

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Fenno Hoffman

April 4, 1808

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Your letter this morning My dear Maria, containing such good accounts of our Harriet has really delighted me, our hopes are easily elevated by our wishes and mine have already reached the anticipation of seeing her restored. Mr. Rodman will I hope be induced to try the effects of a warm climate to which he has every inducement that the experience of others can offer. Mrs. Tilghman has several times been snatched from the very jaws of death. tho' at her advanced period of life there was certainly less to be expected. and New York affords you many instances of the like success. I shall be impatient to hear that he has determined on going.

I think my Dear, you do not manage your baby, with your usual propriety. why devote your evenings entirely to him? the good Caty should be entrusted with him and you permitted to cheer the company below by your presence _ If I were in N York I should not quarrel with those chamber scenes provided I might be permitted sometimes to enjoy them _ but too free a scope to the indulgence of ones own reflections, is not good either, It is seldom productive of happiness _ the mind is crowded by the recollection of so many evil[s] as well as good things, that at best it is but retracing the checquered map of life, on which we have still a
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a large untrodden track to pursue, and hope cannot always in spite of experience represent the future more smooth; if we are continually looking back on the ruggedness of the past _

I had heard of Phil Jones' duel but not his marriage _ I pity his wife _ yet can hardly reconcile to my self the character of a fine woman, and a widow, marrying the lover of a disceaced sister. New Orleans seems a spot to [engender] every sort of immorality & corruption _ there are more duels fought there, than in all the united states _ and I believe more vice of every kind, death is so common a calamity, that the horrors of the scene is forgotten, as soon as past. I heard a gentleman speaking of the facility with which they get over such distresses, say that a Lady at New Orleans thought herself very ill treated if she did not get three husbands _ at least _

When do you move? _ in your new house, let the nursery be the most convenient apartment, as you seem to reside there generally. You might take a lesson from Rachel on the management of this establishment _ tho' I thought her one of the worst that is most slavish nurses in the world _

I suppose Washington has told you how well Sulley is established here, & how much he has improved in this painting. we

have prevailed on My Father to sit to him, and he has promised to come to the house and paint the portrait _

Betsy Abercrombie has just left us, her visit kept my letter
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from the office in time for this days mail. they are just beginning to make their appearance in company again, since the Death of Poor Nancy _ the year of mourning has expired _ and she forgotten! had not decorum prescribed the period _ perhaps less time would have sufficed _

Tell Washington, Emily Caton has left Philadelphia after taking great pains to afford a subject for scandal to feed on during the remainder of the season. she engaged herself in marriage to a young gentleman of family & fortune here, had obtained the approbation & consent of all parties, been caressed by his mother (Mrs. John Craige) and universally received as a bride-elect _ she talked with the utmost unreserve of her engagement, but said as they were both very young it [would?] be determined that he should travel for a year or two before their [marriage] on Friday morning last _ ~~without~~ any [given] assigned cause _ [...] [gathered?] his letters & presents together, and delivered them to his [...] (who called to pay her a visit) _ with a verbal message to her lover, saying she had changed her mind _ that she no longer loved him, and took that means of breaking off _ In her take leave visits, she communicated this circumstance with perfect indifference _ and left the city yesterday morning for Baltimore _

remember me very affectionately to your husband, mother & the girls, continue my dear friend to let me hear all the good news you receive from Albany. and believe me most truly grateful for your kindness in this respect as in all others of which my heart keeps a faithful register _ My Mother & the girls beg you will accept their affectionate love _ embrace my dear little Eliza & Charles for me _ Edward I hear is the most beautiful child in the world _ God Bless you all _ may they prove a reward for all your maternal cries _ ever Your attached R Gratz

[Address:]
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