

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Fenno Hoffman

February 18, 1812

Philadelphia Feb 18th. 1812

Jac this morning parted with our dear Jo again for a long time, he has commenced a long journey, which is to be succeeded by a voyage down the Mississippi to New Orleans, and then _ being so far away; and in pursuit of an uncertain good, (as the smiles of fortune ever are, even to her most zealous wooers) we know not when he will return _ or where he may be decoyed by the inticements of the "fickle Goddess" _ never forget My dear Friend, in your most pious [...ons?] to add a hymn of thanksgiving that your happiness in this life, is not subject to the ever varying scene which is so continually turning in the magic lantern of a merchants life _ now emitting the brightest prospect of a golden harvest _ and again shifting into total darkness where the least false step may plunge him into ruin _

These transient reparations from your husband, you are bound as a good wife and sympathizing friend to regret, because you have the good fortune to possess the best of society in the agreeable conversation of your best friend and because you know when deprived of those charmes with which you ever continue to grace the domestic fire-side, he must deplore their loss _ but you are free from any further care or anxiety, which we, whose dearest interests are so often involved in dangers & hardships must endure _

Yesterday the heavy news of poor William Blodgets death arrived, and excited general and deep sorrow, you know how tenderly he was Beloved here, and how deservedly _ he died at St Petersburg after a few days illness.

He went to Russia with every flattering prospect of making a rapid fortune, had established a mercantile house. and _ death met him on the threshold _ to bear him to "where the weary are at rest" _
[end of page]

Charles was in business in South Carolina _ his house failed, and he is gone! no one knows where! his friends are in great [terror] least he may have destroyed him self _ Thus is poor widowed Maria "deprived of every stay (sans innocence & heaven)" and her helpless little orphans shut out from every prospect but of hardship & poverty _

I am happy to contradict the accounts of general distress among the merchants of our City _ which I suppose reached you through the same channel Eliza mentioned, I have not heard of any considerable [failure] since the autumn, the fashionable world is not so gay as usual at this season, but the Dancing Assembly will have a Ball on the 22nd. and I have no doubt that will bring out a great many private ones _ several large families are in mourning _ [Frances'] Willing's Rawles' Moylans Chews and some others in the habit of contributing to the winter gaiety _ and perhaps the Richmond calamity keeps many sober minded people from the Theatre who in times past were fond of that amusement _ these causes are so obvious

that even I may urge them _ tho' my intercourse with society is so confined that [except] in the circle of my immediate friends & family I am totally ignorant of what is going on _ the Merediths & Isabella do not go out at all on account of Mr. Ogdens illness _ and poor Mrs. Hopkinson is hanging in hopeless agony over the death-bed of a darling son, a boy of nine Years old _ Ann is perfectly well, she walks out every day and looks very handsome, she has promised many times to bring Mary Seton to see us but has not yet performed her promises _ Jo was delighted with her and we [are] very anxious to become acquainted with her too _ she bears a striking resemblance to her mother, and appears very cheerful & amiable _

I wrote to Eliza last week on a fine (or as Dennie would have said) "genial" day, about her coming in the spring and almost forgot
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it was yet winter, I pray you my love, if it has appeared to her, that I would postpone the pleasure of seeing her _ undecieve her in that aspect _ tell her as soon as her Husband is ready to come on, and whether behind the Conostogues of Market Street, or in a more courtly residence we shall be still, as of old her affectionate & glad friends _ bid her write soon, and do you my Maria, go and do likewise _ I have written to you in imagination many letters since the receipt of yours _ but never had the time to put them on paper, so you must not consider my memory of you a [blank], all the time that intervenes in silence _

The accidental circumstance of shewing our dear Harriets picture to an enthusiastic young friend of ours, with such observations respecting her as would naturally accompany it, has so enflamed his imagination with the perfection of her character, that he often leads to the subject _ and then My dear Friend, we indulge in the pleasure of talking and thinking of [...] that are gone _ and faithful memory opens all her treasures _ alas to borrow from the dear Saint her own expression

"Tho thy wings are tipped with woe

Yet thou & I must never part"

Sally & Rachel beg you will accept their affectionate love _ Aunt Cohen just comes in and request hers may be acceptable _

embrace your lovely children for me, and imprint a double kiss on the cheek of your dear infant Harriet _ God Bless you, my ever best Beloved

Maria. believe me always Your

faithful RG

[Address:]

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