Boston Oct. 15. 1830

It is so long since I have written to any of you, dearest Virginia, that I am in debt to you all, and considering you as the eldest of the family (married women being always older than single) I shall ~~begin~~ address my first letter to you. Mama is absent on a visit to her friend Mrs Barrell at Dedham, and does not propose to return for a day or two, the weather is delightful, and she will have too much botanizing & herbalising with two such plant-lovers as Mr & Mrs Barrell to allow her time for writing, you will therefore hear from me that she is well and talking of returning to Washington early in November. I am very anxious to detain her a little longer, the whole month of November is pleasant for travelling, not too cold nor at all stormy, and I am just beginning to enjoy her society. when she first arrived I was in a state of such intense and ~~[illegible]~~ constant suffering that, although it was consoling to me to know that she was under the same roof, I was incapable of conversing with her or of doing any thing to render her visit ~~a~~ pleasant to her ~~one~~. the birth of my twins left me prostrate in strength and spirit, and I am just beginning to feel ~~again~~ something like returning health. I am still as feeble as a child unable to go into company, and much taken up with the care of my young family; now is just the time when mama's society is invaluable to me, & much as you miss her, I am sure you will not repine at being a little while longer separated from her particularly as you know the season is just approaching when she must return, & ~~that~~ a week or two more or less will count a great deal more to me, who see her so seldom, than it can do to you, who have the great happiness of living in the same house. You may also rely upon my anxiety for her safety as a certain pledge that I shall not attempt to detain her longer than I believe she may remain without any danger of a winter journey. George returns with her, & when once I part ~~with~~ from them no member of my own family ~~will be~~ remains within ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ four ~~&~~ five hundred ~~[illegible]~~ miles of me. I may look round & say with Logan "there runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature", at least within my reach, except my dear children who are the more precious to me for ~~the~~ ~~[illegible]~~ being all that I have. But it makes my heart sink when I think how many & how helpless ~~they are~~. my babies are five little creatures under five years old; what a care and what a responsibility!— my twins are fine boys, strong healthy & animated - we have not found names for them as yet. one will be called Jefferson but we cannot decide for the other. I should prefer myself either a family name like Cary or a northern name. I had rather have no political ideas connected with my boys. Jefferson & Madison, Jefferson & Adams are liable to this objection. Dr Franklin is so much ~~regarded~~ looked upon as a philosopher & a ~~man~~ of science, ~~that~~ it leaves his character as a statesman & a politician more in the back ground than generally happens with our great ~~men~~. if therefore a great name is to be given to my boy I ~~[illegible]~~ believe I should ~~not~~ prefer Franklin. he was a northern man, and at the same time a friend of my dear grand-father's. Joseph sometimes thinks of Winthrop, which I should like very well, we have likewise talked of Lucius Cary but time & the necessity of baptism will soon decide.

The arrival of these young gentlemen has compelled me to add a domestic to my establishment, in the person too of a wet-nurse, the most troublesome of all inmates. I am tolerably supplied, having a country girl, strong healthy & good-humored, whose fall from virtue is a less grievous offence in my eyes than the airs & insolence of an honest woman. "respect & honour wait the wedded dame, August her deed and sacred be her name" but I am better satisfied with ~~the~~ humble frailty than I should be with the proud chastity of one of these same august matrons.

Mama tells me that you propose to diminish your household just as I am, most unwillingly, compelled to augment mine. to keep three servants only, with your large family is quite a yankee plan; few families here except the more wealthy have more, but you will be obliged, dear Virginia, to adopt yankee habits if you follow yankee fashions. the great art is, not only to dispense with personal attendance but to learn not to make work. the women should never be called from their regular ~~work~~ business to do a second time in the day what they have already done. for example a chambermaid here, having put her rooms in order in the morning is never called on again. the young ladies of the family if they put a thing out of place take care to set it back again. their work & books are never left about, the beds never lolled on, bonnets, shawls &c always put away as soon as taken off, chairs set back in their places, shreds & patches picked from the carpet, &c &c &c. moreover the girls dress each other, and even when going out take care to require from the servants, no running about from place to place & leave no clothes tossed about no drawe open, combs, pins, curls, ribbons, trinkets here & there on the dressing ta shoes in the middle of the floor, and so forth. these admonitory remarks apply less to you, who have both method and arrangement and go less into the gay world, than to the girls. Mama fears, I think, with reason, that they will without being aware of it themselves, strive to unite two incompatible things, the domestic economy of the north, with the habits & manners of the south. where there are slaves it is no matter how much work you make, there are always plenty of people all the better for having something to do, and who are infallibly idle if you do not find them employment. I make no excuse for thrusting my advice upon you, my dear sister, I am always anxious to give you the benefit of my experience whenever I can, to spare you the pain of earning it for yourselves. ——— I have no space to speak of the fashions, nor is Boston a good place to learn them. the dresses here are still made bag fashion, plaited all round except just behind where they are gathered, & just before where they are plain. the New York ladies whom we have seen lately, have surplice fronts, generally with a cape rolling back, & what they call chemisette handkerchiefs, made high in the neck for morning, & low in the evening when they only shew in front when the surplice comes to a point. the morning handkerchief buttons on the shoulder is made sometimes plain sometimes of strips of inserting work or lace with bands of muslin laid in one or two wide tucks. about the neck they finish with a collar, frills, a little scarf, or what you please. the last prints have large Canton combs in the hair. I hope C—s can be mended. the sleeves are pretty much the same, some smaller from the elbow, a few still large & loose, or confined just above the elbow with a band. farewell my dear sister, love to all & kisses to your sweet children. my tins, as Bess calls them, are beginning to cry together, as they usually do, I suppose to keep each other in countenance. I must go and see about them and bid you an affectionate good night. E. W. C.

Mrs Nicholas P. Trist
Washington
D.C.

10