

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz

April 18, 1832

I do not know my Dear Sister, whether to sympathize with you or rejoice _ if you are over your sickness _ let me be glad, for verily the more I have to love belonging to you the better _ and since the days of the patriarchs children have been called an inheritance of the lord _ and of all the happy families I have ever known _ those are the happiest where sisters & Brothers have dwelt together in love & society _ you & Ben agree so well in bringing them up. that you may look forward to their being a blessing to you in your old age, and so welcome, a glad welcome to all who come _ our brothers have got the very bad habit of reading your letters _ and so when I want to keep a secret, it is as certainly betrayed by my concealing your letter, as if it were open before them _ I dare say Jac will count for you from the time your last arrived, just because it was not in my basket, and I could not make it convenient to bring it down stairs, I was sorry not to let them see some of the agreeable sprightly remarks but it would not satisfy them to have parts read _ when they are used to read the whole, and [so] they must abide by the loss _ there are others tho in the family who profit by all you do _ our Dear Sarah, begins to find delight in poetry _ Byron has been her great favorite, until I shewed her what you say of the older poets _ since which I have given her selections from Pope. Milton & others _ to chastise her taste. and give her other standards of excellence _ she assisted at Mrs. Sigoignes annual concert last Thursday [end of page]

she has improved very much _ indeed plays delightfully she gained much credit from amatures & her teachers [on] this occasion her manners and mind become more womanly _ Julia Hoffman surely has been an advantage, she is highly cultivated cheerful & amiable _ and very much attached to Sarah _ she left us last week. I observe my dear Sister you mistook the object of my sending you the newspaper _ there was a [review] of Eugene Aram. I wished to shew you _ Halocks lines I did not read, but no matter I like your own criticism of the novel. tho' think it less offensive to good morals than either of Bulwers other novels _ the crime of Eugene, was followed by such signal punishment _ even from the day of its commission, (as his confession proves) that I do not think with every perfection that adorns his character, you ever feel

on easy or equal terms with him _ and would always rather the lovely Madelina should fall a sacrifice than be united to a murderer, we shall soon have Irving' & Paulding's books to send you, the Life of Gouveneur Morris is so expensive a work that I thought you might think the piece more than it is worth, tho the letters are very fine, it is probable some copies have already reached you _ if not would you be willing to risk \$7 on the chance of the library taking it? I have never said a word about going to Kentucky, my dear Sister, because the situation of Isabella is such that even if our Brothers invited me, I could not leave our Sister, in the state of anxious toil to which her days & nights are devoted _ for the last few days I have thought, her sufferings likely to be protracted _ for as you observe _ "lengthend life but added sufferings bring _" she has not spoken for more than a fortnight but her morning spasms are weaker _ she sleeps more and has grown stronger _ she communicates what she has to say by a pencil, & keeps paper under her pillow, to write on
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Gratz had a short attack _ but is well again _ Ben not yet arrived _ poor Harriet is almost weary of her long widow-hood, but she behaves with great propriety & patience _ Aunt Bell has had a fall, and is very sick in consequence, but I am not permitted to go to see her _ Sally came to see me some time ago, and I bade her tell her Mother that I meant to come during Passover to pay her a visit _ and so she might give warning to the rest of her family _ I saw she was alarmed and taking me aside, said she was afraid my feelings would be wounded if I did come and {so} she begged me not to attempt it. at the same time hoped I would not think hard of those members of the family who were not to blame _ this is the more suspecting as our brothers have been doing acts of kindness to the Cohens, and I have never come in contact with any of their [prejudices?] or ill humour _ Sister Hays & her family are quite [well?] and Ellens little girl beginning to look like other children _ but not like yours _ sweet creatures how I should like to hug them. tell Bernard he must write to me and then he can tell me all about his brothers _ I have no little children near me now _ for poor Mrs. Rutledge has sent all hers away to connecticut _ and to morrow she follows them _ I went to bid her farewell last evening _ her husbands brother, came to wind up his affairs and to take the family to Carolina _ but she could not so soon make up her mind to go, her own mother wished her to pass the summer in retirement with her, she is an invalid. and said she could not survive the separation at present

so Mrs. R acquiesced _ and will not go to charleston until
the Autumn _ he has left no property _ and she must depend
on his Mother _
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every body here My dearest Sister send you messages
of love _ say the fondest & the kindest of words to my beloved
brother to express my feelings for him. and assure yourself
that you constantly in the mind & heart of your affec
tionate Sister RGratz _

April 18th. 1832

[Address:]
To
Mrs. Benjamin Gratz
Lexington Ky _