

X Washington Dec 14th 1821.

I have always observed my dearest Mother, that your letters have a secret charm, a spell, by which vapours and blue devils are speedily expelled; in whatever mood I may be, to hear from you is like a dose of opium to an hysterical patient; I am at once animated & revived, & things & persons appear in a more amiable point of view, my prospects brighten, and my hopes prevail - yesterday I felt rather dismally, the day was gloomy, and cold, a mingled fall of snow and rain, kept every one within doors. Aunt N - was out of spirits & of course a little out of humour, for you know that in the Randolph family there is no separating these states of mind; she had been very unwell a few days before, and the first symptoms of a relapse bewed themselves in the unusual asperity with which she spoke of men and things. She was evidently feverish and threatened with serious indisposition, all these things combined as you may suppose could produce no very exhilarating effect on me a poor prisoner, particularly as I was detained from all employment, saving work I could not see to do except at the cold window, and reading or writing would have been a want of relish for Aunt N -'s society & conversation, just in this state of affairs your dear welcome letter arrived and (sorry as I was to hear of the mischief I have done in a certain quarter,) it gave me a sensation of gladness, of joy, which it is not very often my lot to experience; it invigorated me so completely that when Aunt N - became really ill and obliged to send for a physician I still felt light & happy in comparison to what I had done a few hours before. She is confined to her bed to day and I am writing from her sick room. Her complaint was a violent pain in the side accompanied by fever, and I should have been considerably alarmed if I had not felt a conviction that it was an affection of the stomach, and I have been confirmed in this belief by the nature of Dr Heath's prescription, and by the sang froid with which he behaves - he is however certainly very sick and I am not without uneasiness on her account, he himself seems convinced that she is in great danger. I have tried to soothe & reason her out of this idea but there is no reasoning with nerves, and she resents as an injury any attempt to bring about an uncomfortable state of being.

so I am ~~fair~~ to let her repeat that he is sure she shall die, although I am by no means unprepared with the idea that she is in danger of any thing more than suffering and discomfort, for some time to come.

I expected you would all be somewhat curious on the subject of my "unknown lover" and intended to keep you for a while in suspense, I knew that when once a disclosure was made the bubble would burst.

Pertinent mates, rather ridiculous men.

This rising Stephen who can do nothing but make indifferent love and play a still more indifferent game of chess and who two days after the adventure of the song and just before leaving Washington, came to a formal declaration of his position, at the same time acknowledging he should find some difficulty in maintaining a wife, and postponing the positive demand of my hand until his return from South America where he is going post haste to make a fortune in less time than ever a fortune was made by man, who has no wish but to lay his hands of silver and ingots of gold his precious stones & pearls of price, and all the precious commodities with which he proposes to return full laden, at the feet of the most charming of the sex. If in the mean time some happier man steps out with a fortune ready made, and with per of gold writes not his own name upon this fair blank paper, which it would seem has a sort of repellent quality forbidding the approach of any metal less precious. This man I say (after a paroxysm as long if not quite as eloquent as any of Cicero's or Chancet's) is no less and no greater a person than a certain William Taylor of Norfolk brother to that Gen Taylor of long-winded memory who married the elder sister of Elizabeth Lindsay, & was formerly in the habit of visiting us at Monticello, a greater bore even than his brother - this is placed the N. Y. upon the seal which the officious zeal of my knight errant clapped on my letter to Corelia. I know nothing earthly of this man, he may have been a shoe-blacker or a black-leg for ought I am aware of, and I therefore consider his address as highly impertinent & derogatory to my dignity - however he is upon the most intimate footing in Col. Freeman's family who was for a long time the officer in command on the Norfolk station and should therefore know "who is who". I do not think Susan Ervin is quite as fond of me as he appeared before but this may be fancy - the whole family pay me the most friendly attention - Col. Freeman to be sure is as rough and rugged as a rupian bear but he seems fond of me, says I am the best little girl in the world, just as good as it is in the nature of woman to be which to be sure is always a doubtful kind of goodness. That I have a pair of the sweetest saucy ~~little~~ eyes he ever saw, and he makes no manner of doubt I have done a great deal of mischief with them, and am right sorry not to have done still more. Nicholas told me I should find him a rough old soldier, but true to the core. He speaks often of grandpa and always with an acknowledgement of obligation. He says Mr. Daffey was the cause of his being promoted. He had in I know not to what

alludes particularly to Mrs. Freeman says she was of a Quaker family in Philadelphia that at the time of their yellow fever Grand-papa inhabited a country house on the banks of the Schuylkill or Delaware I forgot which. But he returned to Virginia and allowed her father or uncle (I forgot again) to inhabit the house, to which the family removed from the infected air of the city; and this she remembers with gratitude.

I have been miserably disappointed in the Vails, and yet I know not why. The girls are certainly accomplished, and so are the young men & they all sing and play and dance and draw wonderfully well, and every body says they are charming, and I echo charming, and yet there are no people whose society gives me less pleasure, whether it is that as they have sweet among them gay and frivolous and learned to speak English from their associates, they have acquired only the common-places language of the fashionables & are unable to express any other than common-places ideas or whether with all their accomplishments, they are deficient in the charm of mind, I cannot tell. To me also, they appear all show and outside work, and so slippery wretches that there is no laying hold of them. They all appear cast in the same mould both as to mind and manners and whether this resemblance is so great as to deceive with regards to their persons or does really exist in matter as well as manner, but I have never yet learned to distinguish the girls from one another and the men from the women only by the difference of pantaloon and petticoat. Constance is younger & prettier in person, and devoid of a haughty & more sartorial temper than the others, and I have been able to dispense other company - when I add to this that they never give me any of merit, you will readily imagine that the girls generally associate with their society.

I have heard nothing of the Trist since the letter which Nicholas wrote the day after his arrival at Wheeling, except through the Vails. Lieutenant Vail left Washington two days after N. & B. whom he joined at Wheeling, and he wrote to his friends here, that they were to leave that place together in a short time after the date of his letter, which was Nov. 29th.

I have never yet heard the price of my bonnet & coat, I enclosed a 50\$ note to Gary Asper and begged that they would let me know how much more would be necessary as he was to have an evening dress made for me besides, but I have not heard a word from her since and feel quite uneasy about the fate of my note the receipt of which has not as yet been acknowledged. I am also afraid I shall not have my dress in time for Mde de N.'s great party next Wednesday, which will be my first appearance in public, since that English Bruden excluded me from his ~~coffee~~ ^{coffee} den. - my pelisse is very pretty indeed but I am afraid exceedingly delicate, it hath spots & rags rough, and I fear can only be used on great occasions - the bonnet is pure white & will stand no service although it is very tatty & perch-looking, but these things are between ourselves. The coat has been very much admired; a young pert clerk son to post master Monroe (the Whitcroft breed) said to a gay flashy grocer's wife, "there goes Col. Freeman's carriage and a very handsome lady in it; who is she?" I do not know who she is, returned the grocer's lady, but I know he has got on the neatest pelisse that ever I saw" the woman is absolutely void of sentiment, said the clerk, "in a blustering air, to think of her

taking about the "philippe?" but letters judges that Mme l'Epinere have been
of the same opinion touching the comparative merits of my person and of my
poets — Dec. 15th. I had written thus far last night when I was interrupted
by a visit from my friend Mr Dix who would really be a charming fellow were it
not for his extreme absence of mind and suspicion of profound melancholy.
Aunt R is decidedly better past a very good night and admits that she
will probably recover, particularly as she is preparing to rise after having taken

✓ Bk

Mrs Thomas M. Randolph

Markieville
Charlottesville Post Office
Virginia

Marie
Charlottesville
Post Office
Virginia



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her breakfast — I received another invitation from Mrs Senator Brown to a
party at her house on Monday — I mentioned in writing to Jane, my despair at
not having had it in my power to accept the first — my spirits rose at the
thought of slipping my prison bars, and once more making my entrance into the
fashionable world — adieu my dearest best loved mother so long as I think
you will pardon my egotism, I have no pleasure so great as writing to you
a great deal of love to all the family, a thousand kisses for Sep. & Geordie
& for yourself the assurance of my devoted attachment.