

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz

July 23, 1826

I thank you My Dearest Maria, for your kind letter and hope your little boys are all much better and your anxiety and fatigue lessened The whooping cough is indeed a severe trial for such young sufferers and lasts so long that the nurse is almost as weary as the patient before it abates _ but yours is now on the decline I have never seen the sore mouths your boys suffered with accompany the disease. God Grant no ill may come near you _ and the lives & constitutions of the dear creatures be preserved _ You have heard long ere this of the tribulations & bereavement of your friends here. I should have written to you before but could not _ our poor Sister is indeed afflicted and I could not leave her during the period of Maria's illness or for some days after her death _ nor can I even now hope to send you such a letter as will afford you and My dear Ben the consolation I desire _ You witnessed last Year how hard it was for our Sister to part with her child _ then she resigned one who had been an invalid from her birth _ her youngest _ she could look back on ten years of anxiety & suffering during which no day opened on the hope of amendment _ or closed without apprehensions of what the night might bring forth _ yet she grieved too deeply _ too long _ she was regaining her cheerfulness had only within a few weeks visited at our houses (unless called by sickness) and we began to be satisfied that she would again be happy when this most severe & unlooked for sorrow overtook us _ Maria devoted her last [end of page]

Year exclusively to her Mother _ she sympathized with her _ strove to cheer her _ accompanied her abroad, or staid at home _ was ever at her side, and seemed to be most happy whilst administering to her comfort

I do not know that she had any anticipations that she was so soon to be removed from these duties _ but her sisters now recollect conversations, (which then made little impression) wherein she left charges with them _ if she should not live to complete her own plans _ _ she was gravely debilitated by the heat of the weather in June, and was very thin, then first attack by the fever of which she died _ she was the only person who thought it would terminate fatally until Dr. Chapman expressed his alarm on Thursday _ stupor & delirium held her alternately at intervals from that day _ but on Saturday morning she appeared so much better that we were all deceived she relapsed at mid-day _ and then experienced no change until her pure spirit was released from its mortal tenement _ her Mother never quitted her bed-side _ was able to perform the last duties _ to embrace the cold remains _ and give directions about the closing scene _ then

indeed she was overwhelmed _ and for many days seemed as if she could not consent to linger here _ but other trials aroused her _ Sarah & the Dr. were both indisposed _ they required some exertion and the Mother was again able to look on those that were left _ she is now perfectly composed has been once or twice in her parlour and takes an interest in her family _ but we all feel this loss as an affliction which will long envelope our family circle with sorrow & regrets _ she had qualities that were [permanently?] lovely and attached all her friends _ such uprightness of heart _ purity of mind & integrity in every action could not fail of gaining respect whilst it fixed affection _ & no one ever loved more sincerely than she did her
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family & companions _ but why should I enhance the virtues of the dear departed, only to elicit regrets that they are gone _ she was so good & pure _ that she must be happy! and since the Merciful and Almighty Creator of the universe had given us the hope of brighter regions of bliss beyond the grave we can only bewail our own bereavement _ when the good are taken away _

It is not to me, My dear Sister you need justify your creed I feel too humble on the subject of religion to judge of others _ nor can I ever enter into the views or feelings of those zealous persons whose peity lead them into uncharitableness of the opinions of others _ if god permits various modes of Worship _ why should weak mortals contend? and if He did not accept offerings from various [altars] surely he has means of rejecting them _ and would not need the aid of his creatures to do him right _ I love with all their inconvenience the laws of my forefathers _ and as they embrace all that is good & holy in religion have no wish but to fulfill them with a firm & perfect faith and to keep them in my heart _ but my zeal has never urged me to wish make one convert _ and wherever I meet with a fellow creature, whose love & fear of [God?] is [the?] [...] [of?] their life. I [reverence?] them as brethren and believe their devotion is a [...] God. as is that of Moses & the prophets _ I never had any apprehension of Mr. Hs influence over the faith of my brother. and I trust my dear Sister, when we have passed our lives in love & affection towards each other _ good-will & charitableness to all men _ that we shall be reunited in a better world, there to perfect the good gifts of which we have a foretaste here _ and as Job said, “shall we receive good from the hand of God and not receive evil also?” endeavour to fortify my mind to bear the evils which are dealt out to me _ and acknowledge the portion of Good which has blesst or shall bless my life _ we are in hopes of seeing Hyman in a few days _ poor fellow! his agreeable visit to you will have a sad termination _ he returns to a [mourning] & sorrowful family _ embrace your darling Children for me _ sweet Howard, he will require prompting to keep up his

memory of Aunt Becky but let him hear her name, and tell him often how tenderly she loved him _ My dear Gratz & Bernard must not forget me _ Horace talks of them constantly he is a great dreamer, and often pays them visits - Sarah begs I will give her love to her dear Aunt & Uncle _ and all the boys _ you do not mention your infant has [...] the whooping cough?
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All the girls with Sally Cohen at their head send messages of affection _ our Sisters too, desire me to add their love _ Isabella Etting whose swelling has entirely disappeared is constantly at Mr. Hays' _ and is able to take as much exercise as any one, she is however very thin and has an unhealthy [appearance?]

Tell my beloved Ben, I intended writing to him last week _ but as our brothers write constantly _ and I could have said nothing agreeable _ took compassion on him _ you may say all the kindest & truest things that are in affectionate thoughts where both you & he My dear Maria have a constant presence in the heart of Your Sister

RGratz

July 23rd. 1826

[Address:]

To

Mrs. Benjamin Gratz

Lexington Kentucky

[Endorsement:]

Rebecca Gratz

Answered August 1826