

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz

July 10, 1820

July 10th. 1820 _

You anticipated not hearing from me for a month, My dear Maria, and I have just realized your expectation, strange, that you should have decided more correctly than I, when I was to be the actor. on receiving your letter, my first impulse was to answer it _ and I determined to shew you how grateful I am for your affection _ and how generously I accept your apologies, and forgive all the omissions of which you so candidly accuse your self, taking care at the same time to convince you I set a due value on our epistles and am exceeding happy to receive them _ but first impulses however strong are often obliged to be relinquished _ and this was the fate of mine in relation to your letter _ one circumstance or other intervened on the mail-day _ either company interrupted me, currant jelly was to be made, or a piece of work must be finished _ then a warm languid day was too [stupifying] for such good company. and thus your favor grew old ere I have told you it is cherished by sisterly affection _

before your faint denial of a certain promised blessing. I had set the girls at work _ frocks & caps are accordingly under the ornamenting needle. and if you do not forbid it, I shall proceed to prepare shirts & cambrick caps for common use _ I am just finishing a set for Rachel. and tho' she assures me, you would infinitely prefer something pretty, to these things necessary, I have determined other wise _ leaving to your younger friends, and your own taste to decorate for gala occasions.

I find the general impression is so strong here to blame you for not paying the hoped & wished for visit to phila. this autumn, that it is in
[end of page]

vain to speak of your Husband's business, so my dear Sister we will not enter on the discussion, but, happy in the kind wishes you express to gratify us when you can. we shall wait your own time _ and trust you will bring such an apology as will not only satisfy but make you entitled to a double welcome _

Mrs. Dr. Caldwell told me on Saturday that they should next week commence their journey westward. she goes determined to be pleased with Lexington. and appears really to feel so much interested in every thing beyond the mountains that I have no doubt she will do her best to deserve the hospitality for which she is a candidate. and I cannot help wishing she may succeed in making herself agreeable. There is scarcely any thing more likely to entrap the vanity of an ordinary mind, than the literary pretensions of one so nearly allied as a husband. had Mrs. C. possessed more judgment & discrimination than the Dr. she might have been less dazzled by his hyperbole. and only given him credit for his solid acquirements _

but who will censure sincere praise, directed to one, who it is both duty and affection to admire. even tho' another cannot subscribe to it?

I know a very sensible woman, whose son is an absolute coxcomb in every thing that relates to letters _ he is a poet without genius _ an essayest without originality and a meagre compiler of uninteresting anecdotes. yet to hear her speak of his literary labours, you would take him for an unrivaled & successful Author _ so blind is judgment when directed by maternal partiality.

By this time our friend Col. Morrison has returned home, you must tell him he is remembered here with very great affection. which often shews itself in Ellen & [me?], by long conversations on his agreeable talents at [narrating?] [of] interesting circumstances in which his youth engaged _ I suppose Maria you have heard him speak of hair breadth ['scapes] and Indian war-fare, or if not him, other worthies who may now look back with equal complaisancy on the early days of Kentucky
[end of page]

and its first settlers _ I wish we had a [Walter] Scott to immortalize America _ I have no doubt he would be able to draw as true and as delightful a set of characters on this side the Atlantic as any celtic or norman among them _ have you had the Monastery? this ranks a few pegs lower than Ivanhoe. but is still beyond the reach of any other writer. so say our critics. and for my own part tho' my affections are not so much engaged in the characters I am not willing to admit that the Authors pen has lost any of its fascination _ Tell My dear Ben he must not think me selfish or [unreasonable] notwithstanding my last letter. did he tell you Maria, that I insisted on his writing to me sometimes with his own hand, and [tho'] I prize your letters as the apple of my eye _ and am as proud of them, as he would be _ have said they shall not be [sub?] -stitute for his, always _ not my dear that I would debar you [...] pleasure a dutiful wife may feel in saving him some labour. but My sister all I receive from you, are yours. and are credited as such. he must delight my heart too, when he can conveniently. as he has always been the very Benjamin of his fathers house _

give my love to your Mother and our Brother Hyman if he is again in Lexington. tell him all are well at home. and the city healthy. but exceedingly warm & dry. we have had no rain for a fortnight _ I have no news for him, Jac writes so constantly to Ben that I cannot even tell of an engagement that has been a [threes] days wonder here _ so he will find nothing new when he arrives. altho the club is broken up. and [Jack] goes to bed at ten oClock o'nights. Jo is from home for a fortnight. in the interior of this state _ and all the rest of your brothers & Sisters salute you with affection _ God Bless you My dear Maria, let me hear from you soon. and believe me with sincerest wishes for your happiness your

affectionate RG _
Ellens love to you & her uncles _

[Address:]
Mrs. Benjamin Gratz
Lexington Kentucky