

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz

July 11, [1833]

July 11th.

How do I long to congratulate you, My dear Sister on the entire disappearance of the pestilence from your neighbourhood _ it has lingered so long, and continues to pick off those who relax a little in the vigilante attention to diet which prudence requires _ that I feel constantly anxious lest some one you care for might suffer, this you will say is useless _ since the Almighty has led you safely through greater danger. and your minds are too deeply impressed with the necessity of caution to allow any of you to transgress in the proscribed indulgences _ yet how can one [escape] fear where they have so much at stake? Flint in one of his admirable works says "Fear _ is an entirely gratuitous infusion of bitterness in the cup of life" and yet he believes one half of the sufferings experienced in our pilgrimage may be attributed to that one source _ I believe he is right in some respects _ for I acknowledge the agony of fear when those we love are in danger is more severe than many real evils that are inflicted from causes that only affect our-[selves] _ but we should have to be born again _ and educated over _ before that feeble ingredient in our nature can be eradicated _ you have disciplined your mind nobly my dear Sister _ yet I know you are sensitive on some points _ tho' you would not shrink from personal risks and I am sure, I never experienced such dread while the Cholera was in this city as daily weighed down my spirit _ since the fatal disease has raged in Lexington _

The newspaper our dear Ben sent yesterday is not calculated to allay anxiety. but it is very judicious to shew the actual state of the place. and give public caution _ I do not know what our physicians would say to 60 grams calomel. but it [end of page]

sounds enormous to me, who never heard of more than 10 being given _ one of the most alarming circumstances we have to contend with, is that so little is known of the treatment proper in a disease that has spread so far _ visited so many climes _ where the science of medicine has made such general progress _ and notwithstanding all that has been written in Europe & America a new practice is tried wherever it makes its first appearance and it every where baffles skill & experiment _ and is still the same awful messenger of destruction _

Becky Moses has just returned home after an absence

of four weeks _ she has been no further than Bordentown, but the Murats [have] brought her back to get permission for a journey to [Black] river. I do not know whether her Father will consent. but they are all so fond of her that Mr. M finds it hard to resist their persuasion, & I should not be surprised if they succeeded. the family are all scattering in different directions _ Ben & Harriet go to morrow to Cape May _ Ellen & her Mother next week to Long branch _ Ellens health is still so delicate that she feels the necessity of changing the air, and Richea is as necessary to her _ as she is to her little Josephine _ it is well for her none of her Sisters are married, for if they expected to share their mothers attention in any proportion to her claims _ she would be badly off _ the present excursion will I hope be of mutual advantage _

I hope My dear Sister that all your boys are well again. and that you & our dear Ben, are restored to more peace of mind than you have possessed for some time [end of page]

the anxiety & fatigue [of] such a long period must have wasted your strength even more than the hot weather _ our city continues healthily _ but we do not indulge in varieties of fruit or vegetables _ but live with the memory of last years discipline before us _ God bless you My beloved Sister may every good in life await you and reward you for all your trials present my tenderest love to My dear brother & embrace your children for your devotedly attached Sister RG _

all here desire affectionate love _ Jac says he will write to morrow or Sunday _

I have just received your sweet letter my darling [Sister] and open this to tell you, that all the happiness & more than you have received at the hands of my family _ have you conferred on us _ & I repeat with you _ blessed be the Lord, who guided you to this city and brought you to be a Sister & a daughter to this house _ you have been a solace & a joy to us all _ and I shall ever be thankful that I saw & knew your honored Mother, for my heart delighted in her character & I loved her sincerely _ sweet Carys innocent prattle made me weep _ I hope we shall yet see happy days together _ be of good heart My dear Sister _ would I could help you in the toils of your daily labours _ ever yrs _

Horace's best love _

[Address:]

To

Mrs. Benjamin Gratz

Lexington Ky.

[Editors' Note: This letter is dated 1833 since it refers to that year's Cholera epidemic in Lexington KY.]