Williamsburg December 12th. 1818.

I hope my beloved cousin does not impute my long silence to neglect, for I assure her that not a single day has past since I last saw her without my thinking of her, and wishing for the time when we shall again meet; but I have been so much engaged with company and other things, that I have literal=ly never had time; and even now (I am so much of a Belle) I expect to be interrupted at least twen=ty times before I have concluded this letter. — The other day I came across the only one you ever wrote one in which you say you cannot conceive what amusement I can expect to derive from a correspon=dence with a secluded being like yourself, whose thoughts and pursuits are so at variance with mine. for the compliment which is implied, I tender you all due thanks; as all your thoughts and pursuits are of course virtuous, if mine are wholly at variance with them, they must be entirely of an opposite nature; but waving my pretensions to the compli=ment, I really think it a matter of wonder and astonishment, that a lady of your taste and judgment can expect to derive any satisfaction from the letters of such a wild, nonsensical, roman=tic being as I am; however as you have professed to do so, you must abide by the consequences.

We were very much pleased to hear that you were not disappointed in your trip to Albemarle, & also that the children had the measles so favourably. I have seen a great many elegant beaus since

Original manuscript in the Southern Historical Collection, Nicholas Philip Trist Papers, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

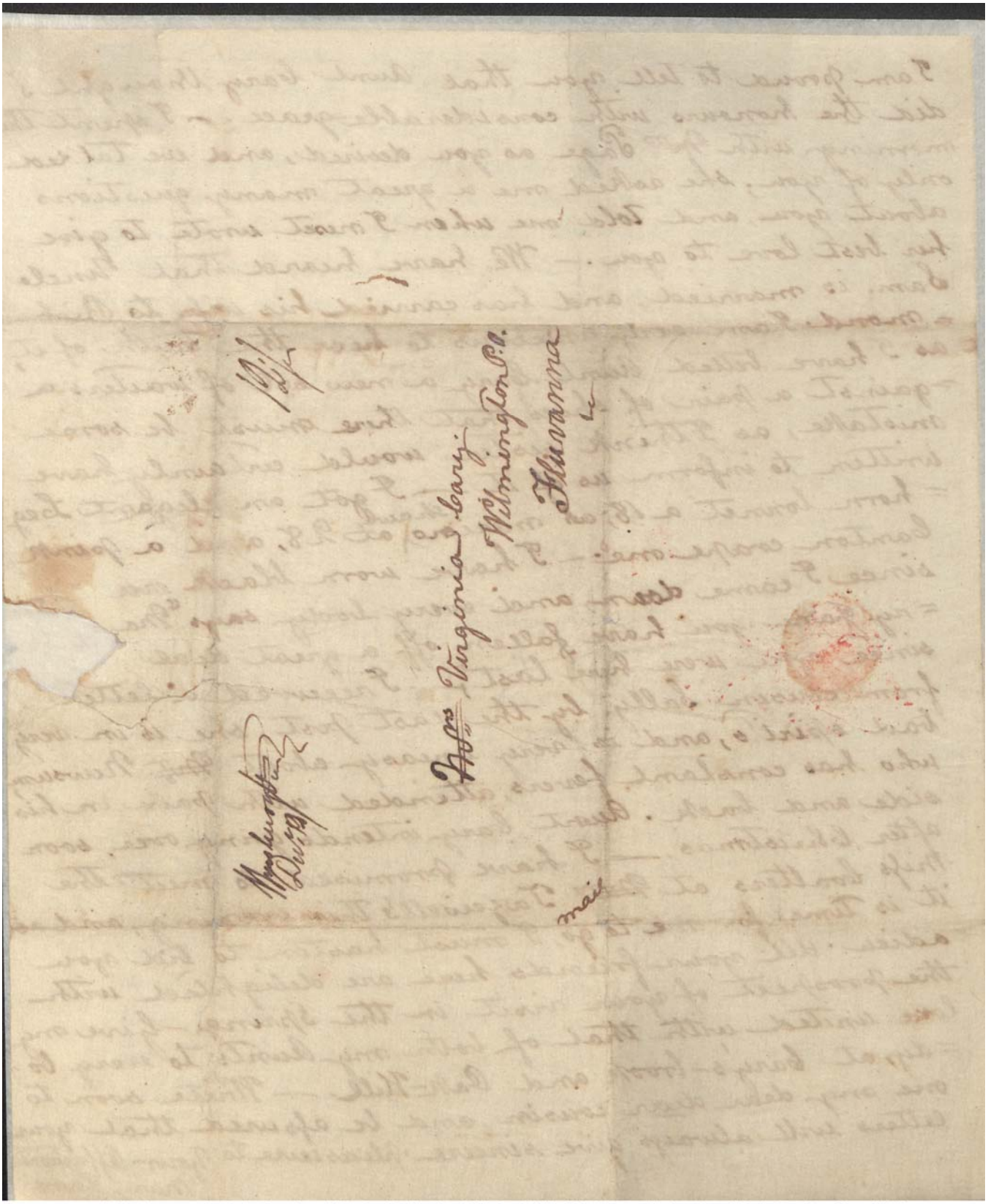
I left Shusanna; among the rest is a Colonel Pleasants who is a second Dr. Boswell; but as Mr. Mason said of the latter, he has had time to be learned and graceful, for he is upwards of Thirty. I will leave you to draw your own inferences, when I tell you you that the aforesaid Colonel intends taking a trip to Williamsburg this winter, for the express purpose of seeing his cousin Carey. — There is a brother of Mr. Mason here at College, who is thought by the ladies to be "the most charming fellow in the world, and by the President and Professors to be twice as clever as his brother, who ranked foremost among the Geniuses when he was here; in short, Mr. James Mason (the new comer) is precisely such a personage, as Scott would like to write and I to read about. I have become very well acquainted with him, and believe myself to be something of a favourite; he has even offered to teach me Latin, so that by means of the family I shall become quite an accomplished lady: — If I dwell so long on the merits of each individual, I shall not be able to get through all the introductions, so I will proceed to make you acquainted with my friend Mr. Edmund Harrison, (a son of the gentleman who married Patsy Skipwith) a tall youth with large sentimental hazel eyes; he stammers most dreadfully, which renders him extremely interesting and last, not least, let me present to you, Mr. Edward Cabell from Albemarle, he is graceful, well-informed and polite, and in a word, as a certain lady in Town observed of him, he does not look like a student. — I had a large party last night, and

Original manuscript in the Southern Historical Collection, Nicholas Philip Trist Papers, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

I am proud to tell you that Aunt Cary brought I did the honours with considerable grace — I spent the morning with Mrs. Page as you desired, and we talked only of you; she asked me a great many questions about you, and told me when I next wrote, to give her best love to you. — We have heard that Uncle Sam is married, and has carried his wife to Richmond. I am very anxious to hear the truth of it, as I have bellied Aunt Cary a new set of waiters against a pair of shoes, that there must be some mistake, as I think sister would certainly have written to inform us of it. — I got an elegant Leghorn bonnet a 18, an merino shawl at 28, and a pink canton crape one. — I have worn black ever since I came down, and every body says "Mary Jane you have fallen off a great deal since you were here last". I received a letter from cousin Sally, by the last post, she is in very bad spirits, and is very uneasy about Mr. Newsum who has constant fevers, attended with pain in his side and back. Aunt Cary intends going over, soon after Christmas. — I have promised to meet the Miss Coalters at Mrs. Tazewell's this evening, and as it is time for me to go, I must hasten to bid you adieu. All your friends here are delighted with the prospect of your visit in the Spring — Give my love united with that of both my Aunts to every body at Cary's-brook and Oak-Hill. — Write soon to one, my dear dear cousin, and be assured that your letters will always give sincere pleasure to

Your Affectionate
Mary Jane

Original manuscript in the Southern Historical Collection, Nicholas Philip Trist Papers, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill



Original manuscript in the Southern Historical Collection, Nicholas Philip Trist Papers, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill