

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Fenno Hoffman

March 23, 1808

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My Dear Maria

I determined not to write until I could collect something amusing to communicate _ or felt inspired with more than my usual spirits to communicate it in _ for really I fear you will think stupidity has become my inseparable companion _ and begin to wish for a release from my correspondence _ Yesterday I received a letter from Newark, mentioning the encreased indisposition of our dear Harriet, and Eliza's departure for Albany which has excited so much anxiety about her in my mind, that I must forego the above resolution and entreat my dear friend that you will forward some information of her. I hope like most bad news this account has been exaggerated, and that she is not materially worse than when you last wrote. your husband has no doubt returned ere this and given more correct accounts than even her own letters. In her last to me I could discover a greater depression, than she usually [suffers] on that account but the [dreariness] of winter by which her mind is ever affected might have had some influence _ and as I know her equally susceptible to the charmes of spring I feel my hopes revive with the advancing season _ How imperfect is all human happiness! Harriet possesses a mind capable of extracting the good from every situation of life, she could be [end of page]

content in any station, draw amusement & instruction from the most sterile sources _ and feel the advantages of an independent mind let the world wag as it may _ but, she is not exempt from her portion of trouble, the infirmities of a slender constitution reduces her to the common lot _ and [on] the [score] of happiness, she too must [submit] _

C Biddle who has just returned from New York, tells us Ann has greatly improved in beauty; and that Matilda retains all her loveliness. He confirms the accounts brought by all travellers of their holding the first rank among your belles, tho' appeared a little mortified at Ann's having forgotten him _ he has been on a matrimonial expedition to the Eastward, and it is said has succeeded with a Miss Gibbs, a lady of large fortune in New Port _

By a letter Jo received from Washington this morning, we are in expectation of seeing him here tomorrow, which you may suppose is very agreeable to us _ poor Jo is quite sick with a sore throat _ but since the arrival of the mail has been so indefatigable in his remedies that I expect a speedy recovery, will be the effect of the anticipated arrival of his friend _

When you see Mary Fairlie give my affectionate love to her, and say I am greatly flattered, and grateful by her kind remembrance of me _ Mr. Bee without giving me any particular message, assures me I am much indebted to her good opinion _ and I feel disposed to acknowledge very gratefully any favor from one I so much esteem _ Is it true that James Paulding is going to be married? it is confidently reported here _

Rachel sends you her best love, your fringe is at length done
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and will be forwarded by an early opportunity _ My Mother & Sally beg you will also receive their affection _ the latter is just recovering from a severe indisposition _

Sully has at length got established here, and is every day gaining friends and reputation, he is painting thirty portraits [at] a reduced price _ I think he has improved greatly since I saw him in New York and is generally preferred to Peale _ who is a favorite here _ Gouverneur Morris is sitting to Sully his picture will be exhibited in the Academy of arts and I doubt not from the interest he has excited that he will be successful in his profession _ the poor fellow lost all his goods, furniture & paintings lost on their passage from New York _

Give my love to your husband _ the dr. Girls _ and [your?] lovely children for me _ let me hear from you soon,
believe me my dearest Maria most affectionately
your RG

[Address:]
Mrs. Ogden Hoffman
New York