

100. 21
500

A
TOUR

THROUGH

PART OF VIRGINIA,

IN THE SUMMER OF

1808.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

INCLUDING AN ACCOUNT OF

HARPER'S FERRY,

THE NATURAL BRIDGE,

THE NEW DISCOVERY CALLED

Weir's Cave,

MONTICELLO,

AND THE

DIFFERENT MEDICINAL SPRINGS,

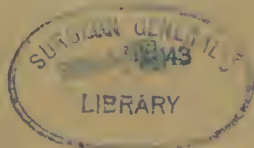
Hot and Cold Baths,

VISITED BY THE AUTHOR.

NEW-YORK:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

H. C. SOUTHWICK, PRINTER,
No. 2, Wall-Street.

1809.



1875

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

1875

CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

PREFACE.

THE object of the Author in writing the following Letters, being merely the entertainment of his friends, during the approaching winter evenings, he hopes for that indulgence in their perusal, which he is sensible that both the style and the matter which it contains, will require the good nature of the reader to bestow.

LETTERS, &c.

Baltimore, June 7, 1808.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I LEAVE this city to-morrow, for the sweet springs in Virginia ; the urgency of my friends, more than my own inclinations, induce my undertaking so long a journey ; the delicate and precarious state of my health requiring, they think, the wholesome exercise of riding, change of air, the use of the waters, and that degree of temperate dissipation, or medicine of the mind, which relieves the patient from the anxiety of worldly pursuits and vexations, and promotes that sunshine and hilarity within, so conducive to the re-establishment of health.

Baltimore, the capital of Maryland, is situated on the north side of Patapsco river, it has arisen within a few years, from a place of little trade, to the rank of the third city in size, opulence, and commerce, in the United States ; the exports in 1806, were, domestic, 3,661,131 ; foreign, 10,919,774, making 14,580,905 dollars. The public spirit of its inhabitants have converted Fell's point into a regular well built town, and from being an unprofitable marsh, it may now vie in wharves, streets, and buildings, with any place of the same size on the continent. It is computed that the city and point, under the general name of Baltimore, contain forty thousand inhabitants. There is a new college erected for the education of youth, under the direction of Roman Catholic Clergy and Preceptors, but young men of all persuasions are educated without interference with their religious opinions. Schools of different descriptions are numerous ; the Baltimore College, directed by the Rev. Mr. Knox, and the Rev. Mr. Sinclair, promises to be of the first literary consequence ; it is at pre-

sent highly respectable, and the pupils are increasing.— Churches and places of worship are many and handsomely built. Baltimore abounds in sectarians, those of the methodist persuasion seem to be rapidly gaining ground. The new Catholic Cathedral, when finished, will be a superb building, and the Court house and Penitentiary will do honor to the taste of their projectors. The fort, about four miles from town, adds to the beauty, as it contributes to the safety of the harbour; there is a sufficient depth of water to, and at the point, for first rate vessels, and at the wharves in town for large coasting vessels. The water for drinking and culinary purposes, originally bad, is now brought at a considerable expence to the town; and every individual can be supplied, at a trifling rate, with this most necessary article of life, of good and wholesome quality. The people of opulence seem to enjoy the good things, and even the luxuries of life with *greater gout* than their neighbours to the eastward, the *sçavoir vivre* is well understood, and their markets, of course, are yearly improving in almost every article, that can add to the comforts, and to the splendour of the table. It must be, however, admitted that the style and expence of late years adopted here, rather exceeds the prudence of commercial calculation, and the disposition to gaming is rather increasing, and in some circles truly alarming to a reflecting mind. It is but just to observe, that few of the younger part of the fair sex join in these amusements; their manners are engaging, their conversation sprightly, their personal charms far above mediocrity, and their *tout ensemble* is calculated to delight and to improve. The Theatre is well attended: no city can boast of more eloquence in the pulpit or at the bar, nor are the people of Baltimore second to any other in correct classical and literary information and acquirement.— There are nearly four thousand uniformed troops, volunteers and militia, in this city, and a finer body of men never paraded; the military spirit is at its height, and emulation has its full and beneficial effect among them.— Nine years since, house rent was very high; it is now, in consequence of the immense increase of buildings, more moderate, and servant's wages are from one to three dollars per month less than in New-York, this may

be attributed to the number of negroes and free people of colour, many of whom make excellent servants,
Adieu.

—•—

Harper's Ferry, 11th June 1803.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE road from Baltimore to Ellicott's mills is excellent; it is a flourishing settlement, consisting of flour and paper mills, a store, tavern and a pretty village of about a dozen houses; the distance from the capital being but ten miles, induces the citizens to make frequent parties of pleasure to this neighbourhood.

Near Ellicott's is the establishment formed by the Maryland Manufacturing Society; they have purchased a large tract, well circumstanced as to wood and water falls, and they are now about erecting their mills and cabins for workmen and manufacturers. Their capital is large, their motives patriotic, and they are entitled, of course, to the support and best wishes of every friend to the interests of his country. The Carolina slave dealers get frequent supplies from this state, particularly from the eastern shore; and never were my feelings more outraged, or my high notions of the freedom and liberty of my country more hurt, than by a scene which presented itself near Ellicott's—Two blanched and meagre looking wretches were lolling in their one-horse chair, protected from the excessive heat of the noon-day sun by a huge umbrella, and driving before them four beings of the African race, fastened to each other by iron chains fixed round the neck and arms, and attended by a black woman, a reliance on whose conjugal or sisterly affection, prevented the application of hand cuffs or neck collars; the people on the road loaded the inhuman drivers with curses and execrations, which, at least, led me to suppose, and to hope that the present exhibition of the inequality of our laws, and of our comforts did not often occur.—The entire road from Baltimore to Frederickstown has been lately turned into a turnpike, and may in time be good; at present, it is in many places almost impassible, in consequence of the roughness of the materials, and hurtful to both carriages and horses. The expence of

tolls from Frederick to Baltimore, a distance of forty-six miles, and back again, for a waggon and six horses, is, I believe, six dollars, an enormous charge to those of the back countries who have travelled hundreds of miles without paying any thing, and with as little injury to their vehicles; this often engages a preference to Georgetown and Alexandria, instead of their former market of Baltimore.

Frederick is supposed to be in size, trade and opulence only second to Lancaster as an inland town, it is in the midst of a fertile, luxurious and abundant country; the domestic manufactures of hat making, shoemaking and sadlery are carried on to a considerable extent. They have a branch of the Farmer's Bank of Maryland, and in the neighbourhood is a barrack for the United States troops, which, during the war, afforded comfortable accommodation to the British and Hessian prisoners. Four miles from hence on the Tuscarora Creek, is the Ætna Window Glass Manufactory.

From Frederick to Trap is eight miles, and from Trap to this place (Harper's-ferry) is twelve miles; the road miserably bad, but the country beautiful and the land good; the approach to the ferry is strikingly picturesque, and after crossing, ascending the hill, and viewing the junction of the Shenandoah and the Potowmack forcing their way through the blue mountains, and proceeding in one joint stream to the ocean; the mind is lost in wonder and admiration, and my pen in vain attempts a description of the scene itself, or the feelings I experienced in contemplating this great work of nature! Batteaux descend the river in spring and fall, to Georgetown and Washington; they carry from 70 to 120 bbls. of flour, and are from 70 to 75 feet long, and 4 or 5 feet wide; the expence of transport is one dollar per barrel. Accidents rarely happen, and one per cent would be ample insurance for the whole navigation. A communication between the western and atlantic waters has been contemplated by means of the Potowmack, but in some future letter, I shall attempt to shew that such communication will be more feisable by the lakes and Hudson river, in New-York state. The United States government have, within these few years, established at this place a manufactory for arms; about one hundred men

are now employed ; the weighty part of the business is conducted by the aid of machinery turned by water, and there are now in the armory not less than 25,000 stand of arms. Government is considerably increasing, and enlarging the works.

The direct road to my place of destination is by Charleston, the capital of Jefferson county, but I prefer a more circuitous route by Shepherdstown and Martinsburgh, the latter the capital of Berkley county. My host, his family and boarders are attending the lectures of a blind Philosopher, and have enabled me, in quiet, to write this long letter, and to assure you

I remain very affectionately,
Your Friend.

Martinsburg.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THIS town has suffered much by the division of the county ; still it thrives and can boast of a most excellent tavern, kept by Mr. Gautier, whose accommodations are better, and terms more reasonable than any I have met with. This good fare and cheapness bring a great resort of company in the summer season ; the proximity to a much frequented sulphur spring, which is only eight miles distant, and the advantage of an excellent news-room, where the most respectable papers on the continent are taken, are additional inducements for strangers to frequent this place. The sulphur springs, in this vicinity, are rented by an Italian, formerly servant to the celebrated General Lee, who left him a handsome legacy. Many anecdotes are told of the general ; he lived in this neighbourhood, as did the other two disgraced generals, Stevens and Gates. Stevens died here, and his friends are now erecting a handsome monument to his memory. Gates, you know, was never tried : he was soon deservedly restored to his country's favor, and died at an advanced age in New-York, where he had resided for many years. I have found it necessary to apply a blister to my breast ; but such is the dread of this application, that my landlord urged my consulting a physician, previous to making use of so dangerous a remedy, and I

at length overcame his solicitude by assuming a knowledge of the healing art.

The Berkley springs are twenty-five miles distant ;— there are several houses of entertainment in their vicinage, which, I am told, are generally crowded. Timber is wasting rapidly throughout the state of Virginia ; owing, in some measure, to the constant fires kept up, night and day, by the negroes in their huts, which no prudence of the master can prevent ; we may however hope, that necessity will oblige them to look for, and discover in the bowels of the earth, that best of fuel, sea coal, with which, no doubt, many of these mountains abound,

I am truly,
Your affectionate friend.

Winchester.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THIS town is twenty-two miles from Martinsburgh ; the road very indifferent. Near the half-way tavern a farm, of 260 acres, is offered for sale ; about 160 acres cleared, and the remainder in wood. The land is of the best quality, and rated at 20 dollars per acre ; it is eight miles from the Shenandoah, from whence boats proceed to Georgetown in the spring and fall, as from Harper's ferry. Winchester is the capital of Frederick county, it is about ninety miles from Baltimore, but the route I came is 110 miles ; a stage runs weekly between the two towns. There are here a jail, court house, six churches and a poor-house. The remains of the brave general Morgan lie buried in the Presbyterian burying ground. There are few inland towns in the United States, which exceed this in trade and population ; the inhabitants may be about 4000, and are governed by a mayor and corporation ; it was formerly fortified, but the fortifications are now in ruins. They have an excellent supply of water, conveyed thro' the streets in pipes, and rising as in Philadelphia, by means of hydrants.

I met with some Manchester weavers, who have an abundance of country work. Decent boarding may be

obtained at 2 dollars, and 2 and a half dollars per week, but travelling charges are higher than might be expected. The people of old Virginia, which includes the whole of the south side of the mountains, affect to consider this north side, or new Virginia, as the back woods: but the country throughout the valley is infinitely superior, both in soil and beauty, to the old territory. The land is in excellent heart, and not worn out, as in the south side, by the cultivation of tobacco and the careless labor of negroes, few of whom, comparatively speaking, are owned here: so that, could human nature be somewhat improved, this district of country, situated between the north and south mountains, might be aptly named the "HAPPY VALLEY." The term, new Virginia, is used to denote the recent settlement of the country.—The beautiful river Shenandoah adds much to the charms of the scenery, and presents such pleasing variety as to give new delight to the beholder at every view of it.

I remain, yours, &c.

Woodstock.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

FROM Winchester to this place is thirty miles of indifferent road. I passed through the villages of Stevensburgh, Middleton and Strasburgh; the country populous and thriving, and this capital of Shenandoah county a neat little town. I would advise every traveller on this road to carry pistols, and as a preventative is better than a cure, so to expose them to view, as to deter the ill-designing from making an attack. A few years since, an unfortunate Philadelphia gentleman, on his way to the springs for recovery of his health, packed his loaded pistols in his trunk; a stout negro seeing him get into his chair at Middleton, and unarmed, attacked him three miles from that village and murdered him. The wretch after secreting the plunder, joined the hue and cry in the pursuit, and was not discovered to be the perpetrator for some days; he soon after paid the forfeit of his crime, on the spot where the murder was committed. I have had frequent occasion to remark the strong propensity to gambling among the Virginians of every class, grade

and denomination, and a late melancholy occurrence may not be unworthy your perusal.

But three short months have elapsed since the common jail of this town was the scene where the unfortunate Mr. — terminated his earthly career. Endued with strong natural abilities, a graceful exterior and polished manners, the father of Mr. — spared no expence in giving the finish to a mind, so calculated to receive every refined and solid improvement, and to the blessings of a respectable fortune and excellent character, was added that greatest of Heaven's gifts, an amiable wife, who brought him three lovely children. An infatuated attachment to gaming soon blasted his fairest prospects, and to make good his deficits at the Pharo Bank, and his losses in business, he procured in London, plates, from which he occasionally struck off bank notes to a considerable amount; his expertness in the art of penmanship, enabled him to carry on his iniquitous system for some time without detection, though not free from suspicion; but justice at length overtook him, and while on a journey in this neighbourhood, he was arrested and lodged in prison. A number of notes were found in his possession, and a quantity which it is supposed he swallowed, prevented the fatal operation of a large dose of laudanum; but to "make assurance doubly sure," he soon afterwards cut his throat from ear to ear, after having laid down in his bed, neatly dressed, as if to receive company. Thus was the law deprived of its victim, and the friends of Mr. — left to lament the infatuation which could have induced a man of his attainments to the commission of crimes which, sooner or later, involve the unfortunate in never ending woe and anguish.

How often do we hear of the career of the gamester terminating in suicide; you recollect the eloquent discourses of our worthy friend doctor Saml. Miller, on this subject; it must be a source of pleasing reflection to him, to know the happy effect his sermons have had in the city of New-York and elsewhere. One man in Boston, actually on the point of applying a deadly weapon to his head, by chance met with a few scattered leaves of this production, and in a publication, afterwards, in one of the Boston Gazettes, he had the candor to admit the

fact, and to acknowledge a sincere contrition. It is well known that since the delivery and publication of those well-timed productions, the crime of suicide has been scarcely heard of in New-York.

I am, dear friend,
Yours, very truly.

Harrisburgh.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I left Woodstock after dinner, and came that night to Shrylocks, only five miles; it being nearly dark, when we arrived at the narrow passage: I cannot give you a perfect account of it. It derives its name, from the road lying between the steep and interesting banks of the Shenandoah, on one side, and a romantic declivity to a rapid creek on the other; it is about a mile from Shrylocks, and well worthy a more minute description.—— Pollock's tavern is eight miles further, it is an excellent inn, about a quarter of a mile from the ford of the Shenandoah; the ford is pretty deep and rapid, and often dangerous. I was told the waters had fallen, and I passed it without apprehension. A few weeks since, Miss ——, a young lady from near Staunton, lost her life in attempting this very pass. The story is truly melancholy, and her fate peculiarly lamentable. She was on her way, in the stage coach, to her parental roof, after paying a visit, and was shortly to have been united in marriage to the lover of her choice—this is no exaggerated account, but the real story of the lovely subject of this sad tale. One of the horses took fright and alarmed the passengers, a man passing the ford on horseback persuaded Miss —— to quit the coach and mount behind him; in the attempt she lost her hold, but still clung to the stirrup, which, in fear for his own safety, the man wrested from her grasp, and she sunk to the bottom;—again she rose, and with an indignant look directed to the terror-struck and nerveless by-standers on the beach, she had sufficient recollection to arrange her clothes, and sunk forever from their view.

New Market is, I think, eight miles from the river, and eighteen miles further is this flourishing little town of Harrisburgh, the capital of Rockingham county, where

we slept. About twelve miles, in a southerly direction, is the new discovered cave, which, as the weather is now damp, I propose visiting on my return. Gamble's tavern, in this town, is a most excellent inn.

I am, very sincerely,
Your affectionate friend.

Staunton,

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE land between Harrisburgh and this place is good, like most of that which I have passed in the valley. The town of Staunton is neat, flourishing, and increasing; the inhabitants are about 3000, industrious and respectable; such is the salubrity of the air, the goodness of the water, the excellence of the taverns, and their moderate charges, as to induce many travellers, on their way to the springs, to spend many weeks here: and very many invalids have reaped considerable advantage by the delay. Caution is requisite in drinking too freely of the water, which is strongly impregnated with lime, but in a few days becomes palatable to the taste, and beneficial to many complaints. In the neighbourhood a spa has been lately discovered; but its medicinal properties have not yet been fully analyzed. The Presbyterian minister serves one congregation here, and one three miles distant; I proceeded to the latter to join in the worship, and to witness the celebration of the Lord's Supper; and here was a scene exhibited, which, if they had beheld it, would have made the bigotted zealots of our Eastern States, blush for the effrontery with which they so often charge their southern brethren with impiety and want of religious decorum. The unaffected zeal of the four associating clergymen, the genuine spirit of religion in the people shewn forth in their humility, their sorrow, and their repentance, spoke more to the heart and the feelings of an attentive observer, than the most costly sacrifice of grandeur, or the vain-glorious professions of the lofty pharisee. Here indeed was a sight to lift the mind of the worldly man from the vain pursuits of time. The Reverend Patriarchal Montgomery, the energetic Brown, the eloquent Calhoun, and another minister, equally sincere, all labouring in the cause of

their heavenly master, while a listening and devout people, at times joined them in the fervency of prayer, at times aspirated their thanksgiving and praise in sweetest melody, or attentively hearkened to the words of instruction, expounded from the book of life. When the mind disengages itself from worldly pursuits and trivial attachments, surely there cannot be a more lovely or interesting view of our brethren of mankind, than to see them united as one family, in the great work of prayer, praise and thanksgiving; alike free from that bigotry or superstition, pomp or parade so inconsistent with the true principles of their profession.



MY DEAR FRIEND,

Lexington.

ON leaving Staunton I quit the direct road to the springs, that I might visit the Natural Bridge. I passed through the villages of Greenville and Fairfield, and arrived early at this place, being a distance of thirty-three miles. Here is the Washington or Liberty Hall Academy, established and endowed by General Washington, out of part of the monies voted him by the legislature of this, his native state. This great man's entire life seemed devoted to his country's good, and he was truly anxious for the welfare of posterity. Conscious that the happiness and well-being of a nation, depends on the principles of virtue and wisdom, instilled into the minds of the rising generation; he on every occasion evinced an anxious solicitude for the establishment of such seminaries, as might best conduce to this all important purpose, and further his grand object of a national university, to which he also left a handsome bequest. He says in his will—"It has always been a source of serious regret with me, to see the youth of these United States, sent to foreign countries for the purpose of education, often before their minds were formed, or they had imbibed any adequate ideas of the happiness of their own; contracting, too frequently, not only the habits of dissipation and extravagance, *but principles unfriendly to republican government, and to the true and genuine liberties of mankind*, which thereafter are rarely overcome; for these reasons it has been my ardent wish to see a plan devised, on a liberal scale, which would have

a tendency to spread systematic ideas through all parts of this rising empire, thereby to do away local prejudices, as far as the nature of things would, or indeed ought to admit, from our national councils." He then bequeaths a large and generous legacy for the accomplishment of his wishes, in the erection and endowment of an university in the district of Columbia. The school in Lexington is not, I am told, in so flourishing a state as formerly, there are now, however, about eighty students, who pay a very moderate sum for their board and education. There is also a school of some celebrity for young ladies. The situation is healthy, the town neat, and provisions cheap and plenty. It is the capital of Rockbridge county.

I am, your's affectionately.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I WRITE this from Douthit's tavern, one mile and a half from the Natural Bridge; and thirteen miles from Lexington; having just now returned from the bridge, I had determined on giving you a concise description of this sublime object, but fearing to fall short of the truth, I have turned to Mr. Jefferson's notes on Virginia, from whence I copy the following extract. "It is on the ascent of a hill which seems to have been cloven through its length by some great convulsion. The fissure just at the bridge is by some admeasurement, 270 feet deep, by others only 205, it is about 45 feet wide at the bottom, and 90 feet at the top, this of course determines the length of the bridge, and its height from the water. Its breadth at the middle is about 60 feet, but more at the ends, and the thickness of the mass at the summit of the arch about 40 feet; a part of this thickness is constituted by a coat of earth, which gives growth to many large trees; the residue, with the hill on both sides, is one solid rock of limestone. The arch approaches the semi-elliptical form, but the larger axis of the ellipsis, which would be the chord of the arch, is many times longer than the transverse. Though the sides of this bridge are provided in some parts with a parapet of fixed rocks, yet few men have the resolution to walk to them, and look over into the abyss; you involuntarily fall upon

your hands and feet, creep to the parapet, and peep over it, looking down from this height about a minute, gave me a violent head ache. If the view from the top be painful and intolerable, that from below is delightful in an equal extreme. It is impossible for the emotions arising from the sublime, to be felt beyond what they are here: so beautiful an arch, so elevated, so light, and springing, as it were up to heaven! the rapture of the spectator is really indispensible. The fissure continuing narrow, deep and strait for a considerable distance both above and below the bridge, opens to a short, but very pleasing view of the north mountains on one side, and the blue ridge on the other, at the distance, each of them, of about five miles. This bridge is in the county of Rockbridge, to which it has given name; it affords a public and commodious passage over a valley, which cannot be crossed elsewhere for a considerable distance. The stream passing under it is called Cedar creek; it is a water of James' river, and sufficient in the driest season to turn a grist mill, though its fountain is not more than two miles above." I felt so strongly "the emotions arising from the sublime" that I could not in plain rational language convey to you my ideas of what I had seen, so you may be well pleased that I thought of the extract. I am here informed that Mr. Jefferson, since the publication of his Notes on Virginia, which first gave celebrity to this wonder of nature, has purchased from the United States fifteen acres of land, in the midst of which stands the bridge, and perhaps no private estate in the world can produce a grander or a more surprising subject of admiration—Adieu.

—

Sweet Springs.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

MY road from the bridge lay through Petersburg, twelve miles; here is a ferry across James River, but I preferred going three miles further, and crossing a very handsome bridge, which made the distance ten miles to Fincastle, the capital of Botetant county; it is about 200 miles W. by N. of Richmond, and is a thriving little town. Some excellent farms are in the neighbourhood—Mr. Brackenridge has the most extensive; his house

is elegant, and his demesne handsomely laid out. The usual route from Fincastle to this place is a distance of above fifty miles, but I came direct over the mountain, and reduced my travelling to 22 miles. I had however, much difficulty to encounter, and was assured that I was the first person who attempted crossing the mountains in a carriage, those vehicles being usually sent round, while their owners preferred the less dangerous method of riding on horseback. I was, however, obliged to procure the aid of a very strong horse, to assist my quadruped in hauling over the chair, and arrived without accident, to the no small surprize of the visitors at the springs.

There is a post office kept here, which I presume is unproductive, as company only resort to the springs from June to August, or beginning of September.— There are upwards of eighty thousand miles of post roads, and more than two thousand post offices in the United States, and this must be one of the many that does not yield revenue. The waters of these springs have never yet been correctly analysed. Some people assert, while others deny their efficacy in pulmonary complaints; they act both as a purgative and a diuretic, and are peculiarly useful in relieving the patient from the bad effects of a course of mercury. There are accommodations here for two hundred persons; families are provided with cabins of two, three, or four rooms with furniture, individuals with log-houses, roomy or crowded, according to the increase of the company, and all that are able meet at the public table to a plentiful breakfast, dinner and supper, where there is little appearance of ill health or want of appetite in the majority. Wine is seldom introduced; musick and dancing frequently crown the evening, and cards are resorted to, by many, more to pass time than through a spirit of gaming, although there are professed gamblers at this place, who have set up a Pharo Bank, but must starve for want of trade, unless they meet more encouragement than the present water-drinking folks seem inclined to give them.

I am, yours very truly.

Sweet Springs.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE charge for boarding is seven dollars per week, and half a dollar per day for each horse; this is extravagantly high for the latter, as hay, oats and corn are remarkably low. This place was formerly in Green briar, but now makes part of Munroe county. It is surrounded by mountainous country, but there are in the vallies very fine tracts of grazing and meadow lands; grain too of every description is plentifully produced, and hemp grows to great perfection. There are large quantities and varieties of game, and you may frequently purchase venison at one cent, beef and mutton at three cents per lb. and chickens at six cents per pair; of fish the supply is small, though they say they sometimes have good cat fish, as large as 100 lbs. weight, from New River. The Rattlesnake mountain is five miles from hence, and many curious persons have visited it, but the danger of the excursion, and the difficulty of ascent prevented me from satisfying my curiosity. It is said this reptile is harmless and inoffensive, unless when attacked, and that it then gives notice of its hostility ere it strikes its poison.

This being the anniversary of our independence, one of our company gave us an oration on the occasion, and very justly remarked, "that so long as this day was commemorated, and its return hailed with joy and thankfulness, so long would our republican institutions be supported; so long would the glorious spirit of '76 dwell within us."

About one mile from these springs is another spa;—a considerable sum of money has been expended in building houses and accommodations for company, but it is now totally deserted, and I am told the present possessor is involved in a chancery suit respecting the premises.

The company here feel much interested for old Mr. E——, who is confined, with very little hope of recovery; his son is his constant nurse and attendant, scarcely moving from his bed-side, so that we enjoy but little of his society. It is pleasing to see the man, whose voice thunders in the senate, whose eloquence and virtue entitle him to the applause of his country, thus exercising his filial affection, smoothing the bed of death, and gent-

ly tending the expiring lamp of the author of his being. It is on such occasions we can best appreciate character, and cannot refuse our love and our esteem to a man thus performing the *double duty* of the most dutiful son, and the most affectionate friend.

Adieu.

Red Sulphur Springs.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THIS place is forty miles from the sweet springs, in a westerly direction. Union-town, the capital of Munroe county, is half way, and consists of a jail, court house, and about a dozen dwellings. About twenty miles to the northward is Lewisburgh, the capital of Greenbriar county. Old Mr. E—— died the day I left the sweet springs, and never did I see the expression of grief more strongly pourtrayed, or the distress of the heart more forcibly depicted, than in the countenance of his afflicted son.

The virtues and medicinal qualities of these Red Sulphur Springs were known, it is supposed, for ages by the Indians. but the first intimation the present possessors had, of there being so great a treasure on their farm, arose from the circumstance of deer and other tenants of the woods frequently resorting to it. It has, within these six or eight years, became a place of great celebrity, though I think their situation very unfit for delicate constitutions. I would recommend invalids bringing with them warm cloathing, some wine, and a supply of such medicine as they may be in the practice of using at home. We seldom see the sun until nine, nor after five o'clock, and heavy fogs are so frequent, that we found it necessary to burn fires in the mornings and evenings of the month of August, while many invalids kept their rooms until the mists would be dispelled by the force of the sun beams.

The water is very sulphurous, but so extremely cold as to be hurtful to many who used it incautiously. I was, however, witness to surprising cures performed by it. — In the vicinity of this place is a sycamore tree, perfectly sound, with most amazing extended branches, of a great height, and thirty-six feet round; I measured it

at some distance from the root. Indiana creek is crossed thirty one times between Union Town and this place. It runs through a cave in a mountain of a quarter of a mile in extent, where are manufactories of salt-petre.

New River is six miles to the westward; it is a broad shallow stream, and when joined by Green-briar river, forms the Kenhawa; it falls into the Ohio, and if Mr. Gallatin's masterly report to congress, "on roads and navigation" be carried into effect, there will be a complete communication opened between these Western states and the Atlantic ocean, by the Lakes and the Hudson river, in the state of New-York. If we may anticipate the rising greatness of our country by the events which have taken place within the last fifty years, we may fairly hope that this navigation will be opened, and unite, even by closer ties, the people at the extremes of this vast extended continent. The rapid and surprising improvements in steam boats, the laudable and prevalent disposition for new discoveries, the advancement in agriculture, arts and manufactures, the increasing spirit of energy, speculation and trade, all combine to convince that these United States promise fair to be the emporium of cultivation, and the garden of the world. That immense tract of country called the "Illinois," is perhaps superior in beauty and fertility, to any other in the United States, and many travellers think it equal to any in the world. Its appearance is so delightful, that some French travellers call it the "terrestrial paradise;"—grapes are in such abundance that they yield, in plenty, a very good red wine, for the consumption of the inhabitants. The Illinois river empties itself into the Mississippi, on the east side, 160 miles below the Falls of St. Anthony, and is navigable about 450 miles; between one of its branches and the Chickago river, which empties itself into lake Michigan, there is a portage of two miles; from this portage to the lake is a batteaux navigation of 16 miles; so that by this communication there would only be a land carriage of 28 miles between New-York and New-Orleans, a distance of nearly 4000 miles. I am thus particular, as I think the Illinois will be the most eligible country in the United States for new settlers, or emigrants from the eastward.

I am, yours, &c.

Warm Springs.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

ON leaving the Red Sulphur, I returned to the sweet springs, and from there took a ride to Bowyer's sulphur springs, the strongest of any I have tasted. They are about 17 miles from the sweet springs, across the mountain, which is not passable for carriages; the distance by the public road is 45 miles. Bowyer's waters have been found highly beneficial for disorders of the blood, and cutaneous complaints. Here I received a well authenticated account of the harmless disposition of the Rattlesnake, when unprovoked. A Mr. Bollen, when an infant, had seated himself with his mush and milk on the green before the door, when his terrified mother beheld him holding his spoon full of food to the mouth of a rattlesnake; she had no assistance at hand, and the fear of irritating the animal, and endangering the life of her child, induced her to keep quiet. The snake conveyed its head into the bowl, and after cordially partaking of little Bollen's fare, departed; the next day, about the same hour, the snake again appeared, when it was killed by a negro, and the skin preserved as a memento of remarkable deliverance. The hot springs are in Bath county, 36 miles from the sweet springs. Here are three baths, one of vital heat, or 96 degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer: one of 104°, and it is said the hottest is 112°, and sufficiently hot to boil an egg. The patient, on coming out of the two latter, is wrapped up in blankets, and lies stewing in the sweating room adjoining the bath, until the perspiration has freely spent itself from every pore of the body. I was shewn the remains of an Indian sweating house, and was informed it was supplied with a large fire and a number of stones, which, when made hot, were sprinkled with water, and the patient, after being drenched in vapour, leaped into a cold bath, but came out instantly, and was then enveloped in blankets until perspiration had its full effect. A petrified rattlesnake is preserved by a person in this neighbourhood, where there is a water said to possess this quality. The warm springs, from whence I date this letter, are five miles from the hot springs; here is, perhaps, the largest and most elegant bath in the world. The water is blood warm, and

bubbling out of the rock underneath, can be raised or lowered at the pleasure of the bathers ; both it, and the hot springs are highly useful in the cure of rheumatisms, and many other complaints have been relieved by their efficacy. From the mountain above the spring, there is a most delightful and extensive prospect, but it requires both strength and fortitude in an invalid to attain the summit. The farmers in this neighbourhood, and to the westward, make great quantities of maple sugar, some as much as 1000 weight in a year. The process is simply cutting a hole in the tree, and placing a wooden trough underneath to catch the sap, which oozes in February and March, six or eight gallons per day, from each tree. This quantity, when boiled down, produces about one pound of sugar, or one pound and a half of molasses, both good and palatable. The tree should be suffered to remain unnotched until twenty-one years old ; it is properly called the sugar tree, and is distinguished from the common maple by both its bark and leaf being rougher.

I am, your's truly.

Weir's Cave.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

ON quitting the warm springs, I came the direct road for Staunton, instead of pursuing the circuitous route by Lexington. Staunton is 54 miles from the warm springs, and this place (Weir's Cave) is 16 miles from Staunton. Madison's Cave, mentioned in Mr. Jefferson's notes, is now abandoned as an object of curiosity, and is about a quarter of a mile from Weir's Cave, which was discovered in February, 1806, by a Pole Cat's being caught in a trap, and retreating for shelter to the Cave, to which a dog pursued her. The owner of the dog enlarged the hole by which the animal entered, and discovered the place from whence I now write to you. It is certainly the most remarkable subterraneous curiosity on this continent, or perhaps in the world, and is well worth the attention of an observing traveller. The entrance, and even after you proceed some paces, is by no means calculated to increase the ardour for research, but advancing further, and getting

into the midst of a variety of cones and cylindrical pillars, gives fresh hopes and vigor for further discovery. In order to designate the different objects of this Cave, I shall give to each the name affixed to it by our conductor. The drawing room is the first large opening, after creeping and going through a number of narrow passages, in which we were frequently obliged to get forward on our hands and knees, to guard our heads from being broke by the crystallizations which hung over them, and to ascend and descend by artificial, and oftentimes, crazy ladders. The dining room is the next large apartment, here are a great number of pillars and busts, which, on the first approach, appear to be indebted for their shape to the art of the chissel, and a variety of chairs, decorated like bishop's stalls, give it the appearance of a cathedral; this room is 39 yards long; adjoining is a collection of tamboreens, or natural drums, formed by sheets or curtains of petrification, and sounding, when struck, like the martial instrument from which they are named: The ball room is 42 yards long, 15 wide, and about 30 feet high, the appearance of a music gallery at one end, adds to the deception which the mind encourages in this romantic grotto; here is a very curious pillar and also a number of columns, extending from top to bottom; near this is the resemblance of a grand chair of state, called the president's chair; a representation of a bank of ice, as white and transparent as the native original, and seemingly underneath, a beautiful cascade of falling water. Washington room is 90 yards long, and of an immense height; a bust stands nearly in the centre, and at a distance, so like the great man whose name it bears, that nature, though only shewing her skill in its formation by drops of water, falling for ages, from the lofty ceiling above, could not be excelled by the most skillful statuary. An admirer of the virtues of this best of men, while gazing on his likeness in this spell bound cavern, can only be prevented by respect for the second commandment, from falling down and worshipping. Lady Washington's room opens out of the last mentioned. The diamond room takes its name from the variety of chrystalizations and transparencies it exhibits: our lights were not sufficiently splendid, but had they

done justice to the scene before us, I question if the eye could be presented with a more glittering or magnificent object. The enchanted room contains the image of "Lot's wife" in the very act of tripping away, and turning her head half round, when she was caught in the fact, and paid the dear forfeit of her curiosity. She has now as much the appearance of a pillar of salt as of petrification. How happy for mankind, if the evils brought on families and on society, by their foibles, which Mrs. Lot undoubtedly inherited from her mother Eve, were to be done away, by a few such examples of terrific justice! I denominated a very rough passage, the wilderness of sin, and John Bunyan himself could not have painted a more terrific road into the garden of Eden, where the perspective presented a pleasing assemblage of trees, shrubs, variegated walks, and ornamental flowering plants. The *tout ensemble* appearing like a petrified flower garden, formed by nature in her playful moments, as if for her own amusement. In the bar room there is a spring of cool water, and as the conductor is generally provided with a bottle of brandy, the almost exhausted strength of the explorator may here be recruited. The mountain of salt, better described by the name it bears than any idea I can give of it, is not the least wonderful of the works of nature in this cavern. On the whole, it is highly worth the attention of the curious, the notice of the naturalist, and the observation of the philosophic traveller: and where is the contemplative being that visits it, and views the sublime and grand scenery I witnessed in the close of the day, in the ascent, on the top, and in the descent of the majestic blue mountains, that is not prepared to cry out in exstasy, with the poet,

"These are thy glorious works, Parent of Good!"

—The good people throughout this part of the country which is but thinly settled, have an uncouth way of conferring an obligation. They will neither take out licences, nor suffer their houses to be called taverns, and yet they entertain guests in what, they term, private entertainment. They tell the way worn traveller he may stay all night, but they make him pay tavern prices in the morning. From the Cave to the beautiful village

of Charlottesville, where I finish this letter, is 37 computed miles ; in this vicinity are some handsome farms and elegant houses, the spacious and well appointed mansion and ground of Mr. Divers, are well worth notice, but as I have already extended this letter to an unreasonable length, I shall break off, and in my next, entertain you with an account of Monticello, three miles from Charlotteville,

And remain yours, &c.

Milton.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THIS village is three miles from the seat of Mr. Jefferson, President of the United States ; my stay there did not exceed one hour, and my opportunity of converse with this great man was much shorter than I wished ; however from my own observation, and from correct and authentic information, I am enabled to give you such an account of Monticello and its philosophic owner as may afford you gratification and entertainment, and as the most minute particulars respecting so eminent a character, and whatever may concern him, must interest you, I hope I shall not be accused of prolixity. Thomas — is the oldest surviving son of Peter Jefferson ; he has one brother and three sisters yet living, most of them have families ; he had six children, two daughters alone lived to maturity ; one married to Mr. John Eppes, the other to Mr. Thomas M. Randolph ; the patriotism and talents of both these gentlemen are well known to the community. Mrs. Eppes died about five years since, and left two children, one of whom is since dead. Mr. and Mrs. Randolph lived near this place ; they have a large family of children, and reside with the President during his visits to Monticello. Mr. Jefferson is very regular and temperate in his mode of living ; he retires to his chamber about nine o'clock, and rises before the sun, both in summer and winter, and it is not easy to conceive a more grand or sublime sight than the rising of the sun viewed from the summit of Monticello. Until breakfast (which is early) he is employed in writing, after that he generally visits his work-shops, labourers, &c. and then, until 12 o'clock,

he is engaged in his study, either in drawing, writing or reading; he then rides over his plantation, returns at two, dresses for dinner and joins his company; he retires from table soon after the cloth is removed, and spends the evening in walking about, reading the papers and in conversation with such guests as may be with him. His disposition is truly amiable, easy of access, quick and ready in the dispatch of business, and so condescending and naturally pleasing in his manners and address, that no person, at all acquainted with him, can feel in his presence perplexity or embarrassment. Mr. Jefferson is seen to less advantage at the seat of government, than at this, his favourite residence.

Monticello is a conical hill;—its summit, on which stands the house, is 500 feet above the adjoining country. The view from hence is extensive, variegated and charming; to the west, the blue mountains, at a distance of about fifteen miles, bound the prospect, while to the north and east, the eye wanders in rapture over an expanse of, I think, 45 miles; and can distinguish particular objects at that distance. It is near a mile from the public road which leads between Charlottesville and Milton. In a few years, when some improvements, now begun, are complete, the approach will be worthy the taste of the proprietor.

The house is an irregular octagon, with porticoes on the east and west sides, and piazzas on the north and south ends. Its extent, including the porticoes and piazzas, is about one hundred and ten by ninety feet; the external is finished in the Doric order complete, with a ballustrade on the top of it. In the centre of the S. W. side, over the parlour, is an attic story, terminated with a dome, which has a fine effect, and forms a beautiful room inside. The internal of the house contains specimens of all the different orders, except the composite, which is not introduced; the hall is in the Ionic, the dining room, in the Doric, the parlour, in the Corinthian, and dome in the Attic; in the other rooms are introduced several different forms of these orders, all in the truest proportions, according to Palladio. On the ground floor are eleven rooms; on the second, six; and on the attic, four; there are cellars under the whole. Through the antes of the house, from N. to S. on the cellar floor,

is a passage of 300 feet long, leading to two wings or ranges of building of one story, that stand equi-distant from each end of the house, and extend 120 feet eastwardly from the passages, terminated by a pavillion of two stories at the end of each. The roofs of the passages, and range of buildings, form an agreeable walk, being flat and floored, and are to have a chinese railing round them; they rise but a little height above the lawn, that they may not obstruct the view. On the south side are the kitchen, smoke house, dairy, waste house and servants' rooms; on the north are the ice house, coach houses, &c. &c. The library is extensive, and contains, as might indeed be expected, a vast collection of rare and valuable works, on all subjects, and in all languages. Mr. Jefferson has also a large collection of mathematical, philosophical, and optical instruments, and Indian curiosities. Among the latter are busts of a male and female, sitting in the Indian position; they are supposed to be of great antiquity, and to have been formed by the Indians: they were ploughed up in the state of Tennessee, are of very hard stone, but a considerably defaced; there is also in the hall a representation of a battle between the Panis and Osage; also a map of the Missouri and its tributary streams, both executed by Indians on dressed Buffaloe hides; bows, arrows and quivers; poisoned lances, pipes of peace, wampum belts, mockasins, &c. &c. several dresses, and cooking utensils of the Mandan and other nations of the Missouri. The statuary in the hall consists of a colossal bust of Mr. Jefferson, by Carrachi, it is on a truncated column, on the pedestal of which are represented the twelve tribes of Israel, and the twelve signs of the Zodiac. A full length figure of Cleopatra, in a reclining position, after she had applied the asp, and busts of Voltaire and Thurgot, in plaister; there is likewise a model of one of the pyramids of Egypt. In the parlour are busts of the emperors Alexander of Russia, and Napoleon of France, sitting on columns, and a sleeping Venus. In the bow of the dining room are busts of Genl. Washington, Doctor Franklin, Marquis de La Fayette, and Paul Jones, in plaister. The collection of paintings is considered by connoiseurs to be of the first rate. — Among them is the Ascension, by Poussin, the Holy

Family, by Raphael, scourging of Christ, by Reubens, Crucifixion, by Guido, and a great many other scripture and historic pieces, by the first masters; portraits, prints, medalions, medals, &c. of celebrated characters and events. The collection of natural curiosities is tolerably extensive, and consists of mammoth and other bones, horns of different kinds, a head of the mountain ram, petrifications, chrystalizations, minerals, shells &c. In short, it is supposed there is no private gentleman in the world in possession of so perfect and complete a scientific, useful and ornamental collection. His lands adjoining Monticello are said to be about eleven thousand acres. About fifteen hundred acres of cleared land, and a proportion of his negroes are hired out; as his public duties, since he became President, have prevented his engaging in agricultural pursuits: he proposes however making a beginning next year, and no doubt the farming community will be benefited both by his observations and practice. He has a merchant mill, which he lets at a rent of 1200 dollars per annum, and a grist mill which he works himself. He has a large tract of land in Bedford county, where he raises annually about 40,000 wt. of tobacco, and grain sufficient to maintain the plantations. He keeps no stock of horses or cattle here, but uses mules for his waggons. The number of his negroes are about two hundred. His flock of sheep are valuable, although not numerous; they consist of the Cape or large tail, Shetland, and Marino breed. The only manufactories at present carried on by him, are at Bedford, of Smith's work, and at Monticello a nailery, the latter conducted by boys; but he is making arrangements for the manufacture of cotton and woollens, on his return to domestic life. The garden, though justly celebrated for variety of delicious fruit, has been much neglected, but Mr. Jefferson proposes making considerable improvements, useful and ornamental, both here and in his pleasure grounds.

I am, dear friend,
Yours, very truly.

Alexandria:

MY DEAR FRIEND,

AT length I am arrived in this city, after repeatedly losing myself in the woods. I can say with truth I have found the roads in Virginia to be, as the Poet represents the ways of Providence, "puzzled in mazes and perplex'd in errors." Between Milton and Orange court-houses I met a great number of persons going to a funeral and a sermon, which it is usual in this country, I understand, to preach on these occasions. Montpelier, the seat of Mr. Secretary Madison, is near Orange court house; from the latter place, I took the private or middle road, it being recommended to me by the President, in preference to either of the other public roads, one of which goes by Fredericksburgh, and the other by Culpepper court house; this last is his winter route to and from the city; but the middle is the best and coolest for a summer journey. I passed through Stephensburgh, a decayed looking village, and at Slaughter's mills, three miles further, I witnessed a scene to me altogether novel and equally pleasing. There were assembled about 400 ladies and gentlemen, from round the country, to the extent of 30 miles, as elegantly and fashionably dressed, as good taste and good clothes could make them: they met at this place in the morning, and had been the entire day engaged in dancing, conversation or other amusements. Refreshments of every kind had been liberally provided by the guests themselves. I understood these merry meetings (termed Barbicues) were very frequent during the summer, and I observed that the hope of soon assembling at another, took the sting from adieu when about to part. A Virginia Barbicue seems a day of rejoicing and jubilee to the whole of the surrounding country. The next town I passed, is called Occoqua Mills, a new place, settled by Mr. Ellicott, one of the industrious and respectable family of that name; it is 16 miles from this city of Alexandria, where there is but little appearance of improvement since my last visit, three years ago; it is in Fairfax county, on the south side of the Potowmack, the situation is pleasant, and the original settlers laid out the streets on the plan of Philadelphia. It contains about 780 houses and 6000 inhabitants. The new bridge erecting over the Potowmack;

will reduce the distance to the capitol in the Federal city, to about six miles. I intend proceeding to Washington to-morrow; that city is 124 miles from Monticello.

I am, my dear friend,
Your's affectionately.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE



NLM 02702265 9