

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz

February 1, 1829

Feb 1st. 1829.

I was charmed My dear Sister not more by the intelligence than by the tone of your last delightful letter, and feel my confidence in your constitution restored. by the very natural cause of your late indisposition, and trust your lungs will now become as sound as your liver did on a former occasion. you are somewhat more indebted to Dr. Dudley for sending you on a pleasant tour to winter in the mild climate of N Orleans _ than to Chapman for covering your side with those bloodthirsty reptiles _ but I think with both these experiences _ the growth of your family will not in future introduce any new diseases into your system _ you are very unreasonable to complain of Hyman's age on this occasion _ he has grown so much out of the way that you will have leisure to give full attention to your first daughter and as she may be [a] born a belle with four brothers to help spoil her. I trust you will give even old fashioned attention to the care of your own health before she comes to claim her share _ I have been very much amused this morning by an old medical essay of Dr. Rush's in which he lays such stress on the powerful influence of will over the diseases of the body, that I do not wonder women so frequently long for indulgences in the restless state they are doomed for so many months to endure and that their wills _ obtain such importance in the eyes of their anxious friends _ if it had not been recently decided by the enlightened college _ that this opinion is erroneous I would just give you a hint to long for a Philadelphian. and then my dear brother would bring you here and let his native city have the honour of being hers also _ I shall certainly give Ellen a hint where to apply when her time comes to languish _ but her letters are so full of other matters now, that I do not believe she has been at all sick _ parties & balls, and preparations [end of page]

for house keeping seems to occupy her altogether and her pent up affections which during her long probation was only guessed at by the saddening effect it produced on her naturally cheerful disposition now overflows in an exuberance of happiness which causes her back full ten years in youthful pleasures and tastes _ her letters are filled with her husbands perfections. and her own grateful acknowledgment of the blessings which surround her _ she will not make us a visit before the spring _ I am delighted to hear you have your niece. A M Boswell, with you, and hope you will make her the companion of your journey when next you visit us. it is full time we should see some of your own family here _ I am sure our girls would love her dearly, and make

them selves agreeable to her. and we should certainly all try to gain her regard _ You will see my sweet little interesting friend Mrs. Erwin present My love to her dear Maria, and tell her I often think with much regard of her & desire to know that her hopes are realized and that her health is restored _

Ben Etting has not yet returned from Richmond. the sister of his mistress is to be married in a few weeks to Mr. Mayo and I suppose he will await that event, unless it should be postponed by the death of S. Myers, who is in a very precarious state of health _ poor fellow! he has been long languishing with that incurable disease “the memory of a rooted sorrow _” his life has been marked by sadness ever since the rash committal of a crime, from which there is no refuge _ and perhaps it is wise & Merciful that his life is called thus early for in the eye of heaven. it is not length of years, but sincere repentance that must expiate offences. I trust his has been accepted, and that pardon awaits him at the throne of grace _ Mr. Marxs family presents an instructive picture of human life at this moment _ one of his daughters _ attending the death bed of her husband _ another preparing for bridal festivities _ and a third in that state full of hopes & fears. which preceeds the change most important to happiness in all that is to [...] come of after life _
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I have been lately a good deal interested in quite a different scene of conjugal affairs _ a neighbour of mine had a matrimonial fracas, which producing an alarming indisposition, I sent to offer services to the invalid _ was accepted and have become quite a party in the fair sufferers cause _ It was a love match between a couple reared in the country and perhaps had not fortune played a blind vagary in their behalf. might have been as happy in obscurity as they anticipated _ but an Irish entailed Estate fell upon the head of the gentlemans father, who being very old, and he heir apparent they came up to town _ furnished a house elegantly _ the lady dressed tastefully. and they set up for the fashion _ Field sports _ dinner parties the Theatre & taverns with the dissipation of idle young men, carried benedict so continually from home _ that the lady grew jealous of her husbands company_ having no children to occupy her lonely hours. she became nervous & unreasonable _ and perhaps complained that she was not first & last in his dear thoughts _ she pouted instead of smiled, when he condescended to return after a weeks absence [_ and] solaced her solitude by bemoaning to her [female?] friends [how] much she suffered _ they echoed her wrongs _ and it became a gossip among the fire side circle of her friends _ at last a spark fell on these [combustibles?] so imprudently spread and the angry husband proposed a separation _ the wife wounded in pride & affection acceded to the proposition _ and _ then repented & has been miserable & sick ever since _ [lawyers] are engaged &

the business proceeds _ he is frolicking with his friends who strengthen his resolution, by keeping up his resentment _ and ridiculing her extactics _ she is in bed, kept under the effects of laudanum to prevent spasms. [or] fluctuating between hope & fear _ a [...] sense of having misused power when she had it. and a conviction that she has it no longer _ when it is all terminated, I will let you know the result _ and you may make it up into a novel _ with proper reflections & morals for the foolish wives & dissipated husbands of the west, if there are any such to be found _ in the mean time present me most tenderly to my Beloved brother, and accept dearest Maria, the
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best wishes and affectionate greetings of Brothers, Sisters nieces & cousins here _ Aunt Bell & Rachel were much gratified by your kind remembrance the latter is recovering. and able to walk about her room wrapped up over head & all. I could not read her what you said, as it would be reason to remind her that any body sympathized in her former misfortunes _ or remembered that she had suffered _ but she shews that they are not forgotten. and wears black for her lost lover _ let me hear from you again _ and if you tell me you are getting well _ or as well as you expect, you will most sincerely rejoice
the heart of my dear Sisters most affectionately attached RG _
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Hyman Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz and Benjamin Gratz

February 1, 1829

My dear charming you must excuse me for intruding a few words to Your Husband on this well filled sheet of Becky! before I commence saying any thing to him permit me to offer you my most lively love, & my sincere good wishes for your amended health _ The quantity of New O_ Sugar which is now here has caused the prices to get down to Y @ Y ½ cts & no sales of magnitude can be made _ the price will not improving & I advise you not to touch them at any thing beyond 5 cts for prime quality Fine tobacco promises to be a good article & if the freights continue low, I hope you will ship some on your own account to their market, flour

continues at 8 [cts?]

[Address:]

To,
Mrs. Benjamin Gratz
New Orleans

