

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz

June 18, 1824

June 18th. 1824 _

I suspected from your former letter My dear Sister, that you had more weighty reason's for not coming to see us, than those expressed and was not disappointed that my Brother declined your generous proposal [in] his favor _ indeed, greatly as we desire to behold his beloved face again. we would not accept of such a sacrifice. we hope to see his brow unclouded by care & anxiety _ which could not be if he left his wife and [bairns] behind _ he will require such a solace as their presence when he finds him self at home and the dear one missing whose smile was the brightest and whose heart the most glowing with love & joy of any he left. when he sees all her bereaved little ones _ and the traces of sorrow which time cannot efface _ he will [turn to] his own sweet treasures for sympathy & consolation _ You must tarry a little while for strength and then bear him company _ I trust the hour you dread will be happily gotten over, and rewarded like your former ones by maternal triumphs, it is natural to tremble at the approach of pain & danger. but the eye of faith can look steadily on, knowing that the hand of God leads safely through every peril it is his will we should surmount. and seeing in our own & others destiny how rarely the final messenger is perceived on his approach. The experience of a single year would be sufficient to teach us wisdom, did we know how to apply it _ we see the young & the healthful cut down in the fulness of joy _ and in the midst of their days _ while the emaciated _ and the hoary headed continue their course without danger tho' apparently drawing hourly [to] an end _ Isabella Etting is indeed a most striking instance. and a Young Lady in our street named [end of page]

Frazer still more afflicted of a similar disease excites our wonder and compassion _ she has been four Years an invalid. and frequently has suffered all the extremes we witnessed in Isabella last winter _ but this is an unkind letter to one, who needs comfort _ and would be cheered, rather than admonished _ sometimes my dear Sister we are amazed by ill-timed gravity, & grow melancholy [at] at found mirth _ I hope such a contrariety will be produced by this letter _ since receiving yours I have wished to write and cheat you out of your sadness _ but I no sooner seated my self at my desk than so many tender regrets came over my heart that my eyes overflowed unbidden _ and I could not discourse of indifferent things _ there is something so soft _ so heart-subduing so exquisitely dear to me

in the name of Sister, that I could not read your address without emotion. it conjured up the shades of so many happy years spent in such society _ do you think my dear Maria, this kind of witchcraft could have been included, in the divine prohibition? if so, I fear I am more guilty than Saul _ or the woman of Endor _ and verily I have my punishment _ when that which has passed away. returns to consume the present _ I must think of this, the idea never occurred to me before. and I have used this faculty as a connecting link between the present & the future _ it is a strange association, but seems to justify our hopes that it may be preserved thro' eternity and will enable us to recognize in the world of spirits. the individuals we have loved and honored on earth.

The accounts you give of your dear little boys interest me greatly. my sweet Horace, seems to think he & Gratz are to be fast friends & companions. he continually talks of what they shall do together. he expects to move in quite another element and will bathe & swim when "little Ben Gratz" comes _ he has kept a little piece of money for a long time. and when asked what he means to do with it _ [says] it is to buy for Gratz _ whatever he happens to like best at the time _ it has of course bought more [end of page]

ever the like sum produced before _ tops & balls, new hats and books & watches _ but still it is in his purse till "little Ben Gratz" comes and walks down street with him _ our Brother Jac is at Bellefonte. or perhaps by this time in the woods _ clearing off some of your husbands property _ I do not mean cutting down _ but selling to those who will improve _ he writes in pretty good spirits of his prospects. but in such cases the "end is not always better than the beginning _ G. Etting is with him, perfectly recovered and pursuing his business with former energy & activity _ Horatio has turned [manufacturer]. he is in a cotton factory on the Schuylkill about 6 miles from town _ Ben & Edward are at sea _ Henry & the girls only at home _ our Sisters Etting & Hays, are both very thin but enjoy health _ Ellen frequently talks of writing to you, and all the girls send a great deal of love _ I do not know that I can tell you any thing, that you care to hear _ the newspapers tell of all the marriages & [Deaths?] among our Brother's acquaintances and indeed that is [the?] only source of information I have of the world _ tell him his friend Lynford Lardner has got a very pretty wife _ who figured a year or two in the fashionable world _ and B. McIlvaine as won the nicest little girl in society _ she is a friend & favorite of our nieces Rosa & Sarah- [&] Hays. and they have been so interested in her bridal's that tho they could not witness them, they have talked about nothing else she is to be settled in our neighbourhood _ I pray you my dearest Maria write soon again, if you have time if not, bid my

dear Brother to give us early information of your state. and tho'
any thing you bring will be truly acceptable. I cannot but think
you very proud to covet boys exclusively _ this is a slight
on our own sex. and I should were you disappointed and this
time give me nothing but a niece _ our Brothers are all well
and send their affectionate love _ give mine most fondly
to my dearest Ben. and believe me my dear Maria, you have
the tenderest love & most fervent prayers of your attached Sister

RGratz _

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Present me most affectionately to your dear Mother _ I was most gratified
by her kind remembrance _

[Address:]

Mrs. Benjamin Gratz

Lexington K.y _