

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz

March 27, [1832]

March 27th.

our dear Ben's last letter says you were not well Maria, and so dear, you must bear to be tormented by enquiries _ and hopes, and fears. and prayers. and the long etc's of anxious affection. for verily it is not only my own solicitude that I have to express _ but our brothers become such fidgets that I should write, if it were only to tell them that you were honestly in my debt, and would no doubt soon speak for yourself. but I have other things to tell you which I am sure you take an interest in _ The Atlantic arrived on Sunday last in 98 days from Canton. and Ben was not in her _ poor Harriet was sadly distressed altho she knew her husband's determination before, the Capt'n. during his voyage out was seized with a fit of insanity which rendered the dangers & discomforts of the ship so intolerable that he determined not to suffer a recurrence of such another calamity. and as he had no power to supply the Capt'n. place, procured passages for him self & Nathaneil in other ships. the latter has arrived _ but it may be several weeks before we see Ben. as he could not sail until he had dispatched the Atlantic. and the Globe was not expected to turn on its axis until the commencement of the New Year. now the poor captain who was the unfortunate cause of all this disappointment. is an object of great sympathy. he is a young man _ but recently married. and left home suffering what the poet says in all the catalogue of human miseries _ is the worst _ Jealousy _ he mastered it on the broad ocean _ but when they entered the china sea, where skill in navigation was most important _ the sight of land and the thought of woman _ quite overcame him _
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and for three weeks, the ship & the ship's crew were exposed to many dangers, besides those of the sea _ the invalid recovered in china. and has brought the Atlantic safe to our shores. I hope the cargo will remunerate Ben for all his troubles and that he will arrive safely to console his wife for her year of trial _ but O My dear Sister, how small [does] her cares appear when compared to poor Mrs. Rutledges condition _ her husband went never to return! he died at Charleston on the 13th. Inst. he had been absent four months. and until within ten days of his death. his mother even was not apprised of his danger _ the first accounts of his increased illness, reached

his wife on the day. of his burial _ she resolved to go to him and immediately left home for New York to sail in a packet on the day after _ something detained the vessel for two days, and a few hours before she was to embark. letters arrived announcing Mr. Rutledges death _ her Mother brought her back to her orphan family _ but so changed that I cannot look at her without weeping. a blight has passed over her heart. & the very root of happiness seems to have perished _ she talks incessantly of her husband, but the brightness has gone from her eye the colour from her cheek _ and her light step seems rooted to the dull earth on which she [treads] _ the hope of her little daughters return, [and] with the accounts of his last words, & wishes seems alone to support her _ and yet she is deeply impressed with the additional duties & cares which this afflicting bereavement lays upon her. and she talks of her two widowed Mothers, whose experience & example will aid her. [and] of her reliance on the goodness of God _ Alas Alas! that human happiness should be so frail & short lived! I never saw it bloom more brightly than in this interesting family and now it has gone _ "and its place shall know it no more"!

Harriet brought her Sister Caroline to Phila. with her, on a visit to her friend Mrs. Greene, and her presence is of great service in cheering her _ as soon as Ben comes they will go to house keeping. and then she will have so many more _ things
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to interest her that she will feel altogether in her right place Isabella continues to suffer. without any change, every body even her mother is surprised that she can exist in such a state and think if she does not get better _ her frame must soon be exhausted _ I wish I had never read "the Martyr [philosopher]" in the Diary of a Physician _ for then I might think so too _ but hers is a [spynal] spinal disease. and years of endurance without cure or hope of cure. may be her fate too _ Ellen _ you would like to see, she looks as she did ten years ago _ and all our merry talking girls are as spirited & happy as you left them _ one of their jokes at present hangs [on] a discovery Miss Peters has made, that Julia Hoffman reads poetry well, and as it is not often her lot to meet with a good reader, she has requested the loan of her voice, to enable her to ciriticise a drama which having been nearly d_d in her judgment by the manner it was addressed to her ear, and knowing it was approved by the American [Quarterly?]. has put our friend in something of a [quandary] _ Yesterday was appointed _ but the weather being unfavorable _ postponed it, and as Julia is a little modest on the occasion, they have engagements for two or three day _ that will lengthen out her probation _ and their amusement _ Sister Hays & all the children, send their warmest embrace, and pray hug the dear little boys for me too _ poor Sarah had a

hearty cry the other day, Jac met her on her way from school and told her to hasten home for a letter from you _ she came in out of breath, the packet was opened. and the only enclosure was [for] Miss Craig _ her ardent feelings often overflow [thus?] may her love, and enthusiasm always be placed on objects such as her judgment may sanction. you know My dear Sister how much my heart is interested for this dear child. every year she becomes more an object _ as her character developes _ would I were more capable of training her [mind]. but I have much pride & happiness in the promise her youth offers _ to dearest Ben give my best love. and assure yourself that you divide my heart between you. God Bless you _ ever yr RG _
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I have just come from Mrs. Pintards, who has promised to put in the box containing your bonnet a paper pattern of the Beebee straw bonnet, which is all the fashion here. they are made of [D...?] ble straw like the one you bought last summer. and are nearly the shape of the english cottage bonnet. I hope the silk one will suit your taste, as the colour is modest & becoming _ Caroline Marx is wearing a pretty cap what she says. she will agreed me to imitate _ if it suceeds, it shall be put into the box likewise _

March 29th. [1832]

every body here sends love to you, dear Ben and the sweet boys _ I beg my dear Sister that you will write soon and particularly about your own health _ you shall have more books as soon as they appear and we can get conveyances _ God Bless you all & believe me devotedly
Your Sister
RG _
29th.

[Address:]
To
Mrs. Benjamin Gratz
Lexington Ky

[Courier:]
Mr. Christie

[Editors' Note: The letter is dated 1832 based on the death of the Reverend Edward Rutledge in March 1832.]