ТОМАС ДЖЕФФЕРСОН

THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON, VOL. 6 (OF 9)

Томас Джефферсон

The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Vol. 6 (of 9)

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=34838630
The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Vol. VI. (of 9) / Being His Autobiography, Correspondence, Reports, Messages, / Addresses, and Other Writings, Official and Private:

Содержание

Thomas Jefferson
The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Vol. VI. (of 9) / Being His Autobiography, Correspondence, Reports, Messages, / Addresses, and Other Writings, Official and Private

PART III.—Continued. LETTERS WRITTEN AFTER HIS RETURN TO THE U. S. DOWN TO THE TIME OF HIS DEATH. 1790-1826

TO DR. RUSH

Dear Sir,—I write to you from a place ninety miles from Monticello, near the New London of this State, which I visit three or four times a year, and stay from a fortnight to a month at a time. I have fixed myself comfortably, keep some books here, bring others occasionally, am in the solitude of a hermit, and quite at leisure to attend to my absent friends. I note this to show that I am not in a situation to examine the dates of our letters, whether I have overgone the annual period of asking how you do? I know that within that time I have received one or more letters from you, accompanied by a volume of your introductory lectures, for which accept my thanks. I have read them with pleasure and edification, for I acknowledge facts in medicine as far as they go, distrusting only their extension by theory. Having to conduct my grandson through his course of mathematics, I have resumed that study with great avidity. It was ever my favorite one. We have no theories there, no uncertainties remain on the mind; all is demonstration and satisfaction. I have forgotten much, and recover it with more difficulty than when in the vigor of my mind I originally acquired it. It is wonderful to me that old men should not be sensible that their minds keep pace with their bodies in the progress of decay. Our old revolutionary friend Clinton, for example, who was a hero, but never a man of mind, is wonderfully jealous on this head. He tells eternally the stories of his younger days to prove his memory, as if memory and reason were the same faculty. Nothing betrays imbecility so much as the being insensible of it. Had not a conviction of the

danger to which an unlimited occupation of the executive chair would expose the republican constitution of our government, made it conscientiously a duty to retire when I did, the fear of becoming a dotard and of being insensible of it, would of itself have resisted all solicitations to remain. I have had a long attack of rheumatism, without fever and without pain while I keep myself still. A total prostration of the muscles of the back, hips and thighs, deprived me of the power of walking, and leaves it still in a very impaired state. A pain when I walk, seems to have fixed itself in the hip, and to threaten permanence. I take moderate rides, without much fatigue; but my journey to this place, in a hard-going gig, gave me great sufferings which I expect will be renewed on my return as soon as I am able. The loss of the power of taking exercise would be a sore affliction to me. It has been the delight of my retirement to be in constant bodily activity, looking after my affairs. It was never damped as the pleasures of reading are, by the question of *cui bono?* for what object? I hope your health of body continues firm. Your works show that of your mind. The habits of exercise which your calling has given to both, will tend long to preserve them. The sedentary character of my public occupations sapped a constitution naturally sound and vigorous, and draws it to an earlier close. But it will still last quite as long as I wish it. There is a fulness of time when men should go, and not occupy too long the ground to which others have a right to advance. We must continue while here to exchange occasionally our mutual good

wishes. I find friendship to be like wine, raw when new, ripened with age, the true old man's milk and restorative cordial. God bless you and preserve you through a long and healthy old age.

TO WM. A. BURWELL, ESQ

Poplar Forest, August 19, 1811.

Dear Sir,—I am here after a long absence, having been confined at home a month by rheumatism. I thought myself equal to the journey when I set out, but I have suffered much coming, staying, and shall, returning. If I am not better after a little rest at home, I shall set out for the warm springs. The object of this letter is to inform Mrs. Burwell that a ring, which she left where she washed the morning of leaving Fludd's, is safe and will be delivered to her order or to herself when she passes. I have not seen the President since he came home, nor do I know what has passed with Foster from the fountain head; but through a channel in which I have confidence, I learn he has delivered a formal note in the name of his government, declaring that the circumstances of the war oblige them to take possession of the ocean, and permit no commerce on it but through their ports. Thus their purpose is at length avowed. They cannot from their own resources maintain the navy necessary to retain the dominion of the ocean, and mean that other nations shall be assessed to maintain their own chains. Should the king die, as is probable, although the ministry which would come in stand so committed to repeal the orders of Council, I doubt if the nation will permit it. For the usurpation of the sea has become

a national disease. This state of things annihilates the culture of tobacco, except of about 15,000 hhds. on the prime lands. Wheat and Flour keep up. Wheat was at 9s. 6d. at Richmond ten days ago. I have sold mine here at the Richmond price, abating 2s., but 8s. a bushel has been offered for machined wheat. Present me respectfully to Mrs. Burwell, and accept assurances of affectionate respect and esteem.

TO MR. PEALE

Poplar Forest, August 20, 1811.

It is long, my dear Sir, since we have exchanged a letter. Our former correspondence had always some little matter of business interspersed; but this being at an end, I shall still be anxious to hear from you sometimes, and to know that you are well and happy. I know indeed that your system is that of contentment under any situation. I have heard that you have retired from the city to a farm, and that you give your whole time to that. Does not the museum suffer? And is the farm as interesting? Here, as you know, we are all farmers, but not in a pleasing style. We have so little labor in proportion to our land that, although perhaps we make more profit from the same labor, we cannot give to our grounds that style of beauty which satisfies the eye of the amateur. Our rotations are corn, wheat, and clover, or corn, wheat, clover and clover, or wheat, corn, wheat, clover and clover; preceding the clover by a plastering. But some, instead of clover substitute mere rest, and all are slovenly enough. We are adding the care of Merino sheep. I have often thought that if heaven had given me choice of my position and calling, it should have been on a rich spot of earth, well watered, and near a good market for the productions of the garden. No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to

that of the garden. Such a variety of subjects, some one always coming to perfection, the failure of one thing repaired by the success of another, and instead of one harvest a continued one through the year. Under a total want of demand except for our family table, I am still devoted to the garden. But though an old man, I am but a young gardener.

Your application to whatever you are engaged in I know to be incessant. But Sundays and rainy days are always days of writing for the farmer. Think of me sometimes when you have your pen in hand, and give me information of your health and occupations; and be always assured of my great esteem and respect.

TO MR. CLAY

Poplar Forest, August 23, 1811.

Dear Sir,—While here, and much confined to the house by my rheumatism, I have amused myself with calculating the hour lines of an horizontal dial for the latitude of this place, which I find to be 37° 22′ 26″. The calculations are for every five minutes of time, and are always exact to within less than half a second of a degree. As I do not know that any body here has taken this trouble before, I have supposed a copy would be acceptable to you. It may be a good exercise for Master Cyrus to make you a dial by them. He will need nothing but a protractor, or a line of chords and dividers. A dial of size, say of from twelve inches to two feet square, is the cheapest and most accurate measure of time for general use, and would I suppose be more common if every one possessed the proper horary lines for his own latitude. Williamsburg being very nearly in the parallel of Poplar Forest, the calculations now sent would serve for all the counties in the line between that place and this, for your own place, New London, and Lynchburg in this neighborhood. Slate, as being less affected by the sun, is preferable to wood or metal, and needs but a saw and plane to prepare it, and a knife point to mark the lines and figures. If worth the trouble, you will of course use the paper enclosed; if not, some of your neighbors may wish to do it, and

the effect to be of some use to you will strengthen the assurances of my great esteem and respect.

TO LEVI LINCOLN, ESQ

Monticello, August 25, 1811.

It is long, my good friend, since we have exchanged a letter; and yet I demur to all prescription against it. I cannot relinquish the right of correspondence with those I have learnt to esteem. If the extension of common acquaintance in public life be an inconvenience, that with select worth is more than a counterpoise. Be assured your place is high among those whose remembrance I have brought with me into retirement, and cherish with warmth. I was overjoyed when I heard you were appointed to the supreme bench of national justice, and as much mortified when I heard you had declined it. You are too young to be entitled to withdraw your services from your country. You cannot yet number the *quadraginta stipendia* of the veteran. Our friends, whom we left behind, have ceased to be friends among themselves. I am sorry for it, on their account and on my own, for I have sincere affection for them all. I hope it will produce no schisms among us, no desertions from our ranks; that no Essex man will find matter of triumph in it. The secret treasons of his heart, and open rebellions on his tongue, will still be punished, while *in fieri*, by the detestation of his country, and by its vengeance in the overt act. What a pity that history furnishes so many abuses of the punishment by exile, the most

rational of all punishments for meditated treason. Their great king beyond the water would doubtless receive them as kindly as his Asiatic prototype did the fugitive aristocracy of Greece. But let us turn to good-humored things. How do you do? What are you doing? Does the farm or the study occupy your time, or each by turns? Do you read law or divinity? And which affords the most curious and cunning learning? Which is most disinterested? And which was it that crucified its Saviour? Or were the two professions united among the Jews? In that case, what must their Caiaphases have been? Answer me these questions, or any others you like better, but let me hear from you and know that you are well and happy. That you may long continue so is the prayer of yours affectionately.

TO MR. JAMES L. EDWARDS

Monticello, September 5, 1811.

Sir,—Your letter of August 20th has truly surprised me. In this it is said that, *for certain services performed* by Mr. James Lyon and Mr. Samuel Morse, formerly editors of the Savannah Republican, I promised them the sum of one thousand dollars. This, Sir, is totally unfounded. I never promised to any printer on earth the sum of one thousand dollars, nor any other sum, for certain services performed, or for any services which that expression would imply. I have had no accounts with printers but for their newspapers, for which I have paid always the ordinary price and no more. I have occasionally joined in moderate contributions to printers, as I have done to other descriptions of persons, distressed or persecuted, not by promise, but the actual payment of what I contributed. When Mr. Morse went to Savannah, he called on me and told me he meant to publish a paper there, for which I subscribed, and paid him the year in advance. I continued to take it from his successors, Everett & McLean, and Everett & Evans, and paid for it at different epochs up to December 31, 1808, when I withdrew my subscription. You say McLean informed you "he had some expectation of getting the money, as he had received a letter from me on the subject." If such a letter exists under my name, it is a forgery.

I never wrote but a single letter to him, that was of the 28th of January, 1810, and was on the subject of the last payment made for his newspaper, and on no other subject; and I have two receipts of his, (the last dated March 9, 1809,) of payments for his paper, both stating to be *in full of all demands*, and a letter of the 17th of April, 1810, in reply to mine, manifestly showing he had no demand against me of any other nature. The promise is said to have been made to Morse & Lyon. Were Mr. Morse living, I should appeal to him with confidence, as I believe him to have been a very honest man. Mr. Lyon I suppose to be living, and will, I am sure, acquit me of any such transaction as that alleged. The truth, then, being that I never made the promise suggested, nor any one of a like nature to any printer or other person whatever, every principle of justice and of self-respect requires that I should not listen to any such demand.

TO MR. JAMES LYON

Monticello, September 5, 1811.

Sir,—I enclose you the copy of a letter I have received from a James L. Edwards, of Boston. You will perceive at once its swindling object. It appeals to two dead men, and one, (yourself,) whom he supposes I cannot get at. I have written him an answer which may perhaps prevent his persevering in the attempt, for the whole face of his letter betrays a consciousness of its guilt. But perhaps he may expect that I would sacrifice a sum of money rather than be disturbed with encountering a bold falsehood. In this he is mistaken; and to prepare to meet him, should he repeat his demand, and considering that he has presumed to implicate your name in this attempt, I take the liberty of requesting a letter from you bearing testimony to the truth of my never having made to you, or within your knowledge or information, any such promise to yourself, your partner Morse, or any other. My confidence in your character leaves me without a doubt of your honest aid in repelling this base and bold attempt to fix on me practices to which no honors or powers in this world would ever have induced me to stoop. I have solicited none, intrigued for none. Those which my country has thought proper to confide to me have been of their own mere motion, unasked by me. Such practices as this letter-writer imputes to me, would have proved

me unworthy of their confidence.

It is long since I have known anything of your situation or pursuits. I hope they have been successful, and tender you my best wishes that they may continue so, and for your own health and happiness.

TO DOCTOR PATTERSON

Monticello, September 11, 1811.

Dear Sir,—The enclosed work came to me without a scrip of a pen other than what you see in the title-page—"A Monsieur le President de la Société." From this I conclude it intended for the Philosophical Society, and for them I now enclose it to you. You will find the notes really of value. They embody and ascertain to us all the scraps of new discoveries which we have learned in detached articles from less authentic publications. M. Goudin has generally expressed his measures according to the old as well as the new standard, which is a convenience to me, as I do not make a point of retaining the last in my memory. I confess, indeed, I do not like the new system of French measures, because not the best, and adapted to a standard accessible to themselves exclusively, and to be obtained by other nations only from them. For, on examining the map of the earth, you will find no meridian on it but the one passing through their country, offering the extent of land on both sides of the 45th degree, and terminating at both ends in a portion of the ocean which the conditions of the problem for an universal standard of measures require. Were all nations to agree therefore to adopt this standard, they must go to Paris to ask it; and they might as well long ago have all agreed to adopt the French foot, the

standard of which they could equally have obtained from Paris. Whereas the pendulum is equally fixed by the laws of nature, is in possession of every nation, may be verified everywhere and by every person, and at an expense within every one's means. I am not therefore without a hope that the other nations of the world will still concur, some day, in making the pendulum the basis of a common system of measures, weights and coins, which applied to the present metrical systems of France and of other countries, will render them all intelligible to one another. England and this country may give it a beginning, notwithstanding the war they are entering into. The republic of letters is unaffected by the wars of geographical divisions of the earth. France, by her power and science, now bears down everything. But that power has its measure in time by the life of one man. The day cannot be distant in the history of human revolutions, when the indignation of mankind will burst forth, and an insurrection of the universe against the political tyranny of France will overwhelm all her arrogations. Whatever is most opposite to them will be most popular, and what is reasonable therefore in itself, cannot fail to be adopted the sooner from that motive. But why leave this adoption to the tardy will of governments who are always, in their stock of information, a century or two behind the intelligent part of mankind, and who have interests against touching ancient institutions? Why should not the college of the literary societies of the world adopt the second pendulum as the unit of measure on the authorities of reason, convenience and common consent?

And why should not our society open the proposition by a circular letter to the other learned institutions of the earth? If men of science, in their publications, would express measures always in multiples and decimals of the pendulum, annexing their value in municipal measures as botanists add the popular to the botanical names of plants, they would soon become familiar to all men of instruction, and prepare the way for legal adoptions. At any rate, it would render the writers of every nation intelligible to the readers of every other, when expressing the measures of things. The French, I believe, have given up their Decada Calendar, but it does not appear that they retire from the centesimal division of the quadrant. On the contrary, M. Borda has calculated according to that division, new trigonometrical tables not yet, I believe, printed. In the excellent tables of Callet, lately published by Didot, in stereotype, he has given a table of Logarithmic lines and tangents for the hundred degrees of the quadrant, abridged from Borda's manuscript. But he has given others for the sexagesimal division, which being for every 10″ through the whole table, are more convenient than Hutton's, Scherwin's, or any of their predecessors. It cannot be denied that the centesimal division would facilitate our arithmetic, and that it might have been preferable had it been originally adopted, as a numeration by eighths would have been more convenient than by tens. But the advantages would not now compensate the embarrassments of a change.

I extremely regret the not being provided with a time-piece

equal to the observations of the approaching eclipse of the sun. Can you tell me what would be the cost in Philadelphia of a clock, the time-keeping part of which should be perfect? And what the difference of cost between a wooden and gridiron pendulum? To be of course without a striking apparatus, as it would be wanted for astronomical purposes only. Accept assurances of affectionate esteem and respect.

TO CLEMENT CAINE, ESQ

Monticello, September 16, 1811.

Sir,—Your favor of April 2d was not received till the 23d of June last, with the volume accompanying it, for which be pleased to accept my thanks. I have read it with great satisfaction, and received from it information, the more acceptable as coming from a source which could be relied on. The retort on European censors, of their own practices on the liberties of man, the inculcation on the master of the moral duties which he owes to the slave, in return for the benefits of his service, that is to say, of food, clothing, care in sickness, and maintenance under age and disability, so as to make him in fact as comfortable and more secure than the laboring man in most parts of the world; and the idea suggested of substituting free whites in all household occupations and manual arts, thus lessening the call for the other kind of labor, while it would increase the public security, give great merit to the work, and will, I have no doubt, produce wholesome impressions. The habitual violation of the equal rights of the colonist by the dominant (for I will not call them the mother) countries of Europe, the invariable sacrifice of their highest interests to the minor advantages of any individual trade or calling at home, are as immoral in principle as the continuance of them is unwise in practice, after the lessons they

have received. What, in short, is the whole system of Europe towards America but an atrocious and insulting tyranny? One hemisphere of the earth, separated from the other by wide seas on both sides, having a different system of interests flowing from different climates, different soils, different productions, different modes of existence, and its own local relations and duties is made subservient to all the petty interests of the other, to *their* laws, *their* regulations, *their* passions and wars, and interdicted from social intercourse, from the interchange of mutual duties and comforts with their neighbors, enjoined on all men by the laws of nature. Happily these abuses of human rights are drawing to a close on both our continents, and are not likely to survive the present mad contest of the lions and tigers of the other. Nor does it seem certain that the insular colonies will not soon have to take care of themselves, and to enter into the general system of independence and free intercourse with their neighboring and natural friends. The acknowledged depreciation of the paper circulation of England, with the known laws of its rapid progression to bankruptcy, will leave that nation shortly without revenue, and without the means of supporting the naval power necessary to maintain dominion over the rights and interests of different nations. The intention too, which they now formally avow, of taking possession of the ocean as their exclusive domain, and of suffering no commerce on it but through their ports, makes it the interest of all mankind to contribute their efforts to bring such usurpations to an end. We

have hitherto been able to avoid professed war, and to continue to our industry a more salutary direction. But the determination to take all our vessels bound to any other than her ports, amounting to all the war she can make (for we fear no invasion), it would be folly in us to let that war be all on one side only, and to make no effort towards indemnification and retaliation by reprisal. That a contest thus forced on us by a nation a thousand leagues from us both, should place your country and mine in relations of hostility, who have not a single motive or interest but of mutual friendship and interchange of comforts, shows the monstrous character of the system under which we live. But however, in the event of war, greedy individuals on both sides, availing themselves of its laws, may commit depredations on each other, I trust that our quiet inhabitants, conscious that no cause exists but for neighborly good will, and the furtherance of common interests, will feel only those brotherly affections which nature has ordained to be those of our situation.

A letter of thanks for a good book has thus run away from its subject into fields of speculation into which discretion perhaps should have forbidden me to enter, and for which an apology is due. I trust that the reflections I hazard will be considered as no more than what they really are, those of a private individual, withdrawn from the councils of his country, uncommunicating with them, and responsible alone for any errors of fact or opinion expressed; as the reveries, in short, of an old man, who, looking beyond the present day, looks into times not his own, and as

evidences of confidence in the liberal mind of the person to whom they are so freely addressed. Permit me, however, to add to them my best wishes for his personal happiness, and assurances of the highest consideration and respect.

TO MR. EPPES

Monticello, September 29, 1811.

Dear Sir,—The enclosed letter came under cover to me without any indication from what quarter it came.

Our latest arrival brings information of the death of the king of England. Its coming from Ireland and not direct from England would make it little worthy of notice, were not the event so probable. On the 26th of July the English papers say he was expected hourly to expire. This vessel sailed from Ireland the 4th of August, and says an express brought notice the day before to the government that he died on the 1st; but whether on that day or not, we may be certain he is dead, and entertain, therefore, a hope that a change of ministers will produce that revocation of the orders of council for which they stand so committed. In this event we may still remain at peace, and that probably concluded between the other powers. I am so far, in that case, from believing that our reputation will be tarnished by our not having mixed in the mad contests of the rest of the world that, setting aside the ravings of pepper-pot politicians, of whom there are enough in every age and country, I believe it will place us high in the scale of wisdom, to have preserved our country tranquil and prosperous during a contest which prostrated the honor, power, independence, laws and property of every country on the

other side of the Atlantic. Which of them have better preserved their honor? Has Spain, has Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, Holland, Prussia, Austria, the other German powers, Sweden, Denmark, or even Russia? And would we accept of the infamy of France or England in exchange for our honest reputation, or of the result of their enormities, despotism to the one, and bankruptcy and prostration to the other, in exchange for the prosperity, the freedom and independence which we have preserved safely through the wreck? The bottom of my page warns me it is time to present my homage to Mrs. Eppes, and to yourself and Francis my affectionate adieux.

TO MR. PAINE TODD

Monticello, October 10, 1811.

Dear Sir,—According to promise I send you our observations of the solar eclipse of September 17th. We had, you know, a perfect observation of the passage of the sun over the meridian, and the eclipse began so soon after as to leave little room for error from the time-piece. Her rate of going, however, was ascertained by ten days' subsequent observation and comparison with the sun, and the times, as I now give them to you, are corrected by these. I have no confidence in the times of the first and ultimate contacts, because you know we were not early enough on the watch, deceived by our time-piece which was too slow. The impression on the sun was too sensible when we first observed it, to be considered as the moment of commencement, and the largeness of our conjectural correction (18´´) shows that that part of the observation should be considered as nothing. The last contact was well enough observed, but it is on the forming and breaking of the annulus that I rely with entire confidence. I am certain there was not an error of an instant of time in either. I would be governed, therefore, solely by them, and not suffer their result to be affected by the others. I have not yet entered on the calculation of our longitude from them. They will enable you to do it as a college exercise. Affectionately yours.

First contact,	0h. 13′ 54′′		
Annulus formed,	1h. 53′ 0′′	central time of annulus, 1h. 56′ 12½′	central time of the two contacts, 1h. 51′ 28′
Annulus broken,	1h. 59′ 25′′		
Ultimate contact,	3h. 29′ 2′′		
Latitude of Monticello,	38° 8′		

TO DOCTOR ROBERT PATTERSON

Monticello, November 10, 1811.

Dear Sir,—Your favor of September 23d came to hand in due time, and I thank you for the nautical almanac it covered for the year 1813. I learn with pleasure that the Philosophical Society has concluded to take into consideration the subject of a fixed standard of measures, weights and coins, and you ask my ideas on it; insulated as my situation is, I am sure I can offer nothing but what will occur to the committee engaged on it, with the advantage on their part of correction by an interchange of sentiments and observations among themselves. I will, however, hazard some general ideas because you desire it, and if a single one be useful, the labor will not be lost.

The subject to be referred to as a standard, whether it be matter or motion, should be fixed by nature, invariable and accessible to all nations, independently of others, and with a convenience not disproportioned to its utility. What subject in nature fulfils best these conditions? What system shall we propose on this, embracing measures, weights and coins? and in what form shall we present it to the world? These are the questions before the committee.

Some other subjects have, at different times, been proposed as standards, but two only have divided the opinions of men: first, a

direct admeasurement of a line on the earth's surface, or second, a measure derived from its motion on its axis. To measure directly such a portion of the earth as would furnish an element of measure, which might be found again with certainty in all future times, would be too far beyond the competence of our means to be taken into consideration. I am free, at the same time, to say that if these were within our power in the most ample degree, this element would not meet my preference. The admeasurement would of course be of a portion of some great circle of the earth. If of the equator, the countries over which that passes, their character and remoteness, render the undertaking arduous, and we may say impracticable for most nations. If of some meridian, the varying measures of its degrees from the equator to the pole, require a mean to be sought, of which some aliquot part may furnish what is desired. For this purpose the 45th degree has been recurred to, and such a length of line on both sides of it terminating at each end in the ocean, as may furnish a satisfactory law for a deduction of the unmeasured part of the quadrant. The portion resorted to by the French philosophers, (and there is no other on the globe under circumstances equally satisfactory,) is the meridian passing through their country and a portion of Spain, from Dunkirk to Barcelona. The objections to such an admeasurement as an element of measure, are the labor, the time, the number of highly-qualified agents, and the great expense required. All this, too, is to be repeated whenever any accident shall have destroyed the standard derived from

it, or impaired its dimensions. This portion of that particular meridian is accessible of right to no one nation on earth. France, indeed, availing herself of a moment of peculiar relation between Spain and herself, has executed such an admeasurement. But how would it be at this moment, as to either France or Spain? and how is it at all times as to other nations, in point either of right or of practice? Must these go through the same operation, or take their measures from the standard prepared by France? Neither case bears that character of independence which the problem requires, and which neither the equality nor convenience of nations can dispense with. How would it now be, were England the deposit of a standard for the world? At war with all the world, the standard would be inaccessible to all other nations. Against this, too, are the inaccuracies of admeasurements over hills and valleys, mountains and waters, inaccuracies often unobserved by the agent himself, and always unknown to the world. The various results of the different measures heretofore attempted, sufficiently prove the inadequacy of human means to make such an admeasurement with the exactness requisite.

Let us now see under what circumstances the pendulum offers itself as an element of measure. The motion of the earth on its axis from noon to noon of a mean solar day, has been divided from time immemorial, and by very general consent, into 86,400 portions of time called seconds. The length of a pendulum vibrating in one of these portions, is determined by the laws of nature, is invariable under the same parallel, and accessible

independently to all men. Like a degree of the meridian, indeed, it varies in its length from the equator to the pole, and like it, too, requires to be reduced to a mean. In seeking a mean in the first case, the 45th degree occurs with unrivalled preferences. It is the mid-way of the celestial ark from the equator to the pole. It is a mean between the two extreme degrees of the terrestrial ark, or between any two equi-distant from it, and it is also a mean value of all its degrees. In like manner, when seeking a mean for the pendulum, the same 45th degree offers itself on the same grounds, its increments being governed by the same laws which determine those of the different degrees of the meridian.

In a pendulum loaded with a Bob, some difficulty occurs in finding the centre of oscillation; and consequently the distance between that and the point of suspension. To lessen this, it has been proposed to substitute for the pendulum, a cylindrical rod of small diameter, in which the displacement of the centre of oscillation would be lessened. It has also been proposed to prolong the suspending wire of the pendulum below the Bob, until their centres of oscillation shall coincide. But these propositions not appearing to have received general approbation, we recur to the pendulum, suspended and charged as has been usual. And the rather as the laws which determine the centre of oscillation leave no room for error in finding it, other than that minimum in practice to which all operations are subject in their execution. The other sources of inaccuracy in the length of the pendulum need not be mentioned, because easily guarded

against. But the great and decisive superiority of the pendulum, as a standard of measure, is in its accessibility to all men, at all times and in all places. To obtain the second pendulum for 45° it is not necessary to go actually to that latitude. Having ascertained its length in our own parallel, both theory and observation give us a law for ascertaining the difference between that and the pendulum of any other. To make a new measure therefore, or verify an old one, nothing is necessary in any place but a well-regulated time-piece, or a good meridian, and such a knowledge of the subject as is common in all civilized nations.

Those indeed who have preferred the other element, do justice to the certainty, as well as superior facilities of the pendulum, by proposing to recur to one of the length of their standard, and to ascertain its number of vibrations in a day. These being once known, if any accident impair their standard it is to be recovered by means of a pendulum which shall make the requisite number of vibrations in a day. And among the several commissions established by the Academy of Sciences for the execution of the several branches of their work on measures and weights, that respecting the pendulum was assigned to Messrs. Borda, Coulomb & Cassini, the result of whose labors, however, I have not learned.

Let our unit of measures then be a pendulum of such length as in the latitude of 45°, in the level of the ocean, and in a given temperature, shall perform its vibrations, in small and equal arcs, in one second of mean time.

What ratio shall we adopt for the parts and multiples of this unit? The decimal without a doubt. Our arithmetic being founded in a decimal numeration, the same numeration in a system of measures, weights and coins, tallies at once with that. On this question, I believe, there has been no difference of opinion.

In measures of length, then, the pendulum is our unit. It is a little more than our yard, and less than the ell. Its tenth or dime, will not be quite 4 inches. Its hundredth, or cent, not quite .4 of an inch; its thousandth, or mill, not quite .04 of an inch, and so on. The traveller will count his road by a longer measure. 1,000 units, or a kiliad, will not be quite two-thirds of our present mile, and more nearly a thousand paces than that.

For measures of surface, the square unit, equal to about ten square feet, or one-ninth more than a square yard, will be generally convenient. But for those of lands a larger measure will be wanted. A kiliad would be not quite a rood, or quarter of an acre; a myriad not quite 2½ acres.

For measures of capacity, wet and dry,

The cubic Unit =	.1 would be about .35 cubic feet, .28 bushels dry, or ⅞ of a ton liquid.
Dime =	.1 would be about 3.5 cubic feet, 2.8 bushels, or about ⅞ of a barrel liquid.
Cent =	.01 about 50 cubic inches, or ⅞ of a quart.
Mill =	.001 = .5 of a cubic inch, or ⅔ of a gill.

To incorporate into the same system our weights and coins, we must recur to some natural substance, to be found everywhere, and of a composition sufficiently uniform. Water has been

considered as the most eligible substance, and rain-water more nearly uniform than any other kind found in nature. That circumstance renders it preferable to distilled water, and its variations in weight may be called insensible.

The cubic unit of this = .1 would weigh about 2,165 lbs. or a ton between the long and short.

The	Dime	= .1 a little more than 2. kentals.
	Cent	= .01 a little more than 20 lb.
	Mill	= .001 a little more than 2 lb.
	Decimmil	= .0001 about 3½ oz. avoirdupois.
	Centimmil	= .00001 a little more than 6 dwt.
	Millionth	= .000001 about 15 grains.
	Decimmillionth	= .0000001 about 1½ grains.
	Centimmillionth	= .00000001 about .14 of a grain.
	Billionth	= .000000001 about .014 of a grain.

With respect to our coins, the pure silver in a dollar being fixed by law at 347¼ grains, and all debts and contracts being bottomed on that value, we can only state the pure silver in the dollar, which would be very nearly 23 millionths.

I have used loose and round numbers (the exact unit being yet undetermined) merely to give a general idea of the measures and weights proposed, when compared with those we now use. And in the names of the subdivisions I have followed the metrology of the ordinance of Congress of 1786, which for their series below unit adopted the Roman numerals. For that above unit the

Grecian is convenient, and has been adopted in the new French system.

We come now to our last question, in what form shall we offer this metrical system to the world? In some one which shall be altogether unassuming; which shall not have the appearance of taking the lead among our sister institutions in making a general proposition. So jealous is the spirit of equality in the republic of letters, that the smallest excitement of that would mar our views, however salutary for all. We are in habits of correspondence with some of these institutions, and identity of character and of object, authorize our entering into correspondence with all. Let us then mature our system as far as can be done at present, by ascertaining the length of the second pendulum of 45° by forming two tables, one of which shall give the equivalent of every different denomination of measures, weights and coins in these States, in the unit of that pendulum, its decimals and multiples; and the other stating the equivalent of all the decimal parts and multiples of that pendulum, in the several denominations of measures, weights and coins of our existing system. This done, we might communicate to one or more of these institutions in every civilized country a copy of those tables, stating as our motive, the difficulty we had experienced, and often the impossibility of ascertaining the value of the measures, weights and coins of other countries, expressed in any standard which we possess; that desirous of being relieved from this, and of obtaining information which could be relied on for the

purposes of science, as well as of business, we had concluded to ask it from the learned societies of other nations, who are especially qualified to give it with the requisite accuracy; that in making this request we had thought it our duty first to do ourselves, and to offer to others, what we meant to ask from them, by stating the value of our own measures, weights and coins, in some unit of measure already possessed, or easily obtainable, by all nations; that the pendulum vibrating seconds of mean time, presents itself as such an unit; its length being determined by the laws of nature, and easily ascertainable at all times and places; that we have thought that of 45° would be the most unexceptionable, as being a mean of all other parallels, and open to actual trial in both hemispheres. In this, therefore, as an unit, and in its parts and multiples in the decimal ratio, we have expressed, in the tables communicated, the value of all the measures, weights and coins used in the United States, and we ask in return from their body a table of the weights, measures and coins in use within their country, expressed in the parts and multiples of the same unit. Having requested the same favor from the learned societies of other nations, our object is, with their assistance, to place within the reach of our fellow citizens at large a perfect knowledge of the measures, weights and coins of the countries with which they have commercial or friendly intercourse; and should the societies of other countries interchange their respective tables, the learned will be in possession of an uniform language in measures,

weights and coins, which may with time become useful to other descriptions of their citizens, and even to their governments. This, however, will rest with their pleasure, not presuming, in the present proposition, to extend our views beyond the limits of our own nation. I offer this sketch merely as the outline of the kind of communication which I should hope would excite no jealousy or repugnance.

Peculiar circumstances, however, would require letters of a more special character to the Institute of France, and the Royal Society of England. The magnificent work which France has executed in the admeasurement of so large a portion of the meridian, has a claim to great respect in our reference to it. We should only ask a communication of their metrical system, expressed in equivalent values of the second pendulum of 45° as ascertained by Messrs. Borda, Coulomb and Cassini, adding, perhaps, the request of an actual rod of the length of that pendulum.

With England, our explanations will be much more delicate. They are the older country, the mother country, more advanced in the arts and sciences, possessing more wealth and leisure for their improvement, and animated by a pride more than laudable.[1] It is their measures, too, which we undertake to ascertain and

[1] We are all occupied in industrious pursuits. They abound with persons living on the industry of their fathers, or on the earnings of their fellow citizens, given away by their rulers in sinecures and pensions. Some of these, desirous of laudable distinction, devote their time and means to the pursuits of science, and become profitable members of society by an industry of a higher order.

communicate to themselves. The subject should therefore be opened to them with infinite tenderness and respect, and in some way which might give them due place in its agency. The parallel of 45° being within our latitude and not within theirs, the actual experiments under that would be of course assignable to us. But as a corrective, I would propose that they should ascertain the length of the pendulum vibrating seconds in the city of London, or at the observatory of Greenwich, while we should do the same in an equidistant parallel to the south of 45°, suppose in 38° 29 ´. We might ask of them, too, as they are in possession of the standards of Guildhall, of which we can have but an unauthentic account, to make the actual application of those standards to the pendulum when ascertained. The operation we should undertake under the 45th parallel, (about Passamaquoddy,) would give us a happy occasion, too, of engaging our sister society of Boston in our views, by referring to them the execution of that part of the work. For that of 38° 29´ we should be at a loss. It crosses the tide waters of the Potomac, about Dumfries, and I do not know what our resources there would be unless we borrow them from Washington, where there are competent persons.

Although I have not mentioned Philadelphia in these operations, I by no means propose to relinquish the benefit of observations to be made there. Her science and perfection in the arts would be a valuable corrective to the less perfect state of them in the other places of observation. Indeed, it is to be wished that Philadelphia could be made the point of observation

south of 45°, and that the Royal Society would undertake the counterpoint on the north, which would be somewhere between the Lizard and Falmouth. The actual pendulums from both of our points of observation, and not merely the measures of them, should be delivered to the Philosophical Society, to be measured under their eye and direction.

As this is really a work of common and equal interest to England and the United States, perhaps it would be still more respectful to make our proposition to her Royal Society in the outset, and to agree with them on a partition of the work. In this case, any commencement of actual experiments on our part should be provisional only, and preparatory to the ultimate results. We might, in the meantime, provisionally also, form a table adapted to the length of the pendulum of 45°, according to the most approved estimates, including those of the French commissioners. This would serve to introduce the subject to the foreign societies, in the way before proposed, reserving to ourselves the charge of communicating to them a more perfect one, when that shall have been completed.

We may even go a step further, and make a general table of the measures, weights and coins of all nations, taking their value hypothetically for the present, from the tables in the commercial dictionary of the encyclopedia methodique, which are very extensive, and have the appearance of being made with great labor and exactness. To these I expect we must in the end recur, as a supplement for the measures which we may fail to

obtain from other countries directly. Their reference is to the foot or inch of Paris, as a standard, which we may convert into parts of the second pendulum of 45°.

I have thus, my dear sir, committed to writing my general ideas on this subject, the more freely as they are intended merely as suggestions for consideration. It is not probable they offer anything which would not have occurred to the committee itself. My apology on offering them must be found in your request. My confidence in the committee, of which I take for granted you are one, is too entire to have intruded a single idea but on that ground.

Be assured of my affectionate and high esteem and respect.

TO DOCTOR ROBERT PATTERSON

Monticello, November 10, 1811.

Dear Sir,—I write this letter separate, because you may perhaps think something in the other of the same date, worth communicating to the committee.

I accept, willingly, Mr. Voigt's offer to make me a time-piece, and with the kind of pendulum he proposes. I wish it to be as good as hands can make it, in everything useful, but no unnecessary labor to be spent on mere ornament. A plain but neat mahogany case will be preferred.

I have a curiosity to try the length of the pendulum vibrating seconds here, and would wish Mr. Voigt to prepare one which could be substituted for that of the clock occasionally, without requiring anything more than unhanging the one and hanging the other in its place. The bob should be spherical, of lead, and its radius, I presume, about one inch. As I should not have the convenience of a room of uniform temperature, the suspending rod should be such as not to be affected by heat or cold, nor yet so heavy as to effect too sensibly the centre of oscillation. Would not a rod of wood not larger than a large wire, answer this double view? I remember Mr. Rittenhouse told me he had made experiments on some occasion, on the expansibility of wood lengthwise by heat, which satisfied him it was as good as

the gridiron for a suspender of the bob. By the experiments on the strength of wood and iron in supporting weights appended to them, iron has been found but about six times as strong as wood, while its specific gravity is eight times as great. Consequently, a rod of it of equal strength, will weigh but three-fourths of one of iron, and disturb the centre of oscillation less in proportion. A rod of wood of white oak, e. g. not larger than a seine twine, would probably support a spherical bob of lead of one inch radius. It might be worked down to that size I suppose, by the cabinet-makers, who are in the practice of preparing smaller threads of wood for inlaying. The difficulty would be in making it fast to the bob at one end, and scapement at the other, so as to regulate the length with ease and accuracy. This Mr. Voigt's ingenuity can supply, and in all things I would submit the whole matter to your direction to him, and be thankful to you to give it. Yours affectionately.

TO MR. H. A. S. DEARBORNE

Monticello, November 15, 1811.

Sir,—Your favor of October 14 was duly received, and with it Mr. Bowditch's observations on the comet, for which I pray you to accept my thanks, and be so good as to present them to Mr. Bowditch also. I am much pleased to find that we have so able a person engaged in observing the path of this great phenomenon; and hope that from his observations and those of others of our philosophical citizens, on its orbit, we shall have ascertained, on this side of the Atlantic, whether it be one of those which have heretofore visited us. On the other side of the water they have great advantages in their well-established observatories, the magnificent instruments provided for them, and the leisure and information of their scientific men. The acquirements of Mr. Bowditch in solitude and unaided by these advantages, do him great honor.

With respect to the eclipse of September 17. I know of no observations made in this State but my own, although I had no doubt that others had observed it. I used myself an equatorial telescope, and was aided by a friend who happened to be with me, and observed through an achromatic telescope of Dollard's. Two others attended the time-pieces. I had a perfect observation of the passage of the sun over the meridian, and the eclipse

commencing but a few minutes after, left little room for error in our time. This little was corrected by the known rate of going of the clock. But we as good as lost the first appulse by a want of sufficiently early attention to be at our places, and composed. I have no confidence, therefore, by several seconds, in the time noted. The last oscillation of the two luminaries was better observed. Yet even there was a certain term of uncertainty as to the precise moment at which the indenture on the limb of the sun entirely vanished. It is therefore the forming of the annulus, and its breaking, which alone possess my entire and complete confidence. I am certain there was not an error of an instant of time in the observation of either of them. Their result therefore should not be suffered to be affected by either of the others. The four observations were as follows:

The 1st. appulse,	0h. 13′ 54′′		
Annulus formed,	1h. 53′ 0′′	central time of annulus 1h. 56′ 12½′′	central time of the two contacts 1h. 51′ 28′′
Annulus broken,	1h. 59′ 25′′		
Last oscillation,	3h. 29′ 2′′		
Latitude of Monticello,	38° 8′		

I have thus given you, Sir, my observations, with a candid statement of their imperfections. If they can be of any use to Mr. Bowditch, it will be more than was in view when they were made; and should I hear of any other observations made in this State, I shall not fail to procure and send him a copy of them. Be

so good as to present me affectionately to your much-esteemed father, and to accept the tender of my respect.

TO MELATIAH NASH

Monticello, November 15, 1811.

Sir,—I duly received your letter of October 24 on the publication of an Ephemeris. I have long thought it desirable that something of that kind should be published in the United States, holding a middle station between the nautical and the common popular almanacs. It would certainly be acceptable to a numerous and respectable description of our fellow citizens, who, without undertaking the higher astronomical operations, for which the former is calculated, yet occasionally wish for information beyond the scope of the common almanacs. What you propose to insert in your Ephemeris is very well so far. But I think you might give it more of the character desired by the addition of some other articles, which would not enlarge it more than a leaf or two. For instance, the equation of time is essential to the regulation of our clocks and watches, and would only add a narrow column to your 2d page. The sun's declination is often desirable, and would add but another narrow column to the same page. This last would be the more useful as an element for obtaining the rising and setting of the sun, in every part of the United States; for your Ephemeris will, I suppose, give it only for a particular parallel, as of New York, which would in a great measure restrain its circulation to that parallel. But

the sun's declination would enable every one to calculate sunrise for himself, with scarcely more trouble than taking it from an Almanac. If you would add at the end of the work a formula for that calculation, as, for example, that for Delalande, § 1026, a little altered. Thus, to the Logarithmic tangent of the latitude (a constant number) add the Log. tangent of the sun's declination; taking 10 from the Index, the remainder is the line of an arch which, turned into time and added to 6 hours, gives sunrise for the winter half and sunset for the summer half of the year, to which may be added 3 lines only from the table of refractions, § 1028, or, to save even this trouble, and give the calculation ready made for every parallel, print a table of semi-diurnal arches, ranging the latitudes from 35° to 45° in a line at top and the degrees of declination in a vertical line on the left, and stating, in the line of the declination, the semi-diurnal arch for each degree of latitude, so that every one knowing the latitude of his place and the declination of the day, would find his sunrise or his sunset where their horizontal and vertical lines meet. This table is to be found in many astronomical books, as, for instance, in Wakeley's Mariner's Compass Rectified, and more accurately in the Connoissance des tems, for 1788. It would not occupy more than two pages at the end of the work, and would render it an almanac for every part of the United States.

To give novelty, and increase the appetite for continuing to buy your Ephemeris annually, you might every year select some one or two useful tables which many would wish to possess

and preserve. These are to be found in the requisite tables, the Connoissance des tems for different years, and many in Pike's arithmetic.

I have given these hints because you requested my opinion. They may extend the plan of your Ephemeris beyond your view, which will be sufficient reason for not regarding them. In any event I shall willingly become a subscriber to it, if you should have any place of deposit for them in Virginia where the price can be paid. Accept the tender of my respects.

TO DOCTOR BENJAMIN RUSH

Poplar Forest, December 5, 1811.

Dear Sir,—While at Monticello I am so much engrossed by business or society, that I can only write on matters of strong urgency. Here I have leisure, as I have everywhere the disposition to think of my friends. I recur, therefore, to the subject of your kind letters relating to Mr. Adams and myself, which a late occurrence has again presented to me. I communicated to you the correspondence which had parted Mrs. Adams and myself, in proof that I could not give friendship in exchange for such sentiments as she had recently taken up towards myself, and avowed and maintained in her letters to me. Nothing but a total renunciation of these could admit a reconciliation, and that could be cordial only in proportion as the return to ancient opinions was believed sincere. In these jaundiced sentiments of hers I had associated Mr. Adams, knowing the weight which her opinions had with him, and notwithstanding she declared in her letters that they were not communicated to him. A late incident has satisfied me that I wronged him as well as her, in not yielding entire confidence to this assurance on her part. Two of the Mr. * * * * *, my neighbors and friends, took a tour to the northward during the last summer. In Boston they fell into company with Mr. Adams, and by his invitation passed a day with him at Braintree. He

spoke out to them everything which came uppermost, and as it occurred to his mind, without any reserve; and seemed most disposed to dwell on those things which happened during his own administration. He spoke of his *masters*, as he called his Heads of departments, as acting above his control, and often against his opinions. Among many other topics, he adverted to the unprincipled licentiousness of the press against myself, adding, "I always loved Jefferson, and still love him."

This is enough for me. I only needed this knowledge to revive towards him all the affections of the most cordial moments of our lives. Changing a single word only in Dr. Franklin's character of him, I knew him to be always an honest man, often a great one, but sometimes incorrect and precipitate in his judgments; and it is known to those who have ever heard me speak of Mr. Adams, that I have ever done him justice myself, and defended him when assailed by others, with the single exception as to political opinions. But with a man possessing so many other estimable qualities, why should we be dissocialized by mere differences of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, or anything else. His opinions are as honestly formed as my own. Our different views of the same subject are the result of a difference in our organization and experience. I never withdrew from the society of any man on this account, although many have done it from me; much less should I do it from one with whom I had gone through, with hand and heart, so many trying scenes. I wish, therefore, but for an apposite occasion to express

to Mr. Adams my unchanged affections for him. There is an awkwardness which hangs over the resuming a correspondence so long discontinued, unless something could arise which should call for a letter. Time and chance may perhaps generate such an occasion, of which I shall not be wanting in promptitude to avail myself. From this fusion of mutual affections, Mrs. Adams is of course separated. It will only be necessary that I never name her. In your letters to Mr. Adams, you can, perhaps, suggest my continued cordiality towards him, and knowing this, should an occasion of writing first present itself to him, he will perhaps avail himself of it, as I certainly will, should it first occur to me. No ground for jealousy now existing, he will certainly give fair play to the natural warmth of his heart. Perhaps I may open the way in some letter to my old friend Gerry, who I know is in habits of the greatest intimacy with him.

I have thus, my friend, laid open my heart to you, because you were so kind as to take an interest in healing again revolutionary affections, which have ceased in expression only, but not in their existence. God ever bless you, and preserve you in life and health.

TO DOCTOR CRAWFORD

Monticello, January 2, 1812.

Sir,—Your favor of December 17th, has been duly received, and with it the pamphlet on the cause, seat and cure of diseases, for which be pleased to accept my thanks. The commencement which you propose by the natural history of the diseases of the human body, is a very interesting one, and will certainly be the best foundation for whatever relates to their cure. While surgery is seated in the temple of the exact sciences, medicine has scarcely entered its threshold. Her theories have passed in such rapid succession as to prove the insufficiency of all, and their fatal errors are recorded in the necrology of man. For some forms of disease, well known and well defined, she has found substances which will restore order to the human system, and it is to be hoped that observation and experience will add to their number. But a great mass of diseases remain undistinguished and unknown, exposed to the random shot of the theory of the day. If on this chaos you can throw such a beam of light as your celebrated brother has done on the sources of animal heat, you will, like him, render great service to mankind.

The fate of England, I think with you, is nearly decided, and the present form of her existence is drawing to a close. The ground, the houses, the men will remain; but in what new

form they will revive and stand among nations, is beyond the reach of human foresight. We hope it may be one of which the predatory principle may not be the essential characteristic. If her transformation shall replace her under the laws of moral order, it is for the general interest that she should still be a sensible and independent weight in the scale of nations, and be able to contribute, when a favorable moment presents itself, to reduce under the same order, her great rival in flagitiousness. We especially ought to pray that the powers of Europe may be so poised and counterpoised among themselves, that their own safety may require the presence of all their force at home, leaving the other quarters of the globe in undisturbed tranquillity. When our strength will permit us to give the law of our hemisphere, it should be that the meridian of the mid-Atlantic should be the line of demarkation between war and peace, on this side of which no act of hostility should be committed, and the lion and the lamb lie down in peace together.

I am particularly thankful for the kind expressions of your letter towards myself, and tender you in return my best wishes and the assurances of my great respect and esteem.

TO MR. THOMAS PULLY

Monticello, January 8, 1812.

Sir,—I have duly received your favor of December 22d, informing me that the society of artists of the United States had made me an honorary member of their society. I am very justly sensible of the honor they have done me, and I pray you to return them my thanks for this mark of their distinction. I fear that I can be but a very useless associate. Time, which withers the fancy, as the other faculties of the mind and body, presses on me with a heavy hand, and distance intercepts all personal intercourse. I can offer, therefore, but my zealous good wishes for the success of the institution, and that, embellishing with taste a country already overflowing with the useful productions, it may be able to give an innocent and pleasing direction to accumulations of wealth, which would otherwise be employed in the nourishment of coarse and vicious habits. With these I tender to the society and to yourself the assurances of my high respect and consideration.

TO COLONEL MONROE

Monticello, January 11, 1812.

Dear Sir,—I thank you for your letter of the 6th. It is a proof of your friendship, and of the sincere interest you take in whatever concerns me. Of this I have never had a moment's doubt, and have ever valued it as a precious treasure. The question indeed whether I knew or approved of General Wilkinson's endeavors to prevent the restoration of the right of deposit at New Orleans, could never require a second of time to answer. But it requires some time for the mind to recover from the astonishment excited by the boldness of the suggestion. Indeed, it is with difficulty I can believe he has really made such an appeal; and the rather as the expression in your letter is that you have "casually heard it," without stating the degree of reliance which you have in the source of information. I think his understanding is above an expedient so momentary and so finally overwhelming. Were Dearborne and myself dead, it might find credit with some. But the world at large, even then, would weigh for themselves the dilemma, whether it was more probable that, in the situation I then was, clothed with the confidence and power of my country, I should descend to so unmeaning an act of treason, or that he, in the wreck now threatening him, should wildly lay hold of any plank. They would weigh his motives and

views against those of Dearborne and myself, the tenor of his life against that of ours, his Spanish mysteries against my open cherishment of the Western interests; and, living as we are, and ready to purge ourselves by any ordeal, they must now weigh, in addition, our testimony against his. All this makes me believe he will never seek this refuge. I have ever and carefully restrained myself from the expression of any opinion respecting General Wilkinson, except in the case of Burr's conspiracy, wherein, after he had got over his first agitations, we believed his decision firm, and his conduct zealous for the defeat of the conspiracy, and although injudicious, yet meriting, from sound intentions, the support of the nation. As to the rest of his life, I have left it to his friends and his enemies, to whom it furnishes matter enough for disputation. I classed myself with neither, and least of all in this time of his distresses, should I be disposed to add to their pressure. I hope, therefore, he has not been so imprudent as to write our names in the pannel of his witnesses.

Accept the assurances of my constant affections.

TO JOHN ADAMS

Monticello, January 21, 1812.

Dear Sir,—I thank you before hand (for they are not yet arrived) for the specimens of homespun you have been so kind as to forward me by post. I doubt not their excellence, knowing how far you are advanced in these things in your quarter. Here we do little in the fine way, but in coarse and middling goods a great deal. Every family in the country is a manufactory within itself, and is very generally able to make within itself all the stouter and middling stuffs for its own clothing and household use. We consider a sheep for every person in the family as sufficient to clothe it, in addition to the cotton, hemp and flax which we raise ourselves. For fine stuff we shall depend on your northern manufactories. Of these, that is to say, of company establishments, we have none. We use little machinery. The spinning jenny, and loom with the flying shuttle, can be managed in a family; but nothing more complicated. The economy and thriftiness resulting from our household manufactures are such that they will never again be laid aside; and nothing more salutary for us has ever happened than the British obstructions to our demands for their manufactures. Restore free intercourse when they will, their commerce with us will have totally changed its form, and the articles we shall in future want from them will not

exceed their own consumption of our produce.

A letter from you calls up recollections very dear to my mind. It carries me back to the times when, beset with difficulties and dangers, we were fellow-laborers in the same cause, struggling for what is most valuable to man, his right of self-government. Laboring always at the same oar, with some wave ever ahead, threatening to overwhelm us, and yet passing harmless under our bark, we knew not how we rode through the storm with heart and hand, and made a happy port. Still we did not expect to be without rubs and difficulties; and we have had them. First, the detention of the western posts, then the coalition of Pilnitz, outlawing our commerce with France, and the British enforcement of the outlawry. In your day, French depredations; in mine, English, and the Berlin and Milan decrees; now, the English orders of council, and the piracies they authorize. When these shall be over, it will be the impressment of our seamen or something else; and so we have gone on, and so we shall go on, puzzled and prospering beyond example in the history of man. And I do believe we shall continue to growl, to multiply and prosper until we exhibit an association, powerful, wise and happy, beyond what has yet been seen by men. As for France and England, with all their preëminence in science, the one is a den of robbers, and the other of pirates. And if science produces no better fruits than tyranny, murder, rapine and destitution of national morality, I would rather wish our country to be ignorant, honest and estimable, as our neighboring savages are. But whither

is senile garrulity leading me? Into politics, of which I have taken final leave. I think little of them and say less. I have given up newspapers in exchange for Tacitus and Thucydides, for Newton and Euclid, and I find myself much the happier. Sometimes, indeed, I look back to former occurrences, in remembrance of our old friends and fellow-laborers, who have fallen before us. Of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, I see now living not more than half a dozen on your side of the Potomac, and on this side, myself alone. You and I have been wonderfully spared, and myself with remarkable health, and a considerable activity of body and mind. I am on horseback three or four hours of every day; visit three or four times a year a possession I have ninety miles distant, performing the winter journey on horseback. I walk little, however, a single mile being too much for me, and I live in the midst of my grand children, one of whom has lately promoted me to be a great grandfather. I have heard with pleasure that you also retain good health, and a greater power of exercise in walking than I do. But I would rather have heard this from yourself, and that, writing a letter like mine, full of egotisms, and of details of your health, your habits, occupations and enjoyments, I should have the pleasure of knowing that in the race of life, you do not keep, in its physical decline, the same distance ahead of me which you have done in political honors and achievements. No circumstances have lessened the interest I feel in these particulars respecting yourself; none have suspended for one moment my sincere esteem for you, and I now salute you

with unchanged affection and respect.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY GOVERNOR BARBOUR

Monticello, January 22, 1812.

Dear Sir,—Your favor of the 14th has been duly received, and I sincerely congratulate you, or rather my country, on the just testimony of confidence which it has lately manifested to you. In your hands I know that its affairs will be ably and honestly administered.

In answer to your inquiry whether, in the early times of our government, where the council was divided, the practice was for the Governor to give the deciding vote? I must observe that, correctly speaking, the Governor not being a counsellor, his vote could make no part of an advice of council. That would be to place an advice on their journals which they did not give, and could not give because of their equal division. But he did what was equivalent in effect. While I was in the administration, no doubt was ever suggested that where the council, divided in opinion, could give no advice, the Governor was free and bound to act on his own opinion and his own responsibility. Had this been a change of the practice of my predecessor, Mr. Henry, the first governor, it would have produced some discussion, which it never did. Hence, I conclude it was the opinion and practice from the first institution of the government.

During Arnold's and Cornwallis' invasion, the council dispersed to their several homes, to take care of their families. Before their separation, I obtained from them a capitulary of standing advices for my government in such cases as ordinarily occur: such as the appointment of militia officers, justices, inspectors, &c., on the recommendations of the courts; but in the numerous and extraordinary occurrences of an invasion, which could not be foreseen, I had to act on my own judgment and my own responsibility. The vote of general approbation, at the session of the succeeding winter, manifested the opinion of the Legislature, that my proceedings had been correct. General Nelson, my successor, staid mostly, I think, with the army; and I do not believe his council followed the camp, although my memory does not enable me to affirm the fact. Some petitions against him for impressment of property without authority of law, brought his proceedings before the next Legislature; the questions necessarily involved were whether necessity, without express law, could justify the impressment, and if it could, whether he could order it without the advice of council. The approbation of the Legislature amounted to a decision of both questions. I remember this case the more especially, because I was then a member of the Legislature, and was one of those who supported the Governor's proceedings, and I think there was no division of the House on the question. I believe the doubt was first suggested in Governor Harrison's time, by some member of the council, on an equal division. Harrison, in his dry way,

observed that instead of one governor and eight counsellors, there would then be eight governors and one counsellor, and continued, as I understood, the practice of his predecessors. Indeed, it is difficult to suppose it could be the intention of those who framed the constitution, that when the council should be divided the government should stand still; and the more difficult as to a constitution formed during a war, and for the purpose of carrying on that war, that so high an officer as their Governor should be created and salaried, merely to act as the clerk and authenticator of the votes of the council. No doubt it was intended that the advice of the council should control the governor. But the action of the controlling power being withdrawn, his would be left free to proceed on its own responsibility. Where from division, absence, sickness or other obstacle, no advice could be given, they could not mean that their Governor, the person of their peculiar choice and confidence, should stand by, an inactive spectator, and let their government tumble to pieces for want of a will to direct it. In executive cases, where promptitude and decision are all important, an adherence to the letter of a law against its probable intentions, (for every law must intend that itself shall be executed,) would be fraught with incalculable danger. Judges may await further legislative explanations, but a delay of executive action might produce irretrievable ruin. The State is invaded, militia to be called out, an army marched, arms and provisions to be issued from the public magazines, the Legislature to be convened, and

the council is divided. Can it be believed to have been the intention of the framers of the constitution, that the constitution itself and their constituents with it should be destroyed for want of a will to direct the resources they had provided for its preservation? Before such possible consequences all verbal scruples must vanish; construction must be made *secundum arbitrium boni viri*, and the constitution be rendered a practicable thing. That exposition of it must be vicious, which would leave the nation under the most dangerous emergencies without a directing will. The cautious maxims of the bench, to seek the will of the legislator and his words only, are proper and safer for judicial government. They act ever on an individual case only, the evil of which is partial, and gives time for correction. But an instant of delay in executive proceedings may be fatal to the whole nation. They must not, therefore, be laced up in the rules of the judiciary department. They must seek the intention of the legislator in all the circumstances which may indicate it in the history of the day, in the public discussions, in the general opinion and understanding, in reason and in practice. The three great departments having distinct functions to perform, must have distinct rules adapted to them. Each must act under its own rules, those of no one having any obligation on either of the others. When the opinion first begun that a governor could not act when his council could not or would not advise, I am uninformed. Probably not till after the war; for, had it prevailed then, no militia could have been opposed to Cornwallis, nor necessaries

furnished to the opposing army of Lafayette. These, Sir, are my recollections and thoughts on the subject of your inquiry, to which I will only add the assurances of my great esteem and respect.

TO BENJAMIN GALLOWAY, ESQ

Monticello, February 2, 1812.

Sir,—I duly received your favor of the 1st inst., together with the volume accompanying it, for which I pray you to accept my thanks, and to be so kind as to convey them to Mrs. Debutts also, to whose obliging care I am indebted for its transmission. But especially my thanks are due to the author himself for the honorable mention he has made of me. With the exception of two or three characters of greater eminence in the revolution, we formed a group of fellow laborers in the common cause, animated by a common zeal, and claiming no distinction of one over another.

The spirit of freedom, breathed through the whole of Mr. Northmore's composition, is really worthy of the purest times of Greece and Rome. It would have been received in England, in the days of Hampden and Sidney, with more favor than at this time. It marks a high and independent mind in the author, one capable of rising above the partialities of country, to have seen in the adversary cause that of justice and freedom, and to have estimated fairly the motives and actions of those engaged in its support. I hope and firmly believe that the whole world will, sooner later, feel benefit from the issue of our assertion of the rights of man. Although the horrors of the French revolution

have damped for awhile the ardor of the patriots in every country, yet it is not extinguished—it will never die. The sense of right has been excited in every breast, and the spark will be rekindled by the very oppressions of that detestable tyranny employed to quench it. The errors of the honest patriots of France, and the crimes of her Dantons and Robespierres, will be forgotten in the more encouraging contemplation of our sober example, and steady march to our object. Hope will strengthen the presumption that what has been done once may be done again. As you have been the channel of my receiving this mark of attention from Mr. Northmore, I must pray you to be that of conveying to him my thanks, and an assurance of the high sense I have of the merit of his work, and of its tendency to cherish the noblest virtues of the human character.

On the political events of the day I have nothing to communicate. I have retired from them, and given up newspapers for more classical reading. I add, therefore, only the assurances of my great esteem and respect.

TO MR. EZRA SARGEANT

Monticello, February 3, 1812.

Sir,—Observing that you edit the Edinburgh Review, reprinted in New York, and presuming that your occupations in that line are not confined to that single work, I take the liberty of addressing the present letter to you. If I am mistaken, the obviousness of the inference will be my apology. Mr. Edward Livingston brought an action against me for having removed his intrusion on the beach of the river Mississippi opposite to New Orleans. At the request of my counsel I made a statement of the facts of the case, and of the law applicable to them, so as to form a full argument of justification. The case has been dismissed from court for want of jurisdiction, and the public remain uninformed whether I had really abused the powers entrusted to me, as he alleged. I wish to convey to them this information by publishing the justification. The questions arising in the case are mostly under the civil law, the laws of Spain and of France, which are of course couched in French, in Spanish, in Latin, and some in Greek; and the books being in few hands in this country, I was obliged to make very long extracts from them. The correctness with which your edition of the Edinburgh Review is printed, and of the passages quoted in those languages, induces me to propose to you the publication of the case I speak of. It will fill about

65 or 70 pages of the type and size of paper of the Edinburgh Review. The MS. is in the handwriting of this letter, entirely fair and correct. It will take between four and five sheets of paper, of sixteen pages each. I should want 250 copies struck off for myself, intended principally for the members of Congress, and the printer would be at liberty to print as many more as he pleased for sale, but without any copyright, which I should not propose to have taken out. It is right that I should add, that the work is not at all for popular reading. It is merely a law argument, and a very dry one; having been intended merely for the eye of my counsel. It may be in some demand perhaps with lawyers, and persons engaged in the public affairs, but very little beyond that. Will you be so good as to inform me if you will undertake to edit this, and what would be the terms on which you can furnish me with 250 copies? I should want it to be done with as little delay as possible, so that Congress might receive it before they separate; and I should add as a condition, that not a copy should be sold until I could receive my number, and have time to lay them on the desks of the members. This would require a month from the time they should leave New York by the stage. In hopes of an early answer I tender you the assurances of my respect.

Monticello, February 14, 1812.

Thomas Jefferson presents his compliments to Dr. Wheaton, and his thanks for the address he was so kind as to enclose him on the advancement in Medicine. Having little confidence in the theories of that art, which change in their fashion with the

ladies' caps and gowns, he has much in the facts it has established by observation. The experience of physicians has proved that in certain forms of disease, certain substances will restore order to the human system; and he doubts not that continued observation will enlarge the catalogue, and give relief to our posterity in cases wherein we are without it. The extirpation of the small pox by vaccination, is an encouraging proof that the condition of man is susceptible of amelioration, although we are not able to fix its extent. He salutes Dr. Wheaton with esteem and respect.

TO MR. CHARLES CHRISTIAN

Monticello, March 21, 1812.

Sir,—I have duly received your favor of the 10th inst. proposing to me to join in a contribution for the support of the family of the late Mr. Cheetham of New York. Private charities, as well as contributions to public purposes in proportion to every one's circumstances, are certainly among the duties we owe to society, and I have never felt a wish to withdraw from my portion of them. The general relation in which I, some time since, stood to the citizens of all our States, drew on me such multitudes of these applications as exceeded all resource. Nor have they much abated since my retirement to the limited duties of a private citizen, and the more limited resources of a private fortune. They have obliged me to lay down as a law of conduct for myself, to restrain my contributions for public institutions to the circle of my own State, and for private charities to that which is under my own observation; and these calls I find more than sufficient for everything I can spare. Nor was there anything in the case of the late Mr. Cheetham, which could claim with me to be taken out of a general rule. On these considerations I must decline the contribution you propose, not doubting that the efforts of the family, aided by those who stand in the relation to them of neighbors and friends, in so great a mart for industry as they are

placed in, will save them from all danger of want or suffering. With this apology for returning the paper sent me, unsubscribed, be pleased to accept the tender of my respect.

TO MR. VANDER KEMP

Monticello, March 22, 1812.

Sir,—I am indebted to you for the communication of the prospectus of a work embracing the history of civilized man, political and moral, from the great change produced in his condition by the extension of the feudal system over Europe through all the successive effects of the revival of letters, the invention of printing, that of the compass, the enlargement of science, and the revolutionary spirit, religious and civil, generated by that. It presents a vast anatomy of fact and reflection, which if duly filled up would offer to the human mind a wonderful mass for contemplation.

Your letter does not ascertain whether this work is already executed, or only meditated; but it excites a great desire to see it completed, and a confidence that the author of the analysis is best able to develop the profound views there only sketched. It would be a library in itself, and to our country particularly desirable and valuable, if executed in the genuine republican principles of our constitution. The only orthodox object of the institution of government is to secure the greatest degree of happiness possible to the general mass of those associated under it. The events which this work proposes to embrace will establish the fact that unless the mass retains sufficient control over those intrusted

with the powers of their government, these will be perverted to their own oppression, and to the perpetuation of wealth and power in the individuals and their families selected for the trust. Whether our constitution has hit on the exact degree of control necessary, is yet under experiment; and it is a most encouraging reflection that distance and other difficulties securing us against the brigand governments of Europe, in the safe enjoyment of our farms and firesides, the experiment stands a better chance of being satisfactorily made here than on any occasion yet presented by history. To promote, therefore, unanimity and perseverance in this great enterprise, to disdain despair, encourage trial, and nourish hope, are the worthiest objects of every political and philanthropic work; and that this would be the necessary result of that which you have delineated, the facts it will review, and the just reflections arising out of them, will sufficiently answer. I hope, therefore, that it is not *in petto* merely, but already completed; and that my fellow citizens, warned in it of the rocks and shoals on which other political associations have been wrecked, will be able to direct theirs with a better knowledge of the dangers in its way.

The enlargement of your observations on the subjects of natural history, alluded to in your letter, cannot fail to add to our lights respecting them, and will therefore ever be a welcome present to every friend of science. Accept, I pray you, the assurance of my great esteem and respect.

TO THE HONORABLE MR. NELSON

Monticello, April 2d, 1812.

Dear Sir,—Your letter of March 22d has been duly received. By this time a printed copy of my MS. respecting the Batture has I hope been laid on your desk, by which you will perceive that the MS. itself has been received long enough to have been sent to New York, printed and returned to Washington.

On the subject of the omission of the officers of the Virginia State line, in the provisions and reservations of the cession of Congress, my memory enables me to say nothing more than that it was not through inattention, as I believe, but the result of compromise. But of this the President, who was in Congress when the arrangement was settled, can give the best account. I had nothing to do but execute a deed according to that arrangement, made previous to my being a member. Colonel Monroe being a member with me, is more likely to remember what passed at that time; but the best resource for explanation of everything we did, is in our weekly correspondence with the Governor of Virginia, which I suppose is still among the Executive records. We made it a point to write a letter to him every week, either jointly, or individually by turns.

You request me to state the public sentiment of our part of the country as to war and the taxes. You know I do not go out much.

My own house and our court yard are the only places where I see my fellow citizens. As far as I can judge in this limited sphere, I think all regret that there is cause for war, but all consider it as now necessary, and would, I think, disapprove of a much longer delay of the declaration of it. As to the taxes, they expect to meet them, would be unwilling to have them postponed, and are only dissatisfied with some of the subjects of taxation; that is to say the stamp tax and excise. To the former I have not seen a man who is not totally irreconcilable. If the latter could be collected from those who buy to sell again, so as to prevent domiciliary visits by the officers, I think it would be acceptable, and I am sure a wholesome tax. I am persuaded the Secretary of the Treasury is mistaken in supposing so immense a deduction from the duties on imports. We shall make little less to sell than we do now, for no one will let his hands be idle; and consequently we shall export not much less, and expect returns. Some part will be taken on the export and some on the import. But taking into account the advance of prices, that revenue will not fall so far short as he thinks; and I have no doubt might be counted on to make good the entire suppression of the stamp tax. Yet, although a very disgusting pill, I think there can be no question the people will swallow it, if their representatives determine on it. I get their sentiments mostly from those who are most in the habit of intercourse with the people than I am myself. Accept the assurance of my great esteem and respect.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Monticello, April 17, 1812.

Dear Sir,—The enclosed papers will explain themselves. Their coming to me is the only thing not sufficiently explained.

Your favor of the 3d came duly to hand. Although something of the kind had been apprehended, the embargo found the farmers and planters only getting their produce to market, and selling as fast as they could get it there. I think it caught them in this part of the State with one-third of their flour or wheat and three-quarters of their tobacco undisposed of. If we may suppose the rest of the middle country in the same situation, and that the upper and lower country may be judged by that as a mean, these will perhaps be the proportions of produce remaining in the hands of the producers. Supposing the objects of the government were merely to keep our vessels and men out of harm's way, and that there is no idea that the want of our flour will starve Great Britain, the sale of the remaining produce will be rather desirable, and what would be desired even in war, and even to our enemies. For I am favorable to the opinion which has been urged by others, sometimes acted on, and now partly so by France and Great Britain, that commerce, under certain restrictions and licenses, may be indulged between

enemies mutually advantageous to the individuals, and not to their injury as belligerents. The capitulation of Amelia Island, if confirmed, might favor this object, and at any rate get off our produce now on hand. I think a people would go through a war with much less impatience if they could dispose of their produce, and that unless a vent can be provided for them, they will soon become querulous and clamor for peace. They appear at present to receive the embargo with perfect acquiescence and without a murmur, seeing the necessity of taking care of our vessels and seamen. Yet they would be glad to dispose of their produce in any way not endangering them, as by letting it go from a neutral place in British vessels. In this way we lose the carriage only; but better that than both carriage and cargo. The rising of the price of flour, since the first panic is passed away, indicates some prospects in the merchants of disposing of it. Our wheat had greatly suffered by the winter, but is as remarkably recovered by the favorable weather of the spring. Ever affectionately yours.

TO JOHN ADAMS

Monticello, April 20, 1812.

Dear Sir,—I have it now in my power to send you a piece of homespun in return for that I received from you. Not of the fine texture, or delicate character of yours, or, to drop our metaphor, not filled as that was with that display of imagination which constitutes excellence in Belles Lettres, but a mere sober, dry and formal piece of logic. *Ornari res ipsa negat.* Yet you may have enough left of your old taste for law reading, to cast an eye over some of the questions it discusses. At any rate, accept it as the offering of esteem and friendship.

You wish to know something of the Richmond and Wabash prophets. Of Nimrod Hews I never heard before. Christopher Macpherson I have known for twenty years. He is a man of color, brought up as a book-keeper by a merchant, his master, and afterwards enfranchized. He had understanding enough to post up his ledger from his journal, but not enough to bear up against hypochondriac affections, and the gloomy forebodings they inspire. He became crazy, foggy, his head always in the clouds, and rhapsodizing what neither himself nor any one else could understand. I think he told me he had visited you personally while you were in the administration, and wrote you letters, which you have probably forgotten in the mass of the

correspondences of that crazy class, of whose complaints, and terrors, and mysticisms, the several Presidents have been the regular depositories. Macpherson was too honest to be molested by anybody, and too inoffensive to be a subject for the mad-house; although, I believe, we are told in the old book, that "every man that is mad, and maketh himself a prophet, thou shouldst put him in prison and in the stocks."

The Wabash prophet is a very different character, more rogue than fool, if to be a rogue is not the greatest of all follies. He arose to notice while I was in the administration, and became, of course, a proper subject of inquiry for me. The inquiry was made with diligence. His declared object was the reformation of his red brethren, and their return to their pristine manner of living. He pretended to be in constant communication with the Great Spirit; that he was instructed by him to make known to the Indians that they were created by him distinct from the whites, of different natures, for different purposes, and placed under different circumstances, adapted to their nature and destinies; that they must return from all the ways of the whites to the habits and opinions of their forefathers; they must not eat the flesh of hogs, of bullocks, of sheep, &c., the deer and buffalo having been created for their food; they must not make bread of wheat but of Indian corn; they must not wear linen nor woollen, but dress like their fathers in the skins and furs of animals; they must not drink ardent spirits, and I do not remember whether he extended his inhibitions to the gun and gunpowder, in favor

of the bow and arrow. I concluded from all this, that he was a visionary, enveloped in the clouds of their antiquities, and vainly endeavoring to lead back his brethren to the fancied beatitudes of their golden age. I thought there was little danger of his making many proselytes from the habits and comfort they had learned from the whites, to the hardships and privations of savagism, and no great harm if he did. We let him go on, therefore, unmolested. But his followers increased till the English thought him worth corruption and found him corruptible. I suppose his views were then changed; but his proceedings in consequence of them were after I left the administration, and are, therefore, unknown to me; nor have I ever been informed what were the particular acts on his part, which produced an actual commencement of hostilities on ours. I have no doubt, however, that his subsequent proceedings are but a chapter apart, like that of Henry and Lord Liverpool, in the book of the kings of England.

Of this mission of Henry, your son had got wind in the time of the embargo, and communicated it to me. But he had learned nothing of the particular agent, although, of his workings, the information he had obtained appears now to have been correct. He stated a particular which Henry has not distinctly brought forward, which was that the Eastern States were not to be required to make a formal act of separation from the Union, and to take a part in the war against it; a measure deemed much too strong for their people; but to declare themselves in a state of neutrality, in consideration of which they were to

have peace and free commerce, the lure most likely to insure popular acquiescence. Having no indications of Henry as the intermediate in this negotiation of the Essex junto, suspicions fell on Pickering, and his nephew Williams, in London. If he was wronged in this, the ground of the suspicion is to be found in his known practices and avowed opinions, as that of his accomplices in the sameness of sentiment and of language with Henry, and subsequently by the fluttering of the wounded pigeons.

This letter, with what it encloses, has given you enough, I presume, of law and the prophets. I will only add to it, therefore, the homage of my respects to Mrs. Adams, and to yourself the assurances of affectionate esteem and respect.

TO JAMES MAURY

Monticello, April 25, 1812.

My Dear and ancient Friend and Classmate,—Often has my heart smote me for delaying acknowledgments to you, receiving, as I do, such frequent proofs of your kind recollection in the transmission of papers to me. But instead of acting on the good old maxim of not putting off to to-morrow what we can do to-day, we are too apt to reverse it, and not to do to-day what we can put off to-morrow. But this duty can be no longer put off. To-day we are at peace; to-morrow, war. The curtain of separation is drawing between us, and probably will not be withdrawn till one, if not both of us, will be at rest with our fathers. Let me now, then, while I may, renew to you the declarations of my warm attachment, which in no period of life has ever been weakened, and seems to become stronger as the remaining objects of our youthful affections are fewer.

Our two countries are to be at war, but not you and I. And why should our two countries be at war, when by peace we can be so much more useful to one another? Surely the world will acquit our government from having sought it. Never before has there been an instance of a nation's bearing so much as we have borne. Two items alone in our catalogue of wrongs will forever acquit us of being the aggressors: the impressment of our seamen, and the

excluding us from the ocean. The first foundations of the social compact would be broken up, were we definitively to refuse to its members the protection of their persons and property, while in their lawful pursuits. I think the war will not be short, because the object of England, long obvious, is to claim the ocean as her domain, and to exact transit duties from every vessel traversing it. This is the sum of her orders of council, which were only a step in this bold experiment, never meant to be retracted if it could be permanently maintained. And this object must continue her in war with all the world. To this I see no termination, until her exaggerated efforts, so much beyond her natural strength and resources, shall have exhausted her to bankruptcy. The approach of this crisis is, I think, visible in the departure of her precious metals, and depreciation of her paper medium. We, who have gone through that operation, know its symptoms, its course, and consequences. In England they will be more serious than elsewhere, because half the wealth of her people is now in that medium, the private revenue of her money-holders, or rather of her paper-holders, being, I believe, greater than that of her land-holders. Such a proportion of property, imaginary and baseless as it is, cannot be reduced to vapor but with great explosion. She will rise out of its ruins, however, because her lands, her houses, her arts will remain, and the greater part of her men. And these will give her again that place among nations which is proportioned to her natural means, and which we all wish her to hold. We believe that the just standing of all nations is the health and security

of all. We consider the overwhelming power of England on the ocean, and of France on the land, as destructive of the prosperity and happiness of the world, and wish both to be reduced only to the necessity of observing moral duties. We believe no more in Bonaparte's fighting merely for the liberty of the seas, than in Great Britain's fighting for the liberties of mankind. The object of both is the same, to draw to themselves the power, the wealth and the resources of other nations. We resist the enterprises of England first, because they first come vitally home to us. And our feelings repel the logic of bearing the lash of George the III. for fear of that of Bonaparte at some future day. When the wrongs of France shall reach us with equal effect, we shall resist them also. But one at a time is enough; and having offered a choice to the champions, England first takes up the gauntlet.

The English newspapers suppose me the personal enemy of their nation. I am not so. I am an enemy to its injuries, as I am to those of France. If I could permit myself to have national partialities, and if the conduct of England would have permitted them to be directed towards her, they would have been so. I thought that in the administration of Mr. Addington, I discovered some dispositions toward justice, and even friendship and respect for us, and began to pave the way for cherishing these dispositions, and improving them into ties of mutual good will. But we had then a federal minister there, whose dispositions to believe himself, and to inspire others with a belief in our sincerity, his subsequent conduct has brought into doubt; and

poor Merry, the English minister here, had learned nothing of diplomacy but its suspicions, without head enough to distinguish when they were misplaced. Mr. Addington and Mr. Fox passed away too soon to avail the two countries of their dispositions. Had I been personally hostile to England, and biased in favor of either the character or views of her great antagonist, the affair of the Chesapeake put war into my hand. I had only to open it and let havoc loose. But if ever I was gratified with the possession of power, and of the confidence of those who had entrusted me with it, it was on that occasion when I was enabled to use both for the prevention of war, towards which the torrent of passion here was directed almost irresistibly, and when not another person in the United States, less supported by authority and favor, could have resisted it. And now that a definitive adherence to her impressments and orders of council renders war no longer avoidable, my earnest prayer is that our government may enter into no compact of common cause with the other belligerent, but keep us free to make a separate peace, whenever England will separately give us peace and future security. But Lord Liverpool is our witness that this can never be but by her removal from our neighborhood.

I have thus, for a moment, taken a range into the field of politics, to possess you with the view we take of things here. But in the scenes which are to ensue, I am to be but a spectator. I have withdrawn myself from all political intermeddlings, to indulge the evening of my life with what have been the passions of every

portion of it, books, science, my farms, my family and friends. To these every hour of the day is now devoted. I retain a good activity of mind, not quite as much of body, but uninterrupted health. Still the hand of age is upon me. All my old friends are nearly gone. Of those in my neighborhood, Mr. Divers and Mr. Lindsay alone remain. If you could make it a partie quarrée, it would be a comfort indeed. We would beguile our lingering hours with talking over our youthful exploits, our hunts on Peter's mountain, with a long train of *et cetera*, in addition, and feel, by recollection at least, a momentary flash of youth. Reviewing the course of a long and sufficiently successful life, I find in no portion of it happier moments than those were. I think the old hulk in which you are, is near her wreck, and that like a prudent rat, you should escape in time. However, here, there, and everywhere, in peace or in war, you will have my sincere affections and prayers for your life, health and happiness.

TO MR. RODMAN

Monticello, April 25, 1812.

Thomas Jefferson presents his complements to Mr. Rodman, and his thanks for the translation of Montgalliard's work which he has been so kind as to send him. It certainly presents some new and true views of the situation of England. It is a subject of deep regret to see a great nation reduced from an unexampled height of prosperity to an abyss of ruin, by the long-continued rule of a single chief. All we ought to wish as to both belligerent parties is to see them forced to disgorge what their ravenous appetites have taken from others, and reduced to the necessity of observing moral duties in future. If we read with regret what concerns England, the fulsome adulation of the author towards his own chief excites nausea and disgust at the state of degradation to which the mind of man is reduced by subjection to the inordinate power of another. He salutes Mr. Rodman with great respect.

TO MR. JOHN JACOB ASTOR

Monticello, May 24, 1812.

Sir,—Your letter of March 14th lingered much on the road, and a long journey before I could answer it, has delayed its acknowledgment till now. I am sorry your enterprise for establishing a factory on the Columbia river, and a commerce through the line of that river and the Missouri, should meet with the difficulties stated in your letter. I remember well having invited your proposition on that subject, and encouraged it with the assurance of every facility and protection which the government could properly afford. I considered as a great public acquisition the commencement of a settlement on that point of the Western coast of America, and looked forward with gratification to the time when its descendants should have spread themselves through the whole length of that coast, covering it with free and independent Americans, unconnected with us but by the ties of blood and interest, and employing like us the rights of self-government. I hope the obstacles you state are not insurmountable; that they will not endanger, or even delay the accomplishment of so great a public purpose. In the present state of affairs between Great Britain and us, the government is justly jealous of contraventions of those commercial restrictions which have been deemed necessary to exclude the use of British

manufactures in these States, and to promote the establishment of similar ones among ourselves. The interests too of the revenue require particular watchfulness. But in the non-importation of British manufactures, and the revenue raised on foreign goods, the legislature could only have in view the consumption of our own citizens, and the revenue to be levied on that. We certainly did not mean to interfere with the consumption of nations foreign to us, as the Indians of the Columbia and Missouri are, or to assume a right of levying an impost on that consumption; and if the words of the laws take in their supplies in either view, it was probably unintentional, and because their case not being under the contemplation of the legislature, has been inadvertently embraced by it. The question with them would be not what manufactures these nations should use, or what taxes they should pay us on them, but whether we should give a transit for them through our country. We have a right to say we will not let the British exercise that transit. But it is our interest as well as a neighborly duty to allow it when exercised by our own citizens only. To guard against any surreptitious introduction of British influence among those nations, we may justifiably require that no Englishman be permitted to go with the trading parties, and necessary precautions should also be taken to prevent this covering the contravention of our own laws and views. But these once securely guarded, our interest would permit the transit free of duty. And I do presume that if the subject were fully presented to the legislature, they would provide that the laws intended to

guard our own concerns only, should not assume the regulation of those of foreign and independent nations; still less that they should stand in the way of so interesting an object as that of planting the germ of an American population on the shores of the Pacific. From meddling however with these subjects it is my duty as well as my inclination to abstain. They are in hands perfectly qualified to direct them, and who knowing better the present state of things, are better able to decide what is right; and whatever they decide on a full view of the case, I shall implicitly confide has been rightly decided. Accept my best wishes for your success, and the assurances of my great esteem and respect.

TO THE PRESIDENT

Monticello, May 30, 1812.

Dear Sir,—Another *communication* is enclosed, and the letter of the applicant is the only information I have of his qualifications. I barely remember such a person as the secretary of Mr. Adams, and messenger to the Senate while I was of that body. It enlarges the sphere of choice by adding to it a strong federalist. The triangular war must be the idea of the Anglomen and malcontents, in other words, the federalists and quids. Yet it would reconcile neither. It would only change the topic of abuse with the former, and not cure the mental disease of the latter. It would prevent our eastern capitalists and seamen from employment in privateering, take away the only chance of conciliating them, and keep them at home, idle, to swell the discontents; it would completely disarm us of the most powerful weapon we can employ against Great Britain, by shutting every port to our prizes, and yet would not add a single vessel to their number; it would shut every market to our agricultural productions, and engender impatience and discontent with that class which, in fact, composes the nation; it would insulate us in general negotiations for peace, making all the parties our opposers, and very indifferent about peace with us, if they have it with the rest of the world, and would exhibit a solecism worthy

of Don Quixotte only, that of a choice to fight two enemies at a time, rather than to take them by succession. And the only motive for all this is a sublimated impartiality, at which the world will laugh, and our own people will turn upon us in mass as soon as it is explained to them, as it will be by the very persons who are now laying that snare. These are the hasty views of one who rarely thinks on these subjects. Your own will be better, and I pray to them every success, and to yourself every felicity.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Monticello, June 6, 1812.

Dear Sir,—I have taken the liberty of drawing the attention of the Secretary at War to a small depôt of military stores at New London, and leave the letter open for your perusal. Be so good as to seal it before delivery. I really thought that General Dearborne had removed them to Lynchburg, undoubtedly a safer and more convenient deposit.

Our county is the only one I have heard of which has required a draught; this proceeded from a mistake of the colonel, who thought he could not receive individual offers, but that the whole quota, 241, must present themselves at once. Every one, however, manifests the utmost alacrity; of the 241 there having been but ten absentees at the first muster called. A further proof is that Captain Carr's company of volunteer cavalry being specifically called for by the Governor, though consisting of but 28 when called on, has got up to 50 by new engagements since their call was known. The only inquiry they make is whether they are to go to Canada or Florida? Not a man, as far as I have learned, entertains any of those doubts which puzzle the lawyers of Congress and astonish common sense, whether it is lawful for them to pursue a retreating enemy across the boundary line of

the Union?

I hope Barlow's correspondence has satisfied all our Quixottes who thought we should undertake nothing less than to fight all Europe at once. I enclose you a letter from Dr. Bruff, a mighty good and very ingenious man. His method of manufacturing bullets and shot, has the merit of increasing their specific gravity greatly, (being made by composition,) and rendering them as much heavier and better than the common leaden bullet, as that is than an iron one. It is a pity he should not have the benefit of furnishing the public when it would be equally to their benefit also. God bless you.

TO JOHN ADAMS

Monticello, June 11, 1812.

Dear Sir,—By our post preceding that which brought your letter of May 21st, I had received one from Mr. Malcolm on the same subject with yours, and by the return of the post had stated to the President my recollections of him. But both your letters were probably too late; as the appointment had been already made, if we may credit the newspapers.

You ask if there is any book that pretends to give any account of the traditions of the Indians, or how one can acquire an idea of them? Some scanty accounts of their traditions, but fuller of their customs and characters, are given us by most of the early travellers among them; these you know were mostly French. Lafitan, among them, and Adair an Englishman, have written on this subject; the former two volumes, the latter one, all in 4to. But unluckily Lafitan had in his head a preconceived theory on the mythology, manners, institutions and government of the ancient nations of Europe, Asia and Africa, and seems to have entered on those of America only to fit them into the same frame, and to draw from them a confirmation of his general theory. He keeps up a perpetual parallel, in all those articles, between the Indians of America and the ancients of the other quarters of the globe. He selects, therefore, all the facts and adopts all the

falsehoods which favor his theory, and very gravely retails such absurdities as zeal for a theory could alone swallow. He was a man of much classical and scriptural reading, and has rendered his book not unentertaining. He resided five years among the Northern Indians, as a Missionary, but collects his matter much more from the writings of others, than from his own observation.

Adair too had his kink. He believed all the Indians of America to be descended from the Jews; the same laws, usages, rites and ceremonies, the same sacrifices, priests, prophets, fasts and festivals, almost the same religion, and that they all spoke Hebrew. For, although he writes particularly of the Southern Indians only, the Catawbas, Creeks, Cherokees, Chickasaws and Chocktaws, with whom alone he was personally acquainted, yet he generalizes whatever he found among them, and brings himself to believe that the hundred languages of America, differing fundamentally every one from every other, as much as Greek from Gothic, yet have all one common prototype. He was a trader, a man of learning, a self-taught Hebraist, a strong religionist, and of as sound a mind as Don Quixotte in whatever did not touch his religious chivalry. His book contains a great deal of real instruction on its subject, only requiring the reader to be constantly on his guard against the wonderful obliquities of his theory.

The scope of your inquiry would scarcely, I suppose, take in the three folio volumes of Latin of De Bry. In these, facts and fable are mingled together, without regard to any favorite

system. They are less suspicious, therefore, in their complexion, more original and authentic, than those of Lafitan and Adair. This is a work of great curiosity, extremely rare, so as never to be bought in Europe, but on the breaking up and selling some ancient library. On one of these occasions a bookseller procured me a copy, which, unless you have one, is probably the only one in America.

You ask further, if the Indians have any order of priesthood among them, like the Druids, Bards or Minstrels of the Celtic nations? Adair alone, determined to see what he wished to see in every object, metamorphoses their Conjurers into an order of priests, and describes their sorceries as if they were the great religious ceremonies of the nation. Lafitan called them by their proper names, Jongleurs, Devins, Sortileges; De Bry praestigiatores; Adair himself sometimes Magi, Archimagi, cunning men, Seers, rain makers; and the modern Indian interpreters call them conjurers and witches. They are persons pretending to have communications with the devil and other evil spirits, to foretell future events, bring down rain, find stolen goods, raise the dead, destroy some and heal others by enchantment, lay spells, &c. And Adair, without departing from his parallel of the Jews and Indians, might have found their counterpart much more aptly, among the soothsayers, sorcerers and wizards of the Jews, their Gannes and Gambres, their Simon Magus, Witch of Endor, and the young damsel whose sorceries disturbed Paul so much; instead of placing them in a line

with their high-priest, their chief priests, and their magnificent hierarchy generally. In the solemn ceremonies of the Indians, the persons who direct or officiate, are their chiefs, elders and warriors, in civil ceremonies or in those of war; it is the head of the cabin in their private or particular feasts or ceremonies; and sometimes the matrons, as in their corn feasts. And even here, Adair might have kept up his parallel, with ennobling his conjurers. For the ancient patriarchs, the Noahs, the Abrahams, Isaacs and Jacobs, and even after the consecration of Aaron, the Samuels and Elijahs, and we may say further, every one for himself offered sacrifices on the altars. The true line of distinction seems to be, that solemn ceremonies, whether public or private, addressed to the Great Spirit, are conducted by the worthies of the nation, men or matrons, while conjurers are resorted to only for the invocation of evil spirits. The present state of the several Indian tribes, without any public order of priests, is proof sufficient that they never had such an order. Their steady habits permit no innovations, not even those which the progress of science offers to increase the comforts, enlarge the understanding, and improve the morality of mankind. Indeed, so little idea have they of a regular order of priests, that they mistake ours for their conjurers, and call them by that name.

So much in answer to your inquiries concerning Indians, a people with whom, in the early part of my life, I was very familiar, and acquired impressions of attachment and commiseration for them which have never been obliterated.

Before the revolution, they were in the habit of coming often and in great numbers to the seat of government, where I was very much with them. I knew much the great Ontassetè, the warrior and orator of the Cherokees; he was always the guest of my father, on his journeys to and from Williamsburg. I was in his camp when he made his great farewell oration to his people the evening before his departure for England. The moon was in full splendor, and to her he seemed to address himself in his prayers for his own safety on the voyage, and that of his people during his absence; his sounding voice, distinct articulation, animated action, and the solemn silence of his people at their several fires, filled me with awe and veneration, although I did not understand a word he uttered. That nation, consisting now of about 2,000 warriors, and the Creeks of about 3,000 are far advanced in civilization. They have good cabins, enclosed fields, large herds of cattle and hogs, spin and weave their own clothes of cotton, have smiths and other of the most necessary tradesmen, write and read, are on the increase in numbers, and a branch of Cherokees is now instituting a regular representative government. Some other tribes are advancing in the same line. On those who have made any progress, English seductions will have no effect. But the backward will yield, and be thrown further back. Those will relapse into barbarism and misery, lose numbers by war and want, and we shall be obliged to drive them with the beasts of the forest into the stony mountains. They will be conquered, however, in Canada. The possession of that country secures our

women and children forever from the tomahawk and scalping knife, by removing those who excite them; and for this possession orders, I presume, are issued by this time; taking for granted that the doors of Congress will re-open with a declaration of war. That this may end in indemnity for the past, security for the future, and complete emancipation from Anglomany, Gallomany, and all the manias of demoralized Europe, and that you may live in health and happiness to see all this, is the sincere prayer of yours affectionately.

TO ELBRIDGE GERRY

Monticello, June 11, 1812.

Dear Sir,—It has given me great pleasure to receive a letter from you. It seems as if, our ancient friends dying off, the whole mass of the affections of the heart survives undiminished to the few who remain. I think our acquaintance commenced in 1764, both then just of age. We happened to take lodgings in the same house in New York. Our next meeting was in the Congress of 1775, and at various times afterwards in the exercise of that and other public functions, until your mission to Europe. Since we have ceased to meet, we have still thought and acted together, "*et idem velle, atque idem nolle, ea demum amicitia est*." Of this harmony of principle, the papers you enclosed me are proof sufficient. I do not condole with you on your release from your government. The vote of your opponents is the most honorable mark by which the soundness of your conduct could be stamped. I claim the same honorable testimonial. There was but a single act of my whole administration of which that party approved. That was the proclamation on the attack of the Chesapeake. And when I found they approved of it, I confess I began strongly to apprehend I had done wrong, and to exclaim with the Psalmist, "Lord, what have I done that the wicked should praise me!"

What, then, does this English faction with you mean? Their

newspapers say rebellion, and that they will not remain united with us unless we will permit them to govern the majority. If this be their purpose, their anti-republican spirit, it ought to be met at once. But a government like ours should be slow in believing this, should put forth its whole might when necessary to suppress it, and promptly return to the paths of reconciliation. The extent of our country secures it, I hope, from the vindictive passions of the petty incorporations of Greece. I rather suspect that the principal office of the other seventeen States will be to moderate and restrain the local excitement of our friends with you, when they (with the aid of their brethren of the other States, if they need it) shall have brought the rebellious to their feet. They count on British aid. But what can that avail them by land? They would separate from their friends, who alone furnish employment for their navigation, to unite with their only rival for that employment. When interdicted the harbors of their quondam brethren, they will go, I suppose to ask a share in the carrying trade of their rivals, and a dispensation with their navigation act. They think they will be happier in an association under the rulers of Ireland, the East and West Indies, than in an independent government, where they are obliged to put up with their proportional share only in the direction of its affairs. But I trust that such perverseness will not be that of the honest and well-meaning mass of the federalists of Massachusetts; and that when the questions of separation and rebellion shall be nakedly proposed to them, the Gores and the Pickerings will find their

levees crowded with silk stocking gentry, but no yeomanry; an army of officers without soldiers. I hope, then, all will still end well; the Anglomen will consent to make peace with their bread and butter, and you and I shall sink to rest, without having been actors or spectators in another civil war.

How many children have you? You beat me, I expect, in that count, but I you in that of our grand-children. We have not timed these things well together, or we might have begun a re-alliance between Massachusetts and the Old Dominion, faithful companions in the war of Independence, peculiarly tallied in interests, by each wanting exactly what the other has to spare; and estranged to each other in latter times, only by the practices of a third nation, the common enemy of both. Let us live only to see this re-union, and I will say with old Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." In that peace may you long remain, my friend, and depart only in the fulness of years, all passed in health and prosperity. God bless you.

P. S. June 13. I did not condole with you on the reprobation of your opponents, because it proved your orthodoxy. Yesterday's post brought me the resolution of the republicans of Congress, to propose you as Vice President. On this I sincerely congratulate you. It is a stamp of double proof. It is a notification to the factionaries that their nay is the yea of truth, and its best test. We shall be almost within striking distance of each other. Who knows but you may fill up some short recess of Congress with a

visit to Monticello, where a numerous family will hail you with a hearty country welcome.

TO JUDGE TYLER

Monticello, June 17, 1812.

Dear Sir,—* * * * *

On the other subject of your letter, the application of the common law to our present situation, I deride with you the ordinary doctrine, that we brought with us from England the *common law rights*. This narrow notion was a favorite in the first moment of rallying to our rights against Great Britain. But it was that of men who felt their rights before they had thought of their explanation. The truth is, that we brought with us the *rights of men*; of expatriated men. On our arrival here, the question would at once arise, by what law will we govern ourselves? The resolution seems to have been, by that system with which we are familiar, to be altered by ourselves occasionally, and adapted to our new situation. The proofs of this resolution are to be found in the form of the oaths of the judges, 1. Hening's Stat. 169. 187; of the Governor, ib. 504; in the act for a provisional government, ib. 372; in the preamble to the laws of 1661-2; the uniform current of opinions and decisions, and in the general recognition of all our statutes, framed on that basis. But the state of the English law at the date of our emigration, constituted the system adopted here. We may doubt, therefore, the propriety of quoting in our courts English authorities subsequent to that

adoption; still more, the admission of authorities posterior to the Declaration of Independence, or rather to the accession of that King, whose reign, *ab initio*, was the very tissue of wrongs which rendered the Declaration at length necessary. The reason for it had inception at least as far back as the commencement of his reign. This relation to the beginning of his reign, would add the advantage of getting us rid of all Mansfield's innovations, or civilizations of the common law. For however I admit the superiority of the civil over the common law code, as a system of perfect justice, yet an incorporation of the two would be like Nebuchadnezzar's image of metals and clay, a thing without cohesion of parts. The only natural improvement of the common law, is through its homogeneous ally, the chancery, in which new principles are to be examined, concocted and digested. But when, by repeated decisions and modifications, they are rendered pure and certain, they should be transferred by statute to the courts of common law, and placed within the pale of juries. The exclusion from the courts of the malign influence of all authorities after the *Georgium sidus* became ascendant, would uncanonize Blackstone, whose book, although the most elegant and best digested of our law catalogue, has been perverted more than all others, to the degeneracy of legal science. A student finds there a smattering of everything, and his indolence easily persuades him that if he understands that book, he is master of the whole body of the law. The distinction between these, and those who have drawn their stores from the deep

and rich mines of Coke Littleton, seems well understood even by the unlettered common people, who apply the appellation of Blackstone lawyers to these ephemeral insects of the law.

Whether we should undertake to reduce the common law, our own, and so much of the English statutes as we have adopted, to a text, is a question of transcendent difficulty. It was discussed at the first meeting of the committee of the revised code, in 1776, and decided in the negative, by the opinions of Wythe, Mason and myself, against Pendleton and Thomas Lee. Pendleton proposed to take Blackstone for that text, only purging him of what was inapplicable or unsuitable to us. In that case, the meaning of every word of Blackstone would have become a source of litigation, until it had been settled by repeated legal decisions. And to come at that meaning, we should have had produced, on all occasions, that very pile of authorities from which it would be said he drew his conclusion, and which, of course, would explain it, and the terms in which it is couched. Thus we should have retained the same chaos of law-lore from which we wished to be emancipated, added to the evils of the uncertainty which a new text and new phrases would have generated. An example of this may be found in the old statutes, and commentaries on them, in Coke's second institute, but more remarkably in the institute of Justinian, and the vast masses explanatory or supplementary of that which fill the libraries of the civilians. We were deterred from the attempt by these considerations, added to which, the bustle of the times did not

admit leisure for such an undertaking.

Your request of my opinion on this subject has given you the trouble of these observations. If your firmer mind in encountering difficulties would have added your vote to the minority of the committee, you would have had on your side one of the greatest men of our age, and like him, have detracted nothing from the sentiments of esteem and respect which I bore to him, and tender with sincerity the assurance of to yourself.

TO GENERAL KOSCIUSKO

Monticello, June 28, 1812.

Nous voila donc, mon cher ami, en guerre avec l'Angleterre. This was declared on the 18th instant, thirty years after the signature of our peace in 1782. Within these thirty years what a vast course of growth and prosperity we have had! It is not ten years since Great Britain began a series of insults and injuries which would have been met with war in the threshold by any European power. This course has been unremittingly followed up by increasing wrongs, with glimmerings indeed of peaceable redress, just sufficient to keep us quiet, till she has had the impudence at length to extinguish even these glimmerings by open avowal. This would not have been borne so long, but that France has kept pace with England in iniquity of principle, although not in the power of inflicting wrongs on us. The difficulty of selecting a foe between them has spared us many years of war, and enabled us to enter into it with less debt, more strength and preparation. Our present enemy will have the sea to herself, while we shall be equally predominant at land, and shall strip her of all her possessions on this continent. She may burn New York, indeed, by her ships and congreve rockets, in which case we must burn the city of London by hired incendiaries, of which her starving manufacturers will furnish abundance. A

people in such desperation as to demand of their government *aut parcem, aut furcam*, either bread or the gallows, will not reject the same alternative when offered by a foreign hand. Hunger will make them brave every risk for bread. The partisans of England here have endeavored much to goad us into the folly of choosing the ocean instead of the land, for the theatre of war. That would be to meet their strength with our own weakness, instead of their weakness with our strength. I hope we shall confine ourselves to the conquest of their possessions, and defence of our harbors, leaving the war on the ocean to our privateers. These will immediately swarm in every sea, and do more injury to British commerce than the regular fleets of all Europe would do. The government of France may discontinue their license trade. Our privateers will furnish them much more abundantly with colonial produce, and whatever the license trade has given them. Some have apprehended we should be overwhelmed by the new improvements of war, which have not yet reached us. But the British possess them very imperfectly, and what are these improvements? Chiefly in the management of artillery, of which our country admits little use. We have nothing to fear from their armies, and shall put nothing in prize to their fleets. Upon the whole, I have known no war entered into under more favorable auspices.

Our manufacturers are now very nearly on a footing with those of England. She has not a single improvement which we do not possess, and many of them better adapted by ourselves

to our ordinary use. We have reduced the large and expensive machinery for most things to the compass of a private family, and every family of any size is now getting machines on a small scale for their household purposes. Quoting myself as an example, and I am much behind many others in this business, my household manufactures are just getting into operation on the scale of a carding machine costing $60 only, which may be worked by a girl of twelve years old, a spinning machine, which may be made for $10, carrying 6 spindles for wool,to be worked by a girl also, another which can be made for $25, carrying 12 spindles for cotton, and a loom, with a flying shuttle, weaving its twenty yards a day. I need 2,000 yards of linen, cotton and woollen yearly, to clothe my family, which this machinery, costing $150 only, and worked by two women and two girls, will more than furnish. For fine goods there are numerous establishments at work in the large cities, and many more daily growing up; and of merinos we have some thousands, and these multiplying fast. We consider a sheep for every person as sufficient for their woollen clothing, and this State and all to the north have fully that, and those to the south and west will soon be up to it. In other articles we are equally advanced, so that nothing is more certain than that, come peace when it will, we shall never again go to England for a shilling where we have gone for a dollar's worth. Instead of applying to her manufacturers there, they must starve or come here to be employed. I give you these details of peaceable operations, because they are within my present

sphere. Those of war are in better hands, who know how to keep their own secrets. Because, too, although a soldier yourself, I am sure you contemplate the peaceable employment of man in the improvement of his condition, with more pleasure than his murders, rapine and devastations.

Mr. Barnes, some time ago, forwarded you a bill of exchange for 5,500 francs, of which the enclosed is a duplicate. Apprehending that a war with England would subject the remittances to you to more casualties, I proposed to Mr. Morson, of Bordeaux, to become the intermediate for making remittances to you, which he readily acceded to on liberal ideas arising from his personal esteem for you, and his desire to be useful to you. If you approve of this medium I am in hopes it will shield you from the effect of the accidents to which the increased dangers of the seas may give birth. It would give me great pleasure to hear from you oftener. I feel great interest in your health and happiness. I know your feelings on the present state of the world, and hope they will be cheered by the successful course of our war, and the addition of Canada to our confederacy. The infamous intrigues of Great Britain to destroy our government (of which Henry's is but one sample), and with the Indians to tomahawk our women and children, prove that the cession of Canada, their fulcrum for these Machiavelian levers, must be a *sine qua non* at a treaty of peace. God bless you, and give you to see all these things, and many and long years of health and happiness.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Monticello, June 29, 1812.

Dear Sir,—I duly received your favor of the 22d covering the declaration of war. It is entirely popular here, the only opinion being that it should have been issued the moment the season admitted the militia to enter Canada. * * * * * To continue the war popular, two things are necessary mainly. 1. To stop Indian barbarities. The conquest of Canada will do this. 2. To furnish markets for our produce, say indeed for our flour, for tobacco is already given up, and seemingly without reluctance. The great profits of the wheat crop have allured every one to it; and never was such a crop on the ground as that which we generally begin to cut this day. It would be mortifying to the farmer to see such an one rot in his barn. It would soon sicken him to war. Nor can this be a matter of wonder or of blame on him. Ours is the only country on earth where war is an instantaneous and total suspension of all the objects of his industry and support. For carrying our produce to foreign markets our own ships, neutral ships, and even enemy ships under neutral flag, which I would wink at, will probably suffice. But the coasting trade is of double importance, because both seller and buyer are disappointed, and both are our own citizens. You will remember that in this trade

our greatest distress in the last war was produced by our own pilot boats taken by the British and kept as tenders to their larger vessels. These being the swiftest vessels on the ocean, they took them and selected the swiftest from the whole mass. Filled with men they scoured everything along shore, and completely cut up that coasting business which might otherwise have been carried on within the range of vessels of force and draught. Why should not we then line our coast with vessels of pilot-boat construction, filled with men, armed with cannonades, and only so much larger as to assure the mastery of the pilot boat? The British cannot counter-work us by building similar ones, because, the fact is, however unaccountable, that our builders alone understand that construction. It is on our own pilot boats the British will depend, which our larger vessels may thus retake. These, however, are the ideas of a landsman only, Mr. Hamilton's judgment will test their soundness.

Our militia are much afraid of being called to Norfolk at this season. They all declare a preference of a march to Canada. I trust however that Governor Barbour will attend to circumstances, and so apportion the service among the counties, that those acclimated by birth or residence may perform the summer tour, and the winter service be allotted to the upper counties.

I trouble you with a letter for General Kosciusko. It covers a bill of exchange from Mr. Barnes for him, and is therefore of great importance to him. Hoping you will have the goodness so

far to befriend the General as to give it your safest conveyance, I commit it to you, with the assurance of my sincere affections.

TO NATHANIEL GREENE, MONTAGUE CENTER

Monticello, July 5, 1812.

Sir,—Your favor of May 19th from New Orleans is just now received. I have no doubt that the information you will present to your countrymen on the subject of the Asiatic countries into which you have travelled, will be acceptable as sources both of amusement and instruction; and the more so, as the observations of an American will be more likely to present what are peculiarities to us, than those of any foreigner on the same countries. In reading the travels of a Frenchman through the United States what he remarks as peculiarities in us, prove to us the contrary peculiarities of the French. We have the accounts of Barbary from European and American travellers. It would be more amusing if Melli Melli would give us his observations on the United States. If, with the fables and follies of the Hindoos, so justly pointed out to us by yourselves and other travellers, we could compare the contrast of those which an Hindoo traveller would imagine he found among us, it might enlarge our instruction. It would be curious to see what parallel among us he would select for his Veeshni. What you will have seen in your western tour will also instruct many who often know least of things nearest home.

The charitable institution you have proposed to the city of New Orleans would undoubtedly be valuable, and all such are better managed by those locally connected with them. The great wealth of that city will insure its support, and the names subscribed to it will give it success. For a private individual, a thousand miles distant, to imagine that his name could add anything to what exhibits already the patronage of the highest authorities of the State, would be great presumption. It will certainly engage my best wishes, to which permit me to add for yourself the assurances of my respect.

TO THOMAS COOPER, ESQ

Monticello, July 10, 1812.

Dear Sir,—I received by your last post through Mr. Hall, of Baltimore, a copy of your introductory lecture to a course of chemistry, for which accept my thanks. I have just entered on the reading of it, and perceive that I have a feast before me. I discover from an error of the binder, that my copy has duplicates of pages 122, 123, 126, 127, and wants altogether, pages 121, 124, 125, 128, and forseeing that every page will be a real loss, and that the book has been printed at Carlisle, I will request your directions to the printer to enclose those four pages under cover to me at this place, *near Milton*. You know the just esteem which attached itself to Dr. Franklin's science, because he always endeavored to direct it to something useful in private life. The chemists have not been attentive enough to this. I have wished to see their science applied to domestic objects, to malting, for instance, brewing, making cider, to fermentation and distillation generally, to the making of bread, butter, cheese, soap, to the incubation of eggs, &c. And I am happy to observe some of these titles in the syllabus of your lecture. I hope you will make the chemistry of these subjects intelligible to our good house-wives. Glancing over the pages of your book, the last one caught my attention, where you recommend to students the books on metaphysics. Not seeing De

Tutt Tracy's name there, I suspected you might not have seen his work. His first volume on Ideology appeared in 1800. I happen to have a duplicate of this, and will send it to you. Since that, has appeared his second volume on grammar and his third on logic. They are considered as holding the most eminent station in that line; and considering with you that a course of anatomy lays the best foundation for understanding these subjects, Tracy should be preceded by a mature study of the most profound of all human compositions, "Cabanis's Rapports du Physique et du moral de l'homme."

In return for the many richer favors received from you, I send you my little tract on the batture of New Orleans, and Livingston's claim to it. I was at a loss where to get it printed, and confided it to the editor of the Edinburgh Review, re-printed at New York. But he has not done it immaculately. Although there are typographical errors in your lecture, I wonder to see so difficult a work so well done at Carlisle. I am making a fair copy of the catalogue of my library, which I mean to have printed merely for the use of the library. It will require correct orthography in so many languages, that I hardly know where I can get it done. Have you read the Review of Montesquieu, printed by Duane? I hope it will become the elementary book of the youth at all our colleges. Such a reduction of Montesquieu to his true value had been long wanting in political study. Accept the assurance of my great and constant esteem and respect.

TO MR. LATROBE

Monticello, July 12, 1812.

Dear Sir,—Of all the faculties of the human mind, that of memory is the first which suffers decay from age. Of the commencement of this decay, I was fully sensible while I lived in Washington, and it was my earliest monitor to retire from public business. It has often since been the source of great regret when applied to by others to attest transactions in which I had been an agent, to find that they had entirely vanished from my memory. In no case has it given me more concern than in that which is the subject of your letter of the 2d instant: the supper given in 1807 to the workmen on the capitol. Of this supper I have not the smallest recollection. If it ever was mentioned to me, not a vestige of it now remains in my mind. This failure of my memory is no proof the thing did not happen, but only takes from it the support of my testimony, which cannot be given for what is obliterated from it. I have looked among my papers to see if they furnish any trace of the matter, but I find none, and must therefore acquiesce in my incompetence to administer to truth on this occasion. I am sorry to learn that Congress has relinquished the benefit of the engagements of Andrei & Franzoni, on the sculpture of the capitol. They are artists of a grade far above what we can expect to get again. I still hope they will continue to work on the basis

of the appropriation made, and as far as that will go; so that what is done will be well done; and perhaps a more favorable moment may still preserve them to us. With respect to yourself, the little disquietudes from individuals not chosen for their taste in works of art, will be sunk into oblivion, while the Representatives' chamber will remain a durable monument of your talents as an architect. I say nothing of the Senate room, because I have never seen it. I shall live in the hope that the day will come when an opportunity will be given you of finishing the middle building in a style worthy of the two wings, and worthy of the first temple dedicated to the sovereignty of the people, embellishing with Athenian taste the course of a nation looking far beyond the range of Athenian destinies. In every situation, public or private, be assured of my sincere wishes for your prosperity and happiness, and of the continuance of my esteem and respect.

TO COLONEL DUANE

Monticello, August 4, 1812.

Dear Sir,—Your favor of the 17th ult. came duly to hand, and I have to thank you for the military manuals you were so kind as to send me. This is the sort of book most needed in our country, where even the elements of tactics are unknown. The young have never seen service, and the old are past it, and of those among them who are not superannuated themselves, their science is become so. I see, as you do, the difficulties and defects we have to encounter in war, and should expect disasters if we had an enemy on land capable of inflicting them. But the weakness of our enemy there will make our first errors innocent, and the seeds of genius which nature sows with even hand through every age and country, and which need only soil and season to germinate, will develop themselves among our military men. Some of them will become prominent, and seconded by the native energy of our citizens, will soon, I hope, to our force add the benefits of skill. The acquisition of Canada this year, as far as the neighborhood of Quebec, will be a mere matter of marching, and will give us experience for the attack of Halifax the next, and the final expulsion of England from the American continent. Halifax once taken, every cock-boat of hers must return to England for repairs. Their fleet will annihilate our public force on the water,

but our privateers will eat out the vitals of their commerce. Perhaps they will burn New York or Boston. If they do, we must burn the city of London, not by expensive fleets or congreve rockets, but by employing an hundred or two Jack-the-painters, whom nakedness, famine, desperation and hardened vice, will abundantly furnish from among themselves. We have a rumor now afloat that the orders of council are repeated. The thing is impossible after Castlereagh's late declaration in Parliament, and the re-construction of a Percival ministry.

I consider this last circumstance fortunate for us. The repeal of the orders of council would only add recruits to our minority, and enable them the more to embarrass our march to thorough redress of our past wrongs, and permanent security for the future. This we shall attain if no internal obstacles are raised up. The exclusion of their commerce from the United States, and the closing of the Baltic against it, which the present campaign in Europe will effect, will accomplish the catastrophe already so far advanced on them. I think your anticipations of the effects of this are entirely probable, their arts, their science, and what they have left of virtue, will come over to us, and although their vices will come also, these, I think, will soon be diluted and evaporated in a country of plain honesty. Experience will soon teach the new-comers how much more plentiful and pleasant is the subsistence gained by wholesome labor and fair dealing, than a precarious and hazardous dependence on the enterprises of vice and violence. Still I agree with you that these immigrations will

give strength to English partialities, to eradicate which is one of the most consoling expectations from the war. But probably the old hive will be broken up by a revolution, and a regeneration of its principles render intercourse with it no longer contaminating. A republic there like ours, and a reduction of their naval power within the limits of their annual facilities of payment, might render their existence even interesting to us. It is the construction of their government, and its principles and means of corruption, which make its continuance inconsistent with the safety of other nations. A change in its form might make it an honest one, and justify a confidence in its faith and friendship. That regeneration however will take a longer time than I have to live. I shall leave it to be enjoyed among you, and make my exit with a bow to it, as the most flagitious of governments I leave among men. I sincerely wish you may live to see the prodigy of its renovation, enjoying in the meantime health and prosperity.

TO GENERAL KOSCIUSKO

Monticello, August 5, 1812.

Dear General,—* * * * *

I have little to add to my letter of June. We have entered Upper Canada, and I think there can be no doubt of our soon having in our possession the whole of the St. Lawrence except Quebec. We have at this moment about two hundred privateers on the ocean, and numbers more going out daily. It is believed we shall fit out about a thousand in the whole. Their success has been already great, and I have no doubt they will cut up more of the commerce of England than all the navies of Europe could do, could those navies venture to sea at all. You will find that every sea on the globe where England has any commerce, and where any port can be found to sell prizes, will be filled with our privateers. God bless you and give you a long and happy life.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Monticello, August 5, 1812.

Dear Sir,—* * * * *

I am glad of the re-establishment of a Percival ministry. The opposition would have recruited our minority by half way offers. With Canada in hand we can go to treaty with an off-set for spoliation before the war. Our farmers are cheerful in the expectation of a good price for wheat in Autumn. Their pulse will be regulated by this, and not by the successes or disasters of the war. To keep open sufficient markets is the very first object towards maintaining the popularity of the war, which is as great at present as could be desired. We have just had a fine rain of 1¼ inches in the most critical time for our corn. The weather during the harvest was as advantageous as could be. I am sorry to find you remaining so long at Washington. The effect on your health may lose us a great deal of your time; a couple of months at Montpelier at this season would not lose us an hour. Affectionate salutations to Mrs. Madison and yourself.

TO THE HONORABLE MR. WRIGHT

Monticello, August 8, 1812.

Dear Sir,—I receive and return the congratulations of your letter of July 6 with pleasure, and join the great mass of my fellow citizens in saying, "Well done, good and faithful servants, receive the benedictions which your constituents are ready to give you." The British government seem to be doing late, what done earlier might have prevented war; to wit: repealing the orders in Council. But it should take more to make peace than to prevent war. The sword once drawn, full justice must be done. "Indemnification for the past and security for the future," should be painted on our banners. For 1,000 ships taken, and 6,000 seamen impressed, give us Canada for indemnification, and the only security they can give us against their Henrys, and the savages, and agree that the American flag shall protect the persons of those sailing under it, both parties exchanging engagements that neither will receive the seamen of the other on board their vessels. This done, I should be for peace with England and then war with France. One at a time is enough, and in fighting the one we need the harbors of the other for our prizes. Go on as you have begun, only quickening your pace, and receive the benedictions and prayers of those who are too old to offer anything else.

TO THOMAS LETRE, ESQ

Monticello, August 8, 1812.

Dear Sir,—I duly received your favor of the 14th ult., covering a paper containing proceedings of the patriots of South Carolina. It adds another to the many proofs of their steady devotion to their own country. I can assure you the hearts of their fellow citizens in this State beat in perfect unison with them, and with their government. Of this their concurrence in the election of Mr. Madison and Mr. Gerry, at the ensuing election, will give sufficient proof. The schism in Massachusetts, when brought to the crisis of principle, will be found to be exactly the same as in the Revolutionary war. The monarchists will be left alone, and will appear to be exactly the tories of the last war. Had the repeal of the orders of council, which now seems probable, taken place earlier, it might have prevented war; but much more is requisite to make peace—"indemnification for the past, and security for the future," should be the motto of the war. 1,000 ships taken, 6,000 seamen impressed, savage butcheries of our citizens, and incendiary machinations against our union, declare that they and their allies, the Spaniards, must retire from the Atlantic side of our continent as the only security or indemnification which will be effectual. Accept the assurances of my great esteem and respect.

TO COLONEL WILLIAM DUANE

Monticello, October 1, 1812.

Dear Sir,—Your favor of September the 20th, has been duly received, and I cannot but be gratified by the assurance it expresses, that my aid in the councils of our government would increase the public confidence in them; because it admits an inference that they have approved of the course pursued, when I heretofore bore a part in those councils. I profess, too, so much of the Roman principle, as to deem it honorable for the general of yesterday to act as a corporal to-day, if his services can be useful to his country; holding that to be false pride, which postpones the public good to any private or personal considerations. But I am past service. The hand of age is upon me. The decay of bodily faculties apprizes me that those of the mind cannot be unimpaired, had I not still better proofs. Every year counts by increased debility, and departing faculties keep the score. The last year it was the sight, this it is the hearing, the next something else will be going, until all is gone. Of all this I was sensible before I left Washington, and probably my fellow laborers saw it before I did. The decay of memory was obvious; it is now become distressing. But the mind too, is weakened. When I was young, mathematics was the passion of my life. The same passion has returned upon me, but with unequal powers. Processes which I

then read off with the facility of common discourse, now cost me labor, and time, and slow investigation. When I offered this, therefore, as one of the reasons deciding my retirement from office, it was offered in sincerity and a consciousness of its truth. And I think it a great blessing that I retain understanding enough to be sensible how much of it I have lost, and to avoid exposing myself as a spectacle for the pity of my friends; that I have surmounted the difficult point of knowing when to retire. As a compensation for faculties departed, nature gives me good health, and a perfect resignation to the laws of decay which she has prescribed to all the forms and combinations of matter.

The detestable treason of Hull has, indeed, excited a deep anxiety in all breasts. The depression was in the first moment gloomy and portentous. But it has been succeeded by a revived animation, and a determination to meet the occurrence with increased efforts; and I have so much confidence in the vigorous minds and bodies of our countrymen, as to be fearless as to the final issue. The treachery of Hull, like that of Arnold, cannot be matter of blame on our government. His character, as an officer of skill and bravery, was established on the trials of the last war, and no previous act of his life had led to doubt his fidelity. Whether the Head of the war department is equal to his charge, I am not qualified to decide. I knew him only as a pleasant, gentlemanly man in society; and the indecision of his character rather added to the amenity of his conversation. But when translated from the colloquial circle to the great stage of

national concerns, and the direction of the extensive operations of war, whether he has been able to seize at one glance the long line of defenceless border presented by our enemy, the masses of strength which we hold on different points of it, the facility this gave us of attacking him, on the same day, on all his points, from the extremity of the lakes to the neighborhood of Quebec, and the perfect indifference with which this last place, impregnable as it is, might be left in the hands of the enemy to fall of itself; whether, I say, he could see and prepare vigorously for all this, or merely wrapped himself in the cloak of cold defence, I am uninformed. I clearly think with you on the competence of Monroe to embrace great views of action. The decision of his character, his enterprise, firmness, industry, and unceasing vigilance, would, I believe, secure, as I am sure they would merit, the public confidence, and give us all the success which our means can accomplish. If our operations have suffered or languished from any want of energy in the present head which directs them, I have so much confidence in the wisdom and conscientious integrity of Mr. Madison, as to be satisfied, that however torturing to his feelings, he will fulfil his duty to the public and to his own reputation, by making the necessary change. Perhaps he may be preparing it while we are talking about it; for of all these things I am uninformed. I fear that Hull's surrender has been more than the mere loss of a year to us. Besides bringing on us the whole mass of savage nations, whom fear and not affection has kept in quiet, there is danger that in

giving time to an enemy who can send reinforcements of regulars faster than we can raise them, they may strengthen Canada and Halifax beyond the assailment of our lax and divided powers. Perhaps, however, the patriotic efforts from Kentucky and Ohio, by recalling the British force to its upper posts, may yet give time to Dearborne to strike a blow below. Effectual possession of the river from Montreal to the Chaudiere, which is practicable, would give us the upper country at our leisure, and close forever the scenes of the tomahawk and scalping knife.

But these things are for others to plan and achieve. The only succor from the old must lie in their prayers. These I offer up with sincere devotion; and in my concern for the great public, I do not overlook my friends, but supplicate for them, as I do for yourself, a long course of freedom, happiness and prosperity.

TO THOMAS C. FLOURNEY, ESQ

Monticello, October 1, 1812.

Sir,—Your letter of August 29th is just now received, having lingered long on the road. I owe you much thankfulness for the favorable opinion you entertain of my services, and the assurance expressed that they would again be acceptable in the executive chair. But, sir, I was sincere in stating age as one of the reasons of my retirement from office, beginning then to be conscious of its effects, and now much more sensible of them. Servile inertness is not what is to save our country; the conduct of a war requires the vigor and enterprise of younger heads. All such undertakings, therefore, are out of the question with me, and I say so with the greater satisfaction, when I contemplate the person to whom the executive powers were handed over. You probably do not know Mr. Madison personally, or at least intimately, as I do. I have known him from 1779, when he first came into the public councils, and from three and thirty years' trial, I can say conscientiously that I do not know in the world a man of purer integrity, more dispassionate, disinterested and devoted to genuine republicanism; nor could I, in the whole scope of America and Europe, point out an abler head. He may be illy seconded by others, betrayed by the Hulls and Arnolds of our country, for such there are in every country, and with sorrow

and suffering we know it. But what man can do will be done by Mr. Madison. I hope, therefore, there will be no difference among republicans as to his re-election, and we shall know his value when we have to give him up, and to look at large for his successor. With respect to the unfortunate loss of Detroit and our army, I with pleasure see the animation it has inspired through our whole country, but especially through the Western States, and the determination to retrieve our loss and our honor by increased exertions. I am not without hope that the Western efforts under General Harrison, may oblige the enemy to remain at their upper posts, and give Dearborne a fair opportunity to strike a blow below. A possession of the river from Montreal to the Chaudiere, gives us the upper country of course, and closes forever the scenes of the tomahawk and scalping-knife. Quebec is impregnable, but it is also worthless, and may be safely left in their hands to fall of itself. The vigorous minds and bodies of our countrymen leave me no fear as to ultimate results. In this confidence I resign myself to the care of those whom in their younger days I assisted in taking care of, and salute you with assurances of esteem and respect.

TO DOCTOR ROBERT PATTERSON

Monticello, December 27, 1812.

Dear Sir,—After an absence of five weeks at a distant possession of mine, to which I pay such visits three or four times a year, I find here your favor of November 30th. I am very thankful to you for the description of Redhefer's machine. I had never before been able to form an idea of what his principle of deception was. He is the first of the inventors of perpetual motion within my knowledge, who has had the cunning to put his visitors on a false pursuit, by amusing them with a sham machinery whose loose and vibratory motion might impose on them the belief that it is the real source of the motion they see. To this device he is indebted for a more extensive delusion than I have before witnessed on this point. We are full of it as far as this State, and I know not how much farther. In Richmond they have done me the honor to quote me as having said that it was a possible thing. A poor Frenchman who called on me the other day, with another invention of perpetual motion, assured me that Dr. Franklin, many years ago, expressed his opinion to him that it was not impossible. Without entering into contest on this abuse of the Doctor's name, I gave him the answer I had given to others before, that the Almighty himself could not construct a machine of perpetual motion while the laws exist which he has

prescribed for the government of matter in our system; that the equilibrium established by him between cause and effect must be suspended to effect that purpose. But Redhefer seems to be reaping a rich harvest from the public deception. The office of science is to instruct the ignorant. Would it be unworthy of some one of its votaries who witness this deception, to give a popular demonstration of the insufficiency of the ostensible machinery, and of course of the necessary existence of some hidden mover? And who could do it with more effect on the public mind than yourself?

I received, at the same time, the Abbé Rochon's pamphlets and book on his application of the double refraction of the Iceland Spath to the measure of small angles. I was intimate with him in France, and had received there, in many conversations, explanations of what is contained in these sheets. I possess, too, one of his lunettes which he had given to Dr. Franklin, and which came to me through Mr. Hopkinson. You are therefore probably acquainted with it. The graduated bar on each side is 12 inches long. The one extending to 37′ of angle, the other to 3,438 diameter in distance of the object viewed. On so large a scale of graduation, a nonias might distinctly enough sub-divide the divisions of 10′′ to 10′′ each; which is certainly a great degree of precision. But not possessing the common micrometer of two semi-lenses, I am not able to judge of their comparative merit.

* * * * *

TO MR. ADAMS

Monticello, December 28, 1812.

Dear Sir,—An absence of five or six weeks, on a journey I take three or four times a year, must apologize for my late acknowledgment of your favor of October 12th. After getting through the mass of business which generally accumulates during my absence, my first attention has been bestowed on the subject of your letter. I turned to the passages you refer to in Hutchinson and Winthrop, and with the aid of their dates, I examined our historians to see if Wollaston's migration to this State was noticed by them. It happens, unluckily, that Smith and Stith, who alone of them go into minute facts, bring their histories, the former only to 1623, and the latter to 1624. Wollaston's arrival in Massachusetts was in 1625, and his removal to this State was "some time" after. Beverly & Keith, who came lower down, are nearly superficial, giving nothing but those general facts which every one knew as well as themselves. If our public records of that date were not among those destroyed by the British on their invasion of this State, they may possibly have noticed Wollaston. What I possessed in this way have been given out to two gentlemen, the one engaged in writing our history, the other in collecting our ancient laws; so that none of these resources are at present accessible to me. Recollecting that Nathaniel Morton, in his New

England memorial, gives with minuteness the early annals of the colony of New Plymouth, and occasionally interweaves the occurrences of that on Massachusetts Bay, I recurred to him, and under the year 1628, I find he notices both Wollaston and Thomas Morton, and gives with respect to both, some details which are not in Hutchinson or Winthrop. As you do not refer to him, and so possibly may not have his book, I will transcribe from it the entire passage, which will prove at least my desire to gratify your curiosity as far as the materials within my power will enable me.

Extract from Nathaniel Morton's New England's Memorial, pp. 93 to 99, Anno 1628. "Whereas, about three years before this time, there came over one Captain Wollaston,[2] a man of considerable parts, and with him three or four more of some eminency, who brought with them a great many servants, with provisions and other requisites for to begin a plantation, and pitched themselves in a place within the Massachusetts Bay, which they called afterwards by their captain's name, Mount Wollaston; which place is since called by the name of Braintry. And amongst others that came with him, there was one Mr. Thomas Morton, who, it should seem, had some small adventure of his own of other men's amongst them, but had little respect, and was slighted by the meanest servants they kept. They having

[2] This gentleman's name is here occasionally used, and although he came over in the year 1625, yet these passages in reference to Morton fell out about this year, and therefore referred to this place.

continued some time in New England, and not finding things to answer their expectation, nor profit to arise as they looked for, the said Captain Wollaston takes a great part of the servants and transports them to Virginia, and disposed of them there, and writes back to one Mr. Rasdale, one of his chief partners, (and accounted then merchant,) to bring another part of them to Virginia, likewise intending to put them off there as he had done the rest; and he, with the consent of the said Rasdale, appointed one whose name was Filcher, to be his Lieutenant, and to govern the remainder of the plantation until he or Rasdale should take further order thereabout. But the aforesaid Morton, (having more craft than honesty,) having been a petty-fogger at Furnival's-inn, he, in the other's absence, watches an opportunity, (commons being put hard among them,) and got some strong drink and other junkets, and made them a feast, and after they were merry, he began to tell them he would give them good counsel. You see, (saith he,) that many of your fellows are carried to Virginia, and if you stay still until Rasdale's return, you will also be carried away and sold for slaves with the rest; therefore I would advise you to thrust out Lieutenant Filcher, and I having a part in the plantation, will receive you as my partners and consociates, so you may be free from service, and we will converse, plant, trade and live together as equals (or to the like effect). This counsel was easily followed; so they took opportunity, and thrust Lieutenant Filcher out of doors, and would not suffer him to come any more amongst them, but forced him to seek bread to eat and other

necessaries amongst his neighbors, till he would get passage for England. (See the sad effect of want of good government.)

"After this they fell to great licentiousness of life, in all prophaneness, and the said Morton became lord of misrule, and maintained (as it were) a school of Atheism, and after they had got some goods into their hands, and got much by trading with the Indians, they spent it as vainly, in quaffing and drinking both wine and strong liquors in great excess, (as some have reported,) ten pounds worth in a morning, setting up a May pole, drinking and dancing about like so many fairies, or furies rather, yea and worse practices, as if they had anew revived and celebrated the feast of the Roman goddess Flora, or the beastly practices of the mad Bacchanalians. The said Morton likewise to show his poetry, composed sundry rythmes and verses, some tending to licentiousness, and others to the detraction and scandal of some persons names, which he affixed to his idle or idol May-pole; they changed also the name of their place, and instead of calling it Mount Wollaston, they called it the Merry Mount, as if this jollity would have lasted always. But this continued not long, for shortly after that worthy gentleman Mr. John Endicot, who brought over a patent under the broad seal of England for the government of the Massachusetts, visiting those parts, caused that May-pole to be cut down, and rebuked them for their prophaneness, and admonished them to look to it that they walked better; so the name was again changed and called Mount Dagon.

"Now to maintain this riotous prodigality and profuse

expense, the said Morton thinking himself lawless, and hearing what gain the fishermen made of trading of pieces, powder, and shot, he as head of this consortship, began the practice of the same in these parts; and first he taught the Indians how to use them, to charge and discharge 'em, and what proportion of powder to give the piece; according to the size of bigness of the same, and what shot to use for fowl, and what for deer; and having instructed them, he employed some of them to hunt and fowl for him; so as they became somewhat more active in that imployment than any of the English, by reason of their swiftness of foot, and nimbleness of body, being also quick-sighted, and by continual exercise, well knowing the haunt of all sorts of game; so as when they saw the execution that a piece would do, and the benefit that might come by the same, they became very eager after them, and would not stick to give any price they could attain to for them; accounting their bows and arrows but baubles in comparison of them.

"And here we may take occasion to bewail the mischief which came by this wicked man, and others like unto him; in that notwithstanding laws for the restraint of selling ammunition to the natives, that so far base covetousness prevailed, and doth still prevail, as that the Salvages became amply furnished with guns, powder, shot, rapiers, pistols, and also well skilled in repairing of defective arms: yea some have not spared to tell them how gunpowder is made, and all the materials in it, and they are to be had in their own land; and would (no doubt, in case they could

attain to the making of Saltpeter) teach them to make powder, and what mischief may fall out unto the English in these parts thereby, let this pestilent fellow Morton (aforenamed) bear a great part of the blame and guilt of it to future generations. But lest I should hold the reader too long in relation to the particulars of his vile actings; when as the English that then lived up and down about the Massachusetts, and in other places, perceiving the sad consequences of his trading, so as the Indians became furnished with the English arms and ammunition, and expert in the improving of them, and fearing that they should at one time or another get a blow thereby; and also taking notice, that if he were let alone in his way, they should keep no servants for him, because he would entertain any, how vile soever, sundry of the chief of the straggling plantations met together, and agreed by mutual consent to send to Plimouth, who were then of more strength to join with them, to suppress this mischief who considering the particulars proposed to them to join together to take some speedy course to prevent (if it might be) the evil that was accruing towards them; and resolved first to admonish him of his wickedness respecting the premises, laying before him the injury he did to their common safety, and that his acting considering the same was against the King's proclamation; but he insolently persisted on in his way, and said the King was dead, and his displeasure with him, and threatened them that if they come to molest him, they should look to themselves; so that they saw that there was no way but to take him by force; so they

resolved to proceed in such a way, and obtained of the Governor of Plimouth to send Capt. Standish and some other aid with him, to take the said Morton by force, the which accordingly was done; but they found him to stand stiffly on his defence, having made fast his doors, armed his consorts, set powder and shot ready upon the table; scoffed and scorned at them, he and his complices being fitted with strong drink, were desperate in their way; but he himself coming out of doors to make a shot at Capt. Standish, he stepping to him put by his piece and took him, and so little hurt was done; and so he was brought prisoner to Plimouth, and continued in durance till an opportunity of sending him for England, which was done at their common charge, and letters also with him, to the honorable council for New England, and returned again into the country in some short time, with less punishment than his demerits deserved (as was apprehended). The year following he was again apprehended, and sent for England, where he lay a considerable time in Exeter gaol; for besides his miscarriage here in New England, he was suspected to have murthered a man that had ventured monies with him when he came first into New England; and a warrant was sent over from the Lord Chief Justice to apprehend him, by virtue whereof, he was by the Governor of Massachusetts sent into England, and for other of his misdemeanors amongst them in that government, they demolished his house, that it might no longer be a roost for such unclean birds. Notwithstanding he got free in England again, and wrote an infamous and scurrilous book

against many godly and chief men of the country, full of lies and slanders, and full fraught with prophane calumnies against their names and persons, and the way of God. But to the intent I may not trouble the reader any more with mentioning of him in this history; in fine, sundry years after he came again into the country, and was imprisoned at Boston for the aforesaid book and other things, but denied sundry things therein, affirming his book was adulterated. And soon after being grown old in wickedness, at last ended his life at Piscataqua. But I fear I have held the reader too long about so unworthy a person, but hope it may be useful to take notice how wickedness was beginning, and would have further proceeded, had it not been prevented timely."

So far Nathaniel Morton. The copy you have of Thomas Morton's New English Canaan, printed in 1637 by Stam of Amsterdam, was a second edition of that "infamous and scurrilous book against the godly." The first had been printed in 1632, by Charles Green, in a 4to of 188 pages, and is the one alluded to by N. Morton. Both of them made a part of the American library given by White Kennett in 1713 to the Society for the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts. This society being a chartered one, still, as I believe, existing, and probably their library also, I suppose that these and the other books of that immense collection, the catalogue of which occupies 275 pages 4to, are still to be found with them. If any research I can hereafter make should ever bring to my knowledge anything more of Wollaston, I shall not fail to communicate it to you. Ever

and affectionately yours.

TO HENRY MIDDLETON, ESQ

Monticello, January 8, 1813.

Dear Sir,—Your favor of November 25th was a month on its passage to me. I received with great pleasure this mark of your recollection, heightened by the assurance that the part I have acted in public life has met your approbation. Having seen the people of all other nations bowed down to the earth under the wars and prodigalities of their rulers, I have cherished their opposites, peace, economy, and riddance of public debt, believing that these were the high road to public as well as to private prosperity and happiness. And, certainly, there never before has been a state of the world in which such forbearances as we have exercised would not have preserved our peace. Nothing but the total prostration of all moral principle could have produced the enormities which have forced us at length into the war. On one hand, a ruthless tyrant, drenching Europe in blood to obtain through future time the character of the destroyer of mankind; on the other, a nation of buccanniers, urged by sordid avarice, and embarked in the flagitious enterprise of seizing to itself the maritime resources and rights of all other nations, have left no means of peace to reason and moderation. And yet there are beings among us who think we ought still to have acquiesced. As if while full war was waging on one side, we

could lose by making some reprisal on the other. The paper you were so kind as to enclose me is a proof you are not of this sentiment; it expresses our grievances with energy and brevity, as well as the feelings they ought to excite. And I see with pleasure another proof that South Carolina is ever true to the principles of free government. Indeed it seems to me that in proportion as commercial avarice and corruption advance on us from the north and east, the principles of free government are to retire to the agricultural states of the south and west, as their last asylum and bulwark. With honesty and self-government for her portion, agriculture may abandon contentedly to others the fruits of commerce and corruption. Accept, I pray you, the assurances of my great esteem and respect.

TO MR. RONALDSON

Monticello, Jan. 12, 1813.

Dear Sir,—Your favor of November 2d arrived a little before I sat out on a journey on which I was absent between five and six weeks. I have still therefore to return you my thanks for the seeds accompanying it, which shall be duly taken care of, and a communication made to others of such as shall prove valuable. I have been long endeavoring to procure the Cork tree from Europe, but without success. A plant which I brought with me from Paris died after languishing some time, and of several parcels of acorns received from a correspondent at Marseilles, not one has ever vegetated. I shall continue my endeavors, although disheartened by the nonchalance of our southern fellow citizens, with whom alone they can thrive. It is now twenty-five years since I sent them two shipments (about 500 plants) of the Olive tree of Aix, the finest Olives in the world. If any of them still exist, it is merely as a curiosity in their gardens, not a single orchard of them has been planted. I sent them also the celebrated species of Sainfoin,[3] from Malta, which yields good crops without a drop of rain through the season. It was lost. The upland rice which I procured fresh from Africa and sent them, has been preserved and spread in the upper parts of Georgia,

[3] Called Sulla.

and I believe in Kentucky. But we must acknowledge their services in furnishing us an abundance of cotton, a substitute for silk, flax and hemp. The ease with which it is spun will occasion it to supplant the two last, and its cleanliness the first. Household manufacture is taking deep root with us. I have a carding machine, two spinning machines, and looms with the flying shuttle in full operation for clothing my own family; and I verily believe that by the next winter this State will not need a yard of imported coarse or middling clothing. I think we have already a sheep for every inhabitant, which will suffice for clothing, and one-third more, which a single year will add, will furnish blanketing. With respect to marine hospitals, which are one of the subjects of your letter, I presume you know that such establishments have been made by the general government in the several States, that a portion of seaman's wages is drawn for their support, and the government furnishes what is deficient. Mr. Gallatin is attentive to them, and they will grow with our growth. You doubt whether we ought to permit the exportation of grain to our enemies; but Great Britain, with her own agricultural support, and those she can command by her access into every sea, cannot be starved by withholding our supplies. And if she is to be fed at all events, why may we not have the benefit of it as well as others? I would not, indeed, feed her armies landed on our territory, because the difficulty of inland subsistence is what will prevent their ever penetrating far into the country, and will confine them to the sea coast. But this would be my only

exception. And as to feeding her armies in the peninsula, she is fighting our battles there, as Bonaparte is on the Baltic. He is shutting out her manufactures from that sea, and so far assisting us in her reduction to extremity. But if she does not keep him out of the peninsular, if he gets full command of that, instead of the greatest and surest of all our markets, as that has uniformly been, we shall be excluded from it, or so much shackled by his tyranny and ignorant caprices, that it will become for us what France now is. Besides, if we could, by starving the English armies, oblige them to withdraw from the peninsular, it would be to send them here; and I think we had better feed them there for pay, than feed and fight them here for nothing. A truth, too, not to be lost sight of is, that no country can pay war taxes if you suppress all their resources. To keep the war popular, we must keep open the markets. As long as good prices can be had, the people will support the war cheerfully. If you should have an opportunity of conveying to Mr. Heriot my thanks for his book, you will oblige me by doing it. Accept the assurance of my great esteem and respect.

TO MR. MELISH

Monticello, January 13, 1813.

Dear Sir,—I received duly your favor of December the 15th, and with it the copies of your map and travels, for which be pleased to accept my thanks. The book I have read with extreme satisfaction and information. As to the western States, particularly, it has greatly edified me; for of the actual condition of that interesting portion of our country, I had not an adequate idea. I feel myself now as familiar with it as with the condition of the maritime States. I had no conception that manufactures had made such progress there, and particularly of the number of carding and spinning machines dispersed through the whole country. We are but beginning here to have them in our private families. Small spinning jennies of from half a dozen to twenty spindles, will soon, however, make their way into the humblest cottages, as well as the richest houses; and nothing is more certain, than that the coarse and middling clothing for our families, will forever hereafter continue to be made within ourselves. I have hitherto myself depended entirely on foreign manufactures; but I have now thirty-five spindles agoing, a hand carding machine, and looms with the flying shuttle, for the supply of my own farms, which will never be relinquished in my time. The continuance of the war will fix the habit generally, and out

of the evils of impressment and of the orders of council, a great blessing for us will grow. I have not formerly been an advocate for great manufactories. I doubted whether our labor, employed in agriculture, and aided by the spontaneous energies of the earth, would not procure us more than we could make ourselves of other necessaries. But other considerations entering into the question, have settled my doubts.

The candor with which you have viewed the manners and condition of our citizens, is so unlike the narrow prejudices of the French and English travellers preceding you, who, considering each the manners and habits of their own people as the only orthodox, have viewed everything differing from that test as boorish and barbarous, that your work will be read here extensively, and operate great good.

Amidst this mass of approbation which is given to every other part of the work, there is a single sentiment which I cannot help wishing to bring to what I think the correct one; and, on a point so interesting, I value your opinion too highly not to ambition its concurrence with my own. Stating in volume one, page sixty-three, the principle of difference between the two great political parties here, you conclude it to be, 'whether the controlling power shall be vested in this or that set of men.' That each party endeavors to get into the administration of the government, and exclude the other from power, is true, and may be stated as a motive of action: but this is only secondary; the primary motive being a real and radical difference of political principle.

I sincerely wish our differences were but personally who should govern, and that the principles of our constitution were those of both parties. Unfortunately, it is otherwise; and the question of preference between monarchy and republicanism, which has so long divided mankind elsewhere, threatens a permanent division here.

Among that section of our citizens called federalists, there are three shades of opinion. Distinguishing between the *leaders* and *people* who compose it, the *leaders* consider the English constitution as a model of perfection, some, with a correction of its vices, others, with all its corruptions and abuses. This last was Alexander Hamilton's opinion, which others, as well as myself, have often heard him declare, and that a correction of what are called its vices, would render the English an impracticable government. This government they wished to have established here, and only accepted and held fast, *at first*, to the present constitution, as a stepping-stone to the final establishment of their favorite model. This party has therefore always clung to England as their prototype, and great auxiliary in promoting and effecting this change. A weighty minority, however, of these *leaders*, considering the voluntary conversion of our government into a monarchy as too distant, if not desperate, wish to break off from our Union its eastern fragment, as being, in truth, the hot-bed of American monarchism, with a view to a commencement of their favorite government, from whence the other States may gangrene by degrees, and the whole be thus brought finally

to the desired point. For Massachusetts, the prime mover in this enterprise, is the last State in the Union to mean a *final* separation, as being of all the most dependent on the others. Not raising bread for the sustenance of her own inhabitants, not having a stick of timber for the construction of vessels, her principal occupation, nor an article to export in them, where would she be, excluded from the ports of the other States, and thrown into dependence on England, her direct, and natural, but now insidious rival? At the head of this MINORITY is what is called the Essex Junto of Massachusetts. But the MAJORITY of these *leaders* do not aim at separation. In this, they adhere to the known principle of General Hamilton, never, under any views, to break the Union. Anglomany, monarchy, and separation, then, are the principles of the Essex federalists. Anglomany and monarchy, those of the Hamiltonians, and Anglomany alone, that of the portion among the *people* who call themselves federalists. These last are as good republicans as the brethren whom they oppose, and differ from them only in their devotion to England and hatred of France which they have imbibed from their leaders. The moment that these leaders should avowedly propose a separation of the Union, or the establishment of regal government, their popular adherents would quit them to a man, and join the republican standard; and the partisans of this change, even in Massachusetts, would thus find themselves an army of officers without a soldier.

The party called republican is steadily for the support of

the present constitution. They obtained at its commencement, all the amendments to it they desired. These reconciled them to it perfectly, and if they have any ulterior view, it is only, perhaps, to popularize it further, by shortening the Senatorial term, and devising a process for the responsibility of judges, more practicable than that of impeachment. They esteem the people of England and France equally, and equally detest the governing powers of both.

This I verily believe, after an intimacy of forty years with the public councils and characters, is a true statement of the grounds on which they are at present divided, and that it is not merely an ambition for power. An honest man can feel no pleasure in the exercise of power over his fellow citizens. And considering as the only offices of power those conferred by the people directly, that is to say, the executive and legislative functions of the General and State governments, the common refusal of these, and multiplied resignations, are proofs sufficient that power is not alluring to pure minds, and is not, with them, the primary principle of contest. This is my belief of it; it is that on which I have acted; and had it been a mere contest who should be permitted to administer the government according to its genuine republican principles, there has never been a moment of my life in which I should have relinquished for it the enjoyments of my family, my farm, my friends and books.

You expected to discover the difference of our party principles in General Washington's valedictory, and my inaugural

address. Not at all. General Washington did not harbor one principle of federalism. He was neither an Angloman, a monarchist, nor a separatist. He sincerely wished the people to have as much self-government as they were competent to exercise themselves. The only point on which he and I ever differed in opinion, was, that I had more confidence than he had in the natural integrity and discretion of the people, and in the safety and extent to which they might trust themselves with a control over their government. He has asseverated to me a thousand times his determination that the existing government should have a fair trial, and that in support of it he would spend the last drop of his blood. He did this the more repeatedly, because he knew General Hamilton's political bias, and my apprehensions from it. It is a mere calumny, therefore, in the monarchists, to associate General Washington with their principles. But that may have happened in this case which has been often seen in ordinary cases, that, by oft repeating an untruth, men come to believe it themselves. It is a mere artifice in this party to bolster themselves up on the revered name of that first of our worthies. If I have dwelt longer on this subject than was necessary, it proves the estimation in which I hold your ultimate opinions, and my desire of placing the subject truly before them. In so doing, I am certain I risk no use of the communication which may draw me into contention before the public. Tranquillity is the *summum bonum* of a Septagenaire.

To return to the merits of your work: I consider it as so

lively a picture of the real state of our country, that if I can possibly obtain opportunities of conveyance, I propose to send a copy to a friend in France, and another to one in Italy, who, I know, will translate and circulate it as an antidote to the misrepresentations of former travellers. But whatever effect my profession of political faith may have on your general opinion, a part of my object will be obtained, if it satisfies you as to the principles of my own action, and of the high respect and consideration with which I tender you my salutations.

TO COLONEL DUANE

Monticello, January 22, 1813.

Dear Sir,—I do not know how the publication of the Review turned out in point of profit, whether gainfully or not. I know it ought to have been a book of great sale. I gave a copy to a student of William and Mary college, and recommended it to Bishop Madison, then President of the college, who was so pleased with it that he established it as a school-book, and as the young gentleman informed me, every copy which could be had was immediately bought up, and there was a considerable demand for more. You probably know best whether new calls for it have been made. Pr. Madison was a good whig. * * * * * Your experiment on that work will enable you to decide whether you ought to undertake another, not of greater but of equal merit. I have received from France a MS. work on Political Economy, written by De Tutt Tracy, the most conspicuous writer of the present day in the metaphysical line. He has written a work entitled Ideology, which has given him a high reputation in France. He considers that as having laid a solid foundation for the present volume on Political Economy, and will follow it by one on Moral Duties. The present volume is a work of great ability. It may be considered as a review of the principles of the Economists, of Smith and of Say, or rather an elementary book

on the same subject. As Smith had corrected some principles of the Economists, and Say some of Smiths, so Tracy has done as to the whole. He has, in my opinion, corrected fundamental errors in all of them, and by simplifying principles, has brought the subject within a narrow compass. I think the volume would be of about the size of the Review of Montesquieu. Although he puts his name to the work, he is afraid to publish it in France, lest its freedom should bring him into trouble. If translated and published here, he could disavow it, if necessary. In order to enable you to form a better judgment of the work, I will subjoin a list of the chapters or heads, and if you think proper to undertake the translation and publication, I will send the work itself. You will certainly find it one of the very first order. It begins with * * * * *

Our war on the land has commenced most inauspiciously. I fear we are to expect reverses until we can find out who are qualified for command, and until these can learn their profession. The proof of a general, to know whether he will stand fire, costs a more serious price than that of a cannon; these proofs have already cost us thousands of good men, and deplorable degradation of reputation, and as yet have elicited but a few negative and a few positive characters. But we must persevere till we recover the rank we are entitled to.

Accept the assurances of my continued esteem and respect.

TO DOCTOR MORRELL

Monticello, February 5, 1813.

Sir,—The book which you were so kind as to take charge of at Paris for me, is safely received, and I thank you for your care of it, and more particularly for the indulgent sentiments you are so kind as to express towards myself. I am happy at all times to hear of the welfare of my literary friends in that country; they have had a hard time of it since I left them. I know nothing which can so severely try the heart and spirit of man, and especially of the man of science, as the necessity of a passive acquiescence under the abominations of an unprincipled tyrant who is deluging the earth with blood to acquire for himself the reputation of a Cartouche or a Robin Hood. The petty larcenies of the Blackbeards and Buccaneers of the ocean, the more immediately exercised on us, are dirty and grovelling things addressed to our contempt, while the horrors excited by the Scelerat of France are beyond all human execrations. With my thanks for your kind attentions, be pleased to accept the assurance of my respect.

TO GENERAL BAILEY

Monticello, February 6, 1813.

Dear Sir,—Your favor of January 25th is received, and I have to renew my thanks to you for the map accompanying it. These proofs of friendly remembrance give additional interest to the subjects which convey them. The scenes, too, which compose the map, are become highly interesting. Our first entrance on them has been peculiarly inauspicious. Our men are good, but force without conduct is easily baffled. The Creator has not thought proper to mark those in the forehead who are of stuff to make good generals. We are first, therefore, to seek them blindfold, and then let them learn the trade at the expense of great losses. But our turn of success will come by-and-bye, and we must submit to the previous misfortunes which are to be the price of it. I think with you on the subject of privateers. Our ships of force will undoubtedly be blockaded by the enemy, and we shall have no means of annoying them at sea but by small, swift-sailing vessels; these will be better managed and more multiplied in the hands of individuals than of the government. In short, they are our true and only weapon in a war against Great Britain, when once Canada and Nova Scotia shall have been rescued from them. The opposition to them in Congress is merely partial. It is a part of the navy fever, and proceeds from

the desire of securing men for the public ships by suppressing all other employments from them. But I do not apprehend that this ill-judged principle is that of a majority of Congress. I hope, on the contrary, they will spare no encouragement to that kind of enterprise. Our public ships, to be sure, have done wonders. They have saved our military reputation sacrificed on the shores of Canada; but in point of real injury and depredation on the enemy, our privateers without question have been most effectual. Both species of force have their peculiar value. I salute you with assurances of friendship and respect.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Monticello, February 8, 1813.

Dear Sir,—Your favor of the 27th ult. has been duly received. You have had a long holiday from my intrusions. In truth I have had nothing to write about, and your time should not be consumed by letters about nothing. The enclosed paper however makes it a duty to give you the trouble of reading it. You know the handwriting and the faith due to it. Our intimacy with the writer leaves no doubt about his facts, and in his letter to me he pledges himself for their fidelity. He says the narrative was written at the request of a young friend in Virginia, and a copy made for my perusal, on the presumption it would be interesting to me. Whether the word "Confidential" at the head of the paper was meant only for his young friend or for myself also, nothing in his letter indicates. I must, therefore, govern myself by considerations of discretion and of duty combined. Discretion dictates that I ought not so to use the paper as to compromit my friend; an effect which would be as fatal to my peace as it might be to his person. But duty tells me that the public interest is so deeply concerned in your perfect knowledge of the characters employed in its high stations, that nothing should be withheld which can give you useful information. On these grounds I

commit it to yourself and the Secretary at War, to whose functions it relates more immediately. It may have effect on your future designation of those to whom particular enterprises are to be committed, and this is the object of the communication. If you should think it necessary that the minds of the other members of the Cabinet should be equally apprized of its contents, although not immediately respecting their departments, the same considerations, and an entire confidence in them personally, would dictate its communication to them also. But beyond this no sense of duty calls on me for its disclosure, and fidelity to my friend strongly forbids it. The paper presents such a picture of indecision in purpose, inattention to preparation, and imprudence of demeanor, as to fix a total incompetence for military direction. How greatly we were deceived in this character, as is generally the case in appointments not on our own knowledge. I remember when we appointed him we rejoiced in the acquisition of an officer of so much understanding and integrity, as we imputed to him; and placed him as near the head of the army as the commands then at our disposal admitted. Perhaps, still, you may possess information giving a different aspect to this case, of which I sincerely wish it may be susceptible. I will ask the return of the paper when no longer useful to you.

The accession to your Cabinet meets general approbation. This is chiefly at present given to the character most known, but will be equally so to the other when better known. I think you

could not have made better appointments.

The autumn and winter have been most unfriendly to the wheat in red lands, by continued cold and alternate frosts and thaws. The late snow of about ten inches now disappearing, have received it. That grain is got to $2 at Richmond. This is the true barometer of the popularity of the war. Ever affectionately yours.

TO GENERAL ARMSTRONG

Monticello, February 8, 1813.

Dear General,—I have long ago in my heart congratulated our country on your call to the place you now occupy. But with yourself personally it is no subject of congratulation. The happiness of the domestic fireside is the first boon of heaven; and it is well it is so, since it is that which is the lot of the mass of mankind. The duties of office are a Corvée which must be undertaken on far other considerations than those of personal happiness. But whether this be a subject of congratulation or of condolence, it furnishes the occasion of recalling myself to your recollection, and of renewing the assurances of my friendship and respect. Whatever you do in office, I know will be honestly and ably done, and although we who do not see the whole ground may sometimes impute error, it will be because we, not you, are in the wrong; or because your views are defeated by the wickedness or incompetence of those you are obliged to trust with their execution. An instance of this is the immediate cause of the present letter. I have enclosed a paper to the President, with a request to communicate it to you, and if he thinks it should be known to your associates of the Cabinet, although not immediately respecting their departments, he will communicate it to them also. That it should go no further is rendered an

obligation on me by considerations personal to a young friend whom I love and value, and by the confidence which has induced him to commit himself to me. I hope, therefore, it will never be known that such a narrative has been written, and much less by whom written, and to whom addressed. It is unfortunate that heaven has not set its stamp on the forehead of those whom it has qualified for military achievement. That it has left us to draw for them in a lottery of so many blanks to a prize, and where the blank is to be manifested only by the public misfortunes. If nature had planted the *fœnum in cornu* on the front of treachery, of cowardice, of imbecility, the unfortunate debut we have made on the theatre of war would not have sunk our spirits at home, and our character abroad. I hope you will be ready to act on the first breaking of the ice, as otherwise we may despair of wresting Canada from our enemies. Their starving manufactories can furnish men for its defence much faster than we can enlist them for its assault.

Accept my prayers for success in all your undertakings, and the assurance of my affectionate esteem and respect.

TO DOCTOR RUSH

Monticello, March 6, 1813.

Dear Sir,—I received some time ago a letter signed "James Carver," proposing that myself, and my friends in this quarter, should subscribe and forward a sum of money towards the expenses of his voyage to London, and maintenance there while going through a course of education in their Veterinary school, with a view to his returning to America, and practising the art in Philadelphia. The name, person and character of the writer, were equally unknown to me, and unauthenticated, but as self-declared in the letter. I supposed him an Englishman, from the style in which he spoke of "His Majesty," and because an American, without offence to the laws, could not now be going, nor be sent by private individuals to England. The scheme did not appear to me either the shortest or surest way of going to work to accomplish the object. Because, if the Veterinary institution there be of the celebrity he described, it must already have produced subjects prepared for entering into practice, and disposed to come to a good position, claiming nothing till they should enter into function, or not more than their passage. I did not receive the letter until the day had elapsed on which the vessel was to depart wherein he had taken his passage; and his desire that the answer should go through you, is my only authority for

troubling you with this, addressed to you, whom I know, love, and revere, and not to him, who, for any evidence I have but from himself, may be a zealous son of science, or an adventurer wanting money to carry him to London. I know nothing of the Veterinary institution of London, yet have no doubt it merits the high character he ascribes to it. It is a nation which possesses many learned men. I know well the Veterinary school of Paris, of long standing, and saw many of its publications during my residence there. They were classically written, announced a want of nothing but certainty as to their facts, which granted, the hypotheses were learned and plausible. The coach-horses of the rich of Paris were availed of the institution; but the farmers even of the neighborhood could not afford to call a Veterinary Doctor to their plough-horses in the country, or to send them to a livery stable to be attended in the city. On the whole, I was not a convert to the utility of the Institution. You know I am so to that of medicine, even in human complaints, but in a limited degree. That there are certain diseases of the human body, so distinctly pronounced by well-articulated symptoms, and recurring so often, as not to be mistaken, wherein experience has proved that certain substances applied, will restore order, I cannot doubt. Such are Kinkina in Intermittents, Mercury in Syphilis, Castor Oil in Dysentery, &c. And so far I go with the physicians. But there are also a great mass of indistinct diseases, presenting themselves under no form clearly characterized, nor exactly recognized as having occurred before, and to which of

course the application of no particular substance can be known to have been made, nor its effect on the case experienced. These may be called unknown cases, and they may in time be lessened by the progress of observation and experiment. Observing that there are in the construction of the animal system some means provided unknown to us, which have a tendency to restore order, when disturbed by accident, called by physicians the *vis medicatrix naturæ*, I think it safer to trust to this power in the unknown cases, than to uncertain conjectures built on the ever-changing hypothetical systems of medicine. Now, in the Veterinary department all are unknown cases. Man can tell his physician the seat of his pain, its nature, history, and sometimes its cause, and can follow his directions for the curative process —but the poor dumb horse cannot signify where his pain is, what it is, or when or whence it came, and resists all process for its cure. If in the case of man, then, the benefit of medical interference in such cases admits of question, what must it be in that of the horse? And to what narrow limits is the real importance of the Veterinary art reduced? When a boy, I knew a Doctor Seymour, neighbor to our famous botanist Clayton, who imagined he could cure the diseases of his tobacco plants; he bled some, administered lotions to others, sprinkled powders on a third class, and so on—they only withered and perished the faster. I am sensible of the presumption of hazarding an opinion to you on a subject whereon you are so much better qualified for decision, both by reading and experience. But our opinions

are not voluntary. Every man's own reason must be his oracle. And I only express mine to explain why I did not comply with Mr. Carver's request; and to give you a further proof that there are no bounds to my confidence in your indulgence in matters of opinion.

Mr. Adams and myself are in habitual correspondence. I owe him a letter at this time, and shall pay the debt as soon as I have something to write about: for with the commonplace topic of politics we do not meddle. Where there are so many others on which we agree, why should we introduce the only one on which we differ. Besides the pleasure which our naval successes have given to every honest patriot, his must be peculiar, because a navy has always been his hobby-horse. A little further time will show whether his ideas have been premature, and whether the little we can oppose on that element to the omnipotence of our enemy there, would lessen the losses of the war, or contribute to shorten its duration, the legitimate object of every measure. On the land, indeed, we have been most unfortunate; so wretched a succession of generals never before destroyed the fairest expectations of a nation, counting on the bravery of its citizens, which has proved itself on all these trials. Our first object must now be the vindication of our character in the field; after that, peace with the *liberum mare*, personal inviolability there, and ouster from this continent of the incendiaries of savages. God send us these good things, and to you health and life here, till you wish to awake to it in another state of being.

TO M. DE LOMERIE

Monticello, April 3, 1813.

Sir,—Your letter of the 26th has been received, as had been that of the 5th. The preceding ones had been complied with by applications verbal and written to the members of the government, to which I could expect no specific answers, their whole time being due to the public, and employed on their concerns. Had it been my good fortune to preserve at the age of seventy, all the activity of body and mind which I enjoyed in earlier life, I should have employed it now, as then, in incessant labors to serve those to whom I could be useful. But the torpor of age is weighing heavily on me. The writing table is become my aversion, and its drudgeries beyond my remaining powers. I have retired, then, of necessity, from all correspondence not indispensably called for by some special duty, and I hope that this necessity will excuse me with you from further interference in obtaining your passage to France, which requires solicitations and exertions beyond what I am able to encounter. I request this the more freely, because I am sure of finding, in your candor and consideration, an acquiescence in the reasonableness of my desire to indulge the feeble remains of life in that state of ease and tranquillity which my condition, physical and moral, require. Accept, then, with my adieux, my best wishes for a safe and

happy return to your native country, and the assurances of my respect.

TO MR. THOMAS PAINE M'MATRON

Monticello, April 3, 1813.

Sir,—Your favor of March 24th is received, and nothing could have been so pleasing to me as to have been able to comply wit the request therein made, feeling especial motives to become useful to any person connected with Mr. M'Matron. But I shall state to you the circumstances which control my will, and rest on your candor their just estimate. When I retired from the government four years ago, it was extremely my wish to withdraw myself from all concern with public affairs, and to enjoy with my fellow citizens the protection of government, under the auspices and direction of those to whom it was so worthily committed. Solicitations from my friends, however, to aid them in their applications for office, drew from me an unwary compliance, till at length these became so numerous as to occupy a great portion of my time in writing letters to the President and heads of departments, and although these were attended to by them with great indulgence, yet I was sensible they could not fail of being very embarrassing. They kept me, at the same time, standing forever in the attitude of a suppliant before them, daily asking favors as humiliating and afflicting to my own mind, as they were unreasonable from their multitude. I was long sensible of the necessity of putting an end to these unceasing importunities,

when a change in the heads of the two departments to which they were chiefly addressed, presented me an opportunity. I came to a resolution, therefore, on that change, never to make another application. I have adhered to it strictly, and find that on its rigid observance, my own happiness and the friendship of the government too much depend, for me to swerve from it in future. On consideration of these circumstances, I hope you will be sensible how much they import, both to the government and myself; and that you do me the justice to be assured of the reluctance with which I decline an opportunity of being useful to one so nearly connected with Mr. M'Matron, and that with the assurance of my regrets, you will accept that of my best wishes for your success, and of my great respect.

TO COLONEL DUANE

Monticello, April 4, 1813.

Dear Sir,—Your favor of February 14th has been duly received, and the MS. of the commentary on Montesquieu is also safe at hand. I now forward to you the work of Tracy, which you will find a valuable supplement and corrective to those we already possess on political economy. It is a little unlucky that its outset is of a metaphysical character, which may damp the ardor of perusal in some readers. He has been led to this by a desire to embody this work, as well as a future one he is preparing on morals, with his former treatise on Ideology. By-the-bye, it is merely to this work that Bonaparte alludes in his answer to his Council of State, published not long since, in which he scouts "the dark and metaphysical doctrine of Ideology, which, diving into first causes, founds on this basis a legislation of the people, &c." If, indeed, this answer be not a forgery, for everything is now forged, even to the fat of our beef and mutton: yet the speech is not unlike him, and affords scope for an excellent parody. I wish you may succeed in getting the commentary on Montesquieu reviewed by the Edinburgh Reviewers. I should expect from them an able and favorable analysis of it. I sent a copy of it to a friend in England, in the hope he would communicate it to them; not, however, expressing that hope, lest

the source of it should have been made known. But the book will make its way, and will become a standard work. A copy which I sent to France was under translation by one of the ablest men of that country.

It is true that I am tired of practical politics, and happier while reading the history of ancient than of modern times. The total banishment of all moral principle from the code which governs the intercourse of nations, the melancholy reflection that after the mean, wicked and cowardly cunning of the cabinets of the age of Machiavel had given place to the integrity and good faith which dignified the succeeding one of a Chatham and Turgot, that this is to be swept away again by the daring profligacy and avowed destitution of all moral principle of a Cartouche and a Blackbeard, sickens my soul unto death. I turn from the contemplation with loathing, and take refuge in the histories of other times, where, if they also furnished their Tarquins, their Catalines and Caligulas, their stories are handed to us under the brand of a Livy, a Sallust and a Tacitus, and we are comforted with the reflection that the condemnation of all succeeding generations has confirmed the censures of the historian, and consigned their memories to everlasting infamy, a solace we cannot have with the Georges and Napoleons but by anticipation.

In surveying the scenes of which we make a part, I confess that three frigates taken by our gallant little navy, do not balance in my mind three armies lost by the treachery, cowardice, or incapacity

of those to whom they were intrusted. I see that our men are good, and only want generals. We may yet hope, however, that the talents which always exist among men will show themselves with opportunity, and that it will be found that this age also can produce able and honest defenders of their country, at what further expense, however, of blood and treasure, is yet to be seen. Perhaps this Russian mediation may cut short the history of the present war, and leave to us the laurels of the sea, while our enemies are bedecked with those of the land. This would be the reverse of what has been expected, and perhaps of what was to be wished.

I have never seen the work on Political Economy, of which you speak. Say and Tracy contain the sum of that science as far as it has been soundly traced in my judgment. And it is a pity that Say's work should not, as well as Tracy's, be made known to our countrymen by a good translation. It would supplant Smith's book altogether, because shorter, clearer and sounder.

Accept my friendly salutations and assurances of continued esteem and respect.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Monticello, May 21, 1813.

Dear Sir,—The enclosed letter from Whit was unquestionably intended for you. The subject, the address, both of title and place, prove it, and the mistake of the name only shows the writer to be a very uninquisitive statesman. Dr. Waterhouse's letter, too, was intended for your eye, and although the immediate object fails by previous appointment, yet he seems to entertain further wishes. I enclose, too, the newspapers he refers to, as some of their matter may have escaped your notice, and the traitorous designs fostered in Massachusetts, and explained in them, call for attention.

We have never seen so unpromising a crop of wheat as that now growing. The winter killed an unusual proportion of it, and the fly is destroying the remainder. We may estimate the latter loss at one-third at present, and fast increasing from the effect of the extraordinary drought. With such a prospect before us, the blockade is acting severely on our past labors. It caught nearly the whole wheat of the middle and upper country in the hands of the farmers and millers, whose interior situation had prevented their getting it to an earlier market. From this neighborhood very little had been sold. When we cast our eyes on the map, and see the extent of country from New York to North Carolina inclusive,

whose produce is raised on the waters of the Chesapeake, (for Albemarle sound is, by the canal of Norfolk, become a water of the Chesapeake,) and consider its productiveness, in comparison with the rest of the Atlantic States, probably a full half, and that all this can be shut up by two or three ships of the line lying at the mouth of the bay, we see that an injury so vast to ourselves and so cheap to our enemy, must forever be resorted to by them, and constantly maintained. To defend all the shores of those waters in detail is impossible. But is there not a single point where they may be all defended by means to which the magnitude of the object gives a title? I mean at the mouth of the Chesapeake. Not by ships of the line, or frigates; for I know that with our present enemy we cannot contend in that way. But would not a sufficient number of gun-boats of *small* draught, stationed in Lynhaven river, render it unsafe for ships of war either to ascend the Chesapeake or to lie at its mouth? I am not unaware of the effect of the ridicule cast on this instrument of defence by those who wished for engines of offence. But resort is had to ridicule only when reason is against us. I know, too, the prejudices of the gentlemen of the navy, and that these are very natural. No one has been more gratified than myself by the brilliant achievements of our little navy. They have deeply wounded the pride of our enemy, and been balm to ours, humiliated on the land where our real strength was felt to lie. But divesting ourselves of the enthusiasm these brave actions have justly excited, it is impossible not to see that all these vessels must be taken and added to the already overwhelming force

of our enemy; that even while we keep them, they contribute nothing to our defence, and that so far as we are to be defended by anything on the water, it must be by such vessels as can assail under advantageous circumstances, and under adverse ones withdraw from the reach of the enemy. This, in shoally waters, is the humble, the ridiculed, but the formidable gun-boats. I acknowledge that in the case which produces these reflections, the station of Lynhaven river would not be safe against land attacks on the boats, and that a retreat for them is necessary in this event. With a view to this there was a survey made by Colonel Tatham, which was lodged either in the war or navy office, showing the depth and length of a canal which would give them a retreat from Lynhaven river into the eastern branch of Elizabeth river. I think the distance is not over six or eight miles, perhaps not so much, through a country entirely flat, and little above the level of the sea. A cut of ten yards wide and four yards deep, requiring the removal of forty cubic yards of earth for every yard in length of the canal, at twenty cents the cubic yard, would cost about $15,000 a mile. But even doubling this to cover all errors of estimate, although in a country offering the cheapest kind of labor, it would be nothing compared with the extent and productions of the country it is to protect. It would, for so great a country, bear no proportion to what has been expended, and justly expended by the Union, to defend the single spot of New York.

While such a channel of retreat secures effectually the safety

of the gun-boats, it insures also their aid for the defence of Norfolk, if attacked from the sea. And the Norfolk canal gives them a further passage into Albemarle sound, if necessary for their safety, or in aid of the flotilla of that sound, or to receive the aid of that flotilla either at Norfolk or in Lynhaven river. For such a flotilla there also will doubtless be thought necessary, that being the only outlet now, as during the last war, for the waters of the Chesapeake. Colonel Monroe, I think, is personally intimate with the face of all that country, and no one, I am certain, is more able or more disposed than the present Secretary of the Navy, to place himself above the navy prejudices, and do justice to the aptitude of these humble and economical vessels to the shallow waters of the South. On the bold Northern shores they would be of less account, and the larger vessels will of course be more employed there. Were they stationed with us, they would rather attract danger than ward it off. The only service they can render us would be to come *in a body* when the occasion offers, of overwhelming a weaker force of the enemy occupying our bay, to oblige them to keep their force in a body, leaving the mass of our coast open.

Although it is probable there may not be an idea here which has not been maturely weighed by yourself, and with a much broader view of the whole field, yet I have frankly hazarded them, because possibly some of the facts or ideas may have escaped in the multiplicity of the objects engaging your notice, and because in every event they will cost you but the trouble

of reading. The importance of keeping open a water which covers wholly or considerably five of the most productive States, containing three-fifths of the population of the Atlantic portion of our Union, and of preserving their resources for the support of the war, as far as the state of war and the means of the confederacy will admit; and especially if it can be done for less than is contributed by the Union for more than one single city, will justify our anxieties to have it effected. And should my views of the subject be even wrong, I am sure they will find their apology with you in the purity of the motives of personal and public regard which induce a suggestion of them. In all cases I am satisfied you are doing what is for the best, as far as the means put into your hands will enable you, and this thought quiets me under every occurrence, and under every occurrence I am sincerely, affectionately and respectfully yours.

TO MADAME LA BARONNE DE STAEL-HOLSTEIN

United States of America, May 24, 1813.

I received with great pleasure, my dear Madam and friend, your letter of November the 10th, from Stockholm, and am sincerely gratified by the occasion it gives me of expressing to you the sentiments of high respect and esteem which I entertain for you. It recalls to my remembrance a happy portion of my life, passed in your native city; then the seat of the most amiable and polished society of the world, and of which yourself and your venerable father were such distinguished members. But of what scenes has it since been the theatre, and with what havoc has it overspread the earth! Robespierre met the fate, and his memory the execration, he so justly merited. The rich were his victims, and perished by thousands. It is by millions that Bonaparte destroys the poor, and he is eulogized and deified by the sycophants even of science. These merit more than the mere oblivion to which they will be consigned; and the day will come when a just posterity will give to their hero the only pre-eminence he has earned, that of having been the greatest of the destroyers of the human race. What year of his military life has not consigned a million of human beings to death, to poverty and wretchedness! What field in Europe may not raise

a monument of the murders, the burnings, the desolations, the famines and miseries it has witnessed from him! And all this to acquire a reputation, which Cartouche attained with less injury to mankind, of being fearless of God or man.

To complete and universalize the desolation of the globe, it has been the will of Providence to raise up, at the same time, a tyrant as unprincipled and as overwhelming, for the ocean. Not in the poor maniac George, but in his government and nation. Bonaparte will die, and his tyrannies with him. But a nation never dies. The English government, and its piratical principles and practices, have no fixed term of duration. Europe feels, and is writhing under the scorpion whips of Bonaparte. We are assailed by those of England. The one continent thus placed under the gripe of England, and the other of Bonaparte, each has to grapple with the enemy immediately pressing on itself. We must extinguish the fire kindled in our own house, and leave to our friends beyond the water that which is consuming theirs. It was not till England had taken one thousand of our ships, and impressed into her service more than six thousand of our citizens; till she had declared, by the proclamation of her Prince Regent, that she would not repeal her aggressive orders *as to us*, until Bonaparte should have repealed his *as to all nations*; till her minister, in formal conference with ours, declared, that no proposition for protecting our seamen from being impressed, under color of taking their own, was practicable or admissible; that, the door to justice and to all amicable arrangement being

closed, and negotiation become both desperate and dishonorable, we concluded that the war she had for years been waging against us, might as well become a war on both sides. She takes fewer vessels from us since the declaration of war than before, because they venture more cautiously; and we now make full reprisals where before we made none. England is, in principle, the enemy of all maritime nations, as Bonaparte is of the continental; and I place in the same line of insult to the human understanding, the pretension of conquering the ocean, to establish continental rights, as that of conquering the continent, to restore maritime rights. No, my dear Madam; the object of England is the *permanent dominion of the ocean*, and the *monopoly of the trade of the world*. To secure this, she must keep a larger fleet than her own resources will maintain. The resources of other nations, then, must be impressed to supply the deficiency of her own. This is sufficiently developed and evidenced by her successive strides towards the usurpation of the sea. Mark them, from her first war after William Pitt, the little, came into her administration. She first forbade to neutrals all trade with her enemies in time of war, which they had not in time of peace. This deprived them of their trade from port to port of the same nation. Then she forbade them to trade from the port of one nation to that of any other at war with her, although a right fully exercised in time of peace. Next, instead of taking vessels only *entering* a blockaded port, she took them over the whole ocean, if destined to that port, although ignorant of the blockade, and without intention

to violate it. Then she took them returning from that port, as if infected by previous infraction of blockade. Then came her paper blockades, by which she might shut up the whole world without sending a ship to sea, except to take all those sailing on it, as they must, of course, be bound to some port. And these were followed by her orders of council, forbidding every nation to go to the port of any other, without coming first to some port of Great Britain, there paying a tribute to her, regulated by the cargo, and taking from her a license to proceed to the port of destination; which operation the vessel was to repeat with the return cargo on its way home. According to these orders, we could not send a vessel from St. Mary's to St. Augustine, distant six hours sail on our own coast, without crossing the Atlantic four times, twice with the outward cargo, and twice with the inward. She found this too daring and outrageous for a single step, retracted as to certain articles of commerce, but left it in force as to others which constitute important branches of our exports. And finally, that her views may no longer rest on inference, in a recent debate her minister declared in open parliament, that the object of the present war is a *monopoly of commerce*.

In some of these atrocities, France kept pace with her fully in speculative wrong, which her impotence only shortened in practical execution. This was called retaliation by both; each charging the other with the initiation of the outrage. As if two combatants might retaliate on an innocent bystander, the blows they received from each other. To make war on both would have

been ridiculous. In order, therefore, to single out an enemy, we offered to both, that if either would revoke its hostile decrees, and the other should refuse, we would interdict all intercourse whatever with that other; which would be war of course, as being an avowed departure from neutrality. France accepted the offer, and revoked her decrees as to us. England not only refused, but declared by a solemn proclamation of her Prince Regent, that she would not revoke her orders *even as to us*, until those of France should be annulled *as to the whole world*. We thereon declared war, and with abundant additional cause.

In the meantime, an examination before parliament of the ruinous effects of these orders on her own manufacturers, exposing them to the nation and to the world, their Prince issued a palinodial proclamation, *suspending* the orders on certain conditions, but claiming to renew them at pleasure, as a matter of right. Even this might have prevented the war, if done and known here before its declaration. But the sword being once drawn, the expense of arming incurred, and hostilities in full course, it would have been unwise to discontinue them, until effectual provision should be agreed to by England, for protecting our citizens on the high seas from impressment by her naval commanders, through error, voluntary or involuntary; the fact being notorious, that these officers, entering our ships at sea under pretext of searching for their seamen, (which they have no right to do by the law or usage of nations, which they neither do, nor ever did, as to any other nation but ours, and which no nation

ever before pretended to do in any case,) entering our ships, I say, under pretext of searching for and taking out their seamen, they took ours, native as well as naturalized, knowing them to be ours, merely because they wanted them; insomuch, that no American could safely cross the ocean, or venture to pass by sea from one to another of our own ports. It is not long since they impressed at sea two nephews of General Washington, returning from Europe, and put them, as common seamen, under the ordinary discipline of their ships of war. There are certainly other wrongs to be settled between England and us; but of a minor character, and such as a proper spirit of conciliation on both sides would not permit to continue them at war. The sword, however, can never again be sheathed, until the personal safety of an American on the ocean, among the most important and most vital of the rights we possess, is completely provided for.

As soon as we heard of her partial repeal of her orders of council, we offered instantly to suspend hostilities by an armistice, if she would suspend her impressments, and meet us in arrangements for securing our citizens against them. She refused to do it, because impracticable by any arrangement, as she pretends; but, in truth, because a body of sixty to eighty thousand of the finest seamen in the world, which we possess, is too great a resource for manning her exaggerated navy, to be relinquished, as long as she can keep it open. Peace is in her hand, whenever she will renounce the practice of aggression on the persons of our citizens. If she thinks it worth eternal war, eternal

war we must have. She alleges that the sameness of language, of manners, of appearance, renders it impossible to distinguish us from her subjects. But because we speak English, and look like them, are we to be punished? Are free and independent men to be submitted to their bondage?

England has misrepresented to all Europe this ground of the war. She has called it a new pretension, set up since the repeal of her orders of council. She knows there has never been a moment of suspension of our reclamation against it, from General Washington's time inclusive, to the present day; and that it is distinctly stated in our declaration of war, as one of its principal causes. She has pretended we have entered into the war to establish the principle of "free bottoms, free goods," or to protect her seamen against her own rights over them. We contend for neither of these. She pretends we are partial to France; that we have observed a fraudulent and unfaithful neutrality between her and her enemy. She knows this to be false, and that if there has been any inequality in our proceedings towards the belligerents, it has been in her favor. Her ministers are in possession of full proofs of this. Our accepting at once, and sincerely, the mediation of the virtuous Alexander, their greatest friend, and the most aggravated enemy of Bonaparte, sufficiently proves whether we have partialities on the side of her enemy. I sincerely pray that this mediation may produce a just peace. It will prove that the immortal character, which has first stopped by war the career of the destroyer of mankind, is the friend of peace, of

justice, of human happiness, and the patron of unoffending and injured nations. He is too honest and impartial to countenance propositions of peace derogatory to the freedom of the seas.

Shall I apologize to you, my dear Madam, for this long political letter? But yours justifies the subject, and my feelings must plead for the unreserved expression of them; and they have been the less reserved, as being from a private citizen, retired from all connection with the government of his country, and whose ideas, expressed without communication with any one, are neither known, nor imputable to them.

The dangers of the sea are now so great, and the possibilities of interception by sea and land such, that I shall subscribe no name to this letter. You will know from whom it comes, by its reference to the date of time and place of yours, as well as by its subject in answer to that. This omission must not lessen in your view the assurances of my great esteem, of my sincere sympathies for the share which you bear in the afflictions of your country, and the deprivation to which a lawless will has subjected you. In return, you enjoy the dignified satisfaction of having met them, rather than be yoked with the abject, to his car; and that, in withdrawing from oppression, you have followed the virtuous example of a father whose name will ever be dear to your country and to mankind. With my prayers that you may be restored to it, that you may see it re-established in that temperate portion of liberty which does not infer either anarchy or licentiousness, in that high degree of prosperity which would be the consequence

of such a government, in that, in short, which the constitution of 1789 would have insured it, if wisdom could have stayed at that point the fervid but imprudent zeal of men, who did not know the character of their own countrymen, and that you may long live in health and happiness under it, and leave to the world a well-educated and virtuous representative and descendant of your honored father, is the ardent prayer of the sincere and respectful friend who writes this letter.

TO JOHN ADAMS

Monticello, May 27, 1813.

Another of our friends of seventy-six is gone, my dear Sir, another of the co-signers of the Independence of our country. And a better man than Rush could not have left us, more benevolent, more learned, of finer genius, or more honest. We too must go; and that ere long. I believe we are under half a dozen at present; I mean the signers of the Declaration. Yourself, Gerry, Carroll, and myself, are all I know to be living. I am the only one south of the Potomac. Is Robert Treat Payne, or Floyd living? It is long since I heard of them, and yet I do not recollect to have heard of their deaths.

Moreton's deduction of the origin of our Indians from the fugitive Trojans, stated in your letter of January the 26th, and his manner of accounting for the sprinkling of their Latin with Greek, is really amusing. Adair makes them talk Hebrew. Reinold Foster derives them from the soldiers sent by Kouli Khan to conquer Japan. Brerewood, from the Tartars, as well as our bears, wolves, foxes, &c., which, he says, "must of necessity fetch their beginning from Noah's ark, which rested, after the deluge in Asia, seeing they could not proceed by the course of nature, as the imperfect sort of living creatures do, from putrefaction." Bernard Romans is of opinion that God created an

original man and woman in this part of the globe. Doctor Barton thinks they are not specifically different from the Persians; but, taking afterwards a broader range, he thinks, "that in all the vast countries of America, there is but one language, nay, that it may be proven, or rendered highly probable, that all the languages of the earth bear some affinity together." This reduces it to a question of definition, in which every one is free to use his own: to wit, what constitutes identity, or difference in two things, in the common acceptation of *sameness*? All languages may be called the same, as being all made up of the same primitive sounds, expressed by the letters of the different alphabets. But, in this sense, all things on earth are the same as consisting of matter. This gives up the useful distribution into genera and species, which we form, arbitrarily indeed, for the relief of our imperfect memories. To aid the question, from whence our Indian tribes descended, some have gone into their religion, their morals, their manners, customs, habits, and physical forms. By such helps it may be learnedly proved, that our trees and plants of every kind are descended from those of Europe; because, like them, they have no locomotion, they draw nourishment from the earth, they clothe themselves with leaves in spring, of which they divest themselves in autumn for the sleep of winter, &c. Our animals too must be descended from those of Europe, because our wolves eat lambs, our deer are gregarious, our ants hoard, &c. But, when for convenience we distribute languages, according to common understanding, into classes originally different, as

we choose to consider them, as the Hebrew, the Greek, the Celtic, the Gothic; and these again into genera, or families, as the Icelandic, German, Swedish, Danish, English; and these last into species, or dialects, as English, Scotch, Irish, we then ascribe other meanings to the terms "same" and "different." In some one of these senses, Barton, and Adair, and Foster, and Brerewood, and Moreton, may be right, every one according to his own definition of what constitutes "identity." Romans, indeed, takes a higher stand, and supposes a separate creation. On the same unscriptural ground, he had but to mount one step higher, to suppose no creation at all, but that all things have existed without beginning in time, as they now exist, and may forever exist, producing and reproducing in a circle, without end. This would very summarily dispose of Mr. Moreton's learning, and show that the question of Indian origin, like many others, pushed to a certain height, must receive the same answer, "Ignoro."

You ask if the usage of hunting in circles has ever been known among any of our tribes of Indians? It has been practised by them all; and is to this day, by those still remote from the settlements of the whites. But their numbers not enabling them, like Genghis Khan's seven hundred thousand, to form themselves into circles of one hundred miles diameter, they make their circle by firing the leaves fallen on the ground, which gradually forcing the animals to a centre, they there slaughter them with arrows, darts, and other missiles. This is called fire hunting, and has been practised in this State within my time, by the white inhabitants.

This is the most probable cause of the origin and extension of the vast prairies in the western country, where the grass having been of extraordinary luxuriance, has made a conflagration sufficient to kill even the old as well as the young timber.

I sincerely congratulate you on the successes of our little navy; which must be more gratifying to you than to most men, as having been the early and constant advocate of wooden walls. If I have differed with you on this ground, it was not on the principle, but the time; supposing that we cannot build or maintain a navy, which will not immediately fall into the same gulf which has swallowed not only the minor navies, but even those of the great second-rate powers of the sea. Whenever these can be resuscitated, and brought so near to a balance with England that we can turn the scale, then is my epoch for aiming at a navy. In the meantime, one competent to keep the Barbary States in order, is necessary; these being the only smaller powers disposed to quarrel with us. But I respect too much the weighty opinions of others, to be unyielding on this point, and acquiesce with the prayer "*quod felix faustumque sit*;" adding ever a sincere one for your health and happiness.

TO COLONEL MONROE

Monticello, May 30, 1813.

Dear Sir,—I thank you for the communication of the President's Message, which has not yet reached us through the public papers. It is an interesting document, always looked for with anxiety, and the late one is equally able as interesting. I hope Congress will act in conformity with it, in all its parts. The unwarrantable ideas often expressed in the newspapers, and by persons who ought to know better, that I intermeddle in the Executive councils, and the indecent expressions, sometimes, of a hope that Mr. Madison will pursue the principles of my administration, expressions so disrespectful to his known abilities and dispositions, have rendered it improper in me to hazard suggestions to him, on occasions even where ideas might occur to me, that might accidentally escape him. This reserve has been strengthened, too, by a consciousness that my views must be very imperfect, from the want of a correct knowledge of the whole ground.

I lately, however, hazarded to him a suggestion on the defence of the Chesapeake, because, although decided on provisionally with the Secretaries of War and the Navy formerly, yet as it was proposed only in the case of war, which did not actually arise, and not relating to his department, might not then have

been communicated to him. Of this fact my memory did not ascertain me. I will now hazard another suggestion to yourself, which indeed grows out of that one: it is, the policy of keeping our frigates together in a body, in some place where they can be defended against a superior naval force, and from whence, nevertheless, they can easily sally forth on the shortest warning. This would oblige the enemy to take stations, or to cruise only in masses equal at least, each of them, to our whole force; and of course they could be acting only in two or three spots at a time, and the whole of our coast, except the two or three portions where they might be present, would be open to exportation and importation. I think all that part of the United States over which the waters of the Chesapeake spread themselves, was blockaded in the early season by a single ship. This would keep our frigates in entire safety, as they would go out only occasionally to oppress a blockading force known to be weaker than themselves, and thus make them a real protection to our whole commerce. And it seems to me that this would be a more essential service, than that of going out by ones, or twos, in search of adventures, which contribute little to the protection of our commerce, and not at all to the defence of our coast, or the shores of our inland waters. A defence of these by militia is most harassing to them. The applications from Maryland, which I have seen in the papers, and those from Virginia, which I suspect, merely because I see such masses of the militia called off from their farms, must be embarrassing to the Executive, not only from a

knowledge of the incompetency of such a mode of defence, but from the exhausture of funds which ought to be husbanded for the effectual operations of a long war. I fear, too, it will render the militia discontented, perhaps clamorous for an end of the war on any terms. I am happy to see that it is entirely popular as yet, and that no symptom of flinching from it appears among the people, as far as I can judge from the public papers, or from my own observation, limited to the few counties adjacent to the two branches of James river. I have such confidence that what I suggest has been already maturely discussed in the Cabinet, and that for wise and sufficient reasons the present mode of employing the frigates is the best, that I hesitate about sending this even after having written. Yet in that case it will only have given you the trouble of reading it. You will bury it in your own breast, as *non-avenue*, and see in it only an unnecessary zeal on my part, and a proof of the unlimited confidence of yours ever and affectionately.

TO JOHN ADAMS

Monticello, June 15, 1813.

Dear Sir,—I wrote you a letter on the 27th of May, which probably would reach you about the 3d instant, and on the 9th I received yours of the 29th of May. Of Lindsay's Memoirs I had never before heard, and scarcely indeed of himself. It could not, therefore, but be unexpected, that two letters of mine should have anything to do with his life. The name of his editor was new to me, and certainly presents itself for the first time under unfavorable circumstances. Religion, I suppose, is the scope of his book; and that a writer on that subject should usher himself to the world in the very act of the grossest abuse of confidence, by publishing private letters which passed between two friends, with no views to their ever being made public, is an instance of inconsistency as well as of infidelity, of which I would rather be the victim than the author.

By your kind quotation of the dates of my two letters, I have been enabled to turn to them. They had completely vanished from my memory. The last is on the subject of religion, and by its publication will gratify the priesthood with new occasion of repeating their comminations against me. They wish it to be believed that he can have no religion who advocates its freedom. This was not the doctrine of Priestley; and I honored

him for the example of liberality he set to his order. The first letter is political. It recalls to our recollection the gloomy transactions of the times, the doctrines they witnessed, and the sensibilities they excited. It was a confidential communication of reflections on these from one friend to another, deposited in his bosom, and never meant to trouble the public mind. Whether the character of the times is justly portrayed or not, posterity will decide. But on one feature of them they can never decide, the sensations excited in free yet firm minds by the terrorism of the day. None can conceive who did not witness them, and they were felt by one party only. This letter exhibits their side of the medal. The federalists, no doubt, have presented the other in their private correspondences as well as open action. If these correspondences should ever be laid open to the public eye, they will probably be found not models of comity towards their adversaries. The readers of my letter should be cautioned not to confine its view to this country alone. England and its alarmists were equally under consideration. Still less must they consider it as looking personally towards you. You happen, indeed, to be quoted, because you happened to express more pithily than had been done by themselves, one of the mottos of the party. This was in your answer to the address of the young men of Philadelphia. [See Selection of Patriotic Addresses, page 198.] One of the questions, you know, on which our parties took different sides, was on the improvability of the human mind in science, in ethics, in government, &c.

Those who advocated reformation of institutions, *pari passu* with the progress of science, maintained that no definite limits could be assigned to that progress. The enemies of reform, on the other hand, denied improvement, and advocated steady adherence to the principles, practices and institutions of our fathers, which they represented as the consummation of wisdom, and acme of excellence, beyond which the human mind could never advance. Although in the passage of your answer alluded to, you expressly disclaim the wish to influence the freedom of inquiry, you predict that that will produce nothing more worthy of transmission to posterity than the principles, institutions and systems of education received from their ancestors. I do not consider this as your deliberate opinion. You possess, yourself, too much science, not to see how much is still ahead of you, unexplained and unexplored. Your own consciousness must place you as far before our ancestors as in the rear of our posterity. I consider it as an expression lent to the prejudices of your friends; and although I happened to cite it from you, the whole letter shows I had them only in view. In truth, my dear Sir, we were far from considering you as the author of all the measures we blamed. They were placed under the protection of your name, but we were satisfied they wanted much of your approbation. We ascribed them to their real authors, the Pickerings, the Wolcotts, the Tracys, the Sedgwicks, et *id genus omne*, with whom we supposed you in a state of duress. I well remember a conversation with you in the morning of the day on which

you nominated to the Senate a substitute for Pickering, in which you expressed a just impatience under "the legacy of secretaries which General Washington had left you," and whom you seemed, therefore, to consider as under public protection. Many other incidents showed how differently you would have acted with less impassioned advisers; and subsequent events have proved that your minds were not together. You would do me great injustice, therefore, by taking to yourself what was intended for men who were then your secret, as they are now your open enemies. Should you write on the subject, as you propose, I am sure we shall see you place yourself farther from them than from us.

As to myself, I shall take no part in any discussions. I leave others to judge of what I have done, and to give me exactly that place which they shall think I have occupied. Marshall has written libels on one side; others, I suppose, will be written on the other side; and the world will sift both and separate the truth as well as they can. I should see with reluctance the passions of that day rekindled in this, while so many of the actors are living, and all are too near the scene not to participate in sympathies with them. About facts you and I cannot differ; because truth is our mutual guide. And if any opinions you may express should be different from mine, I shall receive them with the liberality and indulgence which I ask for my own, and still cherish with warmth the sentiments of affectionate respect, of which I can with so much truth tender you the assurance.

TO MR. SHORT

Monticello, June 18, 1813.

Dear Sir,—Yours of the 2d is received, and a copy of Higgenbotham's mortgage is now enclosed. The journey to Bedford which I proposed in my last, my engagements here have obliged me to postpone till after harvest, which is now approaching; it is the most unpromising one I have seen. We have been some days in expectation of seeing M. Correa. If he is on the road, he has had some days of our very hottest weather. My thermometer has been for two days at 92 and 92½°, the last being the maximum ever seen here. Although we usually have the hottest day of the year in June, yet it is soon interrupted by cooler weather. In July the heat, though not so great, is more continuous and steady.

On the duration of the war I think there is uncertainty. Ever since the rupture of the treaty of Amiens, the object of Great Britain has visibly been the permanent conquest of the ocean, and levying a tribute on every vessel she permits to sail on it, as the Barbary powers do on the Mediterranean, which they call their sea. She must be conscious she cannot from her own resources maintain the exaggerated fleet she now has, and which is necessary to maintain her conquest; she must, therefore, levy the deficiency of duties of transit on other nations. If she should

get another ministry with sense enough to abandon this senseless scheme, the war with us ought to be short, because there is no material cause now existing but impressment; and there our only difference is how to establish a mode of discrimination between our citizens which she does not claim, and hers which it is neither our wish or interest ever to employ. The seamen which our navigation raises had better be of our own. If this be all she aims at, it may be settled at Saint Petersburg. My principle has ever been that war should not suspend either exports or imports. If the piracies of France and England, however, are to be adopted as the law of nations, or should become their practice, it will oblige us to manufacture at home all the material comforts.

This may furnish a reason to check imports until necessary manufactures are established among us. This offers the advantage, too, of placing the consumer of our produce near the producer, but I should disapprove of the prohibition of exports even to the enemy themselves, except indeed refreshments and water to their cruisers on our coast, in order to oblige them to intermit their cruises to go elsewhere for these supplies. The idea of starving them as to bread, is a very idle one. It is dictated by passion, not by reason. If the war is lengthened we shall take Canada, which will relieve us from Indians, and Halifax, which will put an end to their occupation of the American seas, because every vessel must then go to England to repair every accident. To retain these would become objects of first importance to us, and of great importance to Europe, as the means of curtailing the

British marine. But at present, being merely *in posse*, they should not be an impediment to peace. We have a great and a just claim of indemnifications against them for the thousand ships they have taken piratically, and six thousand seamen impressed. Whether we can, on this score, successfully insist on curtailing their American possessions, by the meridian of Lake Huron, so as to cut them off from the Indians bordering on us, would be matter for conversation and experiment at the treaty of pacification. I sometimes allow my mind to wander thus into the political field, but rarely, and with reluctance. It is my desire as well as my duty to leave to the vigor of younger minds to settle concerns which are no longer mine, but must long be theirs. Affectionately adieu.

TO –

Your kind answer of the 16th entirely satisfies my doubts as to the employment of the navy, if kept within striking distance of our coast; and shows how erroneous views are apt to be with those who have not all in view. Yet as I know from experience that profitable suggestions sometimes come from lookers on, they may be usefully tolerated, provided they do not pretend to the right of an answer. They would cost very dear indeed were they to occupy the time of a high officer in writing when he should be acting. I intended no such trouble to you, my dear Sir, and were you to suppose I expected it, I must cease to offer a thought on our public affairs. Although my entire confidence in their direction prevents my reflecting on them but accidentally, yet sometimes facts, and sometimes ideas occur, which I hazard as worth the trouble of reading but not of answering. Of this kind was my suggestion of the facts which I recollected as to the defence of the Chesapeake, and of what had been contemplated at the time between the Secretaries of War and the Navy and myself. If our views were sound, the object might be effected in one year, even of war, and at an expense which is nothing compared to the population and productions it would cover. We are here laboring under the most extreme drought ever remembered at this season. We have had but one rain to lay the dust in two months. That was a good one, but was three weeks

ago. Corn is but a few inches high and dying. Oats will not yield their seed. Of wheat, the hard winter and fly leave us about two-thirds of an ordinary crop. So that in the lotteries of human life you see that even farming is but gambling. We have had three days of excessive heat. The thermometer on the 16th was at 92°, on the 17th 92½°, and yesterday at 93°. It had never before exceeded 92½ at this place; at least within the periods of my observations. Ever and affectionately yours.

TO COLONEL MONROE

Monticello, June 18, 1813.

Dear Sir,—Your favors of the 7th and 16th are received, and I now return you the memoir enclosed in the former. I am much gratified by its communication, because, as the plan appeared in the newspapers soon after the new Secretary of War came into office, we had given him the credit of it. Every line of it is replete with wisdom; and we might lament that our tardy enlistments prevented its execution, were we not to reflect that these proceeded from the happiness of our people at home. It is more a subject of joy that we have so few of the desperate characters which compose modern regular armies. But it proves more forcibly the necessity of obliging every citizen to be a soldier; this was the case with the Greeks and Romans, and must be that of every free State. Where there is no oppression there will be no pauper hirelings. We must train and classify the whole of our male citizens, and make military instruction a regular part of collegiate education. We can never be safe till this is done.

I have been persuaded, *ab initio*, that what we are to do in Canada must be done quickly; because our enemy, with a little time, can empty pickpockets upon us faster than we can enlist honest men to oppose them. If we fail in this acquisition, Hull is the cause of it. Pike, in his situation, would have swept their posts

to Montreal, because his army would have grown as it went along. I fear the reinforcements arrived at Quebec will be at Montreal before General Dearborne, and if so, the game is up. If the marching of the militia into an enemy's country be once ceded as unconstitutional (which I hope it never will be), then will their force, as now strengthened, bid us permanent defiance. Could we acquire that country, we might perhaps insist successfully at St. Petersburg on retaining all westward of the meridian of Lake Huron, or of Ontario, or of Montreal, according to the pulse of the place, as an indemnification for the past and security for the future. To cut them off from the Indians even west of the Huron would be a great future security.

Your kind answer of the 16th, entirely satisfies my doubts as to the employment of a navy, if kept within striking distance of our coast, and shows how erroneous views are apt to be with those who have not all in view. Yet, as I know by experience that profitable suggestions sometimes come from lookers on, they may be usefully tolerated, provided they do not pretend to the right of an answer. They would cost very dear, indeed, were they to occupy the time of a high officer in writing when he should be acting. * * * * * * *

TO MR. MATTHEW CARR

Monticello, June 19, 1813.

Sir,—I thank you for the copy of Mr. Clarke's sketches of the naval history of the United States, which you have been so kind as to send me. It is a convenient repository of cases of that class, and has brought to my recollection a number of individual cases of the Revolutionary war which had escaped me. I received, also one of Mr. Clarke's circulars, asking supplementary communications for a second edition. But these things are so much out of the reach of my inland situation, that I am the least able of all men to contribute anything to his desire. I will indulge myself, therefore, in two or three observations, of which you will make what use you may think they merit. 1. Bushnel's Turtle is mentioned slightly. Would the description of the machine be too much for the sale of the work? It may be found very minutely given in the American Philosophical transactions. It was excellently contrived, and might perhaps, by improvement, be brought into real use. I do not know the difference between this and Mr. Fulton's submarine boat. But an effectual machine of that kind is not beyond the laws of nature; and whatever is within these, is not to be despaired of. It would be to the United States the consummation of their safety. 2. The account of the loss of the Philadelphia, does not give a fair

impression of the transaction. The proofs may be seen among the records of the Navy office. After this loss, Capt. Bainbridge had a character to redeem. He has done it most honorably, and no one is more gratified by it than myself. But still the transaction ought to be correctly stated. 3. But why omit all mention of the scandalous campaigns of Commodore Morris? A two years' command of an effective squadron, with discretionary instructions, wasted in sailing from port to port of the Mediterranean, and a single half day before the port of the enemy against which he was sent. All this can be seen in the proceedings of the court on which he was dismissed; and it is due to the honorable truths with which the book abounds, to publish those which are not so. A fair and honest narrative of the bad, is a voucher for the truth of the good. In this way the old Congress set an example to the world, for which the world amply repaid them, by giving unlimited credit to whatever was stamped with the name of Charles Thompson. It is known that this was never put to an untruth but once, and that where Congress was misled by the credulity of their General (Sullivan). The first misfortune of the Revolutionary war, induced a motion to suppress or garble the account of it. It was rejected with indignation. The whole truth was given in all its details, and there never was another attempt in that body to disguise it. These observations are meant for the good of the work, and for the honor of those whom it means to honor. Accept the assurance of my esteem and respect.

TO PRESIDENT MADISON

Monticello, June 21, 1813.

Dear Sir,—Your favor of the 6th has been received, and I will beg leave to add a few supplementary observations on the subject of my former letter. I am not a judge of the best forms which may be given to the gunboat; and indeed I suppose they should be of various forms, suited to the various circumstances to which they would be applied. Among these, no doubt, Commodore Barney's would find their place. While the largest and more expensive are fitted for moving from one seaport to another, coast-wise, to aid in a particular emergency, those of smaller draught and expense suit shallower waters; and of these shallow and cheap forms must be those for Lynhaven river. Commodore Preble, in his lifetime, undertook to build such in the best manner for two or three thousand dollars. Colonel Monroe, to whose knowledge of the face of the country I had referred, approves, in a letter to me, of such a plan of defence as was suggested, adding to it a fort on the middle grounds; but thinks the work too great to be executed during a war. Such a fort, certainly, could not be built during a war, in the face of an enemy. Its practicability at any time has been doubted, and although a good auxiliary, is not a necessary member of this scheme of defence. But the canal of retreat is really a small work, of a few months' execution; the laborers

would be protected by the military guard on the spot, and many of these would assist in the execution, for fatigue, rations, and pay. The exact magnitude of the work I would not affirm, nor do I think we should trust for it to Tatham's survey: still less would I call in Latrobe, who would immediately contemplate a canal of Languedoc. I would sooner trust such a man as Thomas Monroe to take the level, measure the distances, and estimate the expense. And if the plan were all matured the ensuing winter, and laborers engaged at the proper season, it might be executed in time to mitigate the blockade of the next summer. On recurring to an actual survey of that part of the country, made in the beginning of the Revolutionary war, under the orders of the Governor and Council, by Mr. Andrews I think, a copy of which I took with great care, instead of the half a dozen miles I had conjectured in my former letter, the canal would seem to be of not half that length. I send you a copy of that part of the map, which may be useful to you on other occasions, and is more to be depended on for minutia, probably, than any other existing. I have marked on that the conjectured route of the canal, to wit, from the bridge on Lynhaven river to King's landing, on the eastern branch. The exact draught of water into Lynhaven river you have in the Navy office. I think it is over four feet.

When we consider the population and productions of the Chesapeake country, extending from the Génissee to the Saura towns and Albemarle Sound, its safety and commerce seem entitled even to greater efforts, if greater could secure them.

That a defence at the entrance of the bay can be made mainly effective, that it will cost less in money, harass the militia less, place the inhabitants on its interior waters freer from alarm and depredation, and render provisions and water more difficult to the enemy, is so possible as to render thorough inquiry certainly expedient. Some of the larger gun-boats, or vessels better uniting swiftness with force, would also be necessary to scour the interior, and cut off any pickaroons which might venture up the bay or rivers. The loss on James' river alone, this year, is estimated at two hundred thousand barrels of flour, now on hand, for which the half price is not to be expected. This then is a million of dollars levied on a single water of the Chesapeake, and to be levied every year during the war. If a concentration of its defence at the entrance of the Chesapeake should be found inadequate, then we must of necessity submit to the expenses of detailed defence, to the harassment of the militia, the burnings of towns and houses, depredations of farms, and the hard trial of the spirit of the Middle States, the most zealous supporters of the war, and, therefore, the peculiar objects of the vindictive efforts of the enemy. Those north of the Hudson need nothing, because treated by the enemy as neutrals. All their war is concentrated on the Delaware and Chesapeake; and these, therefore, stand in principal need of the shield of the Union. The Delaware can be defended more easily. But I should not think one hundred gun-boats (costing less than one frigate) an over-proportioned allotment to the Chesapeake country, against the

over-proportioned hostilities pointed at it.

I am too sensible of the partial and defective state of my information, to be over-confident, or pertinacious, in the opinion I have formed. A thorough examination of the ground will settle it. We may suggest, perhaps it is a duty to do it. But you alone are qualified for decision, by the whole view which you can command; and so confident am I in the intentions, as well as wisdom, of the government, that I shall always be satisfied that what is not done, either cannot, or ought not to be done. While I trust that no difficulties will dishearten us, I am anxious to lessen the trial as much as possible. Heaven preserve you under yours, and help you through all its perplexities and perversities.

TO JOHN W. EPPES

Monticello, June 24, 1813.

Dear Sir,—This letter will be on politics only. For although I do not often permit myself to think on that subject, it sometimes obtrudes itself, and suggests ideas which I am tempted to pursue. Some of these relating to the business of finance, I will hazard to you, as being at the head of that committee, but intended for yourself individually, or such as you trust, but certainly not for a mixed committee.

It is a wise rule, and should be fundamental in a government disposed to cherish its credit, and at the same time to restrain the use of it within the limits of its faculties, "never to borrow a dollar without laying a tax in the same instant for paying the interest annually, and the principle within a given term; and to consider that tax as pledged to the creditors on the public faith." On such a pledge as this, sacredly observed, a government may always command, on a *reasonable interest*, all the lendable money of their citizens, while the necessity of an equivalent tax is a salutary warning to them and their constituents against oppressions, bankruptcy, and its inevitable consequence, revolution. But the term of redemption must be moderate, and at any rate within the limits of their rightful powers. But what limits, it will be asked, does this prescribe to their powers? What

is to hinder them from creating a perpetual debt? The laws of nature, I answer. The earth belongs to the living, not to the dead. The will and the power of man expire with his life, by nature's law. Some societies give it an artificial continuance, for the encouragement of industry; some refuse it, as our aboriginal neighbors, whom we call barbarians. The generations of men may be considered as bodies or corporations. Each generation has the usufruct of the earth during the period of its continuance. When it ceases to exist, the usufruct passes on to the succeeding generation, free and unincumbered, and so on, successively, from one generation to another forever. We may consider each generation as a distinct nation, with a right, by the will of its majority, to bind themselves, but none to bind the succeeding generation, more than the inhabitants of another country. Or the case may be likened to the ordinary one of a tenant for life, who may hypothecate the land for his debts, during the continuance of his usufruct; but at his death, the reversioner (who is also for life only) receives it exonerated from all burthen. The period of a generation, or the term of its life, is determined by the laws of mortality, which, varying a little only in different climates, offer a general average, to be found by observation. I turn, for instance, to Buffon's tables, of twenty-three thousand nine hundred and ninety-four deaths, and the ages at which they happened, and I find that of the numbers of all ages living at one moment, half will be dead in twenty-four years and eight months. But (leaving out minors, who have not the power of self-

government) of the adults (of twenty-one years of age) living at one moment, a majority of whom act for the society, one half will be dead in eighteen years and eight months. At nineteen years then from the date of a contract, the majority of the contractors are dead, and their contract with them. Let this general theory be applied to a particular case. Suppose the annual births of the State of New York to be twenty-three thousand nine hundred and ninety-four, the whole number of its inhabitants, according to Buffon, will be six hundred and seventeen thousand seven hundred and three, of all ages. Of these there would constantly be two hundred and sixty-nine thousand two hundred and eighty-six minors, and three hundred and forty-eight thousand four hundred and seventeen adults, of which last, one hundred and seventy-four thousand two hundred and nine will be a majority. Suppose that majority, on the first day of the year 1794, had borrowed a sum of money equal to the fee-simple value of the State, and to have consumed it in eating, drinking and making merry in their day; or, if you please, in quarrelling and fighting with their unoffending neighbors. Within eighteen years and eight months, one half of the adult citizens were dead. Till then, being the majority, they might rightfully levy the interest of their debt annually on themselves and their fellow-revellers, or fellow-champions. But at that period, say at this moment, a new majority have come into place, in their own right, and not under the rights, the conditions, or laws of their predecessors. Are they bound to acknowledge the debt, to consider the preceding

generation as having had a right to eat up the whole soil of their country, in the course of a life, to alienate it from them, (for it would be an alienation to the creditors,) and would they think themselves either legally or morally bound to give up their country and emigrate to another for subsistence? Every one will say no; that the soil is the gift of God to the living, as much as it had been to the deceased generation; and that the laws of nature impose no obligation on them to pay this debt. And although, like some other natural rights, this has not yet entered into any declaration of rights, it is no less a law, and ought to be acted on by honest governments. It is, at the same time, a salutary curb on the spirit of war and indebtment, which, since the modern theory of the perpetuation of debt, has drenched the earth with blood, and crushed its inhabitants under burthens ever accumulating. Had this principle been declared in the British bill of rights, England would have been placed under the happy disability of waging eternal war, and of contracting her thousand millions of public debt. In seeking, then, for an ultimate term for the redemption of our debts, let us rally to this principle, and provide for their payment within the term of nineteen years at the farthest. Our government has not, as yet, begun to act on the rule of loans and taxation going hand in hand. Had any loan taken place in my time, I should have strongly urged a redeeming tax. For the loan which has been made since the last session of Congress, we should now set the example of appropriating some particular tax, sufficient to pay the interest annually, and

the principle within a fixed term, less than nineteen years. And I hope yourself and your committee will render the immortal service of introducing this practice. Not that it is expected that Congress should formally declare such a principle They wisely enough avoid deciding on abstract questions. But they may be induced to keep themselves within its limits.

I am sorry to see our loans begin at so exorbitant an interest. And yet, even at that you will soon be at the bottom of the loan-bag. We are an agricultural nation. Such an one employs its sparings in the purchase or improvement of land or stocks. The lendable money among them is chiefly that of orphans and wards in the hands of executors and guardians, and that which the farmer lays by till he has enough for the purchase in view. In such a nation there is one and one only resource for loans, sufficient to carry them through the expense of a war; and that will always be sufficient, and in the power of an honest government, punctual in the preservation of its faith. The fund I mean, is *the mass of circulating coin*. Every one knows, that although not literally, it is nearly true, that every paper dollar emitted banishes a silver one from the circulation. A nation, therefore, making its purchases and payments with bills fitted for circulation, thrusts an equal sum of coin out of circulation. This is equivalent to borrowing that sum, and yet the vendor receiving payment in a medium as effectual as coin for his purchases or payments, has no claim to interest. And so the nation may continue to issue its bills as far as its wants require, and the limits of the circulation will

admit. Those limits are understood to extend with us at present, to two hundred millions of dollars, a greater sum than would be necessary for any war. But this, the only resource which the government could command with certainty, the States have unfortunately fooled away, nay corruptly alienated to swindlers and shavers, under the cover of private banks. Say, too, as an additional evil, that the disposal funds of individuals, to this great amount, have thus been withdrawn from improvement and useful enterprise, and employed in the useless, usurious and demoralizing practices of bank directors and their accomplices. In the war of 1755, our State availed itself of this fund by issuing a paper money, bottomed on a specific tax for its redemption, and, to insure its credit, bearing an interest of five per cent. Within a very short time, not a bill of this emission was to be found in circulation. It was locked up in the chests of executors, guardians, widows, farmers, &c. We then issued bills bottomed on a redeeming tax, but bearing no interest. These were readily received, and never depreciated a single farthing. In the revolutionary war, the old Congress and the States issued bills without interest, and without tax. They occupied the channels of circulation very freely, till those channels were overflowed by an excess beyond all the calls of circulation. But although we have so improvidently suffered the field of circulating medium to be filched from us by private individuals, yet I think we may recover it in part, and even in the whole, if the States will co-operate with us. If treasury bills are emitted on a tax appropriated

for their redemption in fifteen years, and (to insure preference in the first moments of competition) bearing an interest of six per cent. there is no one who would not take them in preference to the bank paper now afloat, on a principle of patriotism as well as interest; and they would be withdrawn from circulation into private hoards to a considerable amount. Their credit once established, others might be emitted, bottomed also on a tax, but not bearing interest; and if ever their credit faltered, open public loans, on which these bills alone should be received as specie. These, operating as a sinking fund, would reduce the quantity in circulation, so as to maintain that in an equilibrium with specie. It is not easy to estimate the obstacles which, in the beginning, we should encounter in ousting the banks from their possession of the circulation; but a steady and judicious alternation of emissions and loans, would reduce them in time. But while this is going on, another measure should be pressed, to recover ultimately our right to the circulation. The States should be applied to, to transfer the right of issuing circulating paper to Congress exclusively, *in perpetuum*, if possible, but during the war at least, with a saving of charter rights. I believe that every State west and South of Connecticut river, except Delaware, would immediately do it; and the others would follow in time. Congress would, of course, begin by obliging unchartered banks to wind up their affairs within a short time, and the others as their charters expired, forbidding the subsequent circulation of their paper. This they would supply with their own, bottomed,

every emission, on an adequate tax, and bearing or not bearing interest, as the state of the public pulse should indicate. Even in the non-complying States, these bills would make their way, and supplant the unfunded paper of their banks, by their solidity, by the universality of their currency, and by their receivability for customs and taxes. It would be in their power, too, to curtail those banks to the amount of their actual specie, by gathering up their paper, and running it constantly on them. The national paper might thus take place even in the non-complying States. In this way, I am not without a hope, that this great, this sole resource for loans in an agricultural country, might yet be recovered for the use of the nation during war; and, if obtained *in perpetuum*, it would always be sufficient to carry us through any war; provided, that in the interval between war and war, all the outstanding paper should be called in, coin be permitted to flow in again, and to hold the field of circulation until another war should require its yielding place again to the national medium.

But it will be asked, are we to have no banks? Are merchants and others to be deprived of the resource of short accommodations, found so convenient? I answer, let us have banks; but let them be such as are alone to be found in any country on earth, except Great Britain. There is not a bank of discount on the continent of Europe, (at least there was not one when I was there,) which offers anything but cash in exchange for discounted bills. No one has a natural right to the trade of a money lender, but he who has the money to lend. Let those

then among us, who have a monied capital, and who prefer employing it in loans rather than otherwise, set up banks, and give cash or national bills for the notes they discount. Perhaps, to encourage them, a larger interest than is legal in the other cases might be allowed them, on the condition of their lending for short periods only. It is from Great Britain we copy the idea of giving paper in exchange for discounted bills; and while we have derived from that country some good principles of government and legislation, we unfortunately run into the most servile imitation of all her practices, ruinous as they prove to her, and with the gulph yawning before us into which these very practices are precipitating her. The unlimited emission of bank paper has banished all her specie, and is now, by a depreciation acknowledged by her own statesmen, carrying her rapidly to bankruptcy, as it did France, as it did us, and will do us again, and every country permitting paper to be circulated, other than that by public authority, rigorously limited to the just measure for circulation. Private fortunes, in the present state of our circulation, are at the mercy of those self-created money lenders, and are prostrated by the floods of nominal money with which their avarice deluges us. He who lent his money to the public or to an individual, before the institution of the United States Bank, twenty years ago, when wheat was well sold at a dollar the bushel, and receives now his nominal sum when it sells at two dollars, is cheated of half his fortune; and by whom? By the banks, which, since that, have thrown into circulation ten

dollars of their nominal money where was one at that time.

Reflect, if you please, on these ideas, and use them or not as they appear to merit. They comfort me in the belief, that they point out a resource ample enough, without overwhelming war taxes, for the expense of the war, and possibly still recoverable; and that they hold up to all future time a resource within ourselves, ever at the command of government, and competent to any wars into which we may be forced. Nor is it a slight object to equalize taxes through peace and war.

* * * * * * * *

Ever affectionately yours

TO JOHN ADAMS

Monticello, June 27, 1813.

Ιδαν ες πολυδενδρον ανηρ ὑλητομος ελθων
Παπταινει, παρεοντος αδην, ποθεν αρξεται εργου
Τι πρατον καταλεξω; επει παρα μυρια ειπην.

And I too, my dear Sir, like the wood-cutter of Ida, should doubt where to begin, were I to enter the forest of opinions, discussions, and contentions which have occurred in our day. I should say with Theocritus, Τι πρατον καταλεξω; επει παρα μυρια ειπην. But I shall not do it. The *summum bonum* with me is now truly epicurian, ease of body and tranquillity of mind; and to these I wish to consign my remaining days. Men have differed in opinion, and been divided into parties by these opinions, from the first origin of societies, and in all governments where they have been permitted freely to think and to speak. The same political parties which now agitate the United States, have existed through all time. Whether the power of the people or that of the αριστοι should prevail, were questions which kept the States of Greece and Rome in eternal convulsions, as they now schismatize every people whose minds and mouths are not shut up by the gag of a despot. And in fact, the terms of whig and tory belong to natural as well as to civil history.

They denote the temper and constitution of mind of different individuals. To come to our own country, and to the times when you and I became first acquainted, we well remember the violent parties which agitated the old Congress, and their bitter contests. There you and I were together, and the Jays, and the Dickinsons, and other anti-independents, were arrayed against us. They cherished the monarchy of England, and we the rights of our countrymen. When our present government was in the mew, passing from Confederation to Union, how bitter was the schism between the Feds and Antis. Here you and I were together again. For although, for a moment, separated by the Atlantic from the scene of action, I favored the opinion that nine States should confirm the constitution, in order to secure it, and the others hold off until certain amendments, deemed favorable to freedom, should be made. I rallied in the first instant to the wiser proposition of Massachusetts, that all should confirm, and then all instruct their delegates to urge those amendments. The amendments were made, and all were reconciled to the government. But as soon as it was put into motion, the line of division was again drawn. We broke into two parties, each wishing to give the government a different direction; the one to strengthen the most popular branch, the other the more permanent branches, and to extend their permanence. Here you and I separated for the first time, and as we had been longer than most others on the public theatre, and our names therefore were more familiar to our countrymen, the party which

considered you as thinking with them, placed your name at their head; the other, for the same reason, selected mine. But neither decency nor inclination permitted us to become the advocates of ourselves, or to take part personally in the violent contests which followed. We suffered ourselves, as you so well expressed it, to be passive subjects of public discussion. And these discussions, whether relating to men, measures or opinions, were conducted by the parties with an animosity, a bitterness and an indecency which had never been exceeded. All the resources of reason and of wrath were exhausted by each party in support of its own, and to prostrate the adversary opinions; one was upbraided with receiving the anti-federalists, the other the old tories and refugees, into their bosom. Of this acrimony, the public papers of the day exhibit ample testimony, in the debates of Congress, of State Legislatures, of stump-orators, in addresses, answers, and newspaper essays; and to these, without question, may be added the private correspondences of individuals; and the less guarded in these, because not meant for the public eye, not restrained by the respect due to that, but poured forth from the overflowings of the heart into the bosom of a friend, as a momentary easement of our feelings. In this way, and in answers to addresses, you and I could indulge ourselves. We have probably done it, sometimes with warmth, often with prejudice, but always, as we believed, adhering to truth. I have not examined my letters of that day. I have no stomach to revive the memory of its feelings. But one of these letters, it seems, has got before the public, by accident

and infidelity, by the death of one friend to whom it was written, and of his friend to whom it had been communicated, and by the malice and treachery of a third person, of whom I had never before heard, merely to make mischief, and in the same satanic spirit in which the same enemy had intercepted and published, in 1776, your letter animadverting on Dickinson's character. How it happened that I quoted you in my letter to Doctor Priestley, and for whom, and not for yourself, the strictures were meant, has been explained to you in my letter of the 15th, which had been committed to the post eight days before I received yours of the 10th, 11th and 14th. That gave you the reference which these asked to the particular answer alluded to in the one to Priestley. The renewal of these old discussions, my friend, would be equally useless and irksome. To the volumes then written on these subjects, human ingenuity can add nothing new, and the rather, as lapse of time has obliterated many of the facts. And shall you and I, my dear Sir, at our age, like Priam of old, gird on the *arma, diu desueta, trementibus ævo humeris*? Shall we, at our age, become the Athletæ of party, and exhibit ourselves as gladiators in the arena of the newspapers? Nothing in the universe could induce me to it. My mind has been long fixed to bow to the judgment of the world, who will judge by my acts, and will never take counsel from me as to what that judgment shall be. If your objects and opinions have been misunderstood, if the measures and principles of others have been wrongfully imputed to you, as I believe they have been, that you should leave

an explanation of them, would be an act of justice to yourself. I will add, that it has been hoped that you would leave such explanations as would place every saddle on its right horse, and replace on the shoulders of others the burthens they shifted on yours.

But all this, my friend, is offered, merely for your consideration and judgment, without presuming to anticipate what you alone are qualified to decide for yourself. I mean to express my own purpose only, and the reflections which have led to it. To me, then, it appears, that there have been differences of opinion and party differences, from the first establishment of governments to the present day, and on the same question which now divides our own country; that these will continue through all future time; that every one takes his side in favor of the many, or of the few, according to his constitution, and the circumstances in which he is placed; that opinions, which are equally honest on both sides, should not affect personal esteem or social intercourse; that as we judge between the Claudii and the Gracchi, the Wentworths and the Hampdens of past ages, so of those among us whose names may happen to be remembered for awhile, the next generations will judge, favorably or unfavorably, according to the complexion of individual minds, and the side they shall themselves have taken; that nothing new can be added by you or me to what has been said by others, and will be said in every age in support of the conflicting opinions on government; and that wisdom and duty dictate an humble resignation to the

verdict of our future peers. In doing this myself, I shall certainly not suffer moot questions to affect the sentiments of sincere friendship and respect, consecrated to you by so long a course of time, and of which I now repeat sincere assurances.

JOHN ADAMS TO THOMAS JEFFERSON

Quincy, June 28, 1813.

Dear Sir,—I know not what, unless it were the prophet of Tippecanoe, had turned my curiosity to inquiries after the metaphysical science of the Indians, their ecclesiastical establishments, and theological theories; but your letter, written with all the accuracy, perpiscuity, and elegance of your youth and middle age, as it has given me great satisfaction, deserves my best thanks.

It has given me satisfaction, because, while it has furnished me with information *where* all the knowledge is to be obtained that books afford, it has convinced me that I shall never know much more of the subject than I do now. As I have never aimed at making my collection of books upon this subject, I have none of those you abridged in so concise a manner. Lafitan Adair, and De Bry, were known to me only by name.

The various ingenuity which has been displayed in inventions of hypothesis, to account for the original population of America, and the immensity of learning profusely expended to support them, have appeared to me for a longer time than I can precisely recollect, what the physicians call the *Literæ nihil Sanantes*. Whether serpents teeth were sown here and sprang

up men; whether men and women dropped from the clouds upon this Atlantic Island; whether the Almighty created them here, or whether they emigrated from Europe, are questions of no moment to the present or future happiness of man. Neither agriculture, commerce, manufactures, fisheries, science, literature, taste, religion, morals, nor any other good will be promoted, or any evil averted, by any discoveries that can be made in answer to these questions.

The opinions of the Indians and their usages, as they are represented in your obliging letter of the 11th of June, appear to me to resemble the Platonizing Philo, or the Philonizing Plato, more than the genuine system of Indianism.

The philosophy both of Philo and Plato are at least as absurd. It is indeed less intelligible.

Plato borrowed his doctrines from Oriental and Egyptian philosophers, for he had travelled both in India and Egypt.

The Oriental philosophy, imitated and adopted, in part, if not the whole, by Plato and Philo, was

1. One God the good.

2. The ideas, the thoughts, the reason, the intellect, the logos, the ratio of God.

3. Matter, the universe, the production of the logos, or contemplations of God. This matter was the source of evil.

Perhaps the three powers of Plato, Philo, the Egyptians, and Indians, cannot be distinctly made out, from your account of the Indians, but—

1. The great spirit, the good, who is worshipped by the kings, sachems, and all the great men, in their solemn festivals, as the Author, the Parent of good.

2. The Devil, or the source of evil. They are not metaphysicians enough as yet to suppose it, or at least to call it matter, like the wiscains of Antiquity, and like Frederick the Great who has written a very silly essay on the origin of evil, in which he ascribes it all to matter, as if this was an original discovery of his own.

The watchmaker has in his head an idea of the system of a watch before he makes it. The mechanician of the universe had a complete idea of the universe before he made it; and this idea, this logos, was almighty, or at least powerful enough to produce the world, but it must be made of matter which was eternal; for creation out of nothing was impossible. And matter was unmanageable. It would not, and could not be fashioned into any system, without a large mixture of evil in it; for matter was essentially evil.

The Indians are not metaphysicians enough to have discovered this *idea*, this logos, this intermediate power between good and evil, God and matter. But of the two powers, the good and the evil, they seem to have a full conviction; and what son or daughter of Adam and Eve has not?

This logos of Plato seems to resemble, if it was not the prototype of, the *Ratio and its Progress* of Manilius, the astrologer; of the *Progress of the Mind* of Condorcet, and the *Age*

of Reason of Tom Payne.

I could make a system too. The seven hundred thousand soldiers of Zingis, when the whole, or any part of them went to battle, they sent up a howl, which resembled nothing that human imagination has conceived, unless it be the supposition that all the devils in hell were let loose at once to set up an infernal scream, which terrified their enemies, and never failed to obtain them victory. The Indian yell resembles this; and, therefore, America was peopled from Asia.

Another system. The armies of Zingis, sometimes two or three or four hundred thousand of them, surrounded a province in a circle, and marched towards the centre, driving all the wild beasts before them, lions, tigers, wolves, bears, and every living thing, terrifying them with their howls and yells, their drums, trumpets, &c., till they terrified and tamed enough of them to victual the whole army. Therefore, the Scotch Highlanders, who practice the same thing in miniature, are emigrants from Asia. Therefore, the American Indians, who, for anything I know, practice the same custom, are emigrants from Asia or Scotland.

I am weary of contemplating nations from the lowest and most beastly degradations of human life, to the highest refinement of civilization. I am weary of Philosophers, Theologians, Politicians, and Historians. They are an immense mass of absurdities, vices, and lies. Montesquieu had sense enough to say in jest, that all our knowledge might be comprehended in twelve pages in duodecimo, and I believe him in earnest. I could express

my faith in shorter terms. He who loves the workman and his work, and does what he can to preserve and improve it, shall be accepted of him.

I have also felt an interest in the Indians, and a commiseration for them from my childhood. Aaron Pomham the priest, and Moses Pomham the king of the Punkapang and Neponset tribes, were frequent visitors at my father's house, at least seventy years ago. I have a distinct remembrance of their forms and figures. They were very aged, and the tallest and stoutest Indians I have ever seen. The titles of king and priest, and the names of Moses and Aaron, were given them no doubt by our Massachusetts divines and statesmen. There was a numerous family in this town, whose wigwam was within a mile of this house. This family were frequently at my father's house, and I, in my boyish rambles, used to call at their wigwam, where I never failed to be treated with whortleberries, blackberries, strawberries or apples, plums, peaches, &c., for they had planted a variety of fruit trees about them. But the girls went out to service, and the boys to sea, till not a soul is left. We scarcely see an Indian in a year. I remember the time when Indian murder, scalpings, depredations and conflagrations, were as frequent on the Eastern and Northern frontier of Massachusetts, as they are now in Indiana, and spread as much terror. But since the conquest of Canada, all has ceased; and I believe with you that another conquest of Canada will quiet the Indians forever, and be as great a blessing to them as to us.

The instance of Aaron Pomham made me suspect that there

was an order of priesthood among them. But, according to your account, the worship of the good spirit was performed by the kings, sachems, and warriors, as among the ancient Germans, whose highest rank of nobility were priests. The worship of the evil spirit, Αθανατους μὲν πρωτα θεους νομῳ ως διακειται τιμα.

We have war now in earnest. I lament the contumacious spirit that appears about me. But I lament the cause that has given too much apology for it; the total neglect and absolute refusal of all maritime protection and defence. Money, mariners, and soldiers, would be at the public service, if only a few frigates had been ordered to be built. Without this, our Union will be a brittle china vase, a house of ice, or a palace of glass.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.