

August 11 1817

My Dear Virginia

We are returned from the natural
 bridge more anxious to see it again than we were at first
 because in the first place it far surpassed our expectati-
 ons, & in the second we saw it under many disad-
 vantages, which will be removed when we go again, & grand papa has promised
 that we shall, our trip was attended with disasters & accidents
~~from the~~ time we set off untill we returned again, the morning
 we were to go when we got up we found it was a damp cloudy day, but
 grand papa decided at breakfast that it would not rain & sister
 Ellen and myself rejoiced that the sun did not shine & that we
 should have a cool day for our journey we set off accordingly
 after Gile & Israel had made us wait two hours but we had not pro-
 ceeded many miles before it cleared up the sun shone out & we had
 one of the hottest & most disagreeable days for traveling that could
 be then came our first misfortune in going over a ^{high} bridge
 one of the wheel horses broke through & sank up ^{nearly half way} in
 the hole we all got out as quick as we could & found that the
 bridge was entirely gone to decay & not only several of the logs
 but one of the sleepers had broken through & that we had been in
 great danger of going down carriage & horses & all, the horses were
 all harrassed & poor Brama pulled out by main strength, for he
 seemed so overcome with fright that he was incapable of assisting
 himself & lay quite passive & let them do what they would with
 him, he was hurt in no other way than being much shined & bruised,
 that as it was we were obliged now to walk up a long tedious red hill
 & then pursued our journey in the carriage without any other

accident, over a ~~abominable~~ roads, about one o'clock we came to a very
 wild looking part of the country just at the foot of the ridge
 here we met a man with a gun on his shoulder and a squirrel
 which he had just killed, grandpapa asked him ~~some questions~~
 and found out he was the man ~~the~~ whose house we were to leave
 the carriage and that we were a very little distance from it, it
 was a log house in the woods, which were cleared away ~~for~~ im-
 mediately around it, a large family lived in it tho' it had but one
 room, these people were the first of that half civilized race who
 live beyond the ridge that we had seen. the man who before had
 not deigned to take any notice of us & not even to go out of
~~the~~ road that we might pass, as soon ~~but~~ he heard ~~the~~
~~what~~ what we wanted, was very polite, promised to take care
 of the carriage & to have the horses fed immediately, for he was
 one of those who tho' they do not keep a tavern will accom-
 -odate you with what ever they can & take pay for it, while
 the horses were eating he asked us in to his house, where were
 his wife two old men one his father, & a large family of children,
 all the young ones being in their shifts ~~for~~ ~~hats~~, none of the
 men wore coats tho' they ~~had~~ ~~been~~ ~~at~~ ~~work~~ ~~the~~ ~~day~~ ~~before~~ ~~we~~ ~~came~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~place~~ ~~and~~ ~~we~~ ~~did~~ ~~not~~ ~~think~~ ~~I~~ ~~saw~~ ~~more~~
 than ~~one~~ ~~pair~~ ~~of~~ ~~shoes~~ while we were gone & not more than two or three
 pair of shoes. the people in the house were as perfectly at their
 ease as if they had known us all their lives, the two old men en-
 tered into conversation with grandpapa at once, and one of them
 said he had been forty three years living there (within twelve miles
 of the bridge) & had never seen it, now he said he was too ~~old~~ ^{too} to go
 being 84, he was the most ^{'savage looking'} ~~un~~ ~~civilized~~ ~~man~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~place~~ ~~the~~
 they both were uncivilized, both in manners and appearance the
 other going with his hairy breast exposed & both speaking of us
 and our family before our faces just as if we ^{had} ~~were~~ ~~absent~~
 the oldest scarcely waited for grandpapa to go out, ~~the~~ ~~man~~

somewhere that old gentleman was ~~the~~ & the other lady ~~of~~
 surprised answered to was Colonel Jefferson "then" said the first
 "I know where lives, he lives near ~~some~~ ^{place} ~~Chas~~ in Bedford" but the
 other one said no he did not live there he lived in Allegheny
 & only his place in Bedford call'd poplar Grove sometimes, that
 he had possessions in both these countries, & that Randal would
 have land in Bedford too. they said a good deal more about ^{grand}
~~grandpapa~~ a great deal to us the first not even honouring us with
 the title of ladies, but calling us young gentlemen. how they knew
 so much about grandpapa I can't conceive for he never had
 seen either of them before. we left this place on horse ^{back} after
 having refreshed ourselves with ^{ripe} apples which they gave
 us & began so ascend the mountain, we cross'd it at Felites gap
 which is near the place where James river passes the ridge, we
 ride three miles before we come to the top where we dined on
 cold bacon & chicken & then descended three three more we had
 to go before we got to the place where we spent that night &
 the succeeding Greenleaf's ferry. the mountain is the most
 most romantic looking place I ever saw the trees remarkably large
 & tall & no underwood that you could see for a great distance a
 round you. I saw there oaks Chesnuts & poplar, & spruce pine, ^{which}
 which I never saw before it is a beautiful tree I wish we had
 it at Monticello. I've found there a raspberry which is better eat-
 -en than the garden raspberry having a fine flavour & the seeds
 being so small that you scarcely perceive them, the bushes were
 quite full of fruit tho' it was so late in the season they are a
 bright scarlet & the bush has no thorns, the people in the neigh-
 -bourhood call'd it the mountain raspberry, & grandpapa remem-
 -ber'd that they had ^{had} them at Shadwell for many years under the
 name of the mountain strawberry, but they had never been there.

August 19 Grandpapa means to hurry Johnny off so soon
 that I have not time to say any thing more of our trip

To the Natural bridge particularly as I have written down
three pages & have not got to the end of our first days jour-
-ney, but if you are not tired already I will go on with our
travels in the next letter, & will try to get a little better
pen ink & paper that the reading them may not be such
a task at present I must answer the principle articles of your letter
I have not wanted Gonzales but shall probably be ready for it by the time
Johnny comes again, I find Paris much harder than it was at first
I do not come on very fast with any thing for I have not got over
the fatigue of ~~the~~ traveling & am so drowsy & stupid that I can scarcely
keep my eyes open, & when they are open it is with as much difficulty
that I can understand what I am about as you must perceive from
my letter. I wonder you do not persevere in attempting to draw human
figures it is so much more agreeable than flowers, since I have been
here I have attempted several in France which I spoilt after com-
-pleting the figure by trying to draw the rocks & failing in the
attempt for landscapes are what I never could make anything like
in my life. I am now drawing a Ferdinand & Miranda but they both
have a great deal of expression in their countenances & I have
not succeeded very well in that either you have not said a word
of Aunt Pean's I suppose she was not arrived yet till
Elizabeth I shall expect her certainly to render a faithful
account of every thing she sees in her travels. Mada & Mrs
Esper were not with us when we went to the natural bridge
but we expect the former of yours every day. Adieu My
Dear Virginia I will write to Mary & Harriet by the next
trip of the coast if I get over my torpor, but I do not think
I shall write another letter if I write it no better than this
Sister Ellen desires to be remembered to Aunt Mahe & to
Aunt Hackly & her family particularly to Cousin Jane, Also
Aunt Rose, I am delighted to hear she is recovering, give my
love to all the above mentioned persons & bid dear mama
& my sweet little Jim for me once more adieu C.P.

Elizabeth I suppose will be at the springs when I write to
the other girls & I