

Monticello Dec. 27<sup>th</sup> 1821

Brother Jeff sets off on Saturday my dear Virginia and I will remember my promise of writing to you first altho I dare say mama has written to you if she has written to either of you I have not seen her since you left home but heard from her today & am to send the horses down to morrow as she wishes to come up for a short time but not to stay I believe I do not know ~~when~~ she intends to leave sister Jane entirely as she says nothing of it in her note of today tho grandpapa told me she was to return home Saturday. sister Ellen has written Cornelia a splendid account of the de Meville ball which brother Jeff will carry down with him & I do not think G. will quarrel with me for writing you this dull letter when she gets such an amusing one at the same time for indeed I have nothing to tell you ~~about~~ this Christmas has passed away hitherto as quietly as I wished & a great deal more so than I expected I have not had a single application to write papers or done or seen any of the little disagreeable business that we generally have to do & except catching the sound of ~~a~~ fiddle yesterday on my way to the smokehouse & getting a glimpse of the fiddler as he stood with half closed eyes & head thrown back with one foot keeping time to his <sup>own</sup> scraping in the midst of a circle of attentive & admiring auditors I have not seen or heard any thing like Christmas gambols & what is yet more extraordinary have not ordered the death of a single turkey or helped to do execution on a solitary mince pie so you see you



lost nothing by being on the road this week & you have gained something by not arriving in Richmond till the end of it since I am told it is the most disagreeable part of the year to the white population of the place in town however I am told it is generally the beginning of the gay season & I heartily wish you may find it so in this instance for I long to hear that you are embarked full sail upon the sea of dissipation leaving awkwardness melancholy moods & the blues far behind and giving all your ears to the winds prepare to run the career of gaiety, pleasure and mad spirits without knowing either check or stop till you have run your destined course & are obliged sad names! of fate to come back in to the country bringing with you good looks sound nerves & a hoard of pleasant recollections enough to last you through many a dull winter in college marble yet to come all this is nonsense I know but I have really nothing else to talk about but what comes out of my own impoverished brain & that is not likely to be made much better by the life I lead & the functions I perform which are exactly such as a machine might be made to perform with equal success locking & unlocking doors pouring out tea & coffee & in the interim plying my needles not with any great diligence tho, next week I shall turn over a new leaf & try if I can not employ myself better or to more purpose in some way or other the only thing that emburaper me & prevents my organizing my plan of industry at once & falling to work, is the uncertainty of my prospects which are not I am afraid to be very quickly settled if it were only decided & at once whether I am to be a sharer in the scene of action I have just been describing to you or to stay out the winter here



with no other companions than my books & household  
employment where I shall be "à la carte" to improve  
& to learn Latin which grand papa has just been recom-  
= ending to me. in either case I could bring myself to  
submit to my fate with becoming fortitude but tis the  
uncertainty which torments me <sup>but</sup> you know when a body  
is pulled different ways by two contrary powers neither of  
which are of force <sup>sufficient</sup> to conquer the result is that the whole  
stands still so it is with me not being able to decide  
whether I am to devote myself to my books or my needlework  
Laziness has taken the decision in to her own hands & has so  
far got the better of me that as yet I have done nothing  
tho with as little temptation to be idle situated as you know I am  
as even my body had in the world. Aunt Marks is much admired  
and delighted with the opportunity "de faire l'importun de sa  
maison" fancies "green gosling" as she takes me to be "in the  
house" could not go on without her presence & judicious  
interposition nay so persuaded is she of its efficacy that she  
would not let me drink my tea without her advice or trust  
to my doing it at all without being told & then so eloquent  
so eloquent as she can be such matter of ex-capatiation as she  
has contrived to find from the appearance of two lean ducks  
at our board to the great discredit of my management but  
I it seems am not the only sufferer by them for I heard Ben  
exclaim in rather an impatient tone "I wish Aunt Marks  
would let me alone about the ducks I wonder what they  
are to me?" I have written you a long & I fear silly letter may  
be dear N. but I have got into the habit of writing long letters lately &  
I never was out of the habit of writing silly ones. Keep all of my  
heart's treasures for me not forgetting Martha when you see her  
to H. I shall write soon as I am in her debt embrace her & C & E for me  
you have always had so much of my love my dear sister that I  
need scarcely say with how much affection I think of you at all times  
<sup>that ever devoted m.</sup>



I did not tell you what it gave me great concern to hear from a letter  
Grandpa received from some of the Millbrook people who are here  
that since Eppes from being in unusually good health has had another  
violent attack he was taken speechless in bed one night & was only brought  
to life by a bleeding he is well enough now to walk about his house  
& yard again but I feel anxious & uneasy about him for his own sake  
still more for Francis's sake on whose account the precarious state of

For  
Miss Virginia J. Randolph  
Richmond

his father's health has always been a subject of painful interest  
to me, let me know when you hear from him & in what  
sort of spirits he is once more adieu think of me with only half  
the affection I feel for you & I shall be satisfied

I am sorry there are no letters for Mrs M. Randolph in the post  
office here perhaps you are more successful in Richmond