

Ashton Dec. 7th 1820

your letter to Elizabeth is full of complaints
my dear Virginia which I suppose you think very just & therefore as you
say you have suffered so much from uneasiness at not hearing from any one
& you do really believe that you have good reason for your complaints I shall
simply content my self with answering them & resign for the present my
right of reproaching in return we have now been here more than a fort-
night during which time we have not received ~~a~~ line from any one except
one letter from Mama which Mann brought up we have not heard a syllable
from either sister Ellen or yourself except through Elizabeth & Harriet & we
have not mixed writing by a single post since we came here - I did not
~~think it necessary~~ to cause you any ~~anxiety~~ by mentioning mama's
sore throat as it was not an alarming one & did not know till I heard
it from you that Cornelia had said a word about it is it therefore sur-
prising that in the hurry of preparing for a long absence from home &
the entire breaking up of the family we should have omitted by a single post
to give you news of ourselves when you might so readily ^{have} assigned a simple
& natural cause for our silence without accounting for it in a way to
render yourselves uneasy? I am sure you can not fail of being
satisfied by such a plain statement of facts as this is & as I don't
suppose it can be any pleasure to you to hear that you have been
in the wrong I will have done with this subject in as few words as ~~pos-~~
sible Mann went to Tipton yesterday & brought us intelligence of two
letters from you that brother Jeff. had read & put in his pocket

when he went out so that we lost that opportunity of getting them
& I do not know ^{when} we shall ~~have~~ ^{have} another that being the only time we
had heard from Tafton since we came here sister Jane is well & the
children are recovering from the whooping cough which they have
had very favorably - mama writes us that Tim & George have the
whooping cough decidedly but slightly dear little George has it much the
worst of the two & his cough was getting more troublesome when she wrote
I am still however in hopes that it will not be very bad as it has in
every instance both at Tafton & Monticello proved to be a very
mild kind. travelling ~~is said~~ to be beneficial in that complaint
& mama's return will not therefore be retarded by that circumstance
as she it may ^{be} by other ^{ones} over which she has no controul she talks
of setting off the 15th of this month but says that she can not speak
with any certainty as it does not depend on her Aunt Hackley with
her usual kindness has taken the whole concern of ~~mama's~~ ^{mama's} ward
robe into her hands & has furnished Aunt Cary & herself with caps for
"the first impression" cousin Richard has also been very active in his
apistance which was very acceptable in the state of things at the
government house when ~~mama~~ ^{mama} arrived there, she found every
thing in disorder windows unwashed carpets unshaken walls
that had not seen a brush since Mrs Preston's time I daresay
the whole in short as ^{she} expresses it a scene of "uncleanly desolation"
they were ~~busy~~ ^{when she wrote} providing bedding & some other necessary articles
from a remnant of the last appropriation there being furniture
enough of other sorts in the house for the supply of her own wants
they were actually destitute of the needful but expected things would
be rather better after the election which we see by the papers is over
this will enable them to draw a part of the salary in advance & but

relief to difficulties of that sort - Aunt Cary's health & spirits are already improved & will I have no doubt be quite restored by the change of air & scene to the amusements of a town the Richmond theatre is open & Mann was there several nights there are no very good performers I believe but even such as they are what would I not give to be there to see a play acted upon a real theatre with handsome scenery & decorations how delightful it must be when even the representations that we have seen afforded us so much amusement the girls talking of performing a pilgrimage on foot there rather than ~~waiting~~ at home -

I have not been industrious in any of the various ways in which I might have displayed my industry if I had been so inclined & I am afraid you will get a long long way before me in history as well as in every thing else - I had almost forgotten to deliver a message from ^{me} ~~me~~ in this letter as I did in the last she begs that you will ^{or} Daddy that wormley has undertaken to take care of his things in her absence & that she looked up all the papers in his drawer before she went away My love to sis ^{Ellen} ~~Ellen~~ & her some time ago believe me with devoted affection yours ^{over} ~~over~~ Ma ^{was} ~~was~~

I made Mary leave me this half page my dear Love, that I might tell you, I wrote a very long letter to you by the last mail and that whether it reached you or not I shall expect an answer, what can be the reason of your not receiving the girls letters? they must be lost I suppose, and I am very much afraid my last had shared the same fate. However yours reach us in safety so pray continue to write.

We have done nothing since Brother Mann returned from Richmond but eat and sleep and romp and play cards - Cornelia has turned out in her old age the greatest romp that ever lived, she and brother Mann are sum ~~sum~~ cramps already and are fighting and scratching every

moment they are together. —

I wanted to write you a whole letter to day, but the girls declared that as Elizabeth and Mary were both writing, more than a postscript ^{from me} would be too outrageously unreasonable, and I was obliged to yield to their representations however.

19th

written on
9 Decr

Miss Virginia J. Randolph

Poplar Forest

near

Lynchburg

unwillingly — so you see it is no thanks to me that you are spared a third sheet. —

Adieu my dearest Virginia I need not tell you with what energy of affection I am ever your own.

Harriet