

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Fenno Hoffman

February 11, [1821]

It would really be a shame, My dear Maria, if I did not [speedily] acknowledge your frankness. and accept your apologies _ we are selfish creatures, Maria, and in our best feelings do not lose sight of our-selves _ [for] I should never have made a calculation such as you accuse me of in your last letter _ to know that it was in my power to give you pleasure, should be motive enough to induce me to write _ and reward enough too for a perfect friendship _ such as it has been the pride of my life to fancy ours _ and yet you see how far short I have fallen _ but I know your goodness _ and sometimes take advantage of it _ which I believe is too general -ly the practice in this working-day world

our friend Mrs. Meredith is recovering, she has been very sick and is still weak and coughs a great deal but a few days care will I hope restore her _ a miscarriage followed by a severe cold [was] the cause of her illness. and the unfortunate death of Mrs. Chauncy from a similar accident affected her spirits a good deal. but I saw her this afternoon. and think [she is] in no peril _ Caty I hear has been sick too _ we have had a number of deaths this winter _ the heads of large families have been taken away _ many very suddenly. Mr. Keppelle last week _ who was only sick two days. old Mr. Willing died before any of his family knew he was sick _ Mrs. Ralstons death also was very unexpected _ but these are events which frequently occur in large cities [end of page]

and one is only surprised they make so little impression on the survivors _ I think we frequently see the virtues and duties of religion pushed to such an extreme as to fall into their opposite _ resignation to the dispensations of providence. is a duty which the wounded heart finds its only refuge, under affliction _ but it is often a pretence too for insensibility and one is [often] scandalized by seeing mourning habits worn, with the most perfect indifference _ the newspapers last week announced the death of Mrs. William Seton of Emmetsburg. and the obituary notice bore testimony of her virtues and usefulness few persons have passed thro' a greater variety of trials I believe than she did _

you mention your boys but not Julia in your last letter is she from home? or does your living so high in the city, induce you to send her to boarding school? I hope some of the girls take your husbands place during his absence, and assist you in a game of cribbage of an evening _ it is long to sit by the fire-side alone at this season _ I hope you have good

neighbours _ a female gossip is quite as agreeable as a
politition in my opinion _ tho' I know you have too refined
a taste for the first & too femenine a one for the other _
I have seached your letter over and over again but cannot
find one word about your own health _ and many of our friends
are particularly inquisitive on that subject _ will you enable
me to answer them according to my wishes _ that you are
quite well? I had letters to day from my brothers in Kentucky
and hope to see them both in the Spring _ a brother-in-law of
Ben's is here, who gives very agreeable accounts of his situation
and happiness. indeed his letters express the same _ he is quite
an enthusiastic lover, and extols the domestic comforts
[end of page]

of his own fire-side with so much animation that I believe
he has no wish beyond it _ his wife is very highly spoken
of by all the who know her _

I congratulate you on the new relation Ogden has presented
you with, Mary Cooper spoke in terms of great praise of both him
and his wife, I sincerely hope he may be prosperous in his new
residence. has Edward selected a southern damsel to brighten
his destiny? there are so many prizes of that nature in the country
he inhabits that unless he has left his heart in N.Y. he cannot
long resist _ I saw a Lady lately from Natchez who gave me an
account of the Abercrombies _ Maria since her divorce has resumed
her family name _ and it is said will soon again adventure in the
matrimonial lottery _ Charles has married a young heiress _ worth
60,000\$. and Betsy is in Boston _ her [j...er] will be about 20,000
when the estate of her husband is settled. Harriet lives [...]
happily. her husband has succeeded very well in his [...]
and is much respected _ from the very unpromising circumstances
of the family a few years ago, such a happy result could scarcely
have been expected _ the Dr. is getting along very well too, but he
has experienced a total change of habits & society _ he is no longer
a visitor in the houses of his old friends _ and if his present wife
and young family do not make him happy _ he has no resources
left _ he teaches at Miss Lyman's boarding School. once a week _

Rachel sends you her best love, she has a most lovely babe
and is as proud of him, as she was of her first _ she is very
fat and looks as well as ever she did _ Ellen also presents
love _ how is Emma & Mary Seton? and when will the latter be
married _ Adieu, dearest & best _ May God bless you, with his
choicest blessings _ and believe me always most Affectionately

Your RGratz _

Feb: 11th.

[Address:]

Mrs. J. O Hoffman
New York

[Editors' Note: The year of this letter is based on the death date of Michael Keppeler in 1821.]