessity of study \_ he has a wife & three clever children, and when he gets over his west Indian indolence he will shew what he can become \_ one very important talent he certainly possess \_ he is a good hebrew teacher \_ yesterday one of his pupils read a barmitsvah portion very handsomely although he had only a few weeks instruction \_ our brothers have all become very attentive to shool matters Hyman is Gaboy \_ and they rarely omit attending worship \_ we all go on Friday evening as well as Saturday morning \_ and the gallery is as well filled as the other portion of the house \_ I continually think of you my dear Brother when I enter that temple \_ and pray that I may see you again worship

-ing within its walls \_ I know your faith is unchangable and will endure even tho' you are alone \_ in a land of strangers \_ May God be merciful to us all and keep us stedfast to our duties \_ I love your dear Maria, and admire the forbearance which leaves unmolested the religious opinions she knows are sacred in your estimation \_ may you both continue to worship according to the dictates of conscience and your orisons be equally acceptable at the throne of Grace. I should indeed be happy my dear Ben, to witness your domestic comforts \_ and to embrace your lovely boys \_ but no hope can brighten my wishes for such an event. whilst you reside in Kentucky \_ now I cannot expect to journey so far from home \_ not that I should [...?] the way to long  
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for the privilege of claiming a seat by your fire side \_ but my sweet children here are too precious a charge to lose sight of \_ and I hope you will bring your family to us, which can be so much more easily accomplished \_ our Sister Etting is a -gain in town and Isabella well enough to be constantly in the parlour \_ but she is dreadfully swollen. and I fear her disease is dropsical \_ she does not suffer and the swelling does not encrease \_ still it is a melancholy result after all she has endured \_ Gratz is in town, and in good health \_ Richeas family quite well and very charming \_ Rosa & Sarah Ann are both very pretty & very agreeable girls & greatly admired \_ your friend James Biddle is to be married next month \_ and report says Gertrude Meredith is engaged to Musgrave but I have not heard so from her mother \_ Mrs. M. is a good deal changed in her appearance but her vivacity and agreeable qualities remain. she is in no danger of forgetting you \_ she loves us all \_ and you among the best \_ I wish I had something to tell that would make my letter agreeable to you \_ but I see so little of what is going on in the world \_ out of our own family that perhaps at the distance of 700 miles you may know as much of your Phila. acquaintances as I do \_ Logan I sometimes see sauntering about the streets but he has lost all interest in my eyes \_ he is unambitious of employing his advantages \_ and looks like an idler \_ recent accounts have been recieved from John Biddle \_ he is rather better and was just setting out for Rome. his recovery is still very doubtful \_ I suppose you have been much interested in the presidential election, and tho' Adams has not been your candidate, you must be satisfied since Mr. Clay has resigned to him his pretentions \_ Maria has no doubt been indignant at the treatment of Mr. C\_ received from the Pennsilvanian, and indeed so were we here \_ and moreover not a little scandalized that our state should have sent such a mean spirited fellow as Kremer to represent us \_

all here My dear brother send most cordial and affectionate salutations to you and our dear Maria, and embraces to your darling boys I hope little Henry Howard is perfectly recovered before this \_ Horace is delighted with the new name of his little cousin \_ but he still cherishes his first predilection for "little Ben Gratz" whom his uncles have talked so much of \_ I have not seen Aunt Belle to deliver your message, but I know it will gratify her much \_ she retains her health & good looks \_ God Bless you & yours my beloved Brother \_ accept again my thanks for your letter \_ and believe me always your attached Sister RG \_