

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz

September 10, 1826

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You give me credit, my dear Sister for a virtue not yet called into requisition, and I shall be the more ambitious of attaining it, that I may secure your approbation. our brothers' situation (sad as the reverse must be to them) has been attended with so many alleviating circumstances that we must be the most ungrateful family in the world not to be comforted and thankful. so much confidence & moderation has been exercised, and so much sympathy expressed _ that my tears have often flowed from sensibility of generous forbearance _ but not once for change of fortune _ I need tell you of one act which penetrated us most because it was from a person whose character was before unknown to us. Mr. Elkin whom our dear Ben may remember as an emigrant from the West Indias. he married and settled in Phila where he encreases the product of his Island property by lending money on mortgages and other securities. he was a creditor of our brothers. and on the day of their failure Simon sent a message to him beging he would not be alarmed, [as] the next day he walked out to his place told him his visit was not to enquire about his property but to express his sympathy & to offer his services. that he had not much in his power. but had 3 or 4000 in bank which was at his command _ that his debt was of no consequence _ he would withdraw the note and [tear] it up [end of page]

and that he might pay when it was convenient _ if not for ten years he should not complain _ indeed it would gratify the first wish of his heart if he could redeem that beautiful spot (Willington) for him _ Poor Simon wept like a child when he related this anecdote to me _ Mr. Elkin is a Jew, when he first came here he consulted our brothers about the disposition of his affairs, and seemed much attached to Hyman, but there has never been any intimacy between them and as he [bears] the character of a man close to his interests lives retired & prudent _ tho' highly respectable. we had no idea he was so noble & generous _

what the situation of affairs are likely to turn out, I know not _ but Ben will no doubt soon be able to inform you. a proposition

has been made by our Brothers, which will probably be acceded to and when that is decided they will be able to make their arrangements _ we continue in our house until it can be sold which I hope will soon be the case for I feel impatient that some steps should be taken to release them from their [difficulties] _ their spirits & health are thank God better _ indeed they are all well _ Jac is the most depressed of all _ he has less power to resist the ills of life in what ever shape they may approach him _ and he takes the very worst method to acquire fortitude for he shuts him self up _ communes with his own gloomy thoughts and becomes _ if I were to say nervous it would offend him _ but at any rate unhappy _ I hope our dear Ben, has by this time acquired more philosophy _ we must not expect always to have the things we wish for in this world. but as you say, to make the best of what we have _ and I assure you My dear Maria I feel no apprehension that we shall ever want, what is really [end of page]

necessary _ Our Sister Hays & her family are something better they have not exerted them selves to acquire philosophy but the acuteness of their feelings are wearing off _ time will do for us. what we often fail to do for our-selves and it is well that our natures are so constituted _ Sisters fortitude is always great when she can make it useful to others _ but wanting that excitement she is too apt to neglect herself. Sister Etting unites with her in affectionate remembrance to you all _ all the girl desire their love, poor Miriam is quite impatient to have you informed that she is not only ready but weary of waiting for your letter, they are all well, and my constant companions _ we think of sending Sarah to school, which delights her _ Horace must be content another year at home but his ambition is roused by hearing [...] the little Powels go to Mr. Sanderson & are learning Latin. [embrace] your darling boys for me _ the children talk of them constantly they never see any little boy of his size, without recollecting lovely little Howard. and Horace has the utmost respect for Gratz & love for Bernard _ he seems to distinguish each by a particular kind of attachment _ Sarah loves you with all her heart. she says _ and Uncle Ben is the object of general enthusiasm. he is a kind of standard with his nieces _ and he has always been _ he knows, how dear to the rest of his family _ I wish I could write you a more entertaining letter, and would leave family affairs if I could collect more agreeable subjects _ but this is either a period of tribulation to our acquaintance, or else we have a tendency to seek out those who are in affliction for really almost all those we see or think of are in sorrow _ Poor Mrs. McIlwaine engages every ones sympathy _ She has returned to her father sadly bereaved. and is in a situation to excite great

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apprehensions in her friends _ She has one little girl not two years old _ Bloomfield McIlwaine was not only necessary to the happiness of a rising family but the principal support of his fathers _ Adieu My dear Sister _ the time will come I trust when we shall have to talk of better things _ but can never find me more
truly yours & my beloved Ben's affectionate Sister RGratz_
embrace the dear boys for me again & pray do not let them forget me _

[Address:]

To

Mrs. Benjamin Gratz

Lexington Ky

[Endorsement:]

Miss Rebecca Gratz

Answered Sept. [31]th. 1826