

1867

Mountville Sept. 27<sup>th</sup>

My Dear Mother

To Mrs Randolph at Poplar F.

I take advantage of the first mail to let you know that we are all well, and that your Pete is just as handsome and ten degrees more impudent than when you left her, but he is very good and gives no trouble, we have been so constantly employed that we have not been able to keep her in the house as we intended, her Mammy <sup>has</sup> kept her out all day but she sleeps with Cornelia and myself and has never asked for you since the first two nights of your absence. Ben and Lewis go to school every day, but James stays at home and says his lessons well and regularly. You may consider your journey to Bedford at this season as very fortunate, for it has saved you from many disagreeable intrusions; we have had several large parties from the springs, and a coach & four is by no means an uncommon sight at the door. The Monday after you left us (which you remember was a damp rainy day) Mr & Mrs God-  
-fri from Baltimore with a grown daughter and two sons came to see the house - they had seen Jefferson and got <sup>at Wood's tavern</sup> a letter of introduction from him to me - they arrived just as I was in the midst of my house-keeping - but did not stay more than an hour - yesterday we had scarcely taken leave of one party, consisting of four N. Carolinians - impudent and ungenteel people who behaved as if they had been in a tavern - when a coach and four, another carriage and a phaeton drove up to the door filled with ladies and gentlemen Mr Southall came <sup>to introduce</sup> with them and they were evidently persons accustomed to genteel society - two of the ladies were women of pleasing manners and as they did not stay very long

I was not much discomposed by the visit, but this morning just as I had seated myself to write to you two carriages stopped before the door. Mr & Mrs Bafeto with their sister, Mrs Gault - Miss Fuller & Mrs or Miss Bull (I heard none of their names distinctly) with three or four gentlemen formed the party. The two last ladies, talking but not gentle Carolinians, made a great noise asked a great many silly questions and at last went away leaving paper and myself weary & disgusted. Miss Fuller and they were literally "dicieuses pour bethise" and annoyed us not a little by their giggling impertinence. These intruders have pretty generally expressed their regret at Grand Papa's absence and I have rejoiced at it - on his account - not on my own God knows - You know we never have the comfort of a clean house whilst Burwell is away - but the indignation I have felt at these indelicate and improper visits, has spared me <sup>the</sup> mortification ~~in~~ that point I might otherwise have experienced. liberal & sensible people will find an apology in the absence of the family and my indisposition, for I have always appeared <sup>large</sup> wrapped in a great shawl and my face tied up - and for the rest, I care not what they think. Grand Papa, ~~has~~ <sup>has</sup> ~~offert~~ <sup>assisted</sup> me in doing the honors of the house, and has taken good care of us since you went away, he has paid great attention to our comfort, getting every thing we wanted and never making us wait for any thing, but our dinners, and this we do not regard. I have had several slight attacks of my rheumatism but they have not prevented me from taking my share of the housekeeping and from attending to your spinners who do their tasks very regularly - I take care to wrap up well every time I go in the cellar. What with <sup>my share of</sup> attention to these domestic concerns, leaving James, his lessons and relieving company I have not had time to do much

with ~~the~~ my father; I have always managed to practice a little on the harpsichord, and you may tell Virginia I am learning "Molly put the Kettle on" for her; I fear however she will not find me perfect in it, for it is much more difficult than I expected. Aunt Cary has gone down, Mrs Streshly has left the neighbourhood, and sister has not been home to see us since you left us - Mr Bankhead was here a night or two ago, quite sober. Jefferson is never at home - Cornelia is carrying on her Latin grammar with great spirit, and has almost finished Demosthenes - her week for housekeeping begins in two days, but as she dispenses herself from receiving company or coming out to see <sup>anybody</sup> ~~them~~, she will not be as much interrupted as I have been. Aunt Marks carries on her starving system with an energy increased by opposition, and I am afraid will injure her ~~own~~ constitution so much as to ~~be as delicate~~ <sup>become</sup> herself the delicate creature she thinks herself. She is in tolerable spirits and has several times offered to assist me in carrying the keys, an offer which I have always declined, in a manner not to give offence; I really do think that with her present mode of managing <sup>herself</sup>, her health would suffer seriously from any fatigue, or exposure to cold. Give my love to Grandpapa, I have not forgotten to wind up his clock, and will take good care of his wines, when they arrive. Papa hearing <sup>from letter</sup> how little of the Nice Wine there was remaining, declined using it, and since the two first days we have ~~not drunk~~ <sup>no</sup> wine.

Griffith's child is pretty much as it was, if there is any change it is for the worse, but Aunt Bet who keeps it at her house and nurses it, desired me to ask you to tell Courwell, that it is just as it ~~was~~ he left it - Aunt Brisilla begs to be remembered to the young ladies - and that they will inform

John H. of her well doing and constant recollection. He has kept in a very good humor, and the affair of Mary Wright has been compromised by Mary. Doing 6 oys of cotton every day, and attending on Miss Septimia who with an old pair of wool cards of her Mamma's very kindly assists her nurse in doing the task allotted her. Eugenia brings water &c. for the chamber and yet has a great deal of time for her mistress's work. Lucy does her regular task of 3/4 lb every day.

I fear you will scarcely be able to read this long letter for it is written with a bad pen and in a hurry. I do not know how it is, but I who find so much difficulty in writing to other people can never stop when I begin a letter to you. Papa desires me to say he is prevented writing by incessant occupation - to day he intended it, but was prevented by company.

I have just heard to my great satisfaction that the spreading noise will not go out until this day - the paper in the letter which reached me Saturday is the day named there, and this being in order to send my letter to Charlotteville this evening - if any thing of consequence have happened (which is very improbable) I will square it in "under the seal" as you direct. 30th Jefferson will take charge of the letter now four days old but as nothing has happened worthy of it (except your own John of company) I had rather not mention it to you. I will say that we have received your letters giving us

Mrs Randolph  
Poplar Forest.

Adieu Dearest Mother, you cannot conceive how much your absence is felt and how anxious we are for your return. ~~The family~~ without you, is completely a body without a soul - little Tim will not agree that you are gone farther than Milton, and has not honored the girls with a single enquiry. He called for Mary this morning and received the intelligence of her absence, as a piece of news, which he had never heard before. once more adieu. Give my love to the girls - and pray remember me to my Bedford acquaintance.