

Ellen Etting Hays to Maria Gist Gratz

December 11, 1825

Philadelphia Decr. 11th. 1825.

And so my dear Maria you have determined to prove yourself worthy the name of Gratz, insomuch that even one of their lineal descendants may not dispute with you the palm of obstinacy, well, be it so. for I am so well pleased to think you one of us that I will this once yield with the best grace imaginable _ But let me tell you that I shall expect to be rewarded immediately for this piece of condescension and indeed I do not believe I should ever have overcome my diffidence about writing first had it not been for the envy I felt at Aunt Becky's receiving all your charming letters and I have started forward to claim a few without reflecting upon the temerity which would offer my scrawls as an equivalent for such treasures _ But then my dear Maria I cannot believe you less charitable than many others who receive me with kindness, and as [with] ~~me~~ it is from the fulness of the heart that the mouth speaketh you must be content with the overflowings of affection instead of the bright beamings of imagination or sparkles of wit _ Well well child (I suppose ~~you~~ will [say] explain) I am very willing to listen to what you have to say only do [end of page]

not talk [so much] about yourself. With all due deference to your wishes then dear Aunt I will endeavor to discourse of things more agreeable; but what have I to relate! nothing absolutely nothing we just get through life pretty much as when you were here; except that we have not your brightness to enliven our pathway: and the gloom of lost pleasures casts a deeper shade upon our former sorrowful feelings _ But we have grace enough to be grateful for what we have enjoyed and your visit supplies us with a thousand recollections which we love to cherish and to talk over _ Poor Uncle Jack has now no opponent at the chess board Uncle Hyman no one with whom he may indulge in reminiscences of his Western Paradise, nor Uncle Jo any political disputant; so that they have no amusements but railing at the hard times all day and playing Whist nearly all night _ Nor are they the only ones [dear] Maria who feel the loss of your society the female coterie bear witness how much they suffer from being deprived of the ready hand the kind heart and the quick wit of their former beloved associate, and all unite in the hope that it be not very long

ere she be restored to them _ My Mother desires me to mention her to you particularly and most affectionately, she is still silent and sad but makes every exertion to reconcile her griefs _ The girls of all the families are well and cheerful as usual. Miriam and Becky returned from a short visit to New York [end of page]

enchanted with all they saw and the latter does not think she can speak too loudly in its praise _ Of Aunt Becky I shall say nothing because she said if I would give her space she would speak for herself and I am by far too politick not to seize such an opportunity of obliging you; expecting you will feel doubly my debtor that I retire to give place to so much more agreeable a personage. But I will not disappear until I have asked you to make my best love acceptable to my dear Uncle Ben and to bestow ten thousand kisses among the sweet children _ How much do I wish I had my little Howard here to caress after I have told his Mother with [what] sincerity and devotion I am ever her attached Ellen

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz

December 11, 1825

Will [you?] receive in the few words I can crowd in this space [My dear?] Sister my thanks for your long & charming letter _ Ellen [has?] been so often talking of writing to you, that I would not again interfere with her to day tho strongly tempted to address you this morning after perusing your animated effusion, I am quite in love with the Kentucky reception you met on your return home _ and consider your hospitality as refined & poetical, as could be exhibited in the fanciful regions of France or Italy. where the heart & imagination are so highly cultivated; that the most beautiful productions of nature are borrowed as emblems more expressive than language to convey an interchange of sentiments.

I some time ago read a pretty little tale _ of a community where the Rose was made to convey the whole history of Love _ the enamoured youth with as much palpitation as it would cost to declare his passion _ sent to his mistress a half blown bud _ if she condescended to [wear] the flower when he made his next visit _ it was a token that she was pleased with the gift _ and was encouragement _ after an interval he presented [end of page]

a full blown rose _ [which] when worn denoted acceptance _ but I do not know whether such courtship would be satisfactory to your western damsels _ tho' they are sentimental enough to make flowers express their welcome to their friends _ pray what weed will you make emble

-matic of a Caldwell _ I am sorry you should have got such a name from Phila. it must be the climate or station they hold in Kentucky which makes them obnoxious _ here they are harmless _ we never hear the name mentioned at all _ but I hope the young offender may be reclaimed _ and that all the [...] which have injured the fame of your state _ will serve rather as beacons than examples _ embrace My beloved Brother for me, and pray

Keep me in the memory of your sweet boys _ our children never weary of talking of them _ Horace has so many recollections, that something every day awakens _ he is afraid Gratz will get the start of him, as he says two lessons a day. and Bernard he loves so dearly _ and Howard is such a sweet little fellow _ that Aunt Becky is as fond of listening as he is of talking about them _ God Bless you all My much loved friends

believe me ever most affectionately Yr RG.

tell Ben. our poor Uncle Myer Simons
was buried this afternoon _

[Address:]

Mrs. Benjamin Gratz
Lexington
Kentucky _