

August 31<sup>st</sup> - 1819

My dear Virginia

I was very much distressed at hearing of poor Britty's death, for independant of the shock to Burwell, I cannot forget that she was my nurse for a good many years, and whether she discharged the duties of her office properly or not, yet the feeling that attacks us to those immediately about us, is instinctive, and not altogether depending on their merits. I shall miss her a great deal, ever since I have been <sup>up</sup> ~~gone~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~her~~ <sup>services</sup> ~~really~~ <sup>valuable</sup> & most cheerfully rendered. it will be long before I can get accustomed to the deprivation of them, and long very long, I shall miss her <sup>figure</sup> ~~presence~~ and voice in those places I have been used to see & hear them.

I have been recollecting that some time ago, when I was lamenting very seriously that I had not secured one of her elder children Mamma promised I should have ~~any~~ one of them not disposed of. Susan and Emily I believe Cornelia and yourself had taken at that time, and I think I pitched on little Martha as subject to no prior claims. I hope with all my heart this is the case, for I am more than ever anxious to have it in my power to help, and educate as well as I can, one of these children, and if I remember right Martha is a little sprightly black-eyed girl, whom I have often noticed with pleasure. I think her poor mother would have liked this disposition of her, for I believe she preferred me to the rest of the family. If ~~any~~ Mary or any of the rest of you should have a prior claim why then Mamma's promise will hold good for little Theresa.

Burwells as you may suppose is overwhelmed with grief, I have not seen him since he heard the news last night. but although

did not see himself, he came out early in the morning, and did all his business as usual. He did not lay by and send ~~us~~ the keys as I expected he would, and I am very glad if it for the want of employment would only leave him more time for the indulgence of his grief, which is so sincere as to excite the greatest degree of sympathy. If he should be averse to the distribution of <sup>all</sup> his children, I am willing to waive the claim I spoke of altogether, or else to promise that if I should ever quit my family of which there is scarcely a possibility, I will then surrender ~~my~~ my rights. or if Mama should be unwilling to deprive herself of the best of a family, which has a hereditary right to be highly valued, I will say and think ~~no more~~ more about the matter.

I received a very melancholy letter from Maria Goodwin who has suffered a great deal this winter from various causes, besides George Stevenson's death, the family have met with a severe loss in the person of Mr. Kedgey, <sup>their</sup> ~~a~~ cousin and intimate friend, & ~~the~~ brother in law to Mrs. Lyde Goodwin. He died after an illness of a few hours, leaving his wife pregnant, after a childless marriage of ten years, which in every other respect was a perfectly happy one. Maria Goodwin's elder sister Mrs. M. Blair, was for a long time at the point of death, and is but just recovered, so that Maria herself is almost worn out with anxiety and ~~pa-~~ tiques, although much benefited by a short excursion to the ~~Red~~ <sup>York</sup> Springs, whither she accompanied Mrs. M. Blair.

I am much pleased to ~~know~~ <sup>to hear</sup> that you have got Jane B. with you, and still more so, that she has turned out a beauty, a thing I by no means expected. I shall have hopes for myself after this, and may expect with so rapid an improvement to rival Helen. Jane B. always had an

intelligent face, never a handsome one. He is I believe a girl  
of a great many good qualities, her too great parsimony which so  
often takes the appearance of civility, is the result in part of a  
severe education, which made her a slave at home and  
subjected her to all the intoxication of recovered liberty,  
when ever she was suffered to pass the limits of her prison. Her  
her unhappy situation, caused every one to treat her in a  
manner calculated to impress her with the idea that friends  
were to be found every where but at her own home, and  
that every body took a lively interest in her affairs.

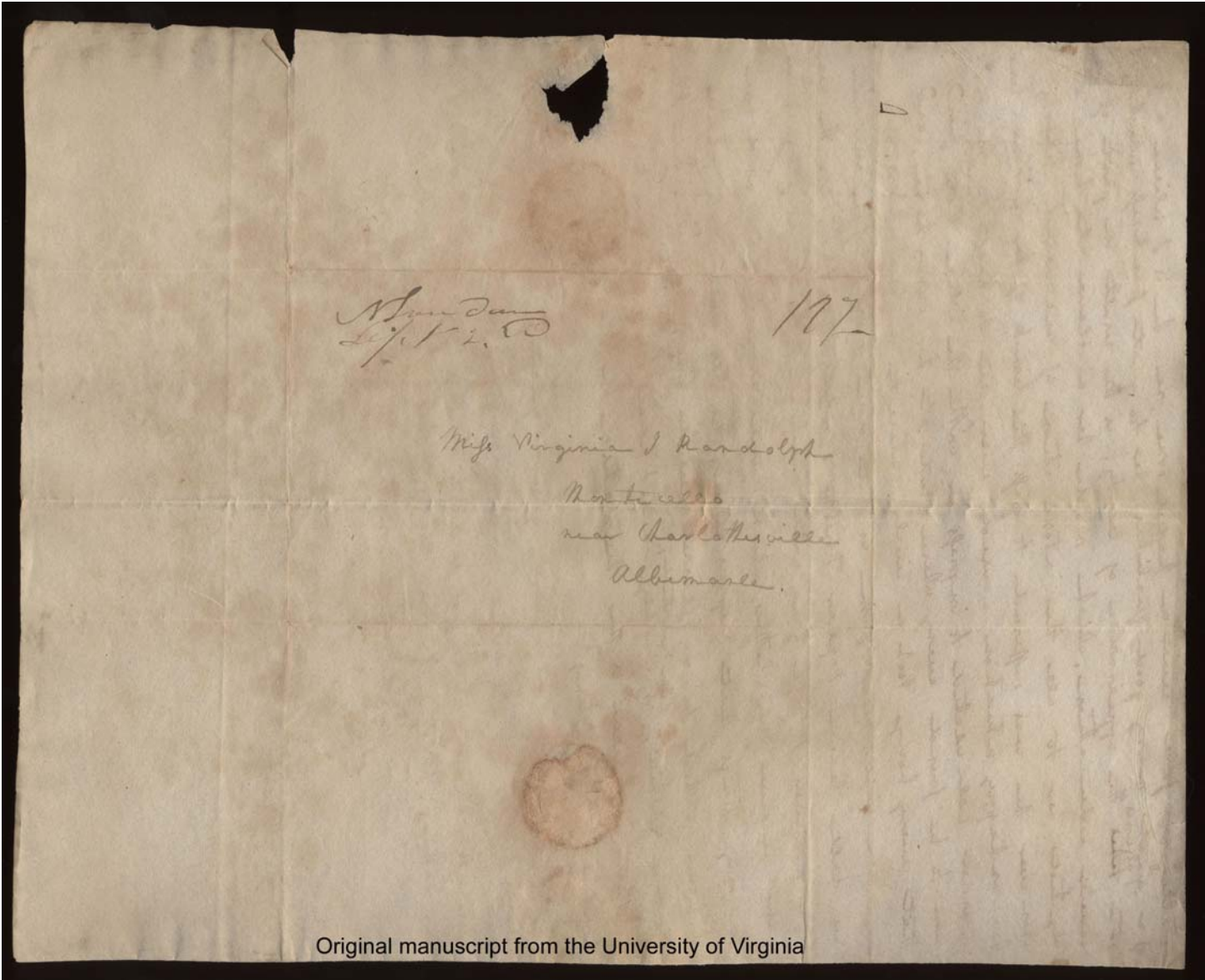
You will hear from us but once more before our return.  
we shall leave Poplar Forest Sunday the 12<sup>th</sup> in the near  
time however I hope you will <sup>all</sup> continue to write as long as we  
can receive your letters, which come very direct, and are  
the only things that keep us alive, at this melancholy place.  
I have wished for my flannel several times; a gaiter I have  
had a gaiter, I have wanted, especially since I have had a slight attack  
of what I believe is the rheumatism in the ribs; did you  
hear of such a thing?

Adieu my dear Virginia, give a great deal of love to  
every body. Miss Georgie, and remember me particularly to  
Jane Bradsher, Aunt H. & Aunt M. to my dear Mother I need  
say nothing, for she knows what I feel for her.

most affectionately yours

Eliza

If Aunt C. is with you  
a great deal of love  
to her



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