

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Fenno Hoffman

February 4, [1813]

Thanks for your letter My dear Maria, and the kind wishes it expresses _ our dear Sally is indeed much better than I expected, and a few days will no doubt terminate her confinement I am sorry I cannot give as good an account of Rachel _ her late affliction preys on her mind, I fear to the injury of her health. she came down to see Sally last Evening, but scarcely spoke a word _ and appeared bowed down with sorrow. I have no doubt however, that a little time will enable her to make those reflections that must not only reconcile, but make her thankful for the removal of her babe _ the physicians now say. it would have been a living grief to its parents had it survived, as the natural defect would have deprived it of the power of speech. I most fervently thank God for his infinite mercy in so soon recalling the pure spirit of this blessed child and hope its Mothers heart will soon be healed.

This day the good citizens are to be feasted at a public dinner in honour to the Commodore, I wished the ladies to partake of a private one with us but they decline. I suppose they are willing to see all the bustle of preparation. it is given at the Mansion House where they stay. Mary & Jane called to see us Yesterday together and appear to have buried the hatchet _ they arrived in town on Sunday Evening.

I am delighted to hear my dear little Friends talk of me, and that you all are not glad to miss me, I assure you my regrets at the loss of those pleasant, quiet hours we passed together cannot be had [...] among [end of page]

the more active scenes of a busy housekeeper to which I am called _ I am almost spoil'd in the indulgence I experienced at your mansion notwithstanding the frequent reproofs for mending the fire &c you used to give _ I received my cold on the journey and have really felt miserable since my return. but whether it be indisposition of body or mind _ or a little of both, I cannot tell _ but I shall certainly be much happier when I hear of your Husbands arrival _ you are so well yet so uncertain of health _ that I am continually fancying the probability of your committing some little imprudence that may endanger your safety _ [for] mercys sake do not justify my fears _ the delightful society of your interesting little nursery, and the books you have piled beside you, with pen & paper may afford very tolerable amusement. to say nothing of your ingenuous shuttle & work-box, or if you wish to diversify occupation. I wish you would sketch a set of cuts for the story of Red-riding-Hood & the wolf King which I shall send by Mrs. Cooper. I have applied to a printer to publish it in the stile of the old Woman & Pedlar. Mary Cooper & Stephen Price in their travelling dress would be good models for the principal characters _

I propose setting myself in my sleighing costume for the Grand mummie.

Speaking of the difficulty you experienced while I was with you of getting good flour. my Brother told me that Mr. Ben Myers constantly kept a supply of the best Richmond flour so that you may obtain it if you can find out his store _ I wish I could read you some of our Butler, and come take our sociable supper meal in your chamber together _ keep the children in mind of their Phila. visit _ and do tell me what your Husband says about it
[end of page]

I pray the Almighty protecting arm may be extended over him & James during the calamity at Albany _ and that they may both return in health _ the same fatal disease has appeared at Camden in Jersey _ Sally sends you her affectionate love _ mine to my dear Ann _ Eliza & the Girls _ how is Ogden _ remember me to Washington _ Adieu My dear Maria

May the blessing of health be yours through
a long life of usefulness is the wish of your Affectionate

RG _

Give a kiss of love to each the dear children for me _
and till them Jo longs for a shake of their daddles _

God Bless you all _

[Address:]

Mrs. Ogden Hoffman
New York

[Editors' Note: This letter is part of an ongoing correspondence in which Rebecca mentions Little Red Riding Hood. The other letter is dated February 26, 1813.]