

50. Hays, Slowey

ALS Slowey. 8vo, 3 pages. Boston, 5 January 1807.
To Rebecca Gratz, Philadelphia.

Religion was a central focus of Slowey Hays' life. Here she is most explicit: "My jewdaism stands, my dear Rebecca, just where you found it when you were on here. I trust I have too much reason remaining to wish following an usurper, or sell my freedom to a tyrant and in such a light alone can I view Napoleon, tho always successful yet always a villan in my estimation." She goes on to say she is willing to await someone other than Napoleon who "more fully answers my ideas of a millennium than the present corrupt situation of society in Bonapartes reign seems to promise..." In an earlier letter Rebecca Gratz seems to have commented favorably on events then taking place in France and which related to the Jews of that country. In response, Slowey Hays notes, "...perhaps I am erroneous in believing my Boston residence for the present is best. I prefer waiting here for a happier and I hope surer translation to a purer region (?) then the Bonaparte mania as you wisely term it seems to portend..."

Boston January 5th 1807

Dear Rebecca

Among the many checks my vanity has ever received, your last letter gave the deadliest blow, after all my endeavors to appear sincere and ingenuous with you while you were in Boston. I can never cease regretting you have been so disgracefully imposed on, I know not which to admire most, the indulgence of your head or the humility of your heart. that could so easily satisfy you with the belief, that my brain was charged with matter of either observation or inquiry, and after having run away with your time and attention for many months am reduced to the sad confession, that in spite of all your expectations to the ~~contrary~~ reverse, you have had all my best share of amusement, it is a very unfortunate circumstance for me, after all my exertion to render myself and letters agreeable to you, that you should only at this late period my friend begin to suspect, since all disputations are at an end, I may possibly possess some few talents of entertainment; however I may feel the reflections of yours. I have too much pride to suffer myself to be depreed by them and am resolved to meet all your satiric gall with all due philosophy and fortitude, tho I grieve for your disappointments in regard to my supposed powers. I will not fill my letter with apologies for what I cannot remedy as I know nothing so tedious therefore with your consent I will give them to the wind instead of ^{troubling} you with them, and merely intreat of you to take me as I am nothing exalted or set down ought in matter; You charge me with flattering you - indeed dear Rebecca peace will never be confirmed by me ~~until~~ until you have learned to estimate your own merits and my sincerity, I know not how smooth the surface of adulations stream may be and can prove myself not even a novice, as I have never ~~been~~ get discovered its source - you must have drank deep. since you imaging it amidst the flowings of my unsophisticated pen, I trust never to mistake my own powers sufficiently to attempt inventing a language I am totally unacquainted with, but as one of my passions is imitating those I much admire

in my correspondence with you I may collect some of the gleaming of your lively imaginations which I find as I look deeper into your character, and in a few short months dash them off on some one as ignorant as myself as my own - at least I might reconcile my own feelings soon to the truth by remembering I was not the first that shone in borrowed splendor, for I believe even your favorite Mr. Demie would sometimes sigh were it not for yourself and some more listless shams, but as I know by experience how tenacious you are of the honors of this sort of the muse, I will cease all observations, your friend Mrs. Meredith otherwise might think I was not slow in giving my opinion.

My Jewdiamond stands my dear Rebecca just where you found it when you were on here, I trust I have too much reason remaining to wish following an usurper, or sell my freedom to a tyrant, and in such a light alone can I view Napoleon, tho' always successful yet always a villain in my estimation. Shaking from him, and the French generally, not even his sophistry of which I acknowledge he possesses enough, can persuade me to yield myself to him, I willingly await the time that can more fully answer my dreams of a Millennium. Then the present corrupt situation of society in Bonapartes reign seems to promise, I am happy to find your Brother Sol is so judiciously employed as reading the newspapers, and think he can't have no time for fatigue should he search deeply into the proceedings of all European measures, should he determine after mature deliberation, to offer himself wife and property to the great and good Emperor I must bemoan his correspondence, that I may in my minds eye behold the land flowing with milk and honey. For I should be better prepared to find the place governed by a tyrant, deluged in blood, and covered with crimes - perhaps I am erroneous in believing my Boston residence for the present. I prefer waiting here for a happier and I hope a surer translation to a purer region than the Bonaparte Mania as you wisely term it. seems to portend. But as I ever found instruction and delight from your society, I must still wish to share with you while reading Levy an illustration of which I believe you quite adequate to and which tho' in me you would not find an assistant I can promise you a sincere admirer of whatever your judgement decided on. I thank you kindly for your question of my precious friend Mrs. Largent I could always talk to you of her, but our letters seems to have been a sort of a controversy, and the Gartering Elements have nothing to do with her composition, there alone are the reasons

why I have not introduced her in my letters to you. But as peace is proclaimed I shall rejoice in telling of domestic pleasures. Christiana is happily settled with a most excellent husband, and thanks to her attachment to me has given an invaluable friend and brother, she has long been the friend of my heart and never proved more so than since she has been a wife - Come to Boston Rebecca I should delight to introduce you to our little happy evening circle around her table we most industriously working and Sargent reading to us. I promise you a welcome from both and all my friends, at these our happy hours and occasionally will lead you to the more fashionable ones where at least we can all wear the semblance of gals that can alone be felt at our own fire side with a few dear friends. Christiana often speaks of you and partakes with me the pleasure your letters ever afford me she knows not of my writing this morning to you. But I dare with confidence offer you her regards and remembrance - How very innocently you have learnt to trifle since your return to Philadelphia, I never believed you mysterious only reserved, perhaps too I have been misinformed, and no hermit pines in solitude. ~~But~~ your heart at this moment reproaches you for your want of confidence, and did I indeed possess those glances to you recommend in your little friend, you would not dare to write so sensibly - Beware how you turn my attention here wonderful tales you may get yourself in difficulty. like a brave foe I bid you again beware - you treat so soberly upon strong and whirlwinds Rebecca that I have entirely given up my knitting plan and will partake in a degree of some of that sweet philanthropy you so kindly recommend to me - I am pleased you should enjoy the society of your friend and favorite Mr. G. and did but trouble me much when in Boston I should pray you might ever possess his friend and instructive conversation at the Southards. One of my favorites has gone on to the Southard. Had I thought he would have staid any time in Philadelphia I would have given him a few lines to you, he is a fine young man by the name of Russell and is travelling on to Virginia with Captain Henry and Lady - no doubt before now he left your place - My paper is so nearly cut I must hasten to tell you the family write in loving you - Make my affectionate regards to Rachel and Sol and present me in proper order to each individual of your family - I greet you with best wishes for your happiness in the new year and beg you will believe me with sincerely yours, Henry.

J. Hay

Aug 6th 1867

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