

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Fenno Hoffman

July 22, [1821]

Philadelphia July 22nd.

Affliction, my dear Maria _ dears us nearer to the hearts of our friends, and I claim the privilege of sympathizing in all yours. Mrs. Meredith informs me she found you at the death-bed of your venerable parent and also that the good old lady was closing her pious life in peace. and trusting to the reward of righteousness in the world of Spirits _ to you who have so often witnessed the departure of innocent and beloved objects _ a death scene has no terrors _ and when this excellent woman lays down the burthen of life, which she has borne so meekly however affection may grieve _ reason & religion must rejoice that her warfare is over and her triumph completed.

I hope she had the consolation of bestowing on her darling grand daughter her parting blessing and that Ann's presence may console her father for this deprivation _

I saw by the paper that your brother Edward had arrived from New Orleans _ Hyman came about a week after him, and Ben brought his wife and son nearly at the same time _ so I have quite a family gathering, and have only to regret the absence of Jo, who sailed about the 1st. of July for Gibraltar _ I wish my dear friend I could introduce you to my new sister, because I am sure she is a woman you would esteem & admire _ she has a fine mind highly cultivated _ and her manners the natural overflowings of good feelings & good sense _ many of our friends think she resembles our dear Harriet but I can perceive no other similarity, than delicacy of complexion & softness [end of page]

in the expression of her eyes _ she appears to be perfectly happy and to make my brother so and she is gaining the hearts of all his friends _ I was gratified to hear my brothers confirm the good accounts you gave of Edwards' success in business _ and as he has conquered the difficulties of climate hope his residence may be as pleasant as it is profitable, James' society will add to his comfort _ I heard some time ago that William McCall had been there with some intention of moving his family to N. Orleans _ you knew his wife as the beautiful Harriet Sitgreaves _ they have resided in Easton, [but] find farming a slow way of getting rich. they have a large family too Mrs. McCall is very delicate, and has lost her beauty _ I should not have recognized her again, had I not seen her with some of the family _

It is a bad plan to take a city belle, into the country _ they make

out badly in the roughness of a farm house _ and lose the graces without acquiring an equivalent but the lady in question has always been a most exemplary wife _ submitting to fortunes buffets and retaining all her sweetness of character _

I am really rejoiced that Ann is coming back into the world _ & hope she may be happy with you, until she journeys south _ Charles has been revelling in the favors of the Richmond circle _ and is quite a fashionable man _ and Ann's arrival greatly wished for _ the reputation of her agreeable talents has preceeded her which she will no doubt justify & extend _ his long residence there without her, is a subject of much wonder & animadversion _ the dear little girls must be quite companions for their mother _ I shall be delighted to see them all _ I have always loved Ann sincerely, tho' she did not always believe it _

as my wishes & feelings respecting Eliza Rodman are similar to those you express for her & your self I hope it will not be long before they are realized _ you must bring her to Phila. when you make me so happy as to bring your self _ or I shall claim her friendship should fortune first appoint our meeting in New York _ I have so [end of page]

often resolved to see you, since we last met that I begin to be a predestinarian on that subject _ and suspect the fates have interposed a decree against it _ my brother Hyman will probably see you ere long, he intends passing on to Saratoga before the season is over _ Rachel bids me present her affectionate love her two youngest boys are indisposed, they have been suffering with the summer complaints of children you must present me to your husband affectionately, and to Ann (if arrived) also to the dear children _ & Eliza R _ will not Edward look upon us this summer? he should get acquainted with the Phila. merchants _ which might be serviceable to him in the way of business _

you have been quite fortunate in having all your brothers and niece to visit you this summer _ Is George a successful farmer?. does his estate improve by his residence on [it?] if he enjoys health _ the fluctuations of his spirits [...] is constitutional to him. is not to be lamented _ you may expect him to grow more grave, as he has not so much excitement to cheerfulness in the country. as he formerly had when a young man in the city _

I heard last week that Washington Irving was engaged to be married, to an American Lady _ is there any truth in it?

Adieu My dearest Maria, may you enjoy the blessings of health & cheerfulness, with every other domestic comfort _ is the wish of your affectionate

RGratz

[Address:]
Mrs. J. O. Hoffman
New York

[Editors' Note: The year of this letter is based on the death date of Sarah Odgen Hoffman, Josiah
Ogden Hoffman's mother, in 1821.]