

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz

August 17, 1820

My dear Maria,

By letters from our brothers you are informed that Rachel is happily over her troubles and is rejoicing in the acquisition of another son _ she is in fine health and really looks beautifully proud of her numerous treasures, and they do her both credit & honor _ for they are really good, as well as lovely children, I have seen her almost every day since her confinement and should have lost the opportunity of now addressing you had not a very timely rain disappointed me of an engagement to pass the afternoon with her, but as I am to have the honor of being God-mother to-morrow I gladly relinquish this days visit for the pleasure of answering your letter _

In the very first place I beg leave to differ from you, my dear sister in regard to the superior advantage of cultivating an acquaintance by letter, rather than by conversation – tho' I admit we may confer as familiarly on paper, and perhaps even express our feelings more freely on some subjects _ yet the pleasure of looking into each others eyes, and reading that untranslatable language of the soul which can only be conveyed thro' them is more than an equivalent for the finest epistle _ I am not however so [forward] a child, as to disparage the good within my [power], because there might be a greater _ and except the charm of your quick bright glances _ have no second choice above your letters, which are so easy and characteristic, that they [end of page]

bring you before “my minds eye.” and are ever welcome visitors indeed I am very glad, you were prevented coming here this summer for we are threatened with the Yellow fever _ several persons have already died within the last week & considerable alarm exists among the citizens _ the board of health have reported to-day and promise a daily bulletin, the infection is confined to the street facing the Delaware on the east of the city and several squares are fenced up to prevent communication _ These vigorous measures will I trust arrest the disease _ we do not consider ourselves in any danger at present in any part of the city and as dull times have long weaned our merchants from their shipping I feel much easier on our Brothers accounts than on any previous occasion. Jac & Simon will soon be all who are left at home as Jo will be going on his travels as soon as Simon returns from the springs _

I really think you Kentuckians treat poor Dr. C. unjustly. you are duped by the same personage and because he, good easy man,

goes further to promote the advancement of the college, and takes a smooth tongued clerk, for a great speculator _ you turn the laugh upon him _ then how ungrateful to Mrs. C. who exasperates herself to patronize all your citizen shop-keepers when they come to Phila. and smuggles them to tea parties just to show how many luxuries she abandons here _ while she triumphs in her address & self complaisancy. her protégée turns the laugh on her _ I hope you will not kill them out right with mortification & disappointment.

You must make the Lady one of your prettiest curtsies and make her forget my remissness in not paying her the compliment of a parting visit (it would have been the first one) for her polite offer of taking any thing I might wish to send _

We have had exceedingly hot weather for some time, and you know
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needles become very dull at such times. Ellens frock will be very pretty _ and she takes great pleasure in working it _ but she has a sweet young friend, who takes up much of her time _ a Young invalid under the care of Dr. Physick, she lives near us, and is so solitary and interesting that your heart would yearn towards her as mine does. her disease is on the right hand occasioned by an accident which deprives her of its use _ I have rarely seen more softness and sensibility connected with a vigorous mind & lively imagination than is combined in Ann Lee _ she is the darling of a widowed mother & the pride of her brother. they have been three months in attendance here _ and until within a few days had scarcely a hope of her restoration to the use of her hand _ she has wept more tears of apprehension than of pain _ poor girl; the idea of amputation is more terrible to her than that of death _ she is just entering life and is formed to enjoy in an exquisite degree its pl[.] & partake its pains _ Ellens society is her [chiefest] de[...] _ they walk together early every morning for the benefit of her health _ and the rest of the day scarcely finds them sundered _ but you will say, what is all this to me? nothing, my dear, save a little depression from Ellen's frock _ but you shall have the sequel by & bye _ tell my dear Brother Ben, how fondly I love him, and if he does not care to have this repeated, because he knows it already, tell him it is my delight to think of him, and in doing so I cannot but renew expressions of affection, to our dear Hyman also give my tendered love _ I hope we shall see him early in the autumn _ we shall send newspapers _ that you may know the situation of the city from time to time _ be ye of good cheer, the arm of providence is our shield thro' every danger, "the pestilence that stalketh at mid-day shall not come nigh us, if He who gave us life shall will its preservation _ adieu my sweet Maria, may
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you & all you love be happy. and deserve while you enjoy
the choicest blessing of almighty God _ [believe] me ever
truly and affectionately your RG _ all our sisters and
nieces desire their best love_ G. Etting has just returned to Bellfonte

Augt. 1[7]th 1820.

[Address:]

Mrs. Benjamin Gratz
Lexington, Kentucky