

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Fenno Hoffman

March 9, 1818

we have been trying my dear Maria, which could hold out the longest. and without any merit in the contest. for each I believe has been long tired of the others perseverance

I am almost, nay quite, ashamed to look back on two months silence, and hope to awaken your attention to me. if it is even to a chiding _ indeed my own heart has anticipated [your?] and I freely acknowledge my fault. which has been its own punishment. I met Ann a few days ago in the street with her friend Mrs. Gillaspy, and she told me she had lately heard from you. that you had given her all the New York news. and what was most acceptable to me that you and all your family were well _ I had for sometime before this been tired of our separation, and daily had it in my mind to write, but the spirit of laziness was strong upon me. and I felt such a blank of intellect that on the score of justice or charity I had no right to intrude _ and so I went on sinning against my own content _ till the present moment which has brought me to this confession, and I hope will produce me the happiness of a letter from you in due season _

Well, you will ask, and what have you been doing all this time? indeed my friend, nothing that ought to have interfered with your claims upon me _ I have been “chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy” at home _ most generally _ have been sometimes engaged with my sisters families _ and sometimes trying to be useful among the Orphans. and have added a new employment to [end of page]

my usual occupations. in the study of the Hebrew language

A Young Gentleman of good education in the sacred language lately arrived here who was desirous of opening a school in the congregation & applied to my brothers on the subject _ there are many children in our family whose parents wished to have taught and I proposed an afternoon class at our house. and my self as a scholar _ Elkalah Cohen, Maria & Ellen Hays. and the little ones to the number of eleven joined us and we have been for the last month declining pronouns &c. with as much zeal as success. our teacher is a German and not sufficiently acquainted with the English to conduct a large school with facility. but I expect we shall make out very well, if he continues here long enough to take us thro’ the grammar. he published in Richmond last year a little tract, which you may perhaps have seen as they were sold [by] at some of the book stores in N.Y. called “Elements of the Jewish faith.” if you have not, I will send you a copy when

an opportunity offers. as I think you will be pleased with the explanations of the decalogue _ and it contains nothing that could be offensive to you _

What has become of my friend Bella Ogden? she has I fear quite forgotten me _ I have not written to her lately I confess, but she has been my debtor these six week at least _ and considering her usual punctuality this is an alarming symptom _ we have been in great anxiety about our Dear Jac for some days. by the arrival of a ship from Canton we heard from him, that his health had not been good. and tho' better when he wrote it was evident he was still indisposed _ some few weeks must still elapse before we can expect him home _ and under these circumstances they appear more heavy to me than the whole period of his absence _

Rachel bids me send affectionate remembrance to you, she
[end of page]

has the most lovely infant I ever saw, very beautiful and fat & healthy & good withal, so that she has as little trouble and as much satisfaction as these little blessings usually bring with them. the Old Gentlemans illness has been a source of great affliction to them all _ Sol looks as if he had been ill himself & I am told Mrs. Levy & Moses are reduced almost to skeletons _ his situation has been very distressing indeed. and you know how very much all his family honor him _

May I hope My dear Maria, soon to hear from you? do not suppose I love you less. than when I was more attentive to you you were never more dear to my heart than you are now. nor do I believe you will be ever less so _ has your husband re-turned from Albany? and are all your children well? and [are] you well? remember the vicissitudes & caprices of our [natal] [month] [remember] too how many Springs have proved [unfa...] to [your?] [health]. and do not be induced to relinquish Winter [...] until the season is more steady than we dare expect at present.

Present my regards to Mr. Verplanck. embrace your children for me and believe me always unalterably Yours

My dearest Friend _ RG _

March 9th. 1818.

[Address:]

Mrs. Ogden Hoffman
New York