

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Fenno Hoffman

October 20, 1817

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I have not written to you my dear Maria, because I have been a good deal engaged _ but my thoughts have often turned to you and I have talked about you, with friends who know & value you, so that my separation has not appeared as long as it really is.

last week John Myers & his parents left us. John had been at our house nearly four weeks. very sick, and as he was obliged to stay at home. my time was taken up, to keep him company. he came from Baltimore with the remains of a fever on him, which so affected his nerves as to alarm us, and induce us to write to his family to come up & visit him _ this brought his Brother Saml. from Richmond & his Parents from Norfolk. Dr. Chapman attended him and recommended his going home, and if the symptoms did not soon disappear to put himself under a course of Mercury. his father however writes that he is better. but I hope they will be judicious and not, to avoid a severe remedy, permit a worse disease to take too deep root. he has been living in Baltimore two or three Years keeps house, and in the solitariness of bachelors-hall, had no one to take proper care of him in his illness. accordingly he did many imprudent things while sick, and lastly travelled in the steam-boat to Phila. with his fever unbroken. the first attack was some what similar to Jo's (from his account of it) _ a remitting bilious but being protracted. affected his nerves. which is always tedious and distressing. I hope however he will soon be well again.
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I have not seen the criticism of Harrington you mention _ but confess myself very well satisfied with the Tale. I do not think she could have managed ~~her~~ ^{treated} her fable better. there was a necessity for some sacrifice of religious principal _ and we are better pleased it should be kept out of view & have been made by the parents of [Berenice], than by either her or Harrington. there is a strong instance too of religious Tolerance in [Montenero's] educating his daughter a Christian. and in the harmony of their affections towards each other. which contains the moral she would inculcate in her tale. I think however a more interesting & natural story might have been produced, in making the characters of few & Christian associate, & assimilate in all the respective charities of social life. without bringing the passions into contact I believe it is impossible to reconcile a matrimonial engagement between persons of so different a creed, without requiring one or the other to yeild _ in all instances we have heard of in real life. this has been the case. and where a family of children are to be brought

up. it appears necessary that parents should agree on so important a subject _ I have known many Jews marry Christian women, whose wives have become strict conformists to the rites of [our] religion _ and, Jewesses married to Christians who have entered the church as in the instance of my Aunt Schuyler. one instance similar to [Montenero] I have heard of here _ but the parties lived very unhappily _ little jealousies were continually occurring _ and at length when the Husband died the widow & her daughters returned to her family & the synagogue while the son was put in the navy. and quite estranged from the family the poor fellow is also dead. but had he survived the [division] of interests and sentiments would have broken up the harmony of feelings that should subsist between such near relations.

I saw our old friend James Paulding in his way home, he appears to [end of page]

be agood deal out of health _ and out of spirits _ perhaps some feeling of sympathy for me may have occasioned his seriousness _ he told me he had not seen you or Ann _ he was but little in New York. I enquired for Gertrude he told me he had never seen her look better _ I enquired no further _ but when I asked when we should have a longer visit from him (he was only two days in town) he said he did not expect to be this way again until early in the Summer. by which I conclude his affairs there are not in a very prosperous way. or at least not to be soon brought to a close _

from the sensibility with which he spoke of his isolated manner of life at Washington _ and the few persons who interested him there, I suspect were he in a situation to marry _ they would not delay. I think so highly of James, that notwithstanding former coquetry believe he would make an excellent husband. and agreeable domestic companion.

Maria & Saml. Nicholas are preparing for their removal to Savannah. they expect to sail next week, all the southern folks are taking their departure from our city. Mrs. Minis whom I believe I mentioned to you. went last week. her little girl, who interested us all so much. is quite recovered. I think she has [reason] [to] be thankful that she was within reach of Dr. Physick. less skillful [treatment] might have cost the life of her child.

I am rejoiced my dear Friend, to recognize in your last letter, your own cheerful submission. God Grant you may long possess the blessings that console you for all your losses. I have seen so many this summer, suffering such evils, as have shorne us of much happiness _ that I cannot fail to acknowledge. that we but share the common lot. and humbly thank God for the support his holy love has afforded us in our trials _ for Ah, my dear friend, when they are smitten who have not been taught to raise their voice to Him who can sustain them, how ten-fold are their sufferings visited upon them _ it is long since I have heard from the Ogdens. when you see them. remember me to them. is Bella in NY?

Give my love to your Husband & Ann, I hope Jo will be with you next week, and will bring me good news of you. take care of your health my Beloved friend, and thus restore cheerfulness & joy to your Husband. and comfort to

the heart of your Affectionate RG. embrace the dear children for me _

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