

Monticello June 5th 1823

Dear Nicholas

As you have had an explanation of this silence of rather more than three weeks, you can have felt no uneasiness, or conceived yourself neglected at all, I shall therefore make no excuses, but proceed to tell you what a pleasant visit we have had to Bedford, and that Grand Papa bore the fatigue of the journey as well as usual; he took a walking stick, on our return, to assist him when he got out of the carriage, having got a fall when we were going, which I believe was occasioned rather by his having been cramped in that dreadful carriage, than any diminution of his strength, though he thinks himself weaker than he was. I found Sister Ellen looking better than when I left her, and Mama upon the eve of a sick-head-ache, which confined her only one day to her bed, and is now quite gone. Aunt Manks's health appears to be declining, and we have become quite uneasy about ^{her} Papa believes that the total inactivity of both his body & mind will kill her, and as she has no mind to employ, and keeps up the pretence of her mind not to indulge his habits of indolence without remorse (of which she is dreadfully afraid, and often suspicious) nothing can be done to excite, & give her an object in life. She takes a short ride in the carriage every day, which perhaps will give her strength & call spirits than she has at present. Poor old lady, life can have no charms for her, but I should be very much shocked at her death, and reproach myself much for having looked folly with so little patience, and so often made it a subject of derision.

55771

I am just recommencing my industrious habits, after spending the spring, not idly, but unprofitably; at least so far as it regards my books, for I have been occupied in visiting, having company at home, sewing and keeping house, the two last, most notable employments! and yet I feel uneasy & impatient when engaged by them, and thinking them studies, still fancy myself throwing away time. I wish that I could become a well educated woman, or had no ambition to be so. excellence in some line, is I believe necessary to happiness, my object has been for many, many years to acquire an education, and this strong desire overcomes in part the most impatient, and despairing temper, opposed by obstacles trying perhaps to a different disposition, and a constitutional, and at most inconquerable indolence. a charming picture! but true I assure you, and lest you should add egotism to the list, I have done. - I hope your law studies are not so much interrupted now, as they have hitherto been, I feel very anxious about your progress, and have been once or twice on the point of expressing my anxiety, when deterred by fears for your health, that you know is the grand desideratum of life, and to which all considerations must give place. you say nothing about your health latterly, and I should give this silence a favourable interpretation, but for your having the hystericks when ever it rains, which I consider a bad symptom. The weather here has been dry, and cold, with the exception of two or three days of intense heat. The drought has been very injurious to the corn & Tobacco, and the hessian fly is destroying the wheat, of course all the farmers are very much out of spirits, and my words greatly increased that any one, who has an alternative, should entrust their peace of mind to the wind and weather of so unpleasant a climate as ours seems to be. I have lately become almost a proselyte to the opinion in favour of savage life, as one of more freedom from pain. all the cares of which I hear, are the work of civilization, and certainly are not counterbalanced by the enjoyments which it procures us! Perhaps the very thought of your ridicule, which has just presented it self to my mind, is one of my artificial pains, and would be unknown to me if more nearly allied to the

famous Indian prince and his tribe! — Your Grand Mother has not yet arrived, although she continues to promise us that she will come very shortly, in all her letters. I wrote to her from Poplar Forest. you need not have given me the advice not to show her a letter from you, unless you think that I have become "as brass as a stone statue," to stand by with unblushing impudence & hear it read aloud to all the curious who have time to listen. Do not be offended with me for speaking so freely to Dearest Nicholas, it is the truth ^{my} heart is without guile, and as much open to the world as if she had a "window in her breast." I have showed your letters to no one but Mama, who reads them all, occasionally to Sister Ellen, and on two instances, I believe, to the other girls. my coat of mail is not so strong as you give me credit for. — On my return home I found your letter enclosing the check, which you say is a duplicate but no other has arrived: my Brother refuses to take it until he has seen, or heard from Judge Coor, who will be in the neighborhood the 20th of this month; in the mean time Mama has it in safe custody — You do not know how much I have reproached myself for the false alarm that my letter in April must have given to you and your self. I dare say that you were very angry with me when the great letter reached you, although rejoiced at the clear statement of the affair.

I have never told you of the nice little cubby that has become my haunt, and from which I am now writing. do you recollect the place over the parlour Portico into which the dome room opened? since the columns to the portico have been completed, Grand Papa has had the great work bench removed from it, and a floor laid, Cornelius's ingenuity in conjunction with mine formed steps from the dome into this little closet with a pile of boxes, and having furnished this apartment with a sofa to lounge upon, though alas! without cushions, a high & low chair & two small tables, one for my writing stand, the other for my books; and breathing through a broken pane of glass and some wide cracks in the floor, I have taken possession with the dirt daubers, wasps & humble bees, and do not intend to give it up to any thing but

55772

the formidable rats which have not yet found out this fairy palace. — I must not omit my only piece of news, the marriage of Susan Bolling and John Scott and their intended removal to Alabama, in a few days. They dined with us the day before yesterday, and Susan

beauty is more resplendent than ever, and her countenance I think improves as the
sances in life, which is a good sign of her intellect. Cornelia and Mary are going down to Troy
to meet her to day — Adieu, the love of the whole family awaits you & Browsey, assure him

Randolph (V.9.)
June 5. 29.

23

Nicholas P. Trist Esq

Dreuxville

Lafayette

Louisiana

mine, give a kiss to your little queen, and believe me ever affectionately your own

P. P. Rando

We expect to have Aunt P. Randolph with us in July — Aunt Rachel's health is much improved
and she is going very soon to join Mr. H. in New York

Original manuscript in the Nicholas Philip Trist Papers, Library of Congress