

Rebecca Hamilton O'Beirne to Harriet Fenno Rodman

September 24, 1800

I have just come to [abuse] you, you
Pitiful [Ninny]

B F Hamilton

you know Beckys aversion to pity she could not bear that you should
consent to be Pitied _ that is [very] true nor shall [you ever Harriet]
Do not you think I am [very] impertinent to intrude _ this is so like me

Rebecca Gratz to Harriet Fenno Rodman

Philadelphia September 2[4th.], 1800

Begin Here

_ You have drawn Your Character my dear Harriet but Others
have drawn it with more justice _ has taken it in another view, have loved,
esteem'd, admired, but never thought of Pity. so my friend do not pretend to ans-
wer in my home to such questions unless you first take a view of my heart &
opinions where you will find Harriet Fenno drawn by the hand of Friendship & Truth
and too firmly fixed [~~there~~], to be moved by your artfully displaying shades which
does not change one feature, unless to make it more interesting and amiable _
your Wit shall return, it was never injudiciously used. and your friends
rejoiced that you possessed it, if you will become sensor I beg you find a more faulty
object and do not deform one whom all the world finds it necessary to
commend.

The post has just arrived, it brought your letter to Rachel
and one from Sally, they both have affected me, I feel very melancholy
but hope your wishes may be answerd and your dear Brother speedily re
stored to health. Rachel is more anxious than ever to be with you, I sincerely
pray she may find you all well & happy. the situation of Baltimore is
more dreadful than you can Imagin, Sally says every day some distressful
tale reaches them, her letters are tinctured with the gloom the times inspire,
we know not when to expect them. Mrs. Etting is ill at [their] house &
my Sisters health very delicate, her mind has never gain'd its natural
tone since the loss of her darling Daughter, and the calamity she is in part
obliged to witness makes too deep an impression. Mrs. Ettings & Miss Kennedys
distress opens a fresh those wounds, which time had [not] yet closed,
What a World is this! How changeable! when I was in Baltimore I thought
it did not contain a happier woman than my Fanny _ surrounded by
a doting Husband & four lovely children _ her only Girl, for whom her active
mind was ever planning scenes of happiness is snatched from her and her for-
titude is [unequal] to the stroke, she thought she divided her affection impartially
but her loss has convinced her, how large a share was bestowed [on] Isabella.

you ask my opinion of St Leon his character is very natural the Old Man struck on his ruling passion _ Ambition and rather than be thought under the direction of his wife, he accepted the gift which he knew must destroy his happiness by lessening the confidence in which he lived with his family _ Margurite was the most perfect woman I ever read of. St Leon was under the greatest Obligations to her. after her death, I felt less interest in [end of page]

his fate, and after his transformation I could not realize the scenes in which he was engaged _ his visits to his daughters & afterwards his encounter with Charles appear equally unnatural. did you ever meet with such a character before as Bethlem Gabor? I cannot discover the authors design, could misfortune or injuries convert a virtuous man, into such a monster? my feelings & Opinions underwent the changes you describe _ and I concluded the Philosophers Stone and the Elixer of [Life] by no means desirable. I would rather Die [like] Margurite, than live like St. Leon.

I have not seen R H, since the visit I mentiond, he apologized for not coming sooner. I gave him a general invitation which he said he would profit by, and asked permission to bring a Brother with [whom] I was not acquainted, which granted, he took his leave, & has never made his appearance since.

Becky Hamilton [came] up _ stairs to me Just now _ she saw the word Pity in your letter I read her what it aluded to, and she took the pen from me to write what you see on the other side. her spirits are very good generally. we see her every day. a few Evenings agoe we had a complete romp _ SEwing came here and Becky assisted to tie him to [a] chair we accomplished it _ gave him snuff and were wicked enough to laugh at him. when he had not the power of defending himself _ My mother was out [at] Sisters _ Becky spent the day here, she was disposed to be gay _ and we could not have found any body so easy to conquer. She is gone with Mr. Lysle to dine at the Woodlands, SE _ has finished Beckys Character & given it to Rachel, he brought Marias at the same time, but I do not think he has discovered as [much] penetration, [as when] he sketched yours _ he does not seem to have found out all their qualities, tho he does justice to Marias disposition. he says of B_ that she is ever varying yet ever uniform _ lively without levity & serious without despondency _ but you shall see it all when you come & I will not give you it by little Lines, 'tis too long to copy in a letter. besides which _ perhaps he will correct some parts which Rachel told him, he erre'd in.

I would not ask him for mine, because, tho' I should like to know his opinion yet in such a peice of writing tis necessary to be more candid than polite _ and I fear he would feel awkward about complying. or else refuse _ which I dont feel disposed to hazard,

My mother tenders you her affectionate love. Sister Hays begins to think of returning to town & means next week to make preparations. The weather has been rainy these two days, we have not been able to [end of page]

learn weither our friend has saild but we have not seen her _ and

I hope she thinks with you, My Dear Harriet _ “that Promises are not made to be broken,” particularly those that sink deep in the heart of a friend, to any other person it would appear strange that we who feel so much interested should remain ignorant but you know the situation we are in with her, and will easily explain it _ would to God I could explain why we are so _ May she be Happy _ and when the idea of Becky Gratz crosses her mind when she thinks of the years of our intimacy _ I hope the sentiments of former times will also seem and that she will do me the justice to believe my faithful Affection will never vary _ Five Years is a long long time _ but Providence is ever watchful over the Good _ And in every clime alike will protect & Bless her. _ every time she has been at Sea she has unfortunately been in a situation that requires the [greatest] indulgence _ this is again the case _ a person who lived with Mrs. Knowles (her sister) and for whom they have a great esteem, is going with her, she is an elderly woman very much attached to Sally _ the captains wife also accompani[ed] them, & a Friend of Mr. [Markoes] which [...] make the passage more agreeable.

Your watch-chain will no doubt be acceptable, I have had no opportunity of telling Curtis of your intention but will undertake to deliver it safe when you send it _ it puts me in mind of poor James C _ do you remember learning me to make one for him, the worthy fellow is at sea and I dare say _ [when] he looks at it recollects the Evening you fasten’d it to his watch. high ho! Harriet how are our friends scatterd o’er the world, perhaps too in a few months, I may have a Brother on the wide [Ocean] Hyman talks of going to the East Indias in the spring I endeavour to persuade myself he is in jest, but fear he really intends going and mentions it now, to familiarize us to the idea. You my dear Friend can tell how painful it is. when did you hear from Charles? Your Brother told us he was much pleased with his situation. I sincerely hope you may all have occasion to be satisfied with it, & that prosperity & Happiness may attend him.

Give my best love to my dear Maria, Eliza, and your worthy Brothers I hope when you next write _ you will tell us of his recovery remember me to George also, & the good [Cathy] _ when do you expect to have the sweet Boys & Caroline home?

Sally desires me to mention her to you with affection and hopes to [end of page]

find you here on her return, which will be delayed on account of the fever in Baltimore, I have not words to tell Rachels delight at receiving your letter this morning _ her tears exprest much she bids me say she will answer it very soon _ and sends you a great deal of Love

God Bless you my dear Harriet take a large share, of Esteem, Love, Affection Good wishes, and all that is most worthy in the heart of

Becky Gratz

[Address:]
Miss Harriet Fenno

New-York