

Margaret (Peggy) Ewing to Rebecca Gratz

July 6, [1803]

Lamberton July 6th.

Do not measure my anxiety to hear from you by the length of time which elapses ere I reply to your most welcome epistles _ I am now [devoting] to you the first evening I could call my own since I rec'd your last letter _ the intermediate time has been spent with company at home, and visiting abroad _ what I call abroad, is my friends who reside at the distance of four and five miles from this place _ and indeed so much has my time been divided, and sub-divided amongst them, that I have been like a bird of passage ever since I left Philada. I am fatigued with such desultory life _ and tell Sister that this week at least, shall be devoted to Lamberton _ I have accordingly sent her off this afternoon to pay off some old-score visits, and am now realising what I have all day anticipated, the pleasure of writing to you _ as we are both in similar situations we must excuse in each other the strictest attention to punctuality _ your friends will I know be selfish _ and leave you little time unemployed _ therefore shall I more highly esteem the few minutes you are permitted to devote to me _ The whole of your letter is so interesting that I am at a loss which part to reply to first _ but I may surely be justified in expressing my curiosity to learn the result of your meditated attack on what you call, my property _ his promise to surrender at discretion was a very thoughtless one for discretion in [end of page]

such cases are generally out of the question _ I shall have need of all mine to conceal my chagrin at such a loss _ you accuse me unjustly in supposing I have caution'd Mr. House against visiting you too often _ his own prudence has warned him of the danger of indulgence, and bid him beware! _ he knows well the value of your society _ but he knows also the danger of enjoying it _ you will observe I am endeavouring to repay a little of your civility to me _ I am always conscientious about being in debt _ I shall not be content to rest my expectation of another letter from you on Mr. H's projected visit to Lamberton I have no faith in the scheme _ and therefore desire you may not be decoyed into a belief of it _

Sam extols in high terms the hospitality and attention

he meets with in Baltimore _ and sure I am it must be something uncommonly agreeable that detains him so long in any one place that is not Philada. he is so immersed that I hope he may not have lost himself _ for [it] is some days since I heard from him _ and more since I have enquired what has become of him _

I am pleased to hear that you can number amongst your acquaintances one pair who have so far discovered the strait road to happiness as to be entitled to a residence in the Temple of the "Garden of wedlock" _ I look upon such a thing as next to a miracle _ and shall be happy to meet with them in Trenton _ as well for my own sake as yours. _ and if ever we, you and I, I mean, ~~should~~ enter be tempted to try the same road, I hope we may find the termination as agreeable _ and recognise there also, your favorite, with many other of our acquaintances _ for a road so beaten does it not excite your wonder that so [end of page]

few tread it with honour _ and yet I believe our disappointments arise principally from our great expectations _ The distribution of good and evil, in any situation of life, is more equal than, [on] a transient glance, we are willing to allow _ and did we enter on the matrimonial one with more moderate hopes, our chance of success would be infinitely greater _ but this is a duty, on which, like almost every other practicable one, we can reason for our friends, and feel for ourselves _ I do not wonder that you regret the loss of your family party _ no feeling is to me so depressing as that which arises from the diminution of so great a source of happiness _ I once enjoyed it in a high degree _ now it can return but occasionally _

Amelia has already left us _ and is at my [...] James's _ her visit here was much shorter than she at [...] and I much fear she will not again repeat [...] and James are so much out of the way of [society] [...] is an act of charity to devote some time to them _

What has the gay City of Baltimore produced for the anniversary celebration of our Independence? _ Trenton has decorated, from one end to the other, with flowers of every description _ and the inhabitants vied with each other in disposing the ornaments to most advantage _ the effect was pleasing _ and almost unconsciously the spirits were exhilarated by so blooming a display _ the evening has concluded with a dance _ but as I did not join the party, I can give you no other description of it than that every one retired in good humour with themselves and each other _ I allow for lovers quarrels, recollect _ as there were some of those among the number _

I am not like you frightened to bed by [an army] of cockroaches _
but by an intruder that seldom asks permission to enter _ and will
not sometimes even allow us to keep our eyes open long enough to say
good-night _ ME _

[Postscript on first page:]

To your Sister and the girls remember me _ of the former I am happy to learn such agreeable tidings

[Address:]

Miss Rebecca Gratz
Baltimore

[Endorsement:]

M Ewing July 6th.

[Editors' Note: This letter is part of an ongoing correspondence during the summer of 1803 that contains many clear references to each other's writing. Some of these letters are dated "1803," others are not.]