

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Fenno Hoffman

May 16, 1815

Phila. May 16th. 1815

I feel, My Dear Maria, that I am fully intitled to at least half the blame of the tardiness which has crept into our late punctual correspondence, and if I were not much more than half the loser by it, I should hardly think my self entitled to your forgiveness _ but truly, I have so little to tell, that can be interesting enough to engage a mind in the constant fulfillment of such active duties as daily occupy yours. that without any disparagement to the ardour of your friendship (which I would not doubt for the world) I often check my inclination to write, as a fruitless effort to entertain you, and a hopeless one of drawing you to your desk _ and therefore in your own style, commune with you in imagination, [without] committing my letters to paper, notwithstanding all which, My Friend, we talk of you to all who have had an opportunity of seeing you and endeavour to make our selves familiar with all your concerns _

Mr. Hoffman almost cheated us into a hope that you would pay us a visit this summer _ on expressing our wish that he would stay here a day longer _ as, said he, "I would rather bring Maria and "pay you a visit in the summer." ignorant of any particular objection to this plan, until your letter arrived, I was only waiting for the season to advance into something like pleasant Spring before I reminded him of his hint _ but you have anticipated me, a few such families as yours would soon make at the ravages of war _ I am rejoiced to hear Dear Eliza is again blest and hope her health will improve, tell her I hope she will find time in her nursery sometimes to renew her communications with her old friends _
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I wish Charles would bring his family here before he goes northward _ they would form quite a female groupe, and her little Daughters would be delightful companions and occupation for their Grandmother & Aunts _ Maria is really a charming woman, her character has had more opportunities of unfolding in the varied duties of mother & wife _ and has been painfully tried by the deplorable situation of her sister _ as much as possible she devotes herself to her Mother & Mrs. M _ her husbands absence too, is a trial of fortitude, but she retains her amiable equanimity of temper & spirits tho' her sensibility cannot be doubted, where her every day exertions to relieve or share her mothers care is witnessed _

Our Fashionable world is running mad, after these Titled strangers _ they are recieved with the most distinguished hospitality. Town & Country feasts made for them daily and even children anxious to get a sight of nobility crowd round the door to see them go to & from their carriages _ I have only seen them in the street yet _ but think it probable shall meet them this Evening at Mrs. Markoe's _ are you not pleased at the appointment

so honorable & advantagous to our friend J Paulding? he left town Yesterday on his way to Washington. you are to lose W Irving too I understand _ what new genuises have risen up to supply their places, or are you to sustain a loss unrequited? fashion so entirely pervades every thing, that perhaps even their wit & pleasantry might lose its charm when the novelty is gone and, thus you must console yourselves _ that they do not wait its wane _

I thank you my dear, for the solicitude you express regarding my journeying with with Jo this summer Niagara is associated in your mind with so many agreeable recollections that you attach sentiments of another nature, with your love of the Sublime & Grand _ indeed, there is no object in nature I would more gladly take a journey to behold _ and should require no persuasion to become his companion, if I could satisfy my self to
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leave home, and my Sisters. but tho' comparatively well, Sally is too delicate to take charge of the family _ and requires a companion could we go together, I should enjoy it beyond measure _ but I would not leave her for such a length of time, for more than the pleasure of viewing the Falls _ what has been the matter with your husband.

I hope nothing serious _ he looked remarkably well when we last had the pleasure of seeing him, present us affectionately _ embrace all your dear Children for us. and say to Ann, we often wish her back again in her old house immediately opposite to ours _ we have a very good neighbourhood, but no friend near enough to make up for Rachel's loss _

your old friend Kitty Clifton is very ill _ her husband told Ben the other day, that he despaired of her recovery her deseases have [f...] lungs, I have seen her since the winter and had no idea. She [wa...?] [th...] time, Sally & Hannah live with her, Sallys husband is intemperate and they separated _ Rachel has lately recieved a letter from Becky OBerne she writes exactly as she would have done ten years ago, says she has no wish ungratified but to see her family & friends _ eulogizes her husband as one of the best in the world, she has two sons, and has lost two _ lives a very gay life, speaks of the corrupt state of society in the country she inhabits and says she never appears in it without her husband _ the calumnies we have heard of her must all be totally false, and she has learned by experience, that to be innocent is not sufficient, she must appear so, Beckys gaiety, had too much levity in it to be harmless in a strange country where her respectability was unknown, and her partner a profligate young man _ she is become more prudent and of course happy _ OBerne too has reformed _ he is become a domestic character _ God Bless you, my dear Maria accept the affectionate love of Sally & Rachel, the sincere regards of the rest of this family
and the unalterable attachment of your faithful RG _

[Address:]
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