

Poplar Forest August 24<sup>th</sup> 1819

My dear Mama

In spite of the desperate condition of Col. N's affairs, I cannot help hoping that my dear Grand-father will escape, or at least that he will receive some indemnification. The 20,000 \$ as you observe would <sup>still</sup> leave a large estate behind, if it was simply a loss of 20,000 \$, but in times like these, to raise such a sum, you must sell property perhaps to the value of 100,000 or even more. This is the point of view in which this unfortunate transaction strikes me, and the possible misfortune which haunts my imagination. Grand Papa's spirits were most visibly affected, when he heard the news, although it came to him, softened by a solemn promise from Col. N. himself, that he should not lose a dollar. He placed, I think, considerable reliance on this promise, but the possibility of such an overthrow of his affairs, <sup>(as the forced payment of so large a sum would produce)</sup> made a deep impression on him, he said very little, but his ~~countenance~~ countenance expressed a great deal. He mentioned the circumstance of the endorsement to me (which I was before perfectly ignorant of) and also, Col. N's promises. I last night he received a second letter <sup>renewing</sup> ~~confirming~~ them most solemnly, and also one from Jefferson confirming him in his hopes of escape. and whatever Jefferson says I cannot help confiding in, he is so rarely mistaken in any of his judgements. Grand Papa has mentioned these things to <sup>Constance &</sup> myself, probably in confidence, and not for worlds would I breathe a syllable to any one but you, for in my utter ignorance of business ~~and its intricacies~~, I should fear to express my hopes, or rather the ground of those hopes, lest its being generally known such a promise had been made, might prove the means of rendering their

judgments more uncertain - silence is at least the safest plan, for no harm can be done by that. Besides that I should not think myself justifiable in repeating any information Grandpapa might give me on the subject of his affairs, out of the immediate circle of my family.

I have always considered Col. M. as a man of the highest honor, and yet I can scarcely reconcile his present situation with my ideas of honor - it is impossible he should have been ~~unacquainted~~ ignorant of the precipice on which he stood, and yet to suppose that he ~~would~~ has involved such numbers in his ruin, merely to put off the evil day; and to delay for a short time a fate he ~~must~~ <sup>must</sup> have known inevitable; this conduct is worse than dishonorable, and I will not, cannot believe him capable of it - it would shake my general confidence in mankind; I should never again know whom to trust if a life of unsullied rectitude is no guarantee against the commission of such acts. But at present all my thoughts center in my dear Grandfather; let his old age be secured from the storms which threaten us all, and I would willingly agree to abide their peltings. I am almost ready to for my ideas of right and wrong on this single point; to believe every thing honorable which can save him - every thing base, vile & dishonorable, that tends to obscure the evening of such a life.

You say nothing of poor Lane, nor how his fears there accumulated distresses; nor whether he is acquainted with the Siroc influence which his father has exercised, and the desolation which marks his path. But of this no more, I had rather think and talk of almost any thing else.

Cornelia and myself have had our visit to Bedford rendered less comfortable than usual, by a variety of circumstances, and we look forward with more than usual satisfaction to the period of our return - Grandpapa proposes to leave Poplar Forest the evening of the 12<sup>th</sup> and we shall dine at Monticello Tuesday the 14<sup>th</sup>. I look forward to my long fall visit with some anxiety; I do not know whether my desire of improvement will prove sufficiently strong to bear me through this melancholy retirement. However the affection for my dear Grandfather which

makes a voluntary exile of me, will perhaps render me a Deerfield  
 one. In spite of all interruptions, I have done about four times as  
 much as I have ever <sup>been able to do</sup> done in the same space of time, at Monticello.  
 I am reading the 5<sup>th</sup> volume of Taulageon, and have some hopes of  
 finishing it before I return. I read sometimes as much as a hundred  
 lines of Virgil in the day, besides a good grammar lesson and Latin  
 exercise, and by only devoting Sunday morning to the Spanish verbs I  
 have made good progress in them. If I only had a piano, that I might  
 not whilst improving in other things, be falling off these.

We have received great kindness and attention from our neigh-  
 -bours, particularly Mrs Walker, who is constantly sending us little pre-  
 -sents. About once a week we see <sup>arrive</sup> a tidy mulattoe girl, with an apron  
 as white as snow, & a nice little basket with a napkin thrown over it,  
 in her hand. Sometimes, fruit of different kinds, melons, apples, ripe  
 peaches &c. then again vegetables, and on one occasion cake and  
 sweetmeats. You will laugh to hear that Lamb has become such  
 a rarity, that we were greatly pleased to receive from the same  
 kind old lady, a quarter of one, very fat and tender. We have  
 lived altogether on chickens, being unable to keep fresh meat for  
 want of ice. We get snow enough from Mr Radford's, (for which  
 we send every other day) to give us hard butter and cool wine.  
 Whilst Israel <sup>Correlie</sup> and myself were ~~being~~ butless, Grand papa insisted  
 on our using that ~~frigid~~ cooler, (refrigerator, I believe he calls it,)  
 which wasted our small stock of ice, and gave us butter that run  
 about the plate so that we could scarcely catch it, and wine  
 above blood-heat. But on Burwell's recovery, he soon scouted  
 it, (to use Aunt M's favorite expression) and we have been quite  
 comfortable ever since. We are not as you may suppose, able to keep  
 up the traffic of presents with Mrs W. but some bottles of red wine,  
 crackers, and a part of our nice south Carolina rice, have served to  
 show her that our wills were good; and when I began to speak of  
 the old lady, it was principally that I might ask you to send  
 by Henry something for us to give the maid who trudges through  
 all weathers to bring her mistress's presents. Money I suppose is too scarce  
 an article to render that practicable, but any thing which you think  
 will do; we have nothing with us but necessary clothes, and I have  
 felt quite ashamed to dismiss her so often unrewarded. There are in  
 fact two of them, but ~~one~~ <sup>Original manuscript from the University of Virginia</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>than</sup> the other.

Grand-papa wants to breakfast at Warren on the morning  
of the day we reach home. will the family be there?

Did Mary neglect to ask Browne for the crayer, has he none to give  
or did he forget the request. however it is now too late, and was never  
of any importance, being merely the gratification of a whim.

I have written quite regularly to Aunt K. and indeed I  
have devoted more than half of one precious day in every week  
to writing to my friends.

Give a great many kisses to Geordie, I am so much afraid  
the cool weather has made his mammy pull his frock up on the  
shoulders, so that I shall not see them naked, the first thing, when  
I arrive.

Adieu my dearest mother, give a great deal of love to Papa and  
the girls, (including Aunt M. & Mrs. Trist) Aunt K. is not with you,  
and believe in the constant affection of your daughter.

Grand-papa has almost entirely recovered  
from his rheumatism.

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