

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz

January 31, [1836]

Jan'y 31st.

It does not become me, My dear Maria, to chide you for laziness when your last letter remains unanswered but we have been somewhat at a loss where to address you and I knew our dear little Beckys letters would tell you all about your sons & Sisters here _ Rosa must have been greatly disappointed on Monday _ for she had notice from town, that she must come in to see you _ as Harriet and the elders of the house claimed your first visit and she thought _ greatly as she prefers her Wheatland home _ that it was fair you should enjoy the hospitalities of Hanover house and the gaieties of Richmond before came to repose your selves at her domestic cottage _ but the elements were against you _ I cannot say "the stars in their courses fought against" your journey _ for never did I see brighter heavens look down on the cold earth _ nor the livery of winter shine in more unsullied whiteness _ but who could voluntarily quit the comforts of home while the winds blew so coldly _ and every branch overhead _ and every spot below is covered with ice? _ for the last fortnight the sleigh bells have been ringing incessantly _ and every body who could rig up a body or harness a horse has been abroad in our streets _ the snow is again falling to day so the pleasure will be prolonged, until all have their fill _ a beau of the last generation being on a Sleighing party & dance in the country, was asked for a sentiment at supper _ when toasts had failed _ [and] he gave "more show" _ every one felt that it was an expression of his gratification. he was a man of few words _ and few ideas _ and this brief sentiment was fastened on him _ every winter George R's wish was reiterated _ and I am ashamed to say that his good nature _ & good qualities are forgotten at all seasons of the year _ excepting when snow & sleigh bells revive his memory and the scene at "the Columbus" _

I told you in my last that the Boys should accompany
[end of page]

Henry Etting to Washington _ but the roads were so encumbered that the rail-cars could not travel _ the weather too cold _ and their [Uncle] Jo disapproved. so I was obliged to disappoint the dear fellows. and I cannot but confess I was right glad, that there were such good reasons for keeping them here some time longer. they behaved extremely well on the occasion _ Jo's plan is to take them with him when you summon him to be your escort home, as he proposes to spend some ten days with you at

Washington. but if this does not satisfy you, or rather if you would rather have them come on earlier _ John Plumb will afford a safe conveyance for them. their quarter at school will be up on the 5th. Feb _ shall they continue going after that period until they leave town? they both enjoy perfect health. Bernard received a letter from his Father, who approved of his having his tooth extracted. which tallying with your council we repaired to Mr. Townsend. he mourned over the accident thinking it was new _ but said very decidedly that the root should be immediately removed, confirming Gardetts opinion that the nerve was so much exposed, that it would decay long before a new tooth should be inserted _ and from his age _ the position of the other teeth &c _ the cavity would [undoubtedly] fill up in a few years _ and so My dear Sister, your Bernard did not hesitate about accomplishing the business _ and behaved a great deal better than I did, for he had no fears, and sat down with less trepidation than I witnessed the scene _ he says he is much more comfortable than before the operation, for now he can eat without any sensation of pain, and every day the matter is improving _ I think both he and Howard are very happy _ they have become expert skaters and exercise some hours every day in the cold streets until their cheeks are as red as roses _ they are both writing to their friends at home.

what sad havock is making on our borders by the savages and what fearful results may be expected to the ill fated race. when the troops are gathered _ would our southern brethren were in a state of better defence. for I fear they have an enemy
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at home as much to be dreaded as the foe without _
our Sister Etting has been improving for the last week _ Dr. Hays has been called in, and her eye evidently improves under his care tho even a consulting physician _ cannot bring Dr. Harris into strict attendance _ and many days pass without their seeing her. I believe it would be good policy never to employ an old practitioner _ when they have reputation & money _ they care little about the sufferings of those who depend on them _ like butchers they grow [hardend] by familiarity with disease _ & pain _ but Dr. Harris has another apology. he is engaged to be married! and his [craped?] hat will be soon laid aside _ last winter he retired to grieve for his widowhood but Solomon says there is a time for every thing _ and it is but a brief space allowed in modern callenders for solitary meditations _ tell Becky.

Elizabeth Phillips is to be his second choice _ we are very desirous to hear something about your movements _ this is the last day of January _ when may we hope to see you here? the next is the shortest month tho along Feb, and you have still your virginia debt to pay _ Jac left home this morning in a sleigh. he has gone to Harrisburg _ and intends going

as far as Clearfield _ will be absent more than a fortnight. If I could hope to see him return cheerful as we left him last spring on the canal, I would not care [if] he staid away a month _ but I always feel my spirits born down by his sadness _ you know how many years of my life was shadowed over by the melancholy of those I loved _ and may imagine how apprehensive affection suffers when the memory is freshened by indulged depression in any member of the family yet left to me _ I think it an absolute duty to cherish mental as well as bodily health, and I believe it is equally in our power to resist the inroads on one as well as the other. for habit indulged frequently injure both. and I would have a sensitive person as attentive to avoid depression as I would a consumptive one the atmosphere of a damp bleak climate on the sea shore _ how are our dear little boys _ & Lizzie & Your Sister _ I wish you were not so hurried _ that you cant tell us any thing. but I do not wish you had one hours less enjoyment _ even if you devoted the leisure to me _ but you shall talk the more when you come back _ Julia, will be here too, by that time _ she is very anxious to see you _ and says she means to come and stay until after the Passover _ our dear Ben, has written to Jo too _ but has said nothing of the period of his coming you will bring him as soon as he can I know
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tell my dear Becky I shall write to her soon again, for I was delighted with her letter _ but my every day thoughts & occupations & habits could add little to her amusement or instruction. and might take up time she can spend more agreeably. if you see our other nieces Harriet & Rosa this week carry my love & good wishes to them _ H. will have little time to enjoy your society if you postpone it long. but you will still be interested in her state, for she is always amiable & energetic. her nurse has been sent a fortnight ago _ Sara desires her best love to you _ she is extremely attentive to the boys and has gained both their hearts Howard is as jealous of her love _ as if it was to be exclusive _ but she has this instant entered and asked for space for a few lines, so my dearest Sis I will say Adieu as I know that will be acceptable to you May God Bless you _ and have all you love in His holy keeping _ believe me ever most fondly yours
RG.

Sara Gratz Moses Joseph to Maria Gist Gratz

January 31, [1836]

I would not have asked Aunt Becky for room for a line to you, my dearest Aunt if I had thought for one moment, for then I should have known that two or three of her words were better than one of mine _ but what is done _ is past _ and the only use of regret for things that we cannot help is the determination not to repeat them. Howard Aunt has advanced in his Latin & bids me tell you that

he is in Historia Sacra. Bernard has been writing to his father & is well and good.
will you not kiss my dear, little boys for me _ also Becky and Liz _ and tell the
latter that I think she might have written me before this _ When are you coming home.
Soon _ prays yr devoted tho perhaps selfish little niece [GM?]

[Address:]

To

Mrs. Benjamin Gratz

Washington City

D.C.

[Editors' Note: This letter is dated 1836 based on ongoing correspondence. See letter RGC0411,
dated January 10?, 1836.]