

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz

[March or April 26, 1835]

I will not encourage you in long silences (for my conscience will not permit me to say laziness) my dear Sister, by telling you how joyfully your letter was received. at last _ for you must know we depend so much on hearing from you among our domestics comforts _ that the chain of enquiries are sung as commonly as the salutation of welcome in my round of visits to the different houses in the family _ and when Aunt Maria has not been heard from for an unusual length of time _ a string of blank faces _ and wonderment follows, with conjectures very near a kin to wordsworth ballad _ of a lovers' fancy on similar occasions _ but I have been provided with a ready answer lately _ while so thriving a correspondence was carrying on between our Brothers _ we had always assurance of your well being & well doing in Dear Ben's letters _ so while this Bank is making and your house repairing I shall not suffer if you even keep on in other useful employments without so much _ as dropping a line in my service _ I hope the articles sent on from Phila. will arrive in time _ and suit your taste _ as to the colour of your paper hangings _ tho not according to order they are the fashion of the times and of universal use in these parts _ for your hall _ we ordered a paper _ and had a sample struck which was considered exactly right _ but when the whole order was executed, the shade was so entirely altered that I would not consent to its being sent _ Julia & I sallied forth with Hyman and made choice of another _ you have been so indulgent to our taste on other occasions that I hope these articles will please also _ and that we shall have the happiness of seeing you enjoy them when they are all arranged _

I suppose you have heard from Washington since your Sisters
[end of page]

return, they passed so rapidly through their journey that we could have no enjoyment of their society _ Elizas political consequence is not less than her husbands _ and had they spent a week in the city we should not have had a quiet hour with her
Montgomery had a relapse of his fever after his parents left the Point, and his Physicians thought the change of air might be more effectual than medicine. and sent him home last week, he passed part of a day & night with us on his way to Washington where he means to spend a fortnight. and hopes to resume his studies in time to be prepared for his examination, he looks very ill _ but has good spirits and I believe his disease is entirely conquered _ he thinks his mothers nursing will perfect his cure _ you would be amused by a peep in Sally Hays' nursery _ she is the most admiring young mother

I have ever seen _ and the Dr. has become a most tender & handy nurse _ they call their son Jo Gratz, and discover so many extraordinary beauties in him, that I do not feel competent to describe him, and I am sure you would think his father so [...] new a personage in his present character that you would scarcely recognize him for the cold being you were so often disposed to quarrel with _

Have you seen Washington Irving's book? it has been most provoking that I have not had an opportunity since its appearance of sending it to you _ and I have been so charmed with the far west in his journal that I want to talk to you about it _ I heard that Miss Martineau was indisposed at the South _ she has travelled through so much inclement weather that I do not wonder _ but I hope she will not arrive in Lexington too soon for you to see her _ she will be disappointed of Miss Sedgewick's company in her Western tour _ [Catharine] was here for a few days _ and told me she feared that agreeable project would fall through _ her brother who was to have accompanied them, will not be able to accomplish his part of the plan on which of course hers depends _ women are never safe in making engagements which they [cannot] execute by themselves _ and so Miss Martineau must know by this time. she has accomplished more than most women would dare to attempt _ and [makes] out much better than our country women do, who travel in Europe _ the Douglass anecdotes _ par exemple [end of page]

There is much prejudice kept in check until the appearance of Fanny Kemble's book _ when I hope it will be disappointed for want of food she has been warned not to speak her sentiments _ but says she does not feel that she can say anything offensive and may therefore be honest. but extracts have been picked out of her journal and published with strictures in the newspaper _ which she says will not admit of so strained a construction when taken [with] the text _ if she were necessary she would stand a good chance of being gratified with the result, for curiosity is on the stretch.

I doubt not your success My dear Sister in your interesting occupation of instructing your boys _ you have their hearts so entirely that you may be able to bring out their faculties to their utmost _ and you must not be too hard to satisfy _ genius is not the happiest, tho one of the highest gifts of nature and if your young sons do not exhibit any thing striking _ they have intelligence enough to satisfy any reasonable person _ even their mother _ the girls are talking so-[so] sensibly that I should like you to hear them _ Julia Hoffman is quite a prominent talker among them, she is well informed on most subjects _ and so modest & unaffected that she gains an influence with the respect of her companions _ Lizzie & Sara & she have been [kept] home by bad weather _ and are making good use of their time _ their subject Botany _ Lizzie finds Julia so much better acquainted with the science _ that she means to ask her mother to permit her study it _ they all send love to you, and

so do our brothers _ Jac left home this morning for another fortnight
he is more than half the time absent but is in good health & spirits
so that an active life agrees with him _ I hope our dear Ben is well
again. he has been so constantly excited with public affairs that
I fear for his steady habits & enjoyments, pray do not let him sacrifice
his precious health for any consideration _ present my best love to him
and embrace the dear boys _ I shall consider them as children, until
I see they have out grown that character _ God Bless them, and all
of you, My dearest Sister prays your ever affectionate RG _
[end of page]

Hyman Gratz to Benjamin Gratz

[Undated]

The books closed on the 25th. with 16978 names and 18,526 shares _ I wrote
on the 22 to which [refer?] with love to all _
HG.

[Address:]

To

Mrs. Benjamin Gratz

Lexington Ky

[Editors' Note: The month and year of this letter is based on the birth date of Joseph Gratz Hays
March 20, 1835. It precedes the letter RGC0369, which is dated May 17, 1835.]