

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz

April 25, 1826

Your letter should not have remained unanswered a whole week My dear Maria, if it had not been the one preceeding Pass-over, when every housekeeper throughout the tribes of Israel are busily employed in the preparation for this national festival _ not that we are so much pressed for time as our ancestors were _ when they were driven out with their kneading troughs on their shoulders _ but as we put away not only the leaven _ but all utensels that have leaven in them _ there is a great shuffling & moving _ & bustle in the kitchen department, which active housekeepers & lazy servants manage to divide greatly in favor of the latter _ however, on this fourth day of the feast I am quite at liberty to engage in more agreeable occupation, and rejoice to think, while indulging myself thus. I shall gratify my beloved Ben and his “second conscience” I like your idea vastly my dear Maria, and think it might be used as a strong argument in favor, not only of the superior happiness, but the superior integrity of married people, always providing this second conscience be an approving one _ and a faithful truth loving conscience at the same time _

I have met with some however, who more resembled the lying spirit that went out of the mouths of the ~~pr~~ophets [than] and called things by such wrong names _ that it were better to have no help at all than be guided by such lights _ sometimes little things were made to appear great, and great things small. so that a poor woman misguided first by flattery till she was spoild _ and then condemned to see her “faults made greater than they were” paid dear enough for the privilege of tormenting in her [end of page]

turn _ I see no signs of alarm in Ellen at the picture you have drawn for her consideration _ but her fortitude has not yet been put to the test, and perhaps by the time she is called on to decide _ her imagination will have become so familiarized to the difficulties which she finds you encounter with so much heroism that she may be induced to fulfil her engagement in order to profit by your example _

your pretty townswoman Mrs. Caldwell is on a visit here _ and much admired _ at least I have heard much praise of her beauty but as I rarely fall in with any fashionable folks from the Southern part of our city _ shall probably only meet her in the street _ I wonder her husband should have brought her, to receive lessons of obedience and discretion from his Mother _

Hyman has been absent for a fortnight _ and will most probably be with you as soon as he can dispatch his business in Pittsburg. I am glad he has something so agreeable in view _

for I am tired of seeing such care worn, business countenances as are common among our merchants _ our brothers remind me of the alledged faculty _ snakes are said to possess of charming [birds?] &c they are continually seeking news _ which [like] the snakes charm, is usually as overwhelming _ every arrival from Europe brings something destructive to commerce & enterprise _ I hope the time will speedily come when there will be an end to these disasters _ The spring has been so cold & backward _ that it will be May before our orchards are in blossom _ we are still by the fire-side, and have scarcely a hyacinth or Tulip to adorn the gardens yet _ but we hope the fruits of Summer & Autumn will repay us for these deprivations _ thus we draw on the future _ to make up the deficiencies of the present _ and should be grateful that among the blessings of Providence this faculty has been engrafted in our natures _
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our sisters & brothers & nieces _ are all well & send embraces & salutations to you all _ the children are delighted with your messages _ Horace is very impatient to accept the boys' invitation and he has several times charged his Uncle Jac _ about Gratzs Bow & Arrows _ he sends kisses to all the boys _ his dear Aunt Maria & Uncle Ben _ Sarah is a great enthusiast _ and loves you all ardently she thanks you a thousand times for permitting her to be your nurse even in idea _ Becky is always just going to write to you _ then comes the difficulty _ "Aunt Maria writes so sweetly _ that how can I send her one of my poor letters"? Ellen will take up her own pen next week and in the mean time sends you a kiss of thanks _ Miriam jokes and laughs, with her usual cheerfulness _ and gets through the duties of a young housekeeper without permitting them to bother her much _ but I have no doubt you remember the names of all your numerous relations here, so I shall leave you to imagine what they say & do in the most characteristic manner _ only promising that [they] talk of & love you constantly _ we have all been reading [Madam] De [Genlis] memoirs up to the revolution which [is] very entertaining [...] [interesting] another series has arrived from which I expect a continuance of amusement _

did you ever read such provoking rapsodies as John Randolph regales the Senate with? will you not be glad when this long & shameful session is over? as Mr. Clay is indebted to Randolph a new garment _ instead of the flannel gown he spoild _ it would be well he gave him a strait-jacket _ and from the honorable Secretary something better might have been expected _ than that he should from his elevated station set such an example _ breaking the laws of God _ & his country _ at the time & on the spot _ where the sages of the nation were assembled for purposes of the highest importance _ O shame where is thy blush _ I beg your pardon My dear Sister, for bringing my letter to such a conclusion _ but

will stop for fear, of saying something worse _
[end of page]

embrace your four darling boys for me, and their beloved Father
too _ assure them & yourself how fondly they are cherished in the heart
of your affectionately Sister RG _
Jac's last words on going to bed were messages of love to you all dear Maria
adieu

April 25th.

[Address:]

To
Mrs. Benjamin Gratz
Lexington Ky

[Endorsement:]

Answered June 1st. 1826
Miss Gratz