

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Fenno Hoffman

[March 1811]

Well my dear Maria since you have overcome so strong an aversion for the pleasure of hearing from me, I shall not play off the airs of retaliation and keep you longer from your well earned reward, hoping that your hydrophobia is cured I shall expect a letter written the next month, and should you have any longing within my reach I beg you will inform me of it with all speed. we are still to be found in the old place, if our friends will take the trouble of hunting _ us out from among the conostoga waggons which form an almost impenetrable phalanx around the door. some days a carriage could not possibly approach, and it is only on a Sunday we can give a stranger any idea of what was once the most beautiful part of Phila. we are making diligent search for a convenient house in Chesnut Street, but have not yet succeeded we wish to continue our near neighbourhood to Rachel which renders it somewhat more difficult _ as we seldom see a large & small house to rent in the same situation, we shall be obliged to determine on some place before May. as Mr. Moses must move then _ you will conclude from this that we are still in the Land of the living _ but to your next question I shall find it more difficult to give a satisfactory answer _ what am I doing _ alas! many things that are of no account _ and leaving undone that which I ought to do _ there are so many little things that engage ones attention daily and seem necessary to ones convenience & comfort that would never do to write down, [and] when the question is asked I am obliged to confess that I really pass my time in a very trifling manner. and shall have to answer to many wasted hours when called to my great account. Rachels children are my favourite toys and I play with them [full] as much as your little Charles does with his bow _ & hoop. then I read a little _ & sew a little _ & write a little _ and gossip a [end of page]

little for the good of the poor _ go about lecturing or spoiling the children of the different families, and fall pretty much into the habits of other old maids, not from any disposition to do mischief _ but simply & purely for the want of a family of my own to regulate. I have not yet acquired the talent of talking scandal, or railing at the follies & extravagances of my married friends and the world in general, but suppose they will come naturally in the course of time _ when wrinkled experience will teach me how blind and undiscerning my cotemporaries have been to neglect such a super-excellent individual as I shall no doubt be _

The whole town is mad after Cooke. yesterday morning at Ten O'clock seats in the boxes were to be [n...ed] for his first performance _ large premiums were offered to stout porters _ constables and negroes to obtain the best places, and they took their station at the door of The theatre, at ten on Friday night, watched the whole night, and by eight the next morning the press was so great, that they were obliged to open the door, for fear of its

being burst open. coats & hats & shirts were torn to peices in the struggle. and I fear tomorrow night the same scene of crowding, fainting, & suffocation will be exhibited here, that attended his first appearance in New York _

Ann tells me she has a seat in the stage box, and is anticipating great delight in her snug situation removed from the crowd of the pit _ Dennie is to sit in the orchestre _ and I hear it is in contemplation, to petition the manager to have Richard played in succession until all the play going people have been gratified _ so you see there is a prospect of Cookes being well recieved in Phila.

If your husband bends his course this way, why can't you accom-pany him? leave Charles to his studies and bring the other two with you _ they are now so healthy that you need not fear the journey. and this season is much more favourable than when you attempted it before _
[end of page]

I congratulate you on Washingtons return, as much on your own account as Miss Julias for I know she will not derive more advantage than you will pleasure from his presence _ he is in fine health _ and the Young Ladies here think him vastly improved in beauty _ he has made such a pet of Mary Jackson that she thinks it incumbent on her to praise him abundantly _ merely I suppose to shew her gratitude _ her heart being previously disposed of _

Give My love to dear Eliza, you say nothing about her _ and I am all impatience to hear when she is to be married, and a thousand &c of that interesting subject _ tell her to write, & write about her self and her concerns _ the girls all send affectionate love to you both _ Mrs. Hays' little Henry, has been very sick. we apprehended something of an [...] he has escaped the fever this morning _ the rest are well _ we [ha...] my name-sake in short cloths and think her greatly [important], she is very pretty and good, and smart _ but does not threaten to out shine Miriam Isaac is considerably improved since you saw him Washington thought him very handsome. Sister Etting continues my patient still, Phisick threatens to change the tube _ but he also flatters her, that he will remove it altoge-ther _ remember me affectionately to your husband _ embrace your children for me _ and believe me my dearest Maria ever most truly
your attached Friend RG

Mrs. Meredith & Isabella send their love _

Sunday morning _

[Address:]
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[Editors' Note: This letter is dated based on George Frederick Cooke's first performance of *Richard III* in Philadelphia in March 1811.]