

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Fenno Hoffman

November 28, 1808

Nov: 28th. 1808 _

I never despair of the performance of your promises, my Beloved and therefore had been anticipating the arrival of your last favor a day or two before its arrival _ yet it came in good time, and came like all its predecessors with full power to charm away my anxiety, and even cheat me of the bitterness of grief, while my tears flowed over the tribute you related, paid to the memory of my dear Miriam by Miss Ridley of whom she was always very fond,

I never knew so young a person who made so universal an interest in the heart of their acquaintance _ her brother-in-law in relating her death says, no event of the kind, had been so generally lamented in Georgetown for a long time. during her short residence in that place she attracted the interest & the affection of all the best people of the place _ her Youth and the peculiar situation she was in _ separated too from all her relations & friends _ seemed to touch all hearts for her _ she was sensible of her danger _ yet composed & resigned _ requested them to pray by her _ and died (I hope) the death of the righteous, she had an innocent heart, and performed the duties of every station it pleased God to place her in, in this world _ and indeed my Dear Maria, she had many severe trials _ an orphan almost from her birth, she never knew the happiness of a Mothers smile, or felt what joy it was to be instructed, approved of, and caressed by a fond parent _ an Estranged father & a cold hearted [step] mother made her natural home comfortless and uninteresting _ yet never did a repining [expression] escape her _ and tho' I possess'd her confidence in other things, I never from her-self had an idea of those sufferings.

I have written to her afflicted Husband, he is inconsolable for her loss, and pledges himself to her dear children, which he says [end of page]

is all that binds him to life. I never read more affectionate bewailing and believe he really is a sincere mourner _ this day three months the account of her death arrived, Gracious God! what misery has been crowded in that little space of time; I can sometimes scarcely realize the dreadful deprivations that have taken place, and yet they are never a moment out of my thoughts.

Mrs. Meredith called here this afternoon and shewed us a beautiful penciled likeness of our Dear Harriet, she was going to carry it to Sully to have it copied, and I requested her to have one done for me, it is a profile done by Malbone, and I think as good a likeness as the [miniatures].

The account you heard of poor P. Ewing is I fear too true,

[the] Dr. Ewing her Brother thinks it is her Liver that is affected, I hear she is in town and undergoing salivation for that disease, she has long been a great sufferer, and I fear will never again be restored to health.

Our little Henry is much better, he came in yesterday & dined with us, and I hope will soon regain his strength. you have no doubt seen my Brother Hyman, he has been making quite a long stay in New York tell him not to venture back in the mail stage, last night it was twice over set, and broke down beside, several of the passengers very much hurt, and all in great danger of being drowned in the Delaware Mr. Shaw I hear is a good deal bruised _

Charles N_ has been to see us, he spoke of you all, and has given good accounts of your health, I am sorry to hear that Ann is still in the habit of meeting Cooper, I do not believe that C would approve for I know he is no favorite of his _ and is certainly no companion for a delicate Young lady _ A_ has much to contend with too on the score of prejudice _ so much has been said [on] that subject, that however she may be able to justify herself to C_ his friends will be difficult [end of page]

to believe _ Coopers character is so much disapproved of here, that no Lady would dare acknowledge him for her friend. and I would advise Ann if she wishes to gain the approbation of C-s family & friends, to be circum-spect in that particular, the Anecdote of the Theatre, has reached this, and tho' my seclusion from the world has prevented my hearing any comments on it _ I have no doubt ill constructions will be made _

The sacrifice of a little amusement, which his company may afford her, is well worth making to her future quietude _ Tho' as an admired Girl she may be indifferent to the serious looks of the grave matron _ the time will come, when their approbation will contribute greatly to her comfort _ and she should make her present conduct dis-countenance the malicious reports which during Cs [absence?] were in circulation.

I am gratified to hear that Washington thinks [...] [friendship?] of such men, I esteem a happiness _ to my Dear Matilda present my affectionate love, her career has been less conspicuous than her sisters yet I doubt but she has been making secret advances in the same ~~fashion~~, Ann has more publicly avowed _ I hope Dear Eliza is better my best love to her and my Dear Ann also to Mary, your Husband and your sweet children, Rachel & Sally desire you will all accept their affectionate love, the former is recovered but is seldom out of her chamber, her little girl is vaccinated she glows finely.

my Father is regaining his usual health, my Brothers all beg to be remembered _ I hope I have not tired you out by my long letter _ these long evenings may be a tax upon your patience, for alas! how can I leave you sooner _ when I have so little pleasure before me, beside telling you of all my grief & all my love _ May God Bless you Dearest & best of friends! prays yr faithful

RG _

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