

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Fenno Hoffman

February 14, [1814]

Feb: 14th.

These impenetrable clouds My Dear Friend, make us look within for all our employments and amusements and your unanswer'd letter looks so [beseeching] from beneath the picture frame which it decorates that I cannot resist it _ altho I am not very well prepared to afford you the amusement I am seeking for myself _ you are but too well acquainted with chamber resources to expect much, tho ours are becoming much lighter by the amended health of our dear Sally. she was down stairs last week, but perhaps from fatigue, or seeing too much company found herself more [indisposed] _ and has not ventured from her chamber since Sunday week. Our city was never more gay than at present _ every thing seems to give occasion for feasting _ the Russian and the Dutchman, are your right polished and enlighten'd gentleman, and are the leaders of the multitude this week _ The sweedish ministers family completely the ton _ all our Ladies have their hair cut in the [Kanzon] style. and these pretty dutch girls put all our [...?] fashions out of countenance _ Mr. Sedgwick call'd to see us this morning and gives sad accounts of Dear Eliza's looks _ I hope she is not worse again _ or has any unpleasant symptoms to retard her recovery _ has she weaned her son? beg her to write us a few lines when she has leisure and give the best account of herself that she truly can.
[end of page]

I only saw Mr. Renwick in the street while in our city, he paid us a visit one morning _ but I happen'd to be performing the office of lamp-cleaning too much in Cinderellas morning dress to make my appearance in the parlour _ and thereby lost that pleasure _ You have no idea what progress I am making in housewifing _ Sally to be sure, has a thousand and one complaints to make on the subject _ but those who have not her skill _ give me due praise and I hope some day to shew you and your husband a fair speicemen if you would only give us such an opportunity _

Since you have Ann at home _ Phila. has no inducements to draw you _ or you manage so badly as to be fixed in your rocking-chair at the proper season for journeying _ Mrs. Hopkinson this morning added another son to her large family I believe this is her Eleventh son _ If Ann does not hasten to name her daughter its little cousin will be registered before her _ Maria means to gratify her filial feelings by calling her first-born after her mother. tho' she acknowledges it is rather an old title _ with us

however it is so common, and among the pretty young Quakeresse that Adelaid or Amanda does not figure more conspicuously in the pages of a novel, than Rebecca among the belles of Phila.

I hope your delicate little Harriet will be preserved from any further trials and the rest of your darlings be blest with health _ that you may have nothing to make your approaching confinement more irksome, or anxious than such periods usually are. pray keep your self free from colds _ and let us see you on our next visit at the head of your family receiving and dispensing that happiness which so gracefully circulates around you. when in your [end of page]

proper sphere _ Tell Mary her church beau Mr. Bradish is engaged to be married to Miss Helen Gibbs of Boston _ I fear she grew less devout _ or bestowed her smiles on Younger swains _ or he could not have deserted her _ how does our friend Rodman come on? does he succeed in the Law? we hear nothing of him _ nor of any of You _ remember us as a pair of recluses who do not go abroad. and never hear the sound of the trumpet of fame or [reunions?] _ and therefore must be indebted to your own report _ Is not Washington going to take unto him self a wife? it is a pity he should alone bear his blushing honors there is no young man more generally known & approved in this Country I suspect _ none surely, better calculated _ or more deserving the honors of a dignified station _ the women think it quite a necessary appendage to greatness _ since the Young hero of the Lake has appear'd among them _ do You ever see James P_? except now & then in the Analectic. we never recognize the least memorial of his existence I hope he does not still waste his precious hours with that silly girl _ who has so long playd the syren over his judgment _ it seems wonderful that any man possessing the friendship & enjoying an intimacy with the gentle Gertrude, should not abandon less dignified society _ particularly such a man as P_

If it be possible, My Dear Maria, write once more to me soon, and tell my Dear Ann to write when you cannot _ which will greatly oblige me _ she is assured of my affection _ present me to her Dr. Eliza, Mary & your Husband _ and to Mr. Nicholas

God Bless you, My dear. and preserve you through every danger _ embrace yr. children for me, & believe me ever Your RG [end of page]

Sally bids me send you her affectionate love _

[Address:]
Mrs. Ogden Hoffman
New York _

[Editors' Note: The year of this letter is based on the birth of Maria Redmen Nicholas's first daughter, Rebecca, in 1814.]