

Rebecca Gratz to Benjamin Gratz

November 12, [1850]

Philadelphia Novr. 12th.

I was truly delighted My dearest Ben to receive your letter, giving so agreeable an account of all your dear family and bringing you all before me, just as I wish to see you, each pursuing your habitual occupations, and enjoying the blessings of providence, in this delightful season. it is pleasant to look back on the past summer, when you were with us. you are indeed unchanged My dear Brother in the fresh & glowing attachments of your youth _ and it is a happiness to feel that they are met with corresponding love _ it is not often that so large a family grow old with so few losses _ and in all respects [having] so much cause to render thanksgiving to almighty God for manifold blessings _ I hope we [are] properly grateful _ my present trouble is a recurrence of our brother Jac's malady _ he has been quite sick _ was a good deal absent from home in Sept & the beginning of Oct _ on his return about three weeks ago he had chills _ which was the commencement of his sickness _ this has left him in great depression of spirits _ very similar to those nervous spells you have seen him under _ I hope however they will soon pass away.

I am glad our dear Cary has taken so wise a step to recover from his first disappointment
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he is at the age of sentiment _ but too young to despair and perhaps had he succeeded, he would not have been happier in five years to come as he will be, with the experience he will obtain during that period _ maturer judgment so often frowns on our early fancies _ Bernard is of a more proper age _ and if the young lady has not grown vain by her frequent conquests she may be favorable to his suit, and I believe her parents think very highly of our dear Bernard _ but Hyman has great sagacity in such matters and has been so well acquainted with the

Humphrey's that his brother may do well by taking a hint from his opinion _ tell Hyman that Abraham Minis is engaged to Lavinia Florance and that both families are well pleased with the match _ I am very glad you were so satisfied with our dear Mary's prospects and liked her husband so well, I believe she is very happy and that Mr. Riggs is devoted to her, I had a letter from him, yesterday giving excellent accounts of her & their Child, he is named Boswell _ Mr. R determining to perpetuate the name by this affectionate compliment to his wife. My friend Julia will not be in town until December, I shall be glad to have her _ but I have learned to live alone, or rather to do without a female in-mate _ I have been very fortunate in so long possessing the companionship of loving & affectionate children _ many mothers might have envied [end of page]

me _ and still I occasionally enjoy their society _ Julia will I hope always spend the winter with me, but as long as her brother stays in the mountains she will continue with him _ his wife is very fond of her _

I heard yesterday that the husband of one of Ann Nicholas's daughters (Dr. Malony) was going to congress from Illinois _ if his wife accompanies him, it may lead to a renewed intercourse in her fathers family as since the death of the parents Saml. Nicholas seems to be interested in the children. our sister's & their families are very well, and send most affectionate remembrances _ they all talk with so much pleasure of Ann the dear little girls & your self that it was really worth all the trouble you took in bringing them here _ to have left such a lively interest in the home circle of your own family. I do not know which of the little ladies we all love best _ indeed their beautiful conduct, good manners and endearing qualities are a never failing source of commendation _ & their little cousins talk as much of them as if their opinions, as well as their love was a matter of consequence _ Sally Hays has recovered her health _ but Philippa is very delicate _ they expect their Sister Fanny this week from Savannah _ Rebecca went home with her brother _ I thank my friends Mrs. Vertner & Miss Sidney for their kind enquiries _ please present my regards to them & Mrs. Bruce & her daughters, I think on a great deal of kindness I received in Lexington with great pleasure _ give my love to the MacAlesters, Mrs.

Slaters health is too feeble to see any but her most intimate friends. indeed I hear she only leaves her room, in the evening _ Tell Ann I wish she could have heard Dr. Raphall's lectures on the post biblical history of the Jews they are so very interesting _ so eloquent & so instructive, they are attended by a very intelligent class of the community _ the last one will perhaps bring a larger audience, as people want to hear what he has to say of the present race
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one would scarcely expect to find a family so hard & cold hearted, as the Wickliffs in a country where nature is supposed to prevail over fashion and the distractions of rank _ and where humanity is so generally extended to foreigners & strangers _ poor Mrs. W if she loved her husband must feel cruelly the want of sympathy in his family _ I hope the good people of Lexington are more kind to her, than her kinsfolk _ the old Duke, must beware of the example of King Lear, and not give his daughters all _ while he is liable to the elements.

give my love to Ann, and tell her she is a letter in my debt _ and that she need not fear to fill a page or two with the prattle of my pets
The old Earl of Balcarres, wrote that people were very apt to leave their Portraits to their descendants showing their features & statues _ but he thought it more satisfactory to leave the picture of the Mind. and if the habit of putting down every days thoughts & incidents, there were few lives so barren but would afford something to add to the stock of human Knowledge, and to be useful to their posterity _ we are much obliged to him & his children for a most agreeable book (The lives of the Lindsays) for following out this plan _ now your dear Children will be so grown before I see them again, that I want to keep up my acquaintance with them uninterruptedly _ Miriam will soon become a fine study _ & sweet little Anne with her ardent & bright mind must not be lost sight of _ I love them both dearly _ give My dear love to all your Sons _ My beloved Brother and believe me fondly your [Affectionate]

RGratz

our Sisters & brothers send their true love _

[Editors' Note: The year of this letter is based on the birth date of Boswell Riggs in 1850.]

