

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz

October 12, 1834

Is it possible My Dear Sister, you had really no intention of coming to us when you raised that cruelly delightful hope? if you could see the blank faces occasioned by the perusal of your last letter _ I am sure you would be sorry you had hit on that expedient to punish Jo for playing the same game _ I had planned such a happy winter for us all _ had arranged my house, which has been all nicely painted & papered _ fixed your chambers according to my dear Howards notion, and thought we should be so comfortable & agreeable all together, that I can hardly bear to relinquish the scheme _ tho' one passage in your letter shews I had expected too much, and my heart tells me _ without the complete family _ without our dear Ben & all the boys _ neither you, nor they nor I could realize the happiness in anticipation _ I expected as Ben wrote to Mr. Blair _ that you would have preceeded your Husband by a month or two _ and that he would have joined us before the Winter set in _ but I will not tell you all my hopes _ and all my disappointments because I would not have your brow clouded with our regret my love can spare you _ only let me set you right in one particular that your objection to bringing all is inadmissible for I shall never be content to have one missing when you do come _ I have good servants and can add to their number without any difficulty _ am not afraid of a large family when they can be domesticated, and have already experienced how easily you can be satisfied with the homely accommodations we can bestow, So My dear Sister, pray think more of gratifying my affection for all your family _ than any little [end of page]

inconvenience you may fancy in the arrangement of my household. we have been in such confusion for the last fortnight in repairing & cleaning _ that I find it quite a pleasure to sit down and see all in order again, and shall feel quite at home when your & Ben's portraits are reclaimed from Mr. Sully, who is varnishing them, _ he has sent his eldest son abroad as a portrait painter, to spend this winter in Virginia _ what would be his chance in the West? Kentucky has produced so many good artists in that department, that I suppose there is no room for strangers _

I hope our dear Ben has got through his unpleasant

duties _ public honors are rarely attained without pain _ & turmoil, he must have earned his popularity by services conferred _ and consistent integrity _ or he would not in the few years he has resided in your city have been so often appointed to offices of trust, and responsibility _ I am sure he would act justly if his own brother was among the arraigned and I hope whatever may be the feelings of delinquents he will be justified in the end. and regarded in the community according to his merit _ the frightful excess political excitement has taken in our country is [of] to be deplored _ I dread the coming week, when our general election is to take place _ it is to be hoped the death of the young man who suffered last week will be a warning _ against deadly arms on that occasion _ tho' the idea of a public funeral _ for the poor lad shews the degrading length party spirit will go _

I heard Sarah Hays begging Elizabeth last evening to petition for a letter from Aunt Maria, not from any other claim than her great desire to be so favored _ and as the poor girl is still confined by her accident, unable to walk across her room without assistance, I second her plea _ she is benefitting in one way however, for she was very thin & pale before she was hurt, and the great care she has been obliged to take of her bruises has been of service to her health & she has grown fat
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The Cohens have moved again into this quarter of the city about five months ago Becky had an attack of paralysis and has been continually afflicted with returns of the same disease _ the family seem hopeless of her recovery _ I have not seen her for some time _ they are afraid of agitating her by introducing any one into her room _ poor Sally is a mere shadow a multitude of minor trials & vexations to which poverty gives a keener edge are added to this grief _ and as their state of feeling will not accept of the sympathies of friendship _ I can only mourn over the destiny of my early companion _ without affording her any consolation in the time of her need _ when I told her the other day that I hoped to have you all here this winter, she expressed more pleasure than I have heard her utter before in a long time _ Ben was a great pet of her Mothers. and her heart was opened to a recollection of former happiness _

If you have had measles in your Orphan Asylum _ we have had small pox & varioloid _ between 30 & 40 were sick at the same time _ one died _ Mrs. Hall was so ill from anxiety & fatigue that we feared we should have lost her too _ and now we have got an assistant matron, to relieve her from the excess of responsibility _ she has used her strength for 20 years with unsparing faithfulness and we the board are grateful and wish to make her as comfortable as we can _ but cannot

consent to her leaving us _ tho her daughter has offered her
a home _ I hope you will be as prosperous _ and as you may be
considered the founder of your Institution, I feel a deep interest
in your success _ Mrs. Yeatman means to establish one in
Tennessee when she returns home _ and is going to get hints
from ours. how abundantly the good seed spreads when
successfully planted _ Charleston S.C. had the first house erected
for this purposes _ and some of the distinguished men of that
state may be traced to that seminary of Charity _

God Bless You My own dear Sister, I am obliged to leave you
for dinner is on the table _ tomorørow [is] the day of atonement, and
I shall have no opportunity of resuming my pen _ tell my beloved
brother, & the children how ardently I love them _ and how sadly
I am disappointed, that I may not hope soon to embrace them
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all here send affectionate remembrances Elizabeth joins _ and
begs me to say do Aunt Maria come _ [let] me hear from you
soon again My beloved Sister and believe me always your
devoted affectionate RG

Oct. 12th. 1834

[Address:]

To

Mrs. Benjamin Gratz
Lexington Ky.