

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz

March 28, 1824

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Truly My dear Sister, the arrival of a letter from you is a circumstance of great joy and triumph in your circle of Philadelphia friends. and is perused & re-perused with so much interest by all the females of the family (as they chance to visit me after I become possessed of the treasure) that I think could you witness its reception you would in future be ashamed to offer such disqualifying apologies lest you might impugn our judgement in those matters. Your last had many provokitives to an early reply. and I should not have left it so long ere I urged you to change your resolution of stay-ing at home with your boys when our beloved Ben makes his promised visit _ but that I have been much and anx-iously engaged by the indisposition of our dear little children Horace had a distressing bleeding at his nose for a whole week after he recovered from the Measles. which reduced him very much. and alarmed me more than his sickness _ but thank God he is well again. and excepting the remains of a blister on Becky's neck we have discarded all badges of disease and have returned once more to the parlour in full assembly _ I cannot accept your ~~[terms]~~ reason my dear Maria [for] depriving us of the anti-cipated pleasure of seeing you and your darlings _ that your Boys are bad you did not intend I should believe and if they were. I should urge their coming _ as it is generally supposed travelling improves the manners of youth _ now as people [who] are provided with two reasons are apt to give the best first if they do not chuse to put first all their strength I must suppose the one you have withheld is not more difficult to [end of page]

remove than the first _ and therefore I do hope you will think better of it, and accompany your husband. bringing your whole stock of happiness along _ I know [your] [would] rather [cross] the mountains than be separated from your Ben _ and he would be but half content in coming to his ancient home leaving his most precious gifts behind _

I suppose you have heard through our Brothers of the improvement lately taken place in Isabella Ettings health _ her spasms have nearly left her _ her sight returned and of course her spirits & the hopes of her Mother revived _ it were impossible to [describe] the state of sufferings she endured for 5 months without relief or intermission and the change appears almost as extraordinary _ her physicians

had perhaps less hopes of her than her family _ for we depended a little on their skill _ and they knew of no remedy to apply likely to afford relief _ she is still confined to her bed and very much [swollen] but He who has preserved her life thus far and vouch safed to restore her to the light of heaven in his own time may complete her care _ You ask if I feel no apprehensions about the Small-pox in the beginning of the winter, there was great alarm, on that subject & on the opinion of Dr. Physick I had all our dear ones, vaccinated lest they might not have had the right protection against that disease _ Dr. Hays performed this operation rather in conformity to our wishes than from an idea of necessity _ however in one instance Miriam it was essential as she took the genuine disease _ the rest had sore arms _ but none of them have had the Varioloid. and we have heard of no fatal consequence arising from it where the vaccine was pursued poor people & blacks who had neglected it were the principal sufferers I believe I mentioned that I. Hays had found the scab. he took from Gratz's arm labell'd and pronounces him to have had the genuine so you may be easy on his account. Mrs. John Cox's children had the varioloid, but she considered it a trifling disease _ I am thus particular, as I find the Small pox is travelling Westward and may soon reach Lexington _ it is disappearing here _ & is said never to last [end of page]

longer as an epidemick than three months _ I should say indeed to those who viewed only the dark side of destiny that children were too intensely interesting to be blessings _ but the care of them is mingled with so many endearing and [sweet] responsibilities, that I do not wonder they were by the pious patriarchs considered as the Treasures & blessings by which God rewarded his faithful servants. and what earthly possession My dear Sister is held on more secure terms _ are not all we love equally liable to be taken from us? and if we are not parents, have we not our hearts [held] by other relations as strongly as the nature of our affections can endure; and when these ties are severed do we not suffer as keenly. as if we had lost our [children]? [...] is but learning to submit our selves to the will [...] remember that all we have, are the gifts of His bounty _ [and?] that according to their greatness & value. are our obligation to love & cherish them _ to use them wisely _ and when they are withdrawn. to remember by whom we are afflicted _ These bereavements My dear Maria, have been so often repeated _ that I sometimes look back on the days of my fullness _ with wonder & gratitude _ retrace the Years which have taken one after another of my beloved companions _ my revered parents _ and most [cherished] sisters & friends. and feel how wonderfully the goodness [and] Mercy of God accompanies his judgments _ in leaving me so much to love. sustaining me to endure _ and directing me to objects who still make life with all its crosses so valuable

-able to me _ but I forbear _ I fear to lift the veil which
hides the griefs of my heart. and [seek] to dwell only on
the blessings which my beloved Brothers & Sisters _ and their
precious offsprings encircle me with _ sorrow makes us egotists
Maria as well as happiness _ Adieu embrace My beloved Brothers
& nephews for me. and assure yourself of the affection of your sisters
heart. My sweet Maria _ ever your attached RG _
[end of page]

PS.

your friend Henry Sergeant has finished his pilgrimage
this afternoon he was consigned to his mother earth _ after an
illness of a fortnight _ he met with an accident some time
ago which confined him by a lame foot _ but was not consid-
-ered to be severely hurt _ his death was occasioned by bilious
fever

The Girls all send their best love to You & Uncle Ben _ Ellen & Maria Hays
Miriam Moses & Sally Cohen all talk of writing to you _ but they take into
calculation your tardiness _ and will probably not execute their design till
a noble moment of disinterested generosity brings them to the resolution
of doing so without hope of return _ they are all anxious to hear what
untold reason is to be assigned for your threat of disappointing us all
pray dear Sister reconsider that matter _ Adieu _

[Address:]

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