

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz

February 2, 1834

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I cannot tell you My dear Sister, how I have longed for a letter from you until the desire absolutely begot such an anxiety that I fancied a thousand untoward causes for your silence _ yesterday brought a letter to Miriam and I know you will soon again take up your pen _ but you speak of languor, or drooping spirits _ and I feel as if I should love to be with & cheer you _ I wish you could have seen our merry nieces at the breakfast table this morning, enjoying the fruits of their own tricks _ it seems they had planned their mischief some days before at Mrs. Segoignes _ and last nights storm gave peculiar effect to their design _ they deranged their Uncles & Horaces & Rosas beds, and then crept quietly to their own _ this morning the affair was discussed with great glee, and while they were triumphing in its complete success _ Horace slipped out of the room and requested the cook to suspend the operation of the griddle and the girls sat waiting very patiently after all had finished breakfast, but themselves until they discovered a counter trick had been played on them, they have now gone to church, to hear Mr. Furness & I hope they will be sobered by dinner time. mentioning Mr. F reminds me of a visit I paid his interesting wife lately and the affectionate enquiries she made for you, the poor Lady has her patience & other virtues tried by a tedious disease her only daughter is suffering under _ white swelling on her ancle which will probably make her lame for life _ she is one of those persons whose contentedness sheds an influence over all that approach her _ the elements are so blended "in her character. and disposition as to produce a perfect harmony _ if Cowper had given such a wife to his clergyman the picture would have been complete Dr. Hays is one of her favorites and she seems very much interested in his approaching happiness _ it is yet to be proved what [end of page]

kind of a husband he will make _ I think Sally will require a great deal of attention. She has been accustomed to much devotion from her family & friends. Southern ladies are treated with much gallantry by all their [male] associates, and she has been a favorite abroad & eldest Sister at home _ she has much dignity with sweetness of manner _ and as the Dr. enjoys but a written courtship, I expect his bride will be a little divinity in his sight. You have heard of poor Henry's failure _ this is another trial to our Sister, as Mr. H is in no business and

he was enabled to do something for the family _ but I have not heard her complain, indeed she bears such evils with as much firmness as any one can, her warm heart is ever open to the joys & sorrows of her children _ and her exertions keep them from desponding in the worst of times _ I do not know much about Henry's affairs, they have never been mentioned by our brothers, and as I heard from our neighbours that Jo is one of his creditors I feel unwilling to ask questions on so disagreeable a subject. the times are so out of joint in political & mercantile affairs _ that these things become common _ I am quite concerned for Mr. Nathan of N Y. who has a family of 14 children all young _ and in Aug. was worth 150-000[\$?] is now a bankrupt, he bears a good reputation _ and lived so happily last summer, when we were in New York, that I sat them down among fortunes favorites _ there is another evil under the Sun that has been making havoc in our city varioloid _ poor Mr. Leeser is one of its present subjects, his attack has been unmitigated Small pox, and tho his life & eye sight has been spared I am told his countenance will bear many marks of its ravages _ he has always been so sensitive on the subject of personal disadvantages _ that his former humility will appear like vanity, to his present state _
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and unless some Desdemona shall arise to see his visage in his mind _ all [his] future aspirations must be confined to solitary studies _ Harriet calls her son Frank, alias Frances after our Sister and he is really a fine boy _ Sister is also recovering _ she has heard of Horatio's arrival in China, and the excitement of our joyful hope has almost made her well, still however she is altogether in her chamber and living on vegetable diet and wears a shade over her eye _ Isabella is well enough to sit with her part of every day, and is a living proof how we may accommodate ourselves to enjoy very limited privileges without repining. the daily visits of her friends breaks the monotony of her existence, and the anecdotes we relate or the letters we sometimes read to her, furnish amusement or interest to the solitude of her chamber _ Elizabeth & Sarah spent yesterday with her _ and she loves such young company as much as ever _ Gratz brought me a list of Morrison College students the other day. to shew me dear Bernard & Howard's names _ and he was very [proud] of his cousins, could hardly believe that Howard was learning Latin already _ I had a letter from Mr. Blair last week, and E. heard from Montgomery _ he is a most attentive correspondent to his sister _ you should have seen

how her face brightened when she told his standing at the Point _ in a few weeks Henry Hart will be in too, and I am sure you will rejoice again to see this favorite youth with all the improvements his travel has bestowed I hope our beloved Ben enjoys health. thro all the labours of his various duties _ and I am sure the more important his public services are in the land of his adoption, the better you will be pleased _
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thank God, whenever his virtues are tested they are found sufficient. may he be successful in all he undertakes with such pure motives, and ever as happy as he deserves to be _ with some people this would be such niggard justice that it might be doubled whether it were a friendly wish _ but with your husband My dear Maria _ it makes him as blest as mortal can desire to be _ embrace your lovely boys for me. and tell my dear Ben all his

sisters send their best love _ Becky Moses just came in for a book, and bid me say she is ashamed of her self for not writing, she thinks she must go to you to plead her own cause _ we have been reading Mrs. Shellys "last Man" it is worth more than her other work _ but still her genius runs wild of good principles _ God Bless you, My dearest Sister
believe in the love of your own RG

[Address:]

To

Mrs. Benjamin Gratz
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