Boston May 13. 1828

It is long, dearest Virginia, since I have written to you, because I thought you heard regularly from mama & Cornelia & would therefore know all that was interesting to you to know concerning your friends here; but now I shall again make a regular correspondent, for, not for worlds, would I have the intercourse between myself & my family interrupted, & although when there were other means of keeping it up I was content to sacrifice the great pleasure of writing ~~[illegible]~~ with my own hand, to the imperious claims which my domestic duties make upon every hour & moment of my time, yet now I consider none of these claims more sacred than the duty of writing to my friends. one of my greatest pleasures it must always be. I need not tell you how dreadfully I miss mama, or how I am reminded of her absence at by every thing. after being for eighteen months either under the same roof with, or within three miles ride of her, it makes me feel desolate indeed to be removed to a distance that now seems greater than ever. I did all I could to detain her, (not however from selfish motives, for unwilling as I was to part from her, yet I thought often & sadly of your feelings at so long a separation,) but because I conscientiously believed that her return was the worst thing that could happen to herself. the temporary relief she has enjoyed from the bitter thraldom under which she has ~~[illegible]~~ suffered so long, must make any thing like a renewal of it most pernicious to her ~~[illegible]~~ peace, & although I hope and believe things can never return to their worst state, yet I fear she has still much to suffer. but I commit her to the only certain protection that we can any of us ~~have~~. & be ~~[illegible]~~ of; and my confidence in providence increasing with my experience of life & its changes I feel now after all my disappointments a security that, ten years ago, the fresh spirit & sanguine temper of youth would not have afforded me.

I have been writing with Bess sitting on my knee & fighting with the pen and paper, & now that she is gone I fear the morning is too far spent to allow of my letter's going by this day's mail, but I will try still to finish it in time as it is the last good mail day of this week. the pictures arrived safe, but they are in a sad state, from the dilapidations of time & the still more ruthless handling of Mr Coffe his brush has been traced on several of them where after scratching off the old paint he has daubed on new. I fear the sale will be a poor one, & yet they say it is likely to be better here than elsewhere, I know not how this is, but I apprehend it cannot be good any where from the ~~situation~~ state of the pictures. Joseph had Stewart's profile likeness of Grandpapa brought ~~here~~ to this house that I might have the pleasure of seeing it after so long a separation from it, and he intends to have it copied by one of the best artists here. It is an incomparable portrait, and the only likeness ever taken of him I think that gives a good idea of the original. it is somewhat injured by dust & flies, but not materially.

I cannot bear to think of the bare walls at Monticello, and I dread the effect they will produce on Mama, in my dreams I sometimes revisit my home, but it is strange that I never find myself within the house, I am always wandering through the grounds or walking on the terrace, & the weather is always delightful. I hear the gentle breathing of the wind through the long branches of the willows, & see them wave slowly, whilst on the other side the aspen leaves quiver & tremble with a rustling as distinct as ever delighted my waking ear. the sky is bright & the glorious prospect lays open before me. I seem to have 'leaped a gulf' of fifteen years, to have retraced my steps, and losing sight of all present ties, forgetting even my children, to be what I was at sixteen. nothing is a surer proof to me that climate enters very much into our pleasures of association & recollection, & exercises a decided influence over our imagination, than ~~feeling the~~ the effect produced on my feelings ~~by~~ by a bright southern day, whether it comes to me in a dream, or, more rarely still, when a few of the most adventurous of those birds of passage straggle

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Original manuscript from the University of Virginia

so far north as Boston; ~~[illegible]~~ these days ~~[illegible]~~ are more apt to remind~~ing~~ me of past times & recall~~ing~~ the events & feelings of my girlhood, than almost any thing else.

I have heard from mama on the road, but shall feel anxious very anxious, to know how she is on her arrival & how she bears her actual return to scenes & circumstances which are too much changed in some respects & too little in others. Mary or yourself must write to me immediately & let me know what you think of her health & the state of her feelings. George is very well, but anxious to receive a letter directed to himself. Joseph has been to see him three or four times & finds him cheerful, playing with his companions. Mama will tell you all about my pets. they are beginning already to be companions for each other, eat their bread & milk out of the same porringer, & roll over on the carpet together. they shew no disposition as yet to quarrel but are very affectionate & fond. Ellen makes a piteous [illegible] whenever I speak to her about her grandmother, & if I press the subject at all she ends with a flood of tears and a loud scream. you may tell mama that [illegible] Baby as distinctly as possible, this word & papa form her whole vocabulary but she understands every thing. she is passionately fond of dress & the bitterest taunt you can make her is to call her shabby. she bears a variety of terms of reproach with great philosophy, but this dreadful attack upon her costume she cannot stand. Miss Edgeworth would discover that this proceeded from some deep & radical defect in her education.

I have just received a letter from mama dated Baltimore, and she is probably near home by this time. I wrote to her a week ago & directed to Baltimore & the care of Dabney Carr. I hope he will forward my letter. farewell dearest Virginia. I shall write to Mary very soon, perhaps this week, & then regularly to each in succession as I used to do when I first left you, & as you ~~have~~ so kindly ~~done~~ did ~~since~~ whilst mama & Cornelia ~~[illegible]~~ were here, without regard to my silence. I sent little Mat a frock, & an apron, & a pair of garden mittens by Mr Higginson which I suppose you have received by this me, & also a gingham frock by mama. I was much disappointed in this. I paid a high price for it as a London gingham, which it really is & very soft, but not near so pretty made up as in the piece. the eighteen-penny calicoes which I sent Mary & yourself are now worn in the street here & much admired by the gentlemen. once more adieu,

Mrs Nicholas P. Trist
Monticello
near Charlottesville
Albemarle
Virginia

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BOSTON
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much love to all. I don't know how you are in respect to ~~climate~~ weather but I am hovering over a fire. I shall write to Cornelia (whose letter I have received) & to Mama very soon.

most affectionately yours.
E. W. C.

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