

ТОМАС ДЖЕФФЕРСОН

**THE WRITINGS OF
THOMAS JEFFERSON,
VOL. 3 (OF 9)**

Томас Джефферсон
**The Writings of Thomas
Jefferson, Vol. 3 (of 9)**

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*The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Volume III (of 9) / Being His
Autobiography, Correspondence, Reports, Messages, / Addresses, and Other
Writings, Official and Private:*

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Thomas Jefferson
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PART II.—Continued.
LETTERS WRITTEN
WHILE IN EUROPE.
1784-1790

TO JAMES MADISON

Dear Sir,—I wrote you last on the 12th of January; since which I have received yours of October the 17th, December the 8th and 12th. That of October the 17th, came to hand only February the 23d. How it happened to be four months on the way, I cannot tell, as I never knew by what hand it came. Looking over my letter of January the 12th, I remark an error of the word "probable" instead of "improbable," which doubtless, however, you had been able to correct.

Your thoughts on the subject of the declaration of rights, in the letter of October the 17th, I have weighed with great satisfaction. Some of them had not occurred to me before, but were acknowledged just in the moment they were presented to my mind. In the arguments in favor of a declaration of rights, you omit one which has great weight with me; the legal check which it puts into the hands of the judiciary. This is a body, which, if rendered independent and kept strictly to their own department, merits great confidence for their learning and integrity. In fact, what degree of confidence would be too much, for a body composed of such men as Wythe, Blair and Pendleton? On characters like these, the "*civium ardor prava jubentium*" would make no impression. I am happy to find that, on the whole, you are a friend to this amendment. The declaration of rights is, like all other human blessings, alloyed with some inconveniences, and not accomplishing fully its object. But the good in this instance, vastly overweighs the evil. I cannot refrain from making short answers to the objections which your letter states to have

been raised. 1. That the rights in question are reserved, by the manner in which the federal powers are granted. Answer. A constitutive act may, certainly, be so formed, as to need no declaration of rights. The act itself has the force of a declaration, as far as it goes; and if it goes to all material points, nothing more is wanting. In the draught of a constitution which I had once a thought of proposing in Virginia, and printed afterwards, I endeavored to reach all the great objects of public liberty, and did not mean to add a declaration of rights. Probably the object was imperfectly executed; but the deficiencies would have been supplied by others, in the course of discussion. But in a constitutive act which leaves some precious articles unnoticed, and raises implications against others, a declaration of rights becomes necessary, by way of supplement. This is the case of our new federal Constitution. This instrument forms us into one State, as to certain objects, and gives us a legislative and executive body for these objects. It should, therefore, guard us against their abuses of power, within the field submitted to them. 2. A positive declaration of some essential rights could not be obtained in the requisite latitude. Answer. Half a loaf is better than no bread. If we cannot secure all our rights, let us secure what we can. 3. The limited powers of the federal government, and jealousy of the subordinate governments, afford a security which exists in no other instance. Answer. The first member of this seems resolvable into the first objection before stated. The jealousy of the subordinate governments is a precious reliance. But

observe that those governments are only agents. They must have principles furnished them, whereon to found their opposition. The declaration of rights will be the text, whereby they will try all the acts of the federal government. In this view, it is necessary to the federal government also; as by the same text, they may try the opposition of the subordinate governments. 4. Experience proves the inefficacy of a bill of rights. True. But though it is not absolutely efficacious under all circumstances, it is of great potency always, and rarely inefficacious. A brace the more will often keep up the building which would have fallen, with that brace the less. There is a remarkable difference between the characters of the inconveniences which attend a declaration of rights, and those which attend the want of it. The inconveniences of the declaration are, that it may cramp government in its useful exertions. But the evil of this is short-lived, moderate and reparable. The inconveniences of the want of a declaration are permanent, afflicting and irreparable. They are in constant progression from bad to worse. The executive, in our governments, is not the sole, it is scarcely the principal object of my jealousy. The tyranny of the legislatures is the most formidable dread at present, and will be for many years. That of the executive will come in its turn; but it will be at a remote period. I know there are some among us, who would now establish a monarchy. But they are inconsiderable in number and weight of character. The rising race are all republicans. We were educated in royalism; no wonder, if some of us retain that

idolatry still. Our young people are educated in republicanism; an apostasy from that to royalism, is unprecedented and impossible. I am much pleased with the prospect that a declaration of rights will be added; and I hope it will be done in that way, which will not endanger the whole frame of government, or any essential part of it.

I have hitherto avoided public news in my letters to you, because your situation insured you a communication of my letters to Mr. Jay. This circumstance being changed, I shall, in future, indulge myself in these details to you. There had been some slight hopes, that an accommodation might be effected between the Turks and two empires; but these hopes do not strengthen, and the season is approaching which will put an end to them, for another campaign, at least. The accident to the King of England has had great influence on the affairs of Europe. His mediation, joined with that of Prussia, would certainly have kept Denmark quiet, and so have left the two empires in the hands of the Turks and Swedes. But the inactivity to which England is reduced, leaves Denmark more free, and she will probably go on in opposition to Sweden. The King of Prussia, too, had advanced so far, that he can scarcely retire. This is rendered the more difficult, by the troubles he has excited in Poland. He cannot well abandon the party he had brought forward there; so that it is very possible he may be engaged in the ensuing campaign. France will be quiet this year, because this year, at least, is necessary for settling her future constitution. The States will meet the 27th of

April; and the public mind will, I think, by that time, be ripe for a just decision of the question, whether they shall vote by orders or persons. I think there is a majority of the Nobles already for the latter. If so, their affairs cannot but go on well. Besides settling for themselves a tolerably free constitution, perhaps as free a one as the nation is as yet prepared to bear, they will fund their public debts. This will give them such a credit, as will enable them to borrow any money they may want, and of course, to take the field again, when they think proper. And I believe they mean to take the field, as soon as they can. The pride of every individual in the nation, suffers under the ignominies they have lately been exposed to, and I think the States General will give money for a war, to wipe off the reproach. There have arisen new bickerings between this court and that of the Hague; and the papers which have passed, show the most bitter acrimony rankling at the heart of this ministry. They have recalled their ambassador from the Hague, without appointing a successor. They have given a note to the Diet of Poland, which shows a disapprobation of their measures. The insanity of the King of England has been fortunate for them, as it gives them time to put their house in order. The English papers tell you the King is well; and even the English ministry say so. They will naturally set the best foot foremost; and they guard his person so well, that it is difficult for the public to contradict them. The King is probably better, but not well, by a great deal. 1. He has been bled, and judicious physicians say, that in his exhausted state, nothing could have induced a recurrence

to bleeding, but symptoms of relapse. 2. The Prince of Wales tells the Irish deputation, he will give them a definitive answer in some days; but if the King had been well, he could have given it at once. 3. They talk of passing a standing law, for providing a regency in similar cases. They apprehend then, they are not yet clear of the danger of wanting a regency. 4. They have carried the King to church; but it was his private chapel. If he be well, why do not they show him publicly to the nation, and raise them from that consternation into which they have been thrown, by the prospect of being delivered over to the profligate hands of the Prince of Wales. In short, judging from little facts, which are known in spite of their teeth, the King is better, but not well. Possibly he is getting well, but still, time will be wanting to satisfy even the ministry, that it is not merely a lucid interval. Consequently, they cannot interrupt France this year in the settlement of her affairs, and after this year it will be too late.

As you will be in a situation to know when the leave of absence will be granted me, which I have asked, will you be so good as to communicate it, by a line, to Mr. Lewis and Mr. Eppes? I hope to see you in the summer, and that if you are not otherwise engaged, you will encamp with me at Monticello for awhile.

I am, with great and sincere attachment, dear Sir, your affectionate friend and servant.

TO THOMAS PAINE

Paris, March 17, 1789.

Dear Sir,—My last letter to you extended from December the 23d to January the 11th. A confidential opportunity now arising, I can acknowledge the receipt of yours of January the 15th, at the date of which you could not have received mine.

You knew, long ago, that the meeting of the States is to be at Versailles on the 27th of April. This country is entirely occupied in its elections, which go on quietly and well. The Duke d'Orleans is elected for Villers Cotterels. The Prince of Condé has lost the election he aimed at; nor is it certain he can be elected anywhere. We have no news from Auvergne, whither the Marquis de La Fayette is gone. In general, all the men of influence in the country are gone into the several provinces to get their friends elected, or be elected themselves. Since my letter to you, a tumult arose in Bretagne, in which four or five lives were lost. They are now quieter, and this is the only instance of a life lost, as yet, in this revolution. The public mind is now so far ripened by time and discussion, that there seems to be but one opinion on the principal points. The question of voting by persons of orders is the most controverted; but even that seems to have gained already a majority among the Nobles. I fear more from the number of the Assembly, than from any other cause. Twelve hundred persons

are difficult to keep to order, and will be so, especially, till they shall have had time to frame rules of order. Their funds continue stationary, and at the level they have stood at for some years past. We hear so little of the parliaments for some time past, that one is hardly sensible of their existence. This unimportance is probably the forerunner of their total re-modification by the nation. The article of legislation, is the only interesting one on which the court has not explicitly declared itself to the nation. The Duke d'Orleans has given instructions to his proxies in the baillages, which would be deemed bold in England, and are reasonable beyond the reach of an Englishman, who, slumbering under a kind of half reformation in politics and religion, is not excited by anything he sees or feels, to question the remains of prejudice. The writers of this country, now taking the field freely and unrestrained, or rather involved by prejudice, will rouse us all from the errors in which we have been hitherto rocked.

We had, at one time, some hope that an accommodation would have been effected between the Turks and two empires. Probably the taking Oczakow, while it has attached the Empress more to the Crimea, is not important enough to the Turks, to make them consent to peace. These hopes are vanishing. Nor does there seem any prospect of peace between Russia and Sweden. The palsied condition of England leaves it probable that Denmark will pursue its hostilities against Sweden. It does not seem certain whether the King of Prussia has advanced so far in that mediation, and in the troubles he has excited in Poland, as to

be obliged to become a party. Nor will his becoming a party draw in this country, the present year, if England remains quiet. Papers which lately passed between this court and the government of Holland, prove that this nourishes its discontent, and only waits to put its house in order, before it interposes. They have recalled their ambassador from the Hague, without naming a successor. The King of Sweden, not thinking that Russia and Denmark are enough for him, has arrested a number of his Nobles, of principal rank and influence. It is a bold measure, at least, and he is too boyish a character to authorize us to presume it a wise one, merely because he has adopted it. His army was before disgusted. He now puts the Nobles and all their dependents on the same side, and they are sure of armed support, by Russia on the north, and Denmark on the south. He can have no salvation but in the King of Prussia.

I have received two letters from Ledyard, the one dated Alexandria, August the 15th, the other Grand Cairo, September the 10th; and one lately from Admiral Paul Jones, dated St. Petersburg, January the 31st. He was just arrived there, on the call of the Empress, and was uncertain where he should be employed the next campaign. Mr. Littlepage has returned from the Black Sea to Warsaw, where he has been perfectly received by the King. I saw this from under the King's own hand, and was pleased with the parental expressions towards him.

We have no news from America later than the middle of January. My letters inform me that even the friends of the new

Constitution have come over to the expediency of adding a declaration of rights. There is reason to hope that this will be proposed by Congress to the several legislatures, and that the plan of New York for calling a new convention, will be rejected. Hitherto no State had acceded to it but Virginia, in which Henry and anti-federalism had got full possession of their legislature. But the people are better disposed. My departure for America is likely to be retarded, by the want of a Congress to give me permission. I must obtain it from the new government. I am anxious to know how much we ought to believe of the recovery of the King of England. By putting little facts together, I see that he is not well. Mr. Rumsey (who came in while I was writing the preceding page) tells me you have a long letter ready for me. I shall be happy to receive it.

I am, with great and sincere attachment, dear Sir, your affectionate friend and servant.

TO COLONEL HUMPHREYS

Paris, March 18, 1789.

Dear Sir,—Your favor of November the 29th, 1788, came to hand the last month. How it happened that mine of August, 1787, was fourteen months on its way, is inconceivable. I do not recollect by what conveyance I sent it. I had concluded, however, either that it had miscarried, or that you had become indolent, as most of our countrymen are, in matters of correspondence.

The change in this country since you left it, is such as you can form no idea of. The frivolities of conversation have given way entirely to politics. Men, women and children talk nothing else; and all, you know, talk a great deal. The press groans with daily productions, which, in point of boldness, makes an Englishman stare, who hitherto has thought himself the boldest of men. A complete revolution in this government has, within the space of two years, (for it began with the Notables of 1787,) been effected merely by the force of public opinion, aided, indeed, by the want of money, which the dissipations of the court had brought on. And this revolution has not cost a single life, unless we charge to it a little riot lately in Bretagne, which began about the price of bread, became afterwards political, and ended in the loss of four or five lives. The assembly of the States General begins the 27th of April. The representation of the people will be perfect. But

they will be alloyed by an equal number of nobility and clergy. The first great question they will have to decide will be, whether they shall vote by orders or persons. And I have hopes that the majority of the Nobles are already disposed to join the Tiers Etat, in deciding that the vote shall be by persons. This is the opinion *a la mode* at present, and mode has acted a wonderful part in the present instance. All the handsome young women, for example, are for the Tiers Etat, and this is an army more powerful in France, than the two hundred thousand men of the King. Add to this, that the court itself is for the Tiers Etat, as the only agent which can relieve their wants; not by giving money themselves, (they are squeezed to the last drop,) but by pressing it from the non-contributing orders. The King stands engaged to pretend no more to the power of laying, continuing or appropriating taxes; to call the States General periodically; to submit *lettres de cachet* to legal restrictions; to consent to freedom of the press; and that all this shall be fixed by a fundamental constitution, which shall bind his successors. He has not offered a participation in the legislature, but it will surely be insisted on. The public mind is so ripened on all these subjects, that there seems to be now but one opinion. The clergy, indeed, think separately, and the old men among the Nobles; but their voice is suppressed by the general one of the nation. The writings published on this occasion are, some of them, very valuable; because, unfettered by the prejudices under which the English labor, they give a full scope to reason, and strike out truths, as yet unperceived and

unacknowledged on the other side the channel. An Englishman, dosing under a kind of half reformation, is not excited to think by such gross absurdities as stare a Frenchman in the face, wherever he looks, whether it be towards the throne or the altar. In fine, I believe this nation will, in the course of the present year, have as full a portion of liberty dealt out to them, as the nation can bear at present, considering how uninformed the mass of their people is. This circumstance will prevent the immediate establishment of the trial by jury. The palsied state of the executive in England is a fortunate circumstance for France, as it will give her time to arrange her affairs internally. The consolidation and funding their debts, will give government a credit which will enable them to do what they please. For the present year, the war will be confined to the two empires and Denmark, against Turkey and Sweden. It is not yet evident whether Prussia will be engaged. If the disturbances of Poland break out into overt acts, it will be a power divided in itself, and so of no weight. Perhaps, by the next year, England and France may be ready to take the field. It will depend on the former principally; for the latter, though she may be then able, must wish a little time to see her new arrangements well under way. The English papers and English ministry say the King is well. He is better but not well; no malady requires a longer time to insure against its return, than insanity. Time alone can distinguish accidental insanity from habitual lunacy.

The operations which have taken place in America lately, fill me with pleasure. In the first place, they realize the confidence

I had, that whenever our affairs go obviously wrong, the good sense of the people will interpose, and set them to rights. The example of changing a constitution, by assembling the wise men of the State, instead of assembling armies, will be worth as much to the world as the former examples we had given them. The Constitution, too, which was the result of our deliberations, is unquestionably the wisest ever yet presented to men, and some of the accommodations of interest which it has adopted, are greatly pleasing to me, who have before had occasions of seeing how difficult those interests were to accommodate. A general concurrence of opinion seems to authorize us to say, it has some defects. I am one of those who think it a defect, that the important rights, not placed in security by the frame of the Constitution itself, were not explicitly secured by a supplementary declaration. There are rights which it is useless to surrender to the government, and which governments have yet always been found to invade. These are the rights of thinking, and publishing our thoughts by speaking or writing; the right of free commerce; the right of personal freedom. There are instruments for administering the government, so peculiarly trust-worthy, that we should never leave the legislature at liberty to change them. The new Constitution has secured these in the executive and legislative department; but not in the judiciary. It should have established trials by the people themselves, that is to say, by jury. There are instruments so dangerous to the rights of the nation, and which place them so totally at the mercy of their governors,

that those governors, whether legislative or executive, should be restrained from keeping such instruments on foot, but in well-defined cases. Such an instrument is a standing army. We are now allowed to say, such a declaration of rights, as a supplement to the constitution where that is silent, is wanting, to secure us in these points. The general voice has legitimated this objection. It has not, however, authorized me to consider as a real defect, what I thought and still think one, the perpetual re-eligibility of the President. But three States out of eleven, having declared against this, we must suppose we are wrong, according to the fundamental law of every society, the *lex majoris partis*, to which we are bound to submit. And should the majority change their opinion, and become sensible that this trait in their Constitution is wrong, I would wish it to remain uncorrected, as long as we can avail ourselves of the services of our great leader, whose talents and whose weight of character, I consider as peculiarly necessary to get the government so under way, as that it may afterwards be carried on by subordinate characters.

I must give you sincere thanks, for the details of small news contained in your letter. You know how precious that kind of information is to a person absent from his country, and how difficult it is to be procured. I hope, to receive soon permission to visit America this summer, and to possess myself anew, by conversation with my countrymen, of their spirit and their ideas. I know only the Americans of the year 1784. They tell me this is to be much a stranger to those of 1789. This renewal of

acquaintance is no indifferent matter to one, acting at such a distance, as that instructions cannot be received hot and hot. One of my pleasures, too, will be that of talking over the old and new with you. In the meantime, and at all times, I have the honor to be, with great and sincere esteem, dear Sir, your friend and servant.

TO DOCTOR WILLARD

Paris, March 24, 1789.

Sir,—I have been lately honored with your letter of September the 24th, 1788, accompanied by a diploma for a Doctorate of Laws, which the University of Harvard has been pleased to confer on me. Conscious how little I merit it, I am the more sensible of their goodness and indulgence to a stranger, who has had no means of serving or making himself known to them. I beg you to return them my grateful thanks, and to assure them that this notice from so eminent a seat of science, is very precious to me.

The most remarkable publications we have had in France, for a year or two past, are the following: "Les Voyages d'Anacharsis par l'Abbé Barthelemi," seven volumes, octavo. This is a very elegant digest of whatever is known of the Greeks; useless, indeed, to him who has read the Original authors, but very proper for one who reads modern languages only. The works of the King of Prussia. The Berlin edition is in sixteen volumes, octavo. It is said to have been gutted at Berlin; and here it has been still more mangled. There are one or two other editions published abroad, which pretend to have rectified the maltreatment both of Berlin and Paris. Some time will be necessary to settle the public mind, as to the best edition.

Montignot has given us the original Greek, and a French translation of the seventh book of Ptolemy's great work, under the title of "Etat des Etoiles fixes au second Siecle," in quarto. He has given the designation of the same stars by Flamstead and Beyer, and their position in the year 1786. A very remarkable work is the "Mechanique Analytique," of Le Grange, in quarto. He is allowed to be the greatest mathematician now living, and his personal worth is equal to his science. The object of his work is to reduce all the principles of mechanics to the single one of the equilibrium, and to give a simple formula applicable to them all. The subject is treated in the algebraic method, without diagrams to assist the conception. My present occupations not permitting me to read anything which requires a long and undisturbed attention, I am not able to give you the character of this work from my own examination. It has been received with great approbation in Europe. In Italy, the works of Spallanzani on Digestion and Generation, are valuable. Though, perhaps, too minute, and therefore tedious, he has developed some useful truths, and his book is well worth attention; it is in four volumes, octavo. Clavigaro, an Italian also, who has resided thirty-six years in Mexico, has given us a history of that country, which certainly merits more respect than any other work on the same subject. He corrects many errors of Dr. Robertson; and though sound philosophy will disapprove many of his ideas, we may still consider it as an useful work, and assuredly the best we possess on the same subject. It is in four thin volumes, small

quarto. De La Lande has not yet published a fifth volume.

The chemical dispute about the conversion and reconversion of air and water, continues still undecided. Arguments and authorities are so balanced, that we may still safely believe, as our fathers did before us, that these principles are distinct. A schism of another kind, has taken place among the chemists. A particular set of them here, have undertaken to remodel all the terms of the science, and to give to every substance a new name, the composition, and especially the termination of which, shall define the relation in which it stands to other substances of the same family. But the science seems too much in its infancy as yet, for this reformation; because, in fact, the reformation of this year must be reformed again the next year, and so on, changing the names of substances as often as new experiments develop properties in them undiscovered before. The new nomenclature has, accordingly, been already proved to need numerous and important reformations. Probably it will not prevail. It is espoused by the minority only here, and by very few, indeed, of the foreign chemists. It is particularly rejected in England.

In the arts, I think two of our countrymen have presented the most important inventions. Mr. Paine, the author of "Common Sense," has invented an iron bridge, which promises to be cheaper by a great deal than stone, and to admit of a much greater arch. He supposes it may be ventured for an arch of five hundred feet. He has obtained a patent for it in England, and is now

executing the first experiment with an arch of between ninety and one hundred feet. Mr. Rumsey has also obtained a patent for his navigation by the force of steam, in England, and is soliciting a similar one here. His principal merit is in the improvement of the boiler, and, instead of the complicated machinery of oars and paddles, proposed by others, the substitution of so simple a thing as the reaction of a stream of water on his vessel. He is building a sea vessel at this time in England, and she will be ready for an experiment in May. He has suggested a great number of mechanical improvements in a variety of branches; and upon the whole, is the most original and the greatest mechanical genius I have ever seen. The return of La Peyrouse (whenever that shall happen) will probably add to our knowledge in Geography, Botany, and Natural History. What a field have we at our doors to signalize ourselves in! The Botany of America is far from being exhausted, its Mineralogy is untouched, and its Natural History or Zoology, totally mistaken and misrepresented. As far as I have seen, there is not one single species of terrestrial birds common to Europe and America, and I question if there be a single species of quadrupeds. (Domestic animals are to be excepted.) It is for such institutions as that over which you preside so worthily, Sir, to do justice to our country, its productions and its genius. It is the work to which the young men, whom you are forming, should lay their hands. We have spent the prime of our lives in procuring them the precious blessing of liberty. Let them spend theirs in showing that it is the great parent of *science* and of virtue; and

that a nation will be great in both, always in proportion as it is free. Nobody wishes more warmly for the success of your good exhortations on this subject, than he who has the honor to be, with sentiments of great esteem and respect, Sir, your most obedient humble servant.

TO J. SARFIELD

Paris, April 3, 1789.

Sir,—I could not name to you the day of my departure from Paris, because I do not know it. I have not yet received my congé, though I hope to receive it soon, and to leave this some time in May, so that I may be back before the winter.

Impost is a duty paid on any imported article, in the *moment of its importation*, and of course it is collected in the seaports only. *Excise* is a duty on any article, whether imported or raised at home, and paid in the *hands of the consumer or retailer*; consequently, it is collected through the whole country. These are the true definitions of these words as used in England, and in the greater part of the United States. But in Massachusetts, they have perverted the word excise to mean a tax on all liquors, whether paid in the moment of importation or at a later moment, and on nothing else. So that in reading the debates of the Massachusetts convention, you must give this last meaning to the word excise.

Rotation is the change of officers required by the laws at certain epochs, and *in a certain order*: thus, in Virginia, our justices of the peace are made sheriffs one after the other, each remaining in office two years, and then yielding it to his next brother in order of seniority. This is the just and classical meaning of the word. But in America, we have extended it (for

want of a proper word) to all cases of officers who must be necessarily changed at a fixed epoch, though the successor be not pointed out in any particular order, but comes in by free election. By the term *rotation in office*, then we mean *an obligation on the holder of that office to go out at a certain period*. In our first Confederation, the principle of rotation was established in the office of President of Congress, who could serve but one year in three, and in that of a member of Congress, who could serve but three years in six.

I believe all the countries in Europe determine their standard of money in gold as well as silver. Thus, the laws of England direct that a pound Troy of gold, of twenty-two carats fine, shall be cut into forty-four and a half guineas, each of which shall be worth twenty-one and a half shillings, that is, into 956 3-4 shillings. This establishes the shilling at 5.518 grains of *pure* gold. They direct that a pound of silver, consisting of 11 1-10 ounces of pure silver and 9-10 of an ounce alloy, shall be cut into sixty-two shillings. This establishes the shilling at 85.93 grains of pure silver, and, consequently, the proportion of gold to silver as 85.93 to 5.518, or as 15.57 to 1. If this be the true proportion between the value of gold and silver at the general market of Europe, then the value of the shilling, depending on two standards, is the same, whether a payment be made in gold or in silver. But if the proportion of the general market at Europe be as fifteen to one, then the Englishman who owes a pound weight of gold at Amsterdam, if he sends the pound of gold to pay it, sends

1043.72 shillings; if he sends fifteen pounds of silver, he sends only 1030.5 shillings; if he pays half in gold and half in silver, he pays only 1037.11 shillings. And this medium between the two standards of gold and silver, we must consider as furnishing the true medium value of the shilling. If the parliament should now order the pound of gold (of one-twelfth alloy as before) to be put into a thousand shillings instead of nine hundred and fifty-six and three-fourths, leaving the silver as it is, the medium or true value of the shilling would suffer a change of half the difference; and in the case before stated, to pay a debt of a pound weight of gold, at Amsterdam, if he sent the pound weight of gold, he would send 1090.9 shillings; if he sent fifteen pounds of silver, he would send 1030.5 shillings; if half in gold and half in silver, he would send 1060.7 shillings; which shows that this parliamentary operation would reduce the value of the shilling in the proportion of 1060.7 to 1037.11.

Now this is exactly the effect of the late change in the quantity of gold contained in your louis. Your *marc d'argent fin* is cut into 53.45 livres (fifty-three livres and nine sous), the *marc de l'or fin* was cut, heretofore, by law, into 784.6 livres (seven hundred and eighty-four livres and twelve sous); gold was to silver then as 14.63 to 1. And if this was different from the proportion at the markets of Europe, the true value of your livre stood half way between the two standards. By the ordinance of October the 30th, 1785, the *marc* of pure gold has been cut into 828.6 livres. If your standard had been in gold alone, this would have reduced

the value of your livre in the proportion of 828.6 to 784.6. But as you had a standard of silver as well as gold, the true standard is the medium between the two; consequently the value of the livre is reduced only one-half the difference, that is, as 806.6 to 784.6, which is very nearly three per cent. Commerce, however, has made a difference of four per cent., the average value of the pound sterling, formerly twenty-four livres, being now twenty-five livres. Perhaps some other circumstance has occasioned an addition of one per cent. to the change of your standard.

I fear I have tired you by these details. I did not mean to be so lengthy when I began. I beg you to consider them as an appeal to your judgment, which I value, and from which I will expect a correction, if they are wrong.

I have the honor to be, with very great esteem and attachment, dear Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE

Paris, May 6, 1789.

My Dear Friend,—As it becomes more and more possible that the Noblesse will go wrong, I become uneasy for you. Your principles are decidedly with the Tiers Etat, and your instructions against them. A complaisance to the latter on some occasions, and an adherence to the former on others, may give an appearance of trimming between the two parties, which may lose you both. You will, in the end, go over wholly to the Tiers Etat, because it will be impossible for you to live in a constant sacrifice of your own sentiments to the prejudices of the Noblesse. But you would be received by the Tiers Etat at any future day, coldly, and without confidence. This appears to me the moment to take at once that honest and manly stand with them which your own principles dictate. This will win their hearts forever, be approved by the world, which marks and honors you as the man of the people, and will be an eternal consolation to yourself. The Noblesse, and especially the Noblesse of Auvergne, will always prefer men who will do their dirty work for them. You are not made for that. They will therefore soon drop you, and the people, in that case, will perhaps not take you up. Suppose a scission should take place. The Priests and Nobles will secede, the nation will remain in place, and, with the King, will do its

own business. If violence should be attempted, where will you be? You cannot then take side with the people in opposition to your own vote, that very vote which will have helped to produce the scission. Still less can you array yourself against the people. That is impossible. Your instructions are indeed a difficulty. But to state this at its worst it is only a single difficulty, which a single effort surmounts. Your instructions can never embarrass you a second time, whereas an acquiescence under them will reproduce greater difficulties every day, and without end. Besides, a thousand circumstances offer as many justifications of your departure from your instructions. Will it be impossible to persuade all parties that (as for good legislation two Houses are necessary) the placing the privileged classes together in one House, and the unprivileged in another, would be better for both than a scission? I own, I think it would. People can never agree without some sacrifices; and it appears but a moderate sacrifice in each party, to meet on this middle ground. The attempt to bring this about might satisfy your instructions, and a failure in it would justify your siding with the people, even to those who think instructions are laws of conduct. Forgive me, my dear friend, if my anxiety for you makes me talk of things I know nothing about. You must not consider this as advice. I know you and myself too well to presume to offer advice. Receive it merely as the expression of my uneasiness, and the effusion of that sincere friendship with which I am, my dear Sir, yours affectionately.

TO WILLIAM CARMICHAEL

Paris, May 8, 1789.

Dear Sir,—Your favor of January the 26th, to March the 27th, is duly received, and I thank you for the interesting papers it contained. The answer of Don Ulloa, however, on the subject of the canal through the American isthmus, was not among them, though mentioned to be so. If you have omitted it through accident, I shall thank you for it at some future occasion, as I wish much to understand that subject thoroughly. Our American information comes down to the 16th of March. There had not yet been members enough assembled of the new Congress to open the tickets. They expected to do it in a day or two. In the meantime, it was said from all the States, that their vote had been unanimous for General Washington, and a good majority in favor of Mr. Adams, who is certainly, therefore, Vice President. The new government would be supported by very cordial and very general dispositions in its favor from the people. I have not yet seen a list of the new Congress. This delay in the meeting of the new government, has delayed the determination on my petition for leave of absence. However, I expect to receive it every day, and am in readiness to sail the instant I receive it, so that this is probably the last letter I shall write you hence till my return. While there, I shall avail government of the useful information I

have received from you, and shall not fail to profit of any good occasion which may occur, to show the difference between your real situation and what it ought to be. I consider Paris and Madrid as the only two points at which Europe and America should touch closely, and that a connection at these points should be fostered.

We have had, in this city, a very considerable riot, in which about one hundred people have been probably killed. It was the most unprovoked, and is, therefore, justly, the most unpitied catastrophe of that kind I ever knew. Nor did the wretches know what they wanted, except to do mischief. It seems to have had no particular connection with the great national question now in agitation. The want of bread is very seriously dreaded through the whole kingdom. Between twenty and thirty ship loads of wheat and flour has already arrived from the United States, and there will be about the same quantity of rice sent from Charleston to this country directly, of which about half has arrived. I presume that between wheat and rice, one hundred ship loads may be counted on in the whole from us. Paris consumes about a ship load a day (say two hundred and fifty tons). The total supply of the West Indies for this year, rests with us, and there is almost a famine in Canada and Nova Scotia. The States General were opened the day before yesterday. Viewing it as an opera, it was imposing; as a scene of business, the King's speech was exactly what it should have been, and very well delivered; not a word of the Chancellor's was heard by anybody, so that, as yet, I have never heard a single guess at what it was about.

Mr. Neckar's was as good as such a number of details would permit it to be. The picture of their resources was consoling, and generally plausible. I could have wished him to have dwelt more on those great constitutional reformatations, which his "Rapport au roy" had prepared us to expect. But they observe, that these points were proper for the speech of the Chancellor. We are in hopes, therefore, they were in that speech, which, like the Revelations of St. John, were no revelations at all. The Noblesse, on coming together, show that they are not as much reformed in their principles as we had hoped they would be. In fact, there is real danger of their totally refusing to vote by persons. Some found hopes on the lower clergy, which constitute four-fifths of the deputies of that order. If they do not turn the balance in favor of the Tiers Etat, there is real danger of a scission. But I shall not consider even that event as rendering things desperate. If the King will do business with the Tiers Etat, which constitutes the nation, it may be well done without Priests or Nobles. From the best information I can obtain, the King of England's madness has terminated in an imbecility, which may very possibly be of long continuance. He is going with his Queen to Germany. England chained to rest, the other parts of Europe may recover or retain tranquillity.

I have the honor to be, with great and sincere esteem, dear Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO MR. LITTLEPAGE

Paris, May 8, 1789.

Dear Sir,—Your favor of February 12th has been duly received, and in exchange for its information, I shall give you that which you desire relative to American affairs. Those of Europe you can learn from other sources. All our States acceded unconditionally to the new Constitution, except North Carolina and Rhode Island. The latter rejects it in toto. North Carolina neither rejected nor received it, but asked certain amendments before it should receive it. Her amendments concur with those asked by Virginia, New York and Massachusetts, and consist chiefly in a declaration of rights. Even the warmest friends to the new form begin to be sensible it wants the security, and it is pretty generally agreed that a declaration of rights shall be added. New York and Virginia, though they have acceded to this government, are less contented with it than the others. In New York, it is the effect of the intrigues and influence of Governor Clinton, who it is hoped will be exchanged for a Judge Yates. In Virginia, it is perhaps the apprehension that the new government will oblige them to pay their debts. Our letters are as late as the 16th of March. There were not yet members enough of the new Congress assembled to open the tickets. It was expected there would be in two or three days. Information, however, from all

the States, gave reason to be satisfied that General Washington was elected unanimously, and Mr. John Adams by a sufficient plurality to ensure his being the Vice President. The elections to Congress had been almost entirely in favor of persons well-disposed to the new government, which proves the mass of the people in its favor. In general, there are the most favorable dispositions to support it, and those heretofore disheartened, now write in great confidence of our affairs. That spirit of luxury which sprung up at the peace, has given place to a laudable economy. Home manufactures are encouraged, and the balance last year was greatly on the side of exportation. The settlement of the Western country has gone on with astonishing rapidity. A late unaccountable event may slacken by scattering it. Spain has granted the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi, with a large tract of country on the western side of the river, to Col. Morgan of New Jersey, to whom great numbers of settlers are flocking over from Kentucky. While this measure weakens somewhat the United States for the present, it begins our possession of that country considerably sooner than I had expected, and without a struggle till no struggle can be made. Great crops of corn last year in the United States, and a great demand for it in British and French America, and in Europe. Remarkable deaths are, Gen. Nelson, and John Bannisters, father and son. I expect every day to receive a leave of absence for six months, and shall sail within a week after receiving it. I hope to be back before winter sets in. I have the honor to be, with very great esteem, dear Sir, your

most obedient humble servant.

TO JOHN JAY

Paris, May 9, 1789.

Sir,—Since my letter of March the 1st, by the way of Havre, and those of March the 12th and 15th, by the way of London, no opportunity of writing has occurred, till the present to London.

There are no symptoms of accommodation between the Turks and two empires, nor between Russia and Sweden. The Emperor was, on the 16th of the last month, expected to die, certainly; he was, however, a little better when the last news came away, so that hopes were entertained of him; but it is agreed that he cannot get the better of his complaints ultimately, so that his life is not at all counted on. The Danes profess, as yet, to do no more against Sweden than furnish their stipulated aid. The agitation of Poland is still violent, though somewhat moderated by the late change in the demeanor of the King of Prussia. He is much less thrasonic than he was. This is imputed to the turn which the English politics may be rationally expected to take. It is very difficult to get at the true state of the British King; but from the best information we can get, his madness has gone off, but he is left in a state of imbecility and melancholy. They are going to carry him to Hanover, to see whether such a journey may relieve him. The Queen accompanies him. If England should, by this accident, be reduced to inactivity, the southern countries

of Europe may escape the present war. Upon the whole, the prospect for the present year, if no unforeseen accident happens, is, certain peace for the powers not already engaged, a probability that Denmark will not become a principal, and a mere possibility that Sweden and Russia may be accommodated. The interior disputes of Sweden are so exactly detailed in the Leyden gazette, that I have nothing to add on that subject.

The revolution of this country has advanced thus far, without encountering anything which deserves to be called a difficulty. There have been riots in a few instances, in three or four different places, in which there may have been a dozen or twenty lives lost. The exact truth is not to be got at. A few days ago, a much more serious riot took place in this city, in which it became necessary for the troops to engage in regular action with the mob, and probably about one hundred of the latter were killed. Accounts vary from twenty to two hundred. They were the most abandoned banditti of Paris, and never was a riot more unprovoked and unpitied. They began, under a pretence that a paper manufacturer had proposed in an assembly to reduce their wages to fifteen sous a day. They rifled his house, destroyed everything in his magazines and shops, and were only stopped in their career of mischief by the carnage above mentioned. Neither this nor any other of the riots, have had a professed connection with the great national reformation going on. They are such as have happened every year since I have been here, and as will continue to be produced by common incidents. The States General were opened

on the 4th instant, by a speech from the throne, one by the Garde des Sceaux, and one from Mr. Neckar. I hope they will be printed in time to send you herewith: lest they should not, I will observe, that that of Mr. Neckar stated the real and ordinary deficit to be fifty-six millions, and that he showed that this could be made up without a new tax, by economies and bonifications which he specified. Several articles of the latter are liable to the objection, that they are proposed on branches of the revenue, of which the nation has demanded a suppression. He tripped too lightly over the great articles of constitutional reformation, these being not as clearly enounced in this discourse as they were in his "Rapport au roy," which I sent you some time ago. On the whole, his discourse has not satisfied the patriotic party. It is now, for the first time, that their revolution is likely to receive a serious check, and begins to wear a fearful appearance. The progress of light and liberality in the order of the Noblesse, has equalled expectation in Paris only and its vicinities. The great mass of deputies of that order, which come from the country, show that the habits of tyranny over the people are deeply rooted in them. They will consent, indeed, to equal taxation; but five-sixths of that chamber are thought to be, decidedly, for voting by orders; so that, had this great preliminary question rested on this body, which formed heretofore the sole hope, that hope would have been completely disappointed. Some aid, however, comes in from a quarter whence none was expected. It was imagined the ecclesiastical elections would have been generally

in favor of the higher clergy; on the contrary, the lower clergy have obtained five-sixths of these deputations. These are the sons of peasants, who have done all the drudgery of the service for ten, twenty and thirty guineas a year, and whose oppressions and penury, contrasted with the pride and luxury of the higher clergy, have rendered them perfectly disposed to humble the latter. They have done it, in many instances, with a boldness they were thought unsusceptible of. Great hopes have been formed, that these would concur with the Tiers Etat in voting by persons. In fact, about half of them seem as yet so disposed; but the bishops are intriguing, and drawing them over with the address which has ever marked ecclesiastical intrigue. The deputies of the Tiers Etat seem, almost to a man, inflexibly determined against the vote by orders. This is the state of parties, as well as can be judged from conversation only, during the fortnight they have been now together. But as no business has been yet begun, no votes as yet taken, this calculation cannot be considered as sure. A middle proposition is talked of, to form the two privileged orders into one chamber. It is thought more possible to bring them into it than the Tiers Etat. Another proposition is, to distinguish questions, referring those of certain descriptions to a vote by persons, others to a vote by orders. This seems to admit of endless altercation, and the Tiers Etat manifest no respect for that, or any other modification whatever. Were this single question accommodated, I am of opinion, there would not occur the least difficulty in the great and essential points

of constitutional reformation. But on this preliminary question the parties are so irreconcilable, that it is impossible to foresee what issue it will have. The Tiers Etat, as constituting the nation, may propose to do the business of the nation, either with or without the minorities in the Houses of Clergy and Nobles which side with them. In that case, if the King should agree to it, the majorities in those two Houses would secede, and might resist the tax gatherers. This would bring on a civil war. On the other hand, the privileged orders, offering to submit to equal taxation, may propose to the King to continue the government in its former train, resuming to himself the power of taxation. Here, the tax gatherers might be resisted by the people. In fine, it is but too possible, that between parties so animated, the King may incline the balance as he pleases. Happy that he is an honest, unambitious man, who desires neither money or power for himself; and that his most operative minister, though he has appeared to trim a little, is still, in the main, a friend to public liberty.

I mentioned to you in a former letter, the construction which our bankers at Amsterdam had put on the resolution of Congress, appropriating the last Dutch loan, by which the money for our captives would not be furnished till the end of the year 1790. Orders from the board of treasury have now settled this question. The interest of the next month is to be first paid, and after that, the money for the captives and foreign officers is to be furnished, before any other payment of interest. This insures it when the next February interest becomes payable. My representations to

them, on account of the contracts I had entered into for making the medals, have produced from them the money of that object, which is lodged in the hands of Mr. Grand.

Mr. Neckar, in his discourse, proposes among his bonifications of revenue, the suppressions of our two free ports of Bayonne and L'Orient, which, he says, occasion a loss of six hundred thousand livres annually, to the crown, by contraband. (The speech being not yet printed, I state this only as it struck my ear when he delivered it. If I have mistaken it, I beg you to receive this as my apology, and to consider what follows as written on that idea only.) I have never been able to see that these free ports were worth one copper to us. To Bayonne our trade never went, and it is leaving L'Orient. Besides, the right of entrepôt is a perfect substitute for the right of free port. The latter is a little less troublesome only, to the merchants and captains. I should think, therefore, that a thing so useless to us and prejudicial to them might be relinquished by us, on the common principles of friendship. I know the merchants of these ports will make a clamor, because the franchise covers their contraband with all the world. Has Monsieur de Moustier said anything to you on this subject? It has never been mentioned to me. If not mentioned in either way, it is rather an indecent proceeding, considering that this right of free port is founded in treaty. I shall ask of M. de Montmorin, on the first occasion, whether he has communicated this to you through his ministry; and if he has not, I will endeavor to notice the infraction to him in such a manner,

as neither to reclaim nor abandon the right of free port, but leave our government free to do either.

The gazettes of France and Leyden, as usual, will accompany this. I am in hourly expectation of receiving from you my leave of absence, and keep my affairs so arranged, that I can leave Paris within eight days after receiving the permission. I have the honor to be, with sentiments of the most perfect esteem and respect, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO GENERAL WASHINGTON

Paris, May 10, 1789.

Sir,—I am now to acknowledge the honor of your two letters of Nov. the 27th and Feb. the 13th, both of which have come to hand since my last to you of Dec. the 4th and 5th. The details you are so good as to give me on the subject of the navigation of the waters of the Potomac and Ohio, are very pleasing to me, as I consider the union of these two rivers, as among the strongest links of connection between the eastern and western sides of our confederacy. It will, moreover, add to the commerce of Virginia, in particular, all the upper parts of the Ohio and its waters. Another vast object, and of much less difficulty, is to add, also, all the country on the lakes and their waters. This would enlarge our field immensely, and would certainly be effected by an union of the upper waters of the Ohio and lake Erie. The Big Beaver and Cayahoga offer the most direct line, and according to information I received from General Hand, and which I had the honor of writing you in the year 1783, the streams in that neighborhood head in lagoons, and the country is flat. With respect to the doubts which you say are entertained by some, whether the upper waters of Potomac can be rendered capable of navigation on account of the falls and rugged banks, they are answered, by observing, that it is reduced to a maxim, that

whenever there is water enough to float a batteau, there may be navigation for a batteau. Canals and locks may be necessary, and they are expensive; but I hardly know what expense would be too great, for the object in question. Probably, negotiations with the Indians, perhaps even settlement, must precede the execution of the Cayahoga canal. The States of Maryland and Virginia should make a common object of it. The navigation, again, between Elizabeth River and the Sound, is of vast importance, and in my opinion, it is much better that these should be done at public than private expense.

Though we have not heard of the actual opening of the new Congress, and consequently, have not official information of your election as President of the United States, yet, as there never could be a doubt entertained of it, permit me to express here my felicitations, not to yourself, but to my country. Nobody who has tried both public and private life, can doubt but that you were much happier on the banks of the Potomac than you will be at New York. But there was nobody so well qualified as yourself, to put our new machine into a regular course of action; nobody, the authority of whose name could have so effectually crushed opposition at home, and produced respect abroad. I am sensible of the immensity of the sacrifice on your part. Your measure of fame was full to the brim; and, therefore, you have nothing to gain. But there are cases wherein it is a duty to risk all against nothing, and I believe this was exactly the case. We may presume, too, according to every rule of probability, that after doing a great

deal of good, you will be found to have lost nothing but private repose.

In a letter to Mr. Jay, of the 19th of Nov., I asked a leave of absence to carry my children back to their own country, and to settle various matters of a private nature, which were left unsettled, because I had no idea of being absent so long. I expected that letter would have been received in time to be decided on by the Government then existing. I know now that it would arrive when there was no Congress, and consequently, that it must have awaited your arrival at New York. I hope you found the request not an unreasonable one. I am excessively anxious to receive the permission without delay, that I may be able to get back before the winter sets in. Nothing can be so dreadful to me, as to be shivering at sea for two or three months in a winter passage. Besides, there has never been a moment at which the presence of a minister here could be so well dispensed with, from certainty of no war this summer, and that the government will be so totally absorbed in domestic arrangements, as to attend to nothing exterior. Mr. Jay will, of course, communicate to you some ciphered letters lately written, and one of this date. My public letter to him contains all the interesting public details. I enclose with the present, some extracts of a letter from Mr. Paine, which he desired me to communicate; your knowledge of the writer will justify my giving you the trouble of these communications, which their interesting nature and his respectability, will jointly recommend to notice. I am in great

pain for the Marquis de La Fayette. His principles, you know, are clearly with the people; but having been elected for the Noblesse of Auvergne, they have laid him under express instructions, to vote for the decision by orders and not persons. This would ruin him with the Tiers Etat, and it is not possible he could continue long to give satisfaction to the Noblesse. I have not hesitated to press on him to burn his instructions, and follow his conscience as the only sure clue, which will eternally guide a man clear of all doubts and inconsistencies. If he cannot effect a conciliatory plan, he will surely take his stand manfully at once, with the Tiers Etat. He will in that case be what he pleases with them, and I am in hopes that base is now too solid to render it dangerous to be mounted on it. In hopes of being able in the course of the summer, to pay my respects to you personally, in New York, I have the honor to be, with sentiments of the most perfect respect and attachment, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

**[Extract of the letter from
Thomas Paine, referred to in the
preceding, to General Washington.]**

"London, March the 12th, 1789. I do not think it is worth while for Congress to appoint any minister at this court. The greater distance Congress observes on this point, the better. It will be all money thrown away, to go to any expense about it, at least during the present reign. I know the nation well, and the line of acquaintance I am in, enables me to judge better on this matter than any other American can judge, especially at a distance. I believe I am not so much in the good graces of the Marquis of Lansdowne as I used to be. I do not answer his purpose. He was always talking of a sort of re-connection of England and America, and my coldness and reserve on this subject checked communication. I believe he would be a good minister for England, with respect to a better agreement with France."

(Same letter continued) "April 10. The acts for regulating the trade with America are to be continued as last year. A paper from the Privy Council respecting the American fly, is before parliament. I had some conversation with Sir Joseph Banks upon this subject, as he was the person whom the Privy Council referred to. I told him that the Hessian fly attacked only the

green plant, and did not exist in the dry grain. He said, that with respect to the Hessian fly, they had no apprehension, but it was the weevil they alluded to. I told him the weevil had always, more or less, been in the wheat countries of America, and that if the prohibition was on that account, it was as necessary fifty or sixty years as now; that I believed it was only a political manœuvre of the ministry to please the landed interest, as a balance for prohibiting the exportation of wool, to please the manufacturing interest. He did not reply, and as we are on very sociable terms, I went farther, by saying, the English ought not to complain of the non-payment of debts from America, while they prohibit the means of payment. I suggest to you a thought on this subject. The debts due before the war ought to be distinguished from the debts contracted since, and all and every mode of payment and remittance under which they might have been discharged at the time they were contracted, ought to accompany those debts so long as any of them shall continue unpaid, because the circumstances of payment became united with the debt, and cannot be separated by subsequent acts of one side only. If this was taken up in America, and insisted on as a right coëval with and inseparable from those debts, it would force some of the restrictions here to give way. While writing this, I am informed that the minister has had a conference with some of the American creditors, and proposed to them to assume the debts, and give them ten shillings in the pound. The conjecture is, that he means, when the new Congress is established, to demand the payment.

If you are writing to General Washington, it may not be amiss to mention this, and if I hear further on this matter, I will inform you. But as, being a money matter, it cannot come forward but through parliament, there will be notice given of the business. This would be a proper time to show, that the British acts since the peace militate against the payment, by narrowing the means by which those debts might have been paid when they were contracted, and which ought to be considered as constituent parts of the contract."

TO JAMES MADISON

Paris, May 11, 1789.

Dear Sir,—My last to you was of the 15th of March. I am now in hourly expectation of receiving my leave of absence. The delay of it a little longer, will endanger the throwing my return into the winter, the very idea of which is horror itself to me. I am in hopes this is the last letter I shall have the pleasure of writing to you, before my departure.

The madness of the King of England has gone off, but left him in a state of imbecility and melancholy. They talk of carrying him to Hanover. If they do, it will be a proof he does not mend, and that they take that measure, to authorize them to establish a regency. But if he grows better, they will perhaps keep him at home, to avoid the question, who shall be regent? As that country cannot be relied on in the present state of its executive, the King of Prussia has become more moderate; he throws cold water on the fermentation he had excited in Poland. The King of Sweden will act as nobody, not even himself, can foresee; because he acts from the caprice of the moment, and because the discontents of his army and nobles may throw him under internal difficulties, while struggling with external ones. Denmark will probably only furnish its stipulated aid to Russia. France is fully occupied with internal arrangement. So that, on the whole, the

prospect of this summer is, that the war will continue between the powers actually engaged in the close of the last campaign, and extend to no others; certainly, it will not extend, this year, to the southern States of Europe. The revolution of France has gone on with the most unexampled success, hitherto. There have been some mobs, occasioned by the want of bread, in different parts of the kingdom, in which there may have been some lives lost; perhaps a dozen or twenty. These had no professed connection, *generally*, with the constitutional revolution. A more serious riot happened lately in Paris, in which about one hundred of the mob were killed. This execution has been universally approved, as they seemed to have no view but mischief and plunder. But the meeting of the States General presents serious difficulties, which it had been hoped the progress of reason would have enabled them to get over. The nobility of and about Paris, have come over, as was expected, to the side of the people, in the great question of voting by persons or orders. This had induced a presumption that those of the country were making the same progress, and these form the great mass of the deputies of that order. But they are found to be where they were centuries ago, as to their disposition to keep distinct from the people, and even to tyrannize over them. They agree, indeed, to abandon their pecuniary privileges. The clergy seem, at present, much divided. Five-sixths of that representation consists of the lower clergy, who, being the sons of the peasantry, are very well with the Tiers Etat. But the Bishops are intriguing, and drawing them over

daily. The Tiers Etat is so firm to vote by persons or to go home, that it is impossible to conjecture what will be the result. This is the state of parties, as well as we can conjecture from the conversation of the members; for, as yet, no vote has been given which will enable us to calculate, on certain ground.

Having formerly written to you on the subject of our finances, I enclose you now an abstract of a paper on that subject, which Gouverneur Morris communicated to me. You will be a better judge of its merit than I am. It seems to me worthy good attention.

I have a box of books packed for you, which I shall carry to Havre, and send by any ship bound to New York or Philadelphia. I have been so inexact as to take no list of them before nailing up the box. Be so good as to do this, and I will take with me my bookseller's account, which will enable us to make a statement of them. They are chiefly Encyclopedies, from the twenty-third to the thirtieth livraison. Paul Jones has desired me to send to yourself and Colonel Carrington each, his bust. They are packed together in the same box. There are three other boxes, with two in each, for other gentlemen. I shall send them all together, and take the liberty of addressing them to you. I rejoice extremely to hear you are elected, in spite of all cabals. I fear your post will not permit me to see you but in New York, and consequently but a short time only. I shall much regret this.

I am, with sentiments of sincere attachment and respect, dear Sir, your friend and servant.

TO THE HONORABLE MR. JAY

Paris, May 12, 1789.

Sir,—I am this moment returned from Versailles, and it is the last moment allowed me to write by this occasion. The Tiers Etat remain unshaken in their resolution to do no business with the other orders, but voting by persons. The Nobles are equally determined, and by a majority of four-fifths or five-sixths to vote only by orders. Committees of accommodation indeed are appointed, but with little prospect of effect. Already the ministry of the Nobles began to talk of abandoning their body, and going to take their places among the Tiers. Perhaps they may be followed by the timid part of their orders, and it might be hoped, by a majority of the Clergy, which still remain undebauched by the bishops. This would form a States General of the whole Tiers, a majority of the Clergy, and a fraction of the Nobles. This may be considered, then, as one of the possible issues this matter may take, should reconciliation be impracticable.

I am able to speak now more surely of the situation of the Emperor. His complaint is pulmonary. The spitting of blood is from the lungs. The hemorrhage which came on was critical, and relieved him for the moment; but the relief was momentary only. There is little expectation he can last long. The King of England's voyage to Hanover is spoken of more doubtfully. This would be

an indication that his complaint is better, or, at least, not worse. I find, on receiving Mr. Neckar's discourse in print, that he has not proposed in direct terms to put down our free ports. The expression is, "on se borne en ce moment a vous faire observer," &c., &c. I spoke on the subject to M. de Montmorin to-day, and he says they meant and mean to confer with me on it before my departure. I spoke to him also to bring Schweighauser and De Bree's affair to a conclusion; and to Mr. Rayneval on the same subject. They told me they had just received a letter from the Count de La Luzerne, justifying the detention of our stores; that they were so much dissatisfied with the principles he advanced, that they should take upon themselves to combat and protest against them, and to insist on a clear establishment of the rule that the property of one sovereign within the dominions of another, is not liable to the territorial jurisdiction. They have accordingly charged one of their ablest counsels with the preparation of a memoir to establish this point. I have the honor to be, with sentiments of the most perfect esteem and respect, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO MONSIEUR DE PONTIÈRE

Paris, May 17, 1789.

Sir,—I am honored with your letter of the 6th instant, and am sincerely sorry that you should experience inconveniences for the want of arrearages due to you from the United States. I have never ceased to take every measure which could promise to procure to the foreign officers the payment of these arrears. At present, the matter stands thus: Congress have agreed to borrow a sum of money in Holland, to enable them to pay the individual demands in Europe. They have given orders that these arrearages shall be paid out of this money, when borrowed, and certain bankers in Amsterdam are charged to borrow the money. I am myself of opinion, they will certainly procure the money in the course of the present year; but it is not for me to affirm this, nor to make any engagement. The moment the money is ready, it shall be made known to Colonel Gourion, who, at the desire of many of the officers, has undertaken to communicate with me on the subject, and to inform them, from time to time, of the progress of this business. He will readily answer your letters on this subject. I depart in a few days for America, but shall leave such instructions here, as that this matter will suffer no delay on that account.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your most obedient humble servant.

TO MR. VAUGHAN

Paris, May 17, 1789.

Dear Sir,—I am to acknowledge, all together, the receipt of your favors of March the 17th, 26th, and May the 7th, and to return you abundant thanks for your attention to the article of dry rice, and the parcel of seeds you sent me. This is interesting, because, even should it not take place of the wet rice, in South Carolina, it will enable us to cultivate this grain in Virginia, where we have not lands disposed for the wet rice. The collection of the works of Monsieur de Poivre has not, as I believe, been ever published. It could hardly have escaped my knowledge if they had been ever announced. The French translation of the book on trade, has not yet come to my hands. Whenever I receive the copies they shall be distributed, and principally among the members of the Etats Generaux. I doubt whether, at this session, they will take up the subject of commerce. Whenever they do, they will find better principles nowhere than in that book. I spoke with Mr. Stewart yesterday on the subject of the distribution, and if I should be gone before the books come to hand, he will execute the commission. Your nation is very far from the liberality that treatise inculcates. The proposed regulation on the subject of our wheat, is one proof. The prohibition of it in England would, of itself, be of no great moment, because I do not

know that it is much sent there. But it is the publishing a libel on our wheat, sanctioned with the name of parliament, and which can have no object but to do us injury, by spreading a groundless alarm in those countries of Europe where our wheat is constantly and kindly received. It is a mere assassination. If the insect they pretend to fear, be the Hessian fly, it never existed in the grain. If it be the weevil, our grain always had that; and the experience of a century has proved that either the climate of England is not warm enough to hatch the egg and continue the race, or that some other unknown cause prevents any evil from it. How different from this spirit, my dear Sir, has been your readiness to help us to the dry rice, to communicate to us the bread tree, &c. Will any of our climates admit the cultivation of the latter? I am too little acquainted with it, to judge. I learn that your newspapers speak of the death of Ledyard, at Grand Cairo. I am anxious to know whether there be foundation for this. I have not yet had time to try the execution of the wood hygrometer proposed by Dr. Franklin. Though I have most of the articles ready made, I doubt now whether I shall be able to do it before my departure for America, the permission for which, I expect every hour; and I shall go off the instant I receive it. While there, I shall have the pleasure of seeing your father and friends. I expect to return in the fall. In the meantime I have the honor to be, with very great esteem and respect, dear Sir, your most obedient humble servant.

TO THOMAS PAINE

Paris, May 19, 1789.

Dear Sir,—Your favors of February the 16th to April the 13th, and of May the 3d and 10th, are received; and the two last are sent to Mr. Leroy, who will communicate them to the Academy.

You know that the States General have met, and probably have seen the speeches at the opening of them. The three orders sit in distinct chambers. The great question, whether they shall vote by orders or persons can never be surmounted amicably. It has not yet been proposed in form; but the votes which have been taken on the outworks of that question show that the Tiers Etat are unanimous, a good majority of the Clergy (consisting of the Curés) disposed to side with the Tiers Etat, and in the chamber of the Noblesse, there are only fifty-four in that sentiment, against one hundred and ninety, who are for voting by orders. Committees to find means of conciliation are appointed by each chamber; but conciliation is impossible. Some think the Nobles could be induced to unite themselves with the *higher Clergy* into one House, the lower Clergy and Tiers Etat forming another. But the Tiers Etat are immovable. They are not only firm, but a little disdainful. The question is, what will ensue? One idea is to separate, in order to consult again their constituents, and to take new instructions. This would be doing nothing, for the

same instructions would be repeated; and what, in the meantime, is to become of a government, absolutely without money, and which cannot be kept in motion with less than a million of livres a day? The more probable expectation is as follows. As soon as it shall become evident that no amicable determination of the manner of voting can take place, the Tiers Etat will send an invitation to the two other orders to come and take their places in the common chamber. A majority of the Clergy will go, and the minority of the Noblesse. The chamber thus composed will declare that the States General are constituted, will notify it to the King, and that they are ready to proceed to business. If the King refuses to do business with them, and adheres to the Nobles, the common chamber will declare all taxes at an end, will form a declaration of rights, and do such other acts as circumstances will permit, and go home. The tax-gatherers will then be resisted, and it may well be doubted whether the soldiery and their officers will not divide, as the Tiers Etat and Nobles. But it is more likely that the King will agree to do business with the States General, so constituted, professing that the necessities of the moment force this, and that he means to negotiate (as they go along) a reconciliation between the seceding members and those which remain. If the matter takes this turn, there may be small troubles and ebullitions excited by the seceding Noblesse and higher Clergy; but no serious difficulty can arise. M. de Lamoignon, the Garde des Sceaux of the last year, has shot himself. The Emperor's complaint is pulmonary and incurable.

The Grand Seignior is dead; his successor, young and warlike. I congratulate you sincerely on the success of your bridge. I was sure of it before from theory; yet one likes to be assured from practice also. I am anxious to see how Mr. Rumsey's experiment succeeds.

May the 21st. I have this moment received a letter from Ledyard, dated Cairo, November the 15th. He therein says, "I am doing up my baggage, and most curious baggage it is, and I leave Cairo in two or three days. I travel from hence southwest, about three hundred leagues, to a black King; there my present conductors leave me to my fate. Beyond, I suppose, I go alone. I expect to hit the continent across, between the parallels of twelve and twenty degrees north latitude. I shall, if possible, write you from the kingdom of this black gentleman." This seems to contradict the story of his having died at Cairo in January, as he was then, probably, in the interior parts of Africa. If Sir Joseph Banks has no news from him later than the letter of September, it may do him pleasure, if you will communicate the above. If he or any other person knows whether there is any foundation for the story of his death, I will thank you to inform me of it. My letter being to go off to-morrow, I shall only add assurances of the esteem and respect with which I am, dear Sir, your friend and servant.

TO DOCTOR PRICE

Paris, May 19, 1789.

Dear Sir,—Your favor of the 4th instant is duly received. I am in hourly expectation of receiving letters permitting me to go to America for a few months, and shall leave Paris within a very few days after I shall have received them. As this is probably the last letter I can have the honor of writing you before my return, I will do myself the pleasure of putting you in possession of the state of things here at this moment, as it may enable you better to decide between truth and falsehood for some time to come. You already know that the States General are met, and have seen the speeches of the King, the Garde des Sceaux, and of Mr. Neckar. The three orders as yet, set in different chambers. The great parliamentary question whether they shall vote by orders or persons is undecided. It has not yet been formally proposed, but the votes already given in the separate chambers on the outworks of that question, show that the Tiers Etat are unanimous for voting by persons. A good majority of the Clergy of the same disposition, and only fifty-four of the Noblesse against one hundred and ninety of the same body, who are for voting by orders. The chambers have appointed committees to confer together on the means of conciliation, but this is mere form, conciliation being impracticable. The Noblesse, as some think,

would be induced to unite themselves into one house, with the higher Clergy, the lower Clergy and Tiers forming another. But the Tiers are firm, and will agree to no modification. They are disposed to reduce the State to one order as much as possible. As we are always disposed to conjecture on the future, it is natural to form conjectures as to the issue from the present difficulty. One idea is, that they will separate to consult their constituents. I think they will not do this, because they know their constituents will repeat the same instructions. And what in the meantime is to become of a government which cannot keep in motion with less than a million of livres a day? A more probable conjecture is, that when it shall be manifest that conciliation is impracticable, the Tiers will invite the other orders to come and take their places in the common chamber. The majority of the Clergy, (to wit, the curés, and the minority of the Noblesse,) will accept the invitation. The chamber thus composed, will declare that the States General are now constituted, will notify it to the King, and prepare to proceed to business. If he refuses to acknowledge them, and adheres to the principles of the Noblesse, they will suspend all taxes, form a declaration of rights, and do such other acts as circumstances will admit, and go home. The tax-gatherers will be resisted, and perhaps the soldiery take side with the Tiers, and their officers with the Noblesse. But I rather suppose the King will do business with the States so constituted, negotiating at the same time as they go along, a reconciliation with the seceding members. The latter may in that case excite small and

partial troubles, but cannot make a serious resistance. It is very important that the lower Clergy side with the Tiers. They are the effective part of that order, while the bishops and archbishops are held in detestation. But you are to keep in mind that these are conjectures, and you know how small a circumstance may give a totally different turn from what has been plausibly conjectured. My hope is that the mass of the Bourgeoisie is too well in motion, and too well-informed to be resisted or misled, and ultimately that this great country will obtain a good constitution, and show the rest of Europe that reformation in government follows reformation in opinion. I am, with sentiments of the most perfect esteem and attachment, dear Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO MONSIEUR DE CREVECOEUR

Paris, May 20, 1789.

Dear Sir,—I am now to acknowledge the receipt of your several letters of October 20th, November 20th, and January 2d, and to thank you for the pamphlets you have been so kind as to send me. A conveyance by the way of London enables me to write the present, for I never think of writing *news* by the circumnavigation of the Bordeaux packet. You know that your States General are met, and you have seen the speeches of the King and his ministers at the opening of it, for I take for granted, M. de Montmorin has sent them to M. de Moustier, as I have done to Mr. Jay. I was present at that august ceremony. Had it been enlightened with lamps and chandeliers, it would have been almost as brilliant as the opera. Till now your affairs have gone on with a smoothness and rapidity which has been never before seen. At this moment, however, they are at a dead stand. The great preliminary question, whether they shall vote by orders or persons, seems to threaten a scission. They have not yet ventured to present the question in form, but the votes which have been given by the separate chambers on the outworks of that question, enables us to see pretty clearly the strength of the two parties. For voting by persons are 1, the Tiers Etat, unanimous; 2, a good majority of the Clergy, consisting of the curés; 3, fifty-four

members of the Noblesse. For voting by orders are 1, the residue of the Nobles being about 190; 2, a minority in the Clergy, consisting of the bishops and archbishops, &c. All the world is conjecturing how they are to get over the difficulty. Abundance are affrighted, and think all is lost, and the nation in despair at this unsuccessful effort, will consign itself to tenfold despotism. This is rank cowardice. Others propose that the members shall go back to ask new instructions from their constituents. This would be useless, because they know that the same instructions would be repeated, and who can say what new event, internal or external, might shuffle this glorious game out of their hands? Another hypothesis, which I shall develop, because I like it, and wish it, and hope it, is, that as soon as it shall be manifest that the committees of conciliation, now appointed by the three chambers, shall be able to agree in nothing, the Tiers will invite the other two orders to come and take their seats in the common chamber. A majority of the Clergy will come, and the minority of the Nobles. The chamber thus composed, will declare that the States General are now constituted, will notify it to the King, and propose to do business. It may be hoped he will accede to their proposition, justifying it by the necessity of the moment, and negotiating as they go along, the return of the other members of the Noblesse and Clergy. If he should, on the contrary, refuse to receive them as the States General, and adheres to the principles of the Noblesse, it may possibly happen that the Tiers will declare all taxes discontinued, form a declaration of rights, and do such

other acts as circumstances will admit, and return every man to his tent. The tax-gatherers might be resisted, and the body of the army found to be disposed differently from their officers. All this will be avoided by admitting this composition of the chamber to be the States General, and pursuing modes of conciliation. These indeed will be difficult for the orders, as the Tiers seem determined to break down all the barriers of the separation of the several orders, and to have in future but one. I would have put off writing to you a few days longer, in hopes of informing you of the unravelling of this knot, but I am in hourly expectation of receiving my leave of absence, and am so prepared for my departure, that a very few days will enable me to set out for America, where I shall have the pleasure of relating to you more accurately the state of things here, of delivering you letters from your sons, and of assuring you in person of those sentiments of esteem and respect, with which I have the honor to be, dear Sir, your most obedient humble servant.

P. S. I have sent to M. le Comte de Moustier a list of the Deputies of the States.

TO MONSIEUR DE LA FAYETTE

Paris, June 3, 1789.

Dear Sir,—Revolving further in my mind the idea started yesterday of the King's coming forward in a *seance royale*, and offering a charter containing all the good in which all the parties agree, I like it more and more. I have ventured to sketch such a charter merely to convey my idea, which I now enclose to you, as I do also to M. de St. Etienne. I write him a letter of apology for my meddling in a business where I know so little and you and he so much. I have thought it better to possess him immediately of the paper, because he may at the conference of to-day sound the minds of the conferees. Yours affectionately.

TO MONSIEUR DE ST. ETIENNE

Paris, June 3, 1789.

Sir,—After you quitted us yesterday evening, we continued our conversation (Monsieur de La Fayette, Mr. Short and myself) on the subject of the difficulties which environ you. The desirable object being, to secure the good which the King has offered, and to avoid the ill which seems to threaten, an idea was suggested, which appearing to make an impression on Monsieur de La Fayette, I was encouraged to pursue it on my return to Paris, to put it into form, and now to send it to you and him. It is this; that the King, in a *seance royale* should come forward with a Charter of Rights in his hand, to be signed by himself and by every member of the three orders. This charter to contain the five great points which the Resultat of December offered, on the part of the King, the abolition of pecuniary privileges offered by the privileged orders, and the adoption of the national debt, and a grant of the sum of money asked from the nation. This last will be a cheap price for the preceding articles; and let the same act declare your immediate separation till the next anniversary meeting. You will carry back to your constituents more good than ever was effected before without violence, and you will stop exactly at the point where violence would otherwise begin. Time will be gained, the public mind will continue to

ripen and to be informed, a basis of support may be prepared with the people themselves, and expedients occur for gaining still something further at your next meeting, and for stopping again at the point of force. I have ventured to send to yourself and Monsieur de La Fayette a sketch of my ideas of what this act might contain, without endangering any dispute. But it is offered merely as a canvas for you to work on, if it be fit to work on at all. I know too little of the subject, and you know too much of it, to justify me in offering anything but a hint. I have done it, too, in a hurry; insomuch, that since committing it to writing, it occurs to me that the fifth article may give alarm; that it is in a good degree included in the fourth, and is, therefore, useless. But after all, what excuse can I make, Sir, for this presumption. I have none but an unmeasurable love for your nation, and a painful anxiety lest despotism, after an unaccepted offer to bind its own hands, should seize you again with tenfold fury. Permit me to add to these, very sincere assurances of the sentiments of esteem and respect, with which I have the honor to be, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

**[The annexed is the Charter
accompanying the two preceding letters.]**

**A Charter of Rights, solemnly
established by the King and Nation**

1. The States General shall assemble, uncalled, on the first day of November, annually, and shall remain together so long as they shall see cause. They shall regulate their own elections and proceedings, and until they shall ordain otherwise, their elections shall be in the forms observed in the present year, and shall be triennial.

2. The States General alone shall levy money on the nation, and shall appropriate it.

3. Laws shall be made by the States General only, with the consent of the King.

4. No person shall be restrained of his liberty, but by regular process from a court of justice, authorized by a general law. (Except that a Noble may be imprisoned by order of a court of justice, on the prayer of twelve of his nearest relations.) On complaint of an unlawful imprisonment, to any judge whatever, he shall have the prisoner immediately brought before him, and shall discharge him, if his imprisonment be unlawful. The officer

in whose custody the prisoner is, shall obey the orders of the judge; and both judge and officer shall be responsible, civilly and criminally, for a failure of duty herein.

5. The military shall be subordinate to the civil authority.

6. Printers shall be liable to legal prosecution for printing and publishing false facts, injurious to the party prosecuting; but they shall be under no other restraint.

7. All pecuniary privileges and exemptions, enjoyed by any description of persons, are abolished.

8. All debts already contracted by the King, are hereby made the debts of the nation; and the faith thereof is pledged for their payment in due time.

9. Eighty millions of livres are now granted to the King, to be raised by loan, and reimbursed by the nation; and the taxes heretofore paid, shall continue to be paid to the end of the present year, and no longer.

10. The States General shall now separate, and meet again on the 1st day of November next.

Done, on behalf of the whole nation, by the King and their representatives in the States General, at Versailles, this – day of June, 1789.

Signed by the King, and by every member individually, and in his presence.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE

Paris, June 12, 1789.

My Dear Sir,—As I may not be able to get at you, at Versailles, I write this to deliver it myself at your door. With respect to the utility, or inutility of your minority's joining the Commons, I am unable to form an opinion for myself. I know too little of the subject to see what may be its consequences.

I never knew an instance of the English parliament's undertaking to relieve the poor, by a distribution of bread in time of scarcity. In fact, the English commerce is so extensive and so active, that though bread may be a little more or less plenty, there can never be an absolute failure. This island is so narrow, that corn can be readily carried from the sea ports to its interior parts. But were an absolute want to happen, and were the parliament to undertake a distribution of corn, I think, that according to the principles of their government, they would only vote a sum of money, and address the King to employ it for the best. The business is, in its nature, executive, and would require too great a variety of detail to be managed by an act of parliament. However, I repeat it, that I never heard or read of an instance of the parliament's interfering to give bread. If I see you at Versailles to-day, I can be more particular.

I am with great sincerity, my dear Sir, your affectionate friend

and servant.

TO JOHN JAY

Paris, June 17, 1789.

Sir,—I had the honor of addressing you on the 9th and 12th of May, by the way of London. This goes through the same channel to the care of Mr. Trumbull. Having received no letter from you of later date than the 25th of November, I am apprehensive that there may have been miscarriages, and the more so, as I learn, through another channel, that you have particularly answered mine of November the 19th.

The death of the Grand Seignior, which has happened, renders the continuance of the war more probable, as it has brought to the throne a successor of a more active and ardent temper, and who means to put himself at the head of his armies. He has declared the Captain Pacha his Generalissimo. The prospects for Russia, on the other hand, are less encouraging. Her principal ally, the Emperor, is at death's door, blazing up a little indeed, from time to time, like an expiring taper, but certainly to extinguish soon. Denmark too, is likely to be restrained by the threats of England and Prussia, from contributing even her stipulated naval succors. It is some time since I have been able to obtain any account of the King of England, on which I can rely with confidence. His melancholy continues, and to such a degree, as to render him absolutely indifferent to everything that passes, so that he seems

willing to let his ministers do everything they please, provided they will let him alone. When forced to speak, his comprehension seems better than it was in the first moments after his phrensy went off. His health is bad; he does not go into public at all, and very few are admitted to see him. This is his present state, according to the best accounts I have been able to get lately. His ministers dictate boldly in the north, because they know it is impossible they should be engaged in the war, while this country is so completely palsied.

You will have seen, by my former letters, that the question, whether the States General should vote by persons or by orders, had stopped their proceedings in the very first instances in which it could occur, that is, as to the verification of their powers, and that they had appointed committees to try if there were any means of accommodation. These could do nothing. The King then proposed that they should appoint others, to meet persons whom he should name, on the same subject. These conferences also proved ineffectual. He then proposed a specific mode of verifying. The Clergy accepted it unconditionally. The Noblesse, with such conditions and modifications, as did away their acceptance altogether. The Commons, considering this as a refusal, came to the resolution of the 10th instant, (which I have the honor to send you,) inviting the two other orders to come and take their places in the common room, and notifying that they should proceed to the verification of powers, and to the affairs of the nation, either with or without them. The Clergy

have, as yet, given no answer. A few of their members have accepted the invitation of the Commons, and have presented themselves in their room, to have their powers verified; but how many it will detach, in the whole, from that body, cannot be known till an answer be decided on. The Noblesse adhered to their former resolutions, and even the minority, well disposed to the Commons, thought they could do more good in their own chamber, by endeavoring to increase their numbers and fettering the measures of the majority, than by joining the Commons. An intrigue was set on foot between the leaders of the majority in that House, the Queen and Princes. They persuaded the King to go for some time to Marly; he went. On the same day, the leaders moved in the chamber of Nobles, that they should address the King, to declare his own sentiments on the great question between the orders. It was intended that this address should be delivered to him at Marly, where, separated from his ministers, and surrounded by the Queen and Princes, he might be surprised into a declaration for the Nobles. The motion was lost, however, by a very great majority, that chamber being not yet quite ripe for throwing themselves into the arms of despotism. Neckar and Montmorin who had discovered this intrigue, had warned some of the minority to defeat it, or they could not answer for what would happen. These two and St. Priest, are the only members of the Council in favor of the Commons. Luzerne, Puy-Segur and the others, are high aristocrats. The Commons having verified their powers, a motion was made the day before yesterday, to

declare themselves constituted, and to proceed to business. I left them at two o'clock yesterday; the debates not then finished. They differed only about forms of expression, but agreed in the substance, and probably decided yesterday, or will decide to-day. Their next move, I fancy, will be to suppress all taxes, and instantly re-establish them till the end of their session, in order to prevent a premature dissolution; and then, they will go to work on a declaration of rights and a constitution. The Noblesse, I suppose, will be employed altogether in counter operations; the Clergy, that is to say, the higher Clergy, and such of the Curés as they can bring over to their side, will be waiting and watching, merely to keep themselves in their saddles. Their deportment, hitherto, is that of meekness and cunning. The fate of the nation depends on the conduct of the King and his ministers. Were they to side openly with the Commons, the revolution would be completed without a convulsion, by the establishment of a constitution, tolerably free, and in which the distinction of Noble and Commoner would be suppressed. But this is scarcely possible. The King is honest, and wishes the good of his people; but the expediency of an hereditary aristocracy is too difficult a question for him. On the contrary, his prejudices, his habits and his connections, decide him in his heart to support it. Should they decide openly for the Noblesse, the Commons, after suppressing taxes, and finishing their declaration of rights, would probably go home; a bankruptcy takes place in the instant. Mr. Neckar must go out, a resistance to the tax-gatherers follows, and probably

a civil war. These consequences are too evident and violent, to render this issue likely. Though the Queen and Princes are infatuated enough to hazard it, the party in the ministry would not. Something, therefore, like what I hinted in my letter of May the 12th, is still the most likely to take place. While the Commons, either with or without their friends of the other two Houses, shall be employed in framing a constitution, perhaps the government may set the other two Houses to work on the same subject; and when the three schemes shall be ready, joint committees may be negotiated, to compare them together, to see in what parts they agree; and probably they will agree in all, except the organization of the future States General. As to this, it may be endeavored, by the aid of wheedling and intimidation, to induce the two privileged chambers to melt themselves into one, and the Commons, instead of one, to agree to two Houses of legislation. I see no other middle ground to which they can be brought.

It is a tremendous cloud, indeed, which hovers over this nation, and he at the helm has neither the courage nor the skill necessary to weather it. Eloquence in a high degree, knowledge in matters of account and order, are distinguishing traits in his character. Ambition is his first passion, virtue his second. He has not discovered that sublime truth, that a bold, unequivocal virtue is the best handmaid even to ambition, and would carry him further, in the end, than the temporising, wavering policy he pursues. His judgment is not of the first order, scarcely even of

the second; his resolution frail; and, upon the whole, it is rare to meet an instance of a person so much below the reputation he has obtained. As this character, by the post and times in which providence has placed it, is important to be known, I send it to you as drawn by a person of my acquaintance, who knows him well. He is not, indeed, his friend, and allowance must, therefore, be made for the high coloring. But this being abated, the facts and groundwork of the drawing are just. If the Tiers separate, he goes at the same time; if they stay together, and succeed in establishing a constitution to their mind, as soon as that is placed in safety, they will abandon him to the mercy of the court, unless he can recover the confidence which he has lost at present, and which, indeed, seems to be irrecoverable.

The inhabitants of St. Domingo, without the permission of the Government, have chosen and sent deputies to the States General. The question of their admission is to be discussed by the States. In the meantime, the Government had promised them an Assembly in their own island, in the course of the present year. The death of the Dauphin, so long expected, has at length happened. Montmorin told Ternant the other day, that de Moustier had now asked a congé, which would be sent him immediately. So that unless a change of ministry should happen, he will, probably, be otherwise disposed of. The gazettes of France and Leyden accompany this. I have the honor to be, with the most perfect esteem and respect, Sir, your most obedient humble servant.

P. S. June 18. The motion under debate with the Commons, for constituting their Assembly, passed yesterday by a majority of four hundred and odd, against eighty odd. The latter were for it in substance, but wished some particular amendment. They proceeded instantly to the subject of taxation. A member, who called on me this moment, gave me a state of the proceedings of yesterday, from memory, which I enclose you. He left the House a little before the question was put, because he saw there was no doubt of its passing, and his brother, who remained till the decision, informed him of it. So that we may expect, perhaps, in the course of to-morrow, to see whether the government will interpose with a bold hand, or will begin a negotiation. But in the meantime, this letter must go off. I will find some other opportunity, however, of informing you of the issue.

**[Character of Mr. Neckar,
accompanying the preceding letter.]**

Nature bestowed on Mr. Neckar an ardent passion for glory, without, at the same time, granting him those qualities required for its pursuit by direct means. The union of a fruitful imagination, with a limited talent, with which she has endowed him, is always incompatible with those faculties of the mind which qualify their possessor to penetrate, to combine, and to comprehend all the relations of objects.

He had probably learned in Geneva, his native country, the

influence which riches exercise on the success of ambition, without having recourse to the school of Paris, where he arrived about the twenty-eighth year of his age. A personal affair with his brother, in which the chiefs of the republic conducted themselves unjustly towards him, the circumstances of which, moreover, exposed him to ridicule, determined him to forsake his country. On taking his leave, he assured his mother that he would make a great fortune at Paris. On his arrival, he engaged himself as clerk, at a salary of six hundred livres, with the banker Thelusson, a man of extreme harshness in his intercourse with his dependents. The same cause which obliged other clerks to abandon the service of Thelusson, determined Neckar to continue in it. By submitting to the brutality of his master with a servile resignation, whilst, at the same time, he devoted the most unremitting attention to his business, he recommended himself to his confidence, and was taken into partnership. Ordinary abilities only, were requisite to avail him of the multitude of favorable circumstances, which, before he entered into the administration, built up a fortune of six millions of livres. He owed much of his good fortune to his connections with the Abbé Terrai, of whose ignorance he did not scruple to profit. His riches, his profession, his table, and a virtuous, reasonable and well-informed wife, procured him the acquaintance of many persons of distinction, among whom were many men of letters, who celebrated his knowledge and wisdom.

The wise and just principles by which Turgot aimed to correct

the abuses of the administration, not having been received with favor, he seized the occasion to flatter ignorance and malignity, by publishing his work against the freedom of the corn trade. He had published, two years before, an eulogy on Colbert. Both these productions exhibited the limited capacity of a banker, and, in no degree, the enlarged views of a statesman. Not at all delicate in the choice of his means, he succeeded to his wish in his object, which was the establishing himself in public opinion. Elevated by a secret cabal, to the direction of the finances, he began by refusing the salaries of his office. He affected a spirit of economy and austerity, which imposed even on foreign nations, and showed the possibility of making war without laying new taxes. Such, at least, was his boast; but, in reality, they have been increased under his administration, about twenty millions, partly by a secret augmentation of the *bailles* and of the poll-tax, partly by some versifications of the *twentieths*, and partly by the natural progression, which is tested by the amount of taxes on consumption, the necessary result of the successive increase of population, of riches, and of expensive tastes.

All these circumstances reared for him an astonishing reputation, which his fall has consecrated. People will not reflect, that, in the short period of his ministry, he had more than doubled his fortune. Not that he had peculated on the public treasury; his good sense and pride forbade a resort to this manœuvre of weak minds; but by resorting to loans and the costly operations of the bank, to provide the funds of war, and being still connected with

the house to which he addressed himself for much the greater part of his negotiations. They have not remarked that his great principles of economy have nothing more than a false show, and that the loans resorted to, in order to avoid the imposition of taxes, have been the source of the mischief which has reduced the finances to their present alarming condition.

As to his *compte rendu*; he has been forgiven the nauseous panegyric which he has passed upon himself, and the affectation of introducing his wife into it, for the purpose of praising her: and we are spared the trouble of examining his false calculations. M. de Calonnes has undertaken this investigation. Without being able to vindicate himself, he has already begun to unmask his antagonist, and he promises to do it effectually.

Necessity has recalled this man to the ministry; and it must be confessed that he is beyond comparison a less mischievous minister than his predecessors. I would compare him to a steward, who, by his management, does not entirely ruin his master, but who enriches himself at his expense. The desire of glory should inspire him as much as possible with the energy requisite for the public business. There is every likelihood that his ministry will not endure long enough to cause it to feel the effects of his false principles of administration; and it is he alone who is able, if any one can, to preserve order in the finances, until the reform is effected which we hope from the assembling of the States General. In the meantime the public estimation of his talents and virtue is not so high as it has been.

There are persons who pretend that he is more firmly established in public opinion than he ever was. They deceive themselves. The ambitious desire he has always manifested of getting again into the administration, his work on the importance of religious opinions, and the memoirs of M. de Calannes, have greatly impaired his reputation.

TO JAMES MADISON

Paris, June 18, 1789.

Sir,—My last to you was of May the 11th. Yours of March the 29th, came to hand ten days ago; and about two days ago I received a cover of your hand writing, under which were a New York paper of May the 4th, and a letter from Mr. Page to Mazzei. There being no letter from you, makes me hope there is one on the way, which will inform me of my congé. I have never received Mr. Jay's answer to my public letter, of November the 19th, which you mention him to have written, and which I fear has been intercepted. I know only from you, that my letter got safe to hand. My baggage has been made up more than a month, so that I shall leave Paris almost in the instant of receiving the permission.

The campaign begins under unfavorable auspices for Russia. The death of the Grand Seignior, who was personally disposed for peace, has brought a young and ardent successor to the throne, determined to push the war to extremity. Her only ally, the Emperor, is in *articulo mortis*, and the Grand Duke of Tuscany, should he succeed, loves peace and money. Denmark is forbidden by England and Prussia to furnish even its stipulated maritime aid. There is no appearance of any other power's engaging in the war. As far as I can discover, the King of England is somewhat

better in his head, but under such a complete depression of spirits, that he does not care how the world goes, and leaves his ministers to do as they please. It is impossible for you to conceive how difficult it is to know the truth relative to him, he is environed in such an atmosphere of lies. Men who would not speak a falsehood on any other subject, lie on this, from a principle of duty; so that even eye witnesses cannot be believed without scanning their principles and connections; and few will stand this, of the very few permitted to see him.

Committees of conciliation having failed in their endeavors to bring together the three chambers of the States General, the King proposed a specific mode of verifying their powers; for that having been the first question which presented itself to them, was the one in which the question of voting by persons or orders was first brought on. The Clergy accepted unconditionally. The Noblesse accepted on conditions which reduced the acceptance to nothing at all. The Commons considered this as a refusal on the part of the Nobles, and thereupon took their definitive resolution, to invite the other two orders to come and verify their powers in common, and to notify them they should proceed with or without them to verify, and to do the business of the nation. This was on the 10th. On the 15th, they moved to declare themselves the National Assembly. The debates on this were finished yesterday, when the proposition was agreed to, by four hundred and odd, against eighty odd. The minority agreed in substance, but wished some particular amendment. They then immediately made the

proposition relative to taxes, which I enclose you, as this moment stated to me, by memory, by a member who left the Assembly a little before the question, because there was no opposition to the matter, but only to the form. He assures me, on the information of another member who was present, that Target's motion passed. We shall know, I think, within a day or two, whether the government will risk a bankruptcy and civil war, rather than see all distinction of orders done away, which is what the Commons will push for. If the fear of the former alternative prevails, they will spin the matter into negotiation. The Commons have in their chamber almost all the talents of the nation; they are firm and bold, yet moderate. There is, indeed, among them, a number of very hot-headed members; but those of most influence are cool, temperate and sagacious. Every step of this House has been marked with caution and wisdom. The Noblesse, on the contrary, are absolutely out of their senses. They are so furious, they can seldom debate at all. They have few men of moderate talents, and not one of great, in the majority. Their proceedings have been very injudicious. The Clergy are waiting to profit by every incident to secure themselves, and have no other object in view. Among the Commons there is an entire unanimity on the great question of voting by persons. Among the Noblesse there are about sixty for the Commons, and about three times that number against them. Among the Clergy, about twenty have already come over and joined the Commons, and in the course of a few days they will be joined by many more,

not indeed making the majority of that House, but very near it. The Bishops and Archbishops have been very successful by bribes and intrigues, in detaching the Curés from the Commons, to whom they were at first attached to a man. The Commons are about five hundred and fifty-four in number, of whom three hundred and forty-four are of the law. These do not possess an influence founded in property; but in their habits of business and acquaintance with the people, and in their means of exciting them as they please. The Curés throughout the kingdom, form the mass of the Clergy; they are the only part favorably known to the people, because solely charged with the duties of baptism, burial, confession, visitation of the sick, instruction of the children, and aiding the poor; they are themselves of the people, and united with them. The carriages and equipage only of the higher Clergy, not their persons, are known to the people, and are in detestation with them. The soldiers will follow their officers, that is to say, their captains, lieutenants and ensigns. These are of the lower nobility, and therefore much divided. The colonels and higher officers are of the higher nobility, are seldom with the soldiers, little known to them, not possessing their attachment. These circumstances give them little weight in the partition of the army.

I give you these miscellaneous observations, that knowing somewhat the dispositions of the parties, you may be able to judge of the future for yourself, as I shall not be here to continue its communication to you.

In hopes to see you soon, I conclude with assurances of the

perfect esteem and respect with which I am, dear Sir, your friend
and servant.

TO JOHN JAY

Paris, June 24, 1789.

Sir,—My letter of the 17th and 18th instant, gave you the progress of the States General to the 17th, when the Tiers had declared the illegality of all the existing taxes, and their discontinuance from the end of their present session. The next day being a jour de fête, could furnish no indication of the impression that vote was likely to make on the government. On the 19th, a Council was held at Marly, in the afternoon. It was there proposed, that the King should interpose by a declaration of his sentiments in a *seance royale*. The declaration prepared by Mr. Neckar, while it censured in general the proceedings both of the Nobles and Commons, announced the King's views, such as substantially to coincide with the Commons. It was agreed to in Council, as also that the *seance royale* should be held on the 22d, and the meetings till then be suspended. While the Council was engaged in this deliberation at Marly, the chamber of the Clergy was in debate, whether they should accept the invitation of the Tiers to unite with them in the common chamber. On the first question, to unite simply and unconditionally, it was decided in the negative by a very small majority. As it was known, however, that some members who had voted in the negative, would be for the affirmative with some

modifications, the question was put with these modifications, and it was determined by a majority of eleven members, that their body should join the Tiers. These proceedings of the clergy were unknown to the Council at Marly, and those of the Council were kept secret from everybody. The next morning (the 20th), the members repaired to the House as usual, found the doors shut and guarded, and a proclamation posted up for holding a *seance royale* on the 22d, and a suspension of their meetings till then. They presumed, in the first moment, that their dissolution was decided, and repaired to another place, where they proceeded to business. They there bound themselves to each other by an oath, never to separate of their own accord, till they had settled a constitution for the nation on a solid basis, and if separated by force, that they would re-assemble in some other place. It was intimated to them, however, that day, privately, that the proceedings of the *seance royale* would be favorable to them. The next day they met in a church, and were joined by a majority of the Clergy. The heads of the aristocracy saw that all was lost without some violent exertion. The King was still at Marly. Nobody was permitted to approach him but their friends. He was assailed by lies in all shapes. He was made to believe that the Commons were going to absolve the army from their oath of fidelity to him, and to raise their pay.

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They procured a committee to be held, consisting of the King and his ministers, to which Monsieur and the Count d'Artois should be admitted. At this committee, the latter attacked Mr. Neckar personally, arraigned his plans, and proposed one which some of his engines had put into his hands. Mr. Neckar, whose characteristic is the want of firmness, was browbeaten and intimidated, and the King shaken. He determined that the two plans should be deliberated on the next day, and the *seance royale* put off a day longer. This encouraged a fiercer attack on Mr. Neckar the next day; his plan was totally dislocated, and that of the Count d'Artois inserted into it. Himself and Monsieur de Montmorin offered their resignation, which was refused; the Count d'Artois saying to Mr. Neckar, "No, Sir, you must be kept as the hostage; we hold you responsible for all the ill which shall happen." This change of plan was immediately whispered without doors. The nobility were in triumph, the people in consternation. When the King passed the next day through the lane they formed from the Chateau to the Hotel des Etats (about half a mile), there was a dead silence. He was about an hour in the House, delivering his speech and declaration, copies of which I enclose you. On his coming out, a feeble cry of "*vive le roy*" was raised by some children, but the people remained silent and sullen. When the Duke d'Orleans followed, however,

their applauses were excessive. This must have been sensible to the King. He had ordered, in the close of his speech, that the members should follow him, and resume their deliberations the next day. The Noblesse followed him, and so did the Clergy, except about thirty, who, with the Tiers, remained in the room, and entered into deliberation. They protested against what the King had done, adhered to all their former proceedings, and resolved the inviolability of their own persons. An officer came twice to order them out of the room, in the King's name, but they refused to obey. In the afternoon, the people, uneasy, began to assemble in great numbers in the courts and vicinities of the palace. The Queen was alarmed, and sent for Mr. Neckar. He was conducted amidst the shouts and acclamations of the multitude, who filled all the apartments of the palace. He was a few minutes only with the Queen, and about three-quarters of an hour with the King. Not a word has transpired of what passed at these interviews. The King was just going to ride out. He passed through the crowd to his carriage, and into it, without being in the least noticed. As Mr. Neckar followed him, universal acclamations were raised of "Vive Monsieur Neckar, vive la sauveur de la France opprimée." He was conducted back to his house with the same demonstrations of affection and anxiety. About two hundred deputies of the Tiers, catching the enthusiasm of the moment, went to his house, and extorted from him a promise that he would not resign. These circumstances must wound the heart of the King, desirous as he is, to possess

the affections of his subjects. As soon as the proceedings at Versailles were known at Paris, a run began on the *caisse d'escompte*, which is the first symptom always of the public diffidence and alarm. It is the less in condition to meet the run, as Mr. Neckar has been forced to make free with its funds, for the daily support of the government. This is the state of things, as late as I am able to give them with certainty, at this moment. My letter not being to go off till to-morrow evening, I shall go to Versailles to-morrow, and be able to add the transactions of this day and to-morrow.

June 25. Just returned from Versailles, I am enabled to continue my narration. On the 24th, nothing remarkable passed, except an attack by the mob of Versailles on the Archbishop of Paris, who had been one of the instigators of the court, to the proceedings of the *seance royale*. They threw mud and stones at his carriage, broke the windows of it, and he in a fright promised to join the Tiers.

This day (the 25th) forty-eight of the Nobles have joined the Tiers. Among these, is the Duke d'Orleans. The Marquis de La Fayette could not be of the number, being restrained by his instructions. He is writing to his constituents, to change his instructions or to accept his resignation. There are with the Tiers now, one hundred and sixty-four members of the Clergy, so that the common chamber consists of upwards of eight hundred members. The minority of the Clergy, however, call themselves the chamber of the Clergy, and pretend to go on with business. I

found the streets of Versailles much embarrassed with soldiers. There was a body of about one hundred horse drawn up in front of the Hotel of the States, and all the avenues and doors guarded by soldiers. Nobody was permitted to enter but the members, and this was by order of the King; for till now, the doors of the common room have been open, and at least two thousand spectators attending their debates constantly. They have named a deputation to wait on the King, and desire a removal of the soldiery from their doors, and seem determined, if this is not complied with, to remove themselves elsewhere.

Instead of being dismayed with what has passed, they seem to rise in their demands, and some of them to consider the erasing every vestige of a difference of order as indispensable to the establishment and preservation of a good constitution. I apprehend there is more courage than calculation in this project. I did imagine, that seeing that Mr. Neckar and themselves were involved as common enemies in the hatred of the aristocrats, they would have been willing to make common cause with him, and to wish his continuance in office; and that Mr. Neckar, seeing that all the trimming he has used towards the court, and Nobles, has availed him nothing, would engage himself heartily and solely on the popular side, and view his own salvation in that alone. The confidence which the people place in him, seems to merit some attention. However, the mass of the common chamber are absolutely indifferent to his remaining in office. They consider his head as unequal to the planning a good

constitution, and his fortitude to a co-operation in the effecting it. His dismissal is more credited to-day than it was yesterday. If it takes place, he will retain his popularity with the nation, as the members of the States will not think it important to set themselves against it, but on the contrary, will be willing that he should continue on their side, on his retirement. The run on the *caisse d'escompte* continues. The members of the States admit, that Mr. Neckar's departure out of office will occasion a stoppage of public payments. But they expect to prevent any very ill effect, by assuring the public against any loss, and by taking immediate measures for continuing payment. They may, perhaps, connect these measures with their own existence, so as to interest the public in whatever catastrophe may be aimed at them. The gazettes of France and Leyden accompany this. During the continuance of this crisis and my own stay, I shall avail myself of every private conveyance to keep you informed of what passes. I have the honor to be, with the most perfect esteem and respect, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO JOHN JAY

Paris, June 29, 1789.

Sir,—My letter of the 25th gave you the transactions of the States General to the afternoon of that day. On the next, the Archbishop of Paris joined the Tiers, as did some others of the Clergy and Noblesse. On the 27th, the question of the St. Domingo deputation came on, and it was decided that it should be received. I have before mentioned to you the ferment into which the proceedings at the *seance royale* of the 23d, had thrown the people. The soldiery also were affected by it. It began in the French guards, extended to those of every other denomination, (except the Swiss) and even to the body guards of the King. They began to quit their barracks, to assemble in squads, to declare they would defend the life of the King, but would not cut the throats of their fellow-citizens. They were treated and caressed by the people, carried in triumph through the streets, called themselves the soldiers of the nation, and left no doubt on which side they would be, in case of a rupture. Similar accounts came in from the troops in other parts of the kingdom, as well those which had not heard of the *seance royale*, as those which had, and gave good reason to apprehend that the soldiery, in general, would side with their fathers and brothers, rather than with their officers. The operation of this medicine,

at Versailles, was as sudden as it was powerful. The alarm there was so complete, that in the afternoon of the 27th, the King wrote a letter to the President of the Clergy, the Cardinal de La Rochefoucault, in these words:¹

"My Cousin,—Wholly engaged in promoting the general good of my kingdom, and desirous, above all things, that the Assembly of the States General should apply themselves to objects of general interest, after the voluntary acceptance by your order of my declaration of the 23d of the present month; I pass my word that my faithful Clergy will, without delay, unite themselves with the other two orders, to hasten the accomplishment of my paternal views. Those, whose powers are too limited, may decline voting until new powers are procured. This will be a new mark of attachment which my Clergy will give me. I pray God, my Cousin, to have you in his holy keeping.

Louis."

A like letter was written to the Duke de Luxemburgh, President of the Noblesse. The two chambers entered into debate on the question, whether they should obey the letter of the King. There was a considerable opposition; when notes written by the Count d'Artois to sundry members, and handed about among the rest, decided the matter, and they went in a body and took their seats with the Tiers, and thus rendered the union of the orders in one chamber complete. As soon as this was known to the people

¹ A translation is here given.

of Versailles, they assembled about the palace, demanded the King and Queen, who came and showed themselves in a balcony. They rent the skies with cries of "*vive le roy*," "*vive la reine*." They called for the Dauphin, who was also produced, and was the subject of new acclamations. After feasting themselves and the royal family with this tumultuary reconciliation, they went to the house of Mr. Neckar and M. de Montmorin, with shouts of thankfulness and affection. Similar emotions of joy took place in Paris, and at this moment, the triumph of the Tiers is considered as complete. To-morrow they will recommence business, voting by persons on all questions; and whatever difficulties may be opposed in debate by the malcontents of the Clergy and Nobility, everything must be finally settled at the will of the Tiers. It remains to see whether they will leave to the Nobility anything but their titular appellations. I suppose they will not. Mr. Neckar will probably remain in office. It would seem natural that he should endeavor to have the hostile part of the Council removed, but I question if he finds himself firm enough for that. A perfect co-operation with the Tiers will be his wisest game. This great crisis being now over, I shall not have matter interesting enough to trouble you with, as often as I have done lately. There has nothing remarkable taken place in any other part of Europe. I have the honor to be, with the most perfect esteem and respect, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE

Paris, July 6, 1789.

Dear Sir,—I never made an offer to anybody, to have corn or flour brought here, from America; no such idea ever entered my head. Mr. Neckar desired me to give information in America, that there would be a want of flour. I did so in a letter to Mr. Jay, which he published with my name to it, for the encouragement of the merchants. Those here, who have named me on this subject, must have mistaken me for Mr. Parker. I have heard him say, he offered Mr. Neckar to bring a large supply, yet I do not think I ever repeated this; or if I did, it must have been in a company I relied on. I will thank you to satisfy Mr. Neckar of the truth. It would be disagreeable, and perhaps mischievous, were he to have an idea that I encouraged censures on him. I will bring you the paper you desire to-morrow; and shall dine at the Dutchess Danville's, where I shall be happy to meet you. Adieu. Yours affectionately.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE

Paris, July 7, 1789.

Dear Sir,—Your letter of yesterday gave me the first information that Monsieur de Mirabeau had suggested to the honorable the Assembly of the Nation, that I had made an offer to Mr. Neckar, to obtain from America a quantity of corn or flour, which had been refused. I know not how Monsieur de Mirabeau has been led into this error. I never in my life made any proposition to Mr. Neckar on the subject; I never said I had made such a proposition. Some time last autumn, Mr. Neckar did me the honor to desire I would have notified in the United States, that corn and flour would meet with a good sale in France. I conveyed this notice, in a letter to Mr. Jay, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, as you will see by the extract of my letter published by him in an American gazette, which I have the honor to send you. I must beg leave to avail myself of your friendship and of your position, to have a communication of these facts made to the honorable Assembly of the Nation, of which you are a member, and to repeat to you those sentiments of respect and attachment, with which I have the honor to be, my dear Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO MR. NECKAR

Paris, July 8, 1789.

Sir,—I have the honor to enclose you a copy of my letter to Monsieur de La Fayette. When I called on him yesterday, he had already spoken to Monsieur de Mirabeau, who acknowledged he had been in an error in what he had advanced in the Assembly of the Nation, as to the proposition supposed to have been made by me to your Excellency, and undertook to declare his error, when the subject should be resumed by the Assembly, to whom my letter to the Marquis de La Fayette will be also read.

I have thought it a duty, Sir, thus to correct in the first moment, an error, by which your name had been compromitted by an unfounded use of mine, and shall be happy in every occasion of proving to you those sentiments of profound respect and attachment with which I have the honor to be, your Excellency's most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO THE COUNT DE MONTMORIN

Paris, July 8, 1789.

Sir,—My hotel having been lately robbed for the third time, I take the liberty of uniting my wish with that of the inhabitants of this quarter, that it might coincide with the arrangements of police, to extend to us the protection of a guard. While the Douane remained here, no accident of that kind happened, but since their removal, other houses in the neighborhood have been robbed, as well as mine. Perhaps it may lessen the difficulties of this request, that the house occupied by the people of the Douane, will lodge abundantly a *corps de garde*. On the one side of that house is Chaillot, on the other the Roule, on the third the Champs Elysées, where accidents are said to happen very frequently, all of which are very distant from any *corps de garde*.

I have the honor to be, with sentiments of the most perfect respect and esteem, your Excellency's most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE

Paris, July 9, 1789.

Dear Sir,—Having been curious to form some estimate of the quantity of corn and flour, which have been supplied to France this year, I applied to a person in the Farms, to know upon what quantities the premium had been paid. He could not give me information, but as to the *Atlantic* ports, into which there have been imported from the United States, from March to May inclusive, forty-four thousand one hundred and sixteen quintals of corn, twelve thousand two hundred and twenty-one quintals of flour, making fifty-six thousand three hundred and thirty-seven quintals, in the whole. Add to this, what has been imported since May, suppose nearly twenty thousand quintals a month, and what has been furnished to the French islands, which has prevented an equal quantity being exported from France, and you will have the proportion drawn from us. Observe, that we have regular and constant markets for corn and flour, in Spain, Portugal, and all the West India islands, except the French. These take nearly our whole quantity. This year, France, the French West Indies and Canada were added. But a regular course of trade is not quitted in an instant, nor constant customers deserted for accidental ones. This is the reason that so small a proportion has come here. I am, dear Sir, with great sincerity, your affectionate friend and

servant.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE

Paris, July 10, 1789.

Dear Sir,—The acknowledgment by Monsieur de Mirabeau to the National Assembly, that he had been in an error as to the offer he supposed me to have made, and the reading to them my letter, seem to be all that was requisite for any just purpose. As I was unwilling my name should be used to injure the minister, I am also unwilling it should be used to injure Monsieur de Mirabeau. I learn that his enemies in Paris are framing scandalous versions of my letter. I think, therefore, with you, it may be better to print it, and I send you a copy of it. I gave copies of it to Monsieur de Montmorin and Monsieur Neckar, as was my duty.

I am, with sincere affection, my dear Sir, your friend and servant.

TO THOMAS PAINE

Paris, July 11, 1789.

Dear Sir,—Since my last, which was of May the 19th, I have received yours of June the 17th and 18th. I am struck with the idea of the geometrical wheelbarrow, and will beg of you a farther account, if it can be obtained. I have no news yet of my congé.

Though you have doubtless heard most of the proceedings of the States General since my last, I will take up the narration where that left it, that you may be able to separate the true from the false accounts you have heard. A good part of what was conjecture in that letter, is now become true history.

* * * * *

The *National Assembly* then (for that is the name they take), having shown through every stage of these transactions a coolness, wisdom, and resolution to set fire to the four corners of the kingdom and to perish with it themselves, rather than to relinquish an iota from their plan of a total change of government, are now in complete and undisputed possession of the sovereignty. The executive and aristocracy are at their feet; the mass of the nation, the mass of the clergy, and the army

are with them; they have prostrated the old government, and are now beginning to build one from the foundation. A committee, charged with the arrangement of their business, gave in, two days ago, the following order of proceedings.

"1. Every government should have for its only end, the preservation of the rights of man; whence it follows, that to recall constantly the government to the end proposed, the constitution should begin by a declaration of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man.

"2. Monarchical government being proper to maintain those rights, it has been chosen by the French nation. It suits especially a great society; it is necessary for the happiness of France. The declaration of the principles of this government, then, should follow immediately the declaration of the rights of man.

"3. It results from the principles of monarchy, that the nation, to assure its own rights, has yielded particular rights to the monarch; the constitution, then, should declare, in a precise manner, the rights of both. It should begin by declaring the rights of the French nation, and then it should declare the rights of the King.

"4. The rights of the King and nation not existing but for the happiness of the individuals who compose it, they lead to an examination of the rights of citizens.

"5. The French nation not being capable of assembling individually, to exercise all its rights, it ought to be represented. It is necessary, then, to declare the form of its representation and

the rights of its representatives.

"6. From the union of the powers of the nation and King should result the enacting and execution of the laws; thus, then it should first be determined how the laws shall be established afterwards should be considered, how they shall be executed.

"7. Laws have for their object the general administration of the kingdom, the property and the actions of the citizens. The execution of the laws which concern the general administration requires Provincial and Municipal Assemblies. It is necessary to examine, therefore, what should be the organization of the Provincial Assemblies, and what of the Municipal.

"8. The execution of the laws which concern the property and actions of the citizens, call for the judiciary power. It should be determined how that should be confided, and then its duties and limits.

"9. For the execution of the laws and the defence of the kingdom, there exists a public force. It is necessary, then, to determine the principles which should direct it, and how it should be employed.

"Recapitulation

"Declaration of the rights of man. Principles of the monarchy. Rights of the nation. Rights of the King. Rights of the citizens.

"Organization and rights of the National Assembly. Forms necessary for the enactment of laws. Organization and functions of

the Provincial and Municipal Assemblies. Duties and limits of the judiciary power. Functions and duties of the military power."

You see that these are the materials of a superb edifice, and the hands which have prepared them, are perfectly capable of putting them together, and of filling up the work of which these are only the outlines. While there are some men among them of very superior abilities, the mass possess such a degree of good sense, as enables them to decide well. I have always been afraid their numbers might lead to confusion. Twelve hundred men in one room are too many. I have still that fear. Another apprehension is, that a majority cannot be induced to adopt the trial by jury; and I consider that as the only anchor ever yet imagined by man, by which a government can be held to the principles of its constitution. Mr. Paradise is the bearer of this letter. He can supply those details which it would be too tedious to write.

I am, with great esteem, dear Sir, your friend and servant.

TO MR. MASON

Paris, July 16, 1789.

Sir,—I am honored with your favor of the 11th, and sincerely thank you for the offer of your ship, which I would certainly have embraced, had I been at liberty to go. But I have not yet received permission, and must await that. I beg you to remember me in the most friendly terms to your father. I have put off answering his letter because I expected constantly to make my voyage to America and to see him at his own house.

Great events have taken place here within these few days. The change of the ministry and the tumult of Paris consequent on that, you will have heard of. Yesterday the King went without any cortege but his two brothers to the States General, and spoke to them in very honest and conciliatory terms; such as in my opinion amounts to a surrender at discretion. The temper of the city is too much heated at present to view them in that light, and therefore they keep on the watch, and go on in organizing their armed Bourgeoise. But I have not a single doubt of the sincerity of the King, and there will not be another disagreeable act from him. He has promised to send away the troops.

I am with great esteem, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO JOHN JAY

Paris, July 19, 1789.

Dear Sir,—I am become very uneasy, lest you should have adopted some channel for the conveyance of your letters to me, which is unfaithful. I have none from you of later date than November the 25th, 1788, and of consequence, no acknowledgment of the receipt of any of mine, since that of August the 11th, 1788. Since that period, I have written to you of the following dates. 1788. August the 20th, September the 3d, 5th, 24th, November the 14th, 19th, 29th. 1789. January the 11th, 14th, 21st, February the 4th, March the 1st, 12th, 14th, 15th, May the 9th, 11th, 12th, June the 17th, 24th, 29th. I know, through another person, that you have received mine of November the 29th, and that you have written an answer; but I have never received the answer, and it is this which suggests to me the fear of some general source of miscarriage.

The capture of three French merchant ships by the Algerines, under different pretexts, has produced great sensation in the seaports of this country, and some in its government. They have ordered some frigates to be armed at Toulon to punish them. There is a possibility that this circumstance, if not too soon set to rights by the Algerines, may furnish occasion to the States General, when they shall have leisure to attend to matters of this

kind, to disavow any future tributary treaty with them. These pirates respect still less their treaty with Spain, and treat the Spaniards with an insolence greater than was usual before the treaty.

The scarcity of bread begins to lessen in the southern parts of France, where the harvest has commenced. Here it is still threatening, because we have yet three weeks to the beginning of harvest, and I think there has not been three days' provision beforehand in Paris, for two or three weeks past. Monsieur de Mirabeau, who is very hostile to Mr. Neckar, wished to find a ground for censuring him, in a proposition to have a great quantity of flour furnished from the United States, which he supposed me to have made to Mr. Neckar, and to have been refused by him; and he asked time of the States General to furnish proofs. The Marquis de La Fayette immediately gave me notice of this matter, and I wrote him a letter to disavow having ever made any such proposition to Mr. Neckar, which I desired him to communicate to the States. I waited immediately on Mr. Neckar and Monsieur de Montmorin, satisfied them that what had been suggested was absolutely without foundation from me; and indeed they had not needed this testimony. I gave them copies of my letter to the Marquis de La Fayette, which was afterwards printed. The Marquis, on the receipt of my letter, showed it to Mirabeau, who turned then to a paper from which he had drawn his information, and found he had totally mistaken it. He promised immediately that he would himself declare his

error to the States General, and read to them my letter, which he did. I state this matter to you, though of little consequence in itself, because it might go to you misstated in the English papers.

Our supplies to the Atlantic ports of France, during the months of March, April and May, were only twelve thousand two hundred and twenty quintals, thirty-three pounds of flour, and forty-four thousand one hundred and fifteen quintals, forty pounds of wheat, in twenty-one vessels.

My letter of the 29th of June, brought down the proceedings of the States and government to the re-union of the orders, which took place on the 27th. Within the Assembly, matters went on well. But it was soon observed, that troops, and particularly the foreign troops, were on their march towards Paris from various quarters, and that this was against the opinion of Mr. Neckar. The King was probably advised to this, under pretext of preserving peace in Paris and Versailles, and saw nothing else in the measure. That his advisers are supposed to have had in view, when he should be secured and inspirited by the presence of the troops, to take advantage of some favorable moment, and surprise him into an act of authority for establishing the declaration of the 23d of June, and perhaps dispersing the States General, is probable. The Marshal de Broglio was appointed to command all the troops within the isle of France, a high flying aristocrat, cool and capable of everything. Some of the French guards were soon arrested under other pretexts, but in reality, on account of their dispositions in favor of the

national cause. The people of Paris forced the prison, released them, and sent a deputation to the States General, to solicit a pardon. The States, by a most moderate and prudent Arrêté, recommended these prisoners to the King, and peace to the people of Paris. Addresses came in to them from several of the great cities, expressing sincere allegiance to the King, but a determined resolution to support the States General. On the 8th of July, they voted an address to the King to remove the troops. This² piece of masculine eloquence, written by Monsieur de Mirabeau, is worth attention on account of the bold matter it expresses and discovers through the whole. The King refused to remove the troops, and said they might remove themselves, if they pleased, to Noyons or Soissons. They proceeded to fix the order in which they will take up the several branches of their future constitution, from which it appears, they mean to build it from the bottom, confining themselves to nothing in their ancient form, but a King. A declaration of rights, which forms the first chapter of their work, was then proposed by the Marquis de La Fayette. This was on the 11th. In the meantime, troops, to the number of about twenty-five or thirty thousand, had arrived, and were posted in and between Paris and Versailles. The bridges and passes were guarded. At three o'clock in the afternoon, the Count de La Luzerne was sent to notify Mr. Neckar of his dismissal, and to enjoin him to retire instantly, without saying a word of it to anybody. He went home, dined,

² See it in the paper called Point du Jour, No. 23.

proposed to his wife a visit to a friend, but went in fact to his country-house at St. Ouen, and at midnight, set out from thence, as is supposed, for Brussels. This was not known till the next day, when the whole ministry was changed, except Villedeuil, of the domestic department, and Barentin, Garde des Sceaux. These changes were as follows: the Baron de Breteuil, President of the Council of Finance; and de La Galaisiere, Comptroller General in the room of Mr. Neckar; the Marshal de Broglio, minister of war, and Foulon under him, in the room of Puy-Segur; Monsieur de La Vauguyon, minister of foreign affairs, instead of Monsieur de Montmorin; de La Porte, minister of marine, in place of the Count de La Luzerne; St. Priest was also removed from the Council. It is to be observed, that Luzerne and Puy-Segur had been strongly of the aristocratical party in Council; but they were not considered as equal to bear their shares in the work now to be done. For this change, however sudden it may have been in the mind of the King, was, in that of his advisers, only one chapter of a great plan, of which the bringing together the foreign troops had been the first. He was now completely in the hands of men, the principal among whom, had been noted through their lives, for the Turkish despotism of their characters, and who were associated about the King, as proper instruments for what was to be executed. The news of this change began to be known in Paris about one or two o'clock. In the afternoon, a body of about one hundred German cavalry were advanced and drawn up in the Place Louis XV. and about

two hundred Swiss posted at a little distance in their rear. This drew the people to that spot, who naturally formed themselves in front of the troops, at first merely to look at them. But as their numbers increased, their indignation arose; they retired a few steps, posted themselves on and behind large piles of loose stone, collected in that place for a bridge adjacent to it, and attacked the horse with stones. The horse charged, but the advantageous position of the people, and the showers of stones, obliged them to retire, and even to quit the field altogether, leaving one of their number on the ground. The Swiss in their rear were observed never to stir. This was the signal for universal insurrection, and this body of cavalry, to avoid being massacred, retired towards Versailles. The people now armed themselves with such weapons as they could find in armorers' shops and private houses, and with bludgeons, and were roaming all night through all parts of the city, without any decided practicable object. The next day, the States pressed on the King to send away the troops, to permit the Bourgeoise of Paris to arm for the preservation of order in the city, and offered to send a deputation from their body to tranquillize them. He refused all their propositions. A committee of magistrates and electors of the city were appointed by their bodies, to take upon them its government. The mob, now openly joined by the French guards, forced the prison of St. Lazare, released all the prisoners, and took a great store of corn, which they carried to the corn market. Here they got some arms, and the French guards began to form and train them. The

committee determined to raise forty-eight thousand Bourgeoise, or rather to restrain their numbers to forty-eight thousand. On the 14th, they sent one of their members (Monsieur de Corny, whom we knew in America) to the Hotel des Invalides, to ask arms for their Garde Bourgeoise. He was followed by, or he found there, a great mob. The Governor of the Invalides came out, and represented the impossibility of his delivering arms, without the orders of those from whom he received them. De Corny advised the people then to retire, and retired himself; and the people took possession of the arms. It was remarkable, that not only the Invalides themselves made no opposition, but that a body of five thousand foreign troops, encamped within four hundred yards, never stirred. Monsieur de Corny and five others were then sent to ask arms of Monsieur de Launai, Governor of the Bastile. They found a great collection of people already before the place, and they immediately planted a flag of truce, which was answered by a like flag hoisted on the parapet. The deputation prevailed on the people to fall back a little, advanced themselves to make their demand of the Governor, and in that instant a discharge from the Bastile killed four people of those nearest to the deputies. The deputies retired; the people rushed against the place, and almost in an instant were in possession of a fortification, defended by one hundred men, of infinite strength, which in other times had stood several regular sieges, and had never been taken. How they got in, has, as yet, been impossible to discover. Those who pretend to have been of the party tell

so many different stories, as to destroy the credit of them all. They took all the arms, discharged the prisoners, and such of the garrison as were not killed in the first moment of fury, carried the Governor and Lieutenant Governor to the Gréve, (the place of public execution,) cut off their heads, and sent them through the city in triumph to the Palais Royal. About the same instant, a treacherous correspondence having been discovered in Monsieur de Flesselles, Prevost des Marchands, they seized him in the Hotel de Ville, where he was in the exercise of his office, and cut off his head. These events, carried imperfectly to Versailles, were the subject of two successive deputations from the States to the King, to both of which he gave dry and hard answers; for it has transpired, that it had been proposed and agitated in Council, to seize on the principal members of the States General, to march the whole army down upon Paris, and to suppress its tumults by the sword. But at night, the Duke de Liancourt forced his way into the King's bed chamber, and obliged him to hear a full and animated detail of the disasters of the day in Paris. He went to bed deeply impressed. The decapitation of de Launai worked powerfully through the night on the whole aristocratical party, insomuch, that in the morning, those of the greatest influence on the Count d'Artois, represented to him the absolute necessity that the King should give up everything to the States. This according well enough with the dispositions of the King, he went about eleven o'clock, accompanied only by his brothers, to the States General, and there read to them a speech, in which he asked their

interposition to re-establish order. Though this be couched in terms of some caution, yet the manner in which it was delivered, made it evident that it was meant as a surrender at discretion. He returned to the chateau a foot, accompanied by the States. They sent off a deputation, the Marquis de La Fayette at their head, to quiet Paris. He had, the same morning, been named Commandant-in-Chief of the Milice Bourgeoise, and Monsieur Bailly, former President of the States General, was called for as Prevost des Marchands. The demolition of the Bastile was now ordered, and begun. A body of the Swiss guards of the regiment of Ventimille, and the city horse guards, joined the people. The alarm at Versailles increased instead of abating. They believed that the aristocrats of Paris were under pillage and carnage, that one hundred and fifty thousand men were in arms, coming to Versailles to massacre the royal family, the court, the ministers, and all connected with them, their practices and principles. The aristocrats of the Nobles and Clergy in the States General, vied with each other in declaring how sincerely they were converted to the justice of voting by persons, and how determined to go with the nation all its lengths. The foreign troops were ordered off instantly. Every minister resigned. The King confirmed Bailly as Prevost des Marchands, wrote to Mr. Neckar to recall him, sent his letter open to the States General, to be forwarded by them, and invited them to go with him to Paris the next day, to satisfy the city of his dispositions; and that night and the next morning, the Count d'Artois and Monsieur de

Montisson (a deputy connected with him) Madame de Polignac, Madame de Guiche, and the Count de Vaudreuil, favorites of the Queen, the Abbé de Vermont, her confessor, the Prince of Condé and Duke de Bourbon, all fled; we know not whither. The King came to Paris, leaving the Queen in consternation for his return. Omitting the less important figures of the procession, I will only observe, that the King's carriage was in the centre, on each side of it the States General, in two ranks, a foot, and at their head the Marquis de La Fayette, as Commander-in-Chief, on horseback, and Bourgeoise guards before and behind. About sixty thousand citizens of all forms and colors, armed with the muskets of the Bastille and Invalides, as far as they would go, the rest with pistols, swords, pikes, pruning hooks, scythes, &c., lined all the streets through which the procession passed, and, with the crowds of people in the streets, doors and windows, saluted them everywhere with cries of "*vive la nation*;" but not a single "*vive le roy*" was heard. The King stopped at the Hotel de Ville. There Monsieur Bailly presented and put into his hat the popular cockade, and addressed him. The King being unprepared and unable to answer, Bailly went to him, gathered from him some scraps of sentences, and made out an answer, which he delivered to the audience as from the King. On their return, the popular cries were "*vive le roy et la nation*." He was conducted by a Garde Bourgeoise to his palace at Versailles, and thus concluded such an *amende honorable*, as no sovereign ever made, and no people ever received. Letters written with his own

hand to the Marquis de La Fayette, remove the scruples of his position. Tranquillity is now restored to the capital: the shops are again opened; the people resuming their labors, and if the want of bread does not disturb our peace, we may hope a continuance of it. The demolition of the Bastile is going on, and the Milice Bourgeoise organizing and training. The ancient police of the city is abolished by the authority of the people, the introduction of the King's troops will probably be proscribed, and a watch or city guards substituted, which shall depend on the city alone. But we cannot suppose this paroxysm confined to Paris alone. The whole country must pass successively through it, and happy if they get through it as soon and as well as Paris has done.

I went yesterday to Versailles, to satisfy myself what had passed there; for nothing can be believed but what one sees, or has from an eye witness. They believe there still, that three thousand people have fallen victims to the tumults of Paris. Mr. Short and myself have been every day among them, in order to be sure what was passing. We cannot find, with certainty, that anybody has been killed but the three before mentioned, and those who fell in the assault or defence of the Bastile. How many of the garrison were killed, nobody pretends to have ever heard. Of the assailants, accounts vary from six to six hundred. The most general belief is, that there fell about thirty. There have been many reports of instantaneous executions by the mob, on such of their body as they caught in acts of theft or robbery. Some of these may perhaps be true. There was a severity of honesty

observed, of which no example has been known. Bags of money offered on various occasions through fear or guilt, have been uniformly refused by the mobs. The churches are now occupied in singing "*De profundis*" and "*Requiems*" "for the repose of the souls of the brave and valiant citizens who have sealed with their blood the liberty of the nation." Monsieur de Montmorin is this day replaced in the department of foreign affairs, and Monsieur de St. Priest is named to the home department. The gazettes of France and Leyden accompany this. I send, also, a paper (called the Point du Jour), which will give you some idea of the proceedings of the National Assembly. It is but an indifferent thing; however, it is the best.

I have the honor to be, with great esteem and respect, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

P. S. *July 21.* Mr. Neckar had left Brussels for Frankfort, before the courier got there. We expect, however, to hear of him in a day or two. Monsieur le Comte de La Luzerne has resumed the department of the marine this day. Either this is an office of friendship effected by Monsieur de Montmorin, (for though they had taken different sides, their friendship continued,) or he comes in as a stop-gap, till somebody else can be found. Though very unequal to his office, all agree that he is an honest man. The Count d'Artois was at Valenciennes. The Prince of Condé and Duke de Bourbon had passed that place.

TO M. L'ABBÉ ARNOLD

Paris, July 19, 1789.

Dear Sir,—The annexed is a catalogue of all the books I recollect on the subject of juries. With respect to the value of this institution, I must make a general observation. We think, in America, that it is necessary to introduce the people into every department of government, as far as they are capable of exercising it; and that this is the only way to insure a long-continued and honest administration of its powers.

1. They are not qualified to exercise themselves the executive department, but they are qualified to name the person who shall exercise it. With us, therefore, they choose this officer every four years. 2. They are not qualified to legislate. With us, therefore, they only choose the legislators. 3. They are not qualified to *judge* questions of *law*, but they are very capable of judging questions of *fact*. In the form of juries, therefore, they determine all matters of fact, leaving to the permanent judges, to decide the law resulting from those facts. But we all know that permanent judges acquire an *Esprit de corps*; that being known, they are liable to be tempted by bribery; that they are misled by favor, by relationship, by a spirit of party, by a devotion to the executive or legislative power; that it is better to leave a cause to the decision of cross and pile, than to that of a judge biased to one side; and

that the opinion of twelve honest jurymen gives still a better hope of right, than cross and pile does. It is in the power, therefore, of the juries, if they think permanent judges are under any bias whatever, in any cause, to take on themselves to judge the law as well as the fact. They never exercise this power but when they suspect partiality in the judges; and by the exercise of this power, they have been the firmest bulwarks of English liberty. Were I called upon to decide, whether the people had best be omitted in the legislative or judiciary department, I would say it is better to leave them out of the legislative. The execution of the laws is more important than the making them. However, it is best to have the people in all the three departments, where that is possible.

I write in great haste, my dear Sir, and have, therefore, only time to add wishes for the happiness of your country, to which a new order of things is opening; and assurances of the sincere esteem with which I have the honor to be, dear Sir, your most obedient and humble servant.

Books on the subject of Juries

Complete Juryman, or a compendium of the laws relating to jurors.

Guide to English juries.

Hawles' Englishman's right.

Juror's judges both of law and fact, by Jones.

Security of Englishmen's lives, or the duty of grand juries.

Walwin's juries justified.

TO MR. MADISON

Paris, July 22, 1789.

Dear Sir,—My last to you was of the 18th of June. Within a day or two after, yours of May the 9th came to hand. In the rest of Europe nothing remarkable has happened; but in France such events as will be forever memorable in history. To begin where my last left them, the King took on himself to decide the great question of voting by persons or orders, by a declaration made at a *seance royale* on the 23d of June. In the same declaration he inserted many other things, some good, some bad. The Tiers, undismayed, resolved the whole was a mere nullity, and proceeded as if nothing had happened. The majority of the clergy joined them, and a small part of the nobles. The uneasiness produced by the King's declaration occasioned the people to collect about the palace in the evening of the same day. The King and Queen were alarmed and sent for Mr. Neckar. He was conducted to and from the palace amidst the acclamations of the people. The French guards were observed to be mixed in great numbers with the people and to participate of their passions. This made so decisive an impression, that the King on the 27th wrote to the clergy and nobles, who had not yet joined the Tiers, recommending to them to go and join them. They did so, and it was imagined all was now settled. It

was soon observed, however, that troops, and those the foreign troops, were marching towards Paris from different quarters. The States addressed the King to forbid their approach. He declared it was only to preserve the tranquillity of Paris and Versailles, and I believe he thought so. The command of those troops was given to the Marshal Broglio, and it was observed that the Baron de Breteuil was going daily to Versailles. On the 11th, there being now thirty thousand foreign troops in and between Paris and Versailles, Mr. Neckar was dismissed and ordered to retire privately. The next day the whole ministry was changed except Villedieu and Barentin. Breteuil, Broglio and Vauguyon were the principal persons named in the new. A body of cavalry were advanced into Paris to awe them. The people attacked and routed them, killing one of the cavalry and losing a French guard. The corps of French guards gathered stronger, followed the cavalry, attacked them in the street, (*the rue basse des ramparts,*) and killed four. (I did not know this fact with certainty when I wrote to Mr. Jay, it is therefore not in my letter. I since have it from an eye-witness.) The insurrection became now universal. The next day (the 13th) the people forced a prison and took some arms. On the 14th a committee was framed by the city, with powers corresponding to our committees of safety. They resolve to raise a city militia of forty-eight thousand men. The people attack the invalids and get a great store of arms. They then attack and carry the Bastile, cut off the Governor's and Lieutenant-Governor's heads, and that also of the Prevost des Marchand's, discovered

in a treacherous correspondence. While these things were doing here, the council is said to have been agitating at Versailles a proposition to arrest a number of the members of the States, to march all the foreign troops against Paris, and suppress the tumult by the sword. But the decapitations being once known there, and that there were fifty or sixty thousand men in arms, the King went to the States, referred everything to them, and ordered away the troops. The City Committee named the Marquis de La Fayette commander-in-chief. They went on organizing their militia, the tumult continued, and a noise spread about Versailles that they were coming to massacre the court, the ministry, &c. Every minister hereupon resigned and fled, the Count d'Artois, Prince of Condé, Duke de Bourbon, the family of Polignacs, the Count de Vaudreuil, Abbé Vermont, confessor of the Queen, and key-stone of all the intrigues, all fled out of the kingdom. The King agreed to recall Mr. Neckar, reappointed Montmorin and St. Priest, friends of Neckar, and came with the States General to Paris to satisfy the city of his dispositions. All the streets through which he passed were lined with Bourgeoise, armed with guns, pistols, pikes, pruning-hooks, scythes, and whatever they could lay hold of, about sixty thousand. The States General on foot on each side of his coach, the Marquis de La Fayette at their head, on horseback. He returned to Versailles in the same order, to the great joy of the remaining courtiers, who feared he would have been detained in Paris. The tumults in the city had pretty well subsided, but to-day they have been revived by a new incident.

Foulon, one of the fugitive ministers, was taken in the country, (it is said by his own tenants,) and brought to Paris. Every possible effort of persuasion was exerted in vain to save him. He was forced from the hands of the Gardes Bourgeoises by the mob, was hung, and after severing his head, the body was dragged by the enraged populace through the principal streets of Paris. The Intendant of Paris (de Chauvigny), accused of having been in the plots with the late ministry, and who had fled, was taken at Compiègne, and a party of two hundred militia horse are now gone for him. If they bring him to Paris it will be impossible to save him. Monsieur de La Luzerne was reappointed minister of marine yesterday. Your last letter says nothing of my leave of absence. The season is so far advanced towards the Equinox, that if it comes to hand I shall not leave Europe till that be over. Indeed this scene is too interesting to be left at present. But if the permission does not come in time for my passage in the fall, the necessity of my going is so imperious, that I shall be in a most distressing dilemma.

I am, with sincere esteem and respect, dear Sir, your affectionate friend and servant.

P. S. *July 23.* I just learn that Bertier de Chauvigny was brought to town in the night and massacred immediately.

TO JOHN JAY

Paris, July 23, 1789.

Sir,—The bearer of my letters (a servant of Mr. Morris) not going off till to-day, I am enabled to add to their contents. The spirit of tumult seemed to have subsided, when, yesterday, it was excited again, by a particular incident. Monsieur Foulon, one of the obnoxious ministry, who, as well as his brethren, had absconded, was taken in the country, and, as is said, by his own tenants, and brought to Paris. Great efforts were exerted by popular characters, to save him. He was at length forced out of the hands of the Garde Bourgeoise, hung immediately, his head cut off, and his body drawn through the principal streets of the city. The Intendant of Paris, Monsieur de Chauvigny, accused of having entered into the designs of the said ministry, has been taken at Compiègne, and a body of two hundred men on horseback have gone for him. If he be brought here, it will be difficult to save him. Indeed, it is hard to say at what distance of time the presence of one of those ministers, or of any of the most obnoxious of the fugitive courtiers, will not rekindle the same blood-thirsty spirit. I hope it is extinguished as to everybody else, and yesterday's example will teach them to keep out of its way. I add two other sheets of the Point du Jour, and am, with the most perfect esteem and respect, Sir, your most obedient, and most

humble servant.

P. S. I just now learn that Bertier de Chauvigny was brought to town last night, and massacred immediately.

TO JOHN JAY

Paris, July 29, 1789.

Sir,—I have written you lately, on the 24th of June, with a postscript of the 25th; on the 29th of the same month; the 19th of July, with a postscript of the 21st; and again on the 23d. Yesterday I received yours of the 9th of March, by the way of Holland.

Mr. Neckar has accepted his appointment, and will arrive to-day from Switzerland, where he had taken refuge. No other ministers have been named since my last. It is thought that Mr. Neckar will choose his own associates. The tranquillity of Paris has not been disturbed since the death of Foulon and Bertier mentioned in my last. Their militia is in a course of organization. It is impossible to know the exact state of the supplies of bread. We suppose them low and precarious, because, some days, we are allowed to buy but half or three-fourths of the daily allowance of our families. Yet as the wheat harvest must begin within ten days or a fortnight, we are in hopes there will be subsistence found till that time. This is the only source from which I should fear a renewal of the late disorders; for I take for granted, the fugitives from the wrath of their country are all safe in foreign countries. Among these, are numbered seven Princes of the house of Bourbon, and six ministers; the seventh (the Marshal

de Broglio), being shut up in the fortified town of Metz, strongly garrisoned with foreign soldiers. I observed to you, in a preceding letter, that the storm which had begun in Paris, on the change of the ministry, would have to pass over the whole country, and consequently would, for a short time, occasion us terrible details from the different parts of it. Among these, you will find a horrid one retailed from Vesoul, in French Compté. The atrociousness of the fact would dispose us rather to doubt the truth of the evidence on which it rests, however regular that appears. There is no question, that a number of people were blown up; but there are reasons for suspecting that it was by accident and not design. It is said the owner of the chateau sold powder by the pound, which was kept in the cellar of the house blown up; and it is possible, some one of the guests may have taken this occasion to supply himself, and been too careless in approaching the mass. Many idle stories have also been propagated and believed here, against the English, as that they have instigated the late tumults with money, that they had taken or were preparing to take Cherbourg, Brest, &c.; and even reasonable men have believed, or pretended to believe, all these. The British ambassador has thought it necessary to disavow them in a public letter, which you will find in one of the papers accompanying this.

I have lately had an opportunity of knowing with certainty, the present state of the King of England. His recovery was slow; he passed through a stage of profound melancholy; but this has at length dissipated, and he is at present perfectly re-established. He

talks now as much as ever, on the same trifling subjects, and has recovered even his habitual inquisitiveness into the small news of the families about him. His health is also good, though he is not as fleshy as he used to be. I have multiplied my letters to you lately, because the scene has been truly interesting; so much so, that had I received my permission to pay my projected visit to my own country, I should have thought, and should still think it my duty to defer it awhile. I presume it cannot now be long, before I receive your definitive answer to my request. I send herewith the public papers, as usual; and have the honor to be, with the most perfect esteem and respect, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO MR. CARMICHAEL

Paris, August 9, 1789.

Dear Sir,—Since your last of March the 27th, I have only written that of May the 8th. The cause of this long silence, on both parts, has been the expectation I communicated to you of embarking for America. In fact, I have expected permission for this, every hour since the month of March, and therefore always thought that by putting off writing to you a few days, my letter, while it should communicate the occurrences of the day, might be a letter of adieu. Should my permission now arrive, I should put off my departure till after the equinox. They write me that my not receiving it, has proceeded from the ceasing of the old government in October last, and the organization of the higher departments in the new, which had not yet taken place when my last letters came away. Bills had been brought in for establishing departments of Foreign Affairs, Finance, and War. The last would certainly be given to General Knox. Mr. Jay would probably have his choice of the first and second; and it is supposed Hamilton would have that which Mr. Jay declined. Some thought Mr. Jay would prefer and obtain the head of the law department, for which Wilson would be a competitor. In such a case; some have supposed C. Thompson would ask the Foreign Affairs. The Senate and Representatives differed about

the title of the President. The former wanted to style him "His Highness, George Washington, President of the United States, and Protector of their liberties." The latter insisted and prevailed, to give no title but that of office, to wit, "George Washington, President of the United States." I hope the terms of Excellency, Honor, Worship, Esquire, forever disappear from among us, from that moment: I wish that of Mr. would follow them. In the impost bill, the Representatives had, by almost an unanimous concurrence, made a difference between nations in treaty with us, and those not in treaty. The Senate had struck out this difference and lowered all the duties. Quære, whether the Representatives would yield? Congress were to proceed about the 1st of June to propose amendments to the new Constitution. The principal would be, the annexing a declaration of rights to satisfy the mind of all, on the subject of their liberties. They waited the arrival of Brown, delegate from Kentucky, to take up the receiving that district as a fourteenth State. The only objections apprehended, were from the partisans of Vermont, who might insist on both coming in together. This would produce a delay, though probably not a long one.

To detail to you the events of this country, would require a volume. It would be useless too; because those given in the Leyden gazette, though not universally true, have so few and such unimportant errors mixed with them, that you may have a general faith in them. I will rather give you, therefore, what that paper cannot give, the views of the prevailing power, as far as

they can be collected from conversation and writings. They will distribute the powers of government into three parts, legislative, judiciary, and executive. The legislative will certainly have no hereditary branch, and probably not even a select one (like our Senate). If they divide it into two chambers at all, it will be by breaking the representative body into two equal halves by lot. But very many are for a single House, and particularly the Turgotists. The imperfection of their legislative body, I think, will be, that not a member of it will be chosen by the people directly. Their representation will be an equal one, in which every man will elect and be elected as a citizen, not as of a distinct order. Quære, whether they will elect placemen and pensioners? Their legislature will meet periodically, and set at their own will, with a power in the executive to call them extraordinarily, in case of emergencies. There is a considerable division of sentiment whether the executive shall have a negative on the laws. I think they will determine to give such a negative, either absolute or qualified. In the judiciary, the parliaments will be suppressed, less numerous judiciary bodies instituted, and trial by jury established in criminal, if not in civil cases. The executive power will be left entire in the hands of the King. They will establish the responsibility of ministers, gifts and appropriations of money by the National Assembly alone; consequently, a civil list, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom of commerce and industry, freedom of person against arbitrary arrests, and modifications, if not a total prohibition of military

agency in civil cases. I do not see how they can prohibit altogether the aid of the military in cases of riot, and yet I doubt whether they can descend from the sublimity of ancient military pride, to let a Marechal of France with his troops, be commanded by a Magistrate. They cannot conceive, that General Washington, at the head of his army, during the late war, could have been commanded by a common Constable to go as his *posse comitatus*, to suppress a mob, and that Count Rochambeau, when he was arrested at the head of his army by a sheriff, must have gone to jail if he had not given bail to appear in court. Though they have gone astonishing lengths, they are not yet thus far. It is probable, therefore, that not knowing how to use the military as a civil weapon, they will do too much or too little with it.

I have said that things will be so and so. Understand by this, that these are only my conjectures, the plan of the constitution not being proposed yet, much less agreed to. Tranquillity is pretty well established in the capital; though the appearance of any of the refugees here would endanger it. The Baron de Besenval is kept away; so is M. de la Vauguyon. The latter was so short a time a member of the obnoxious administration, that probably he might not be touched were he here. Seven Princes of the house of Bourbon, and seven ministers, fled into foreign countries, is a wonderful event indeed.

I have the honor to be, with great respect and attachment, dear Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO JOHN JAY

Paris, August 27, 1789.

Sir,—I am honored with your favor of June the 19th, informing me that permission is given me to make a short visit to my native country, for which indulgence I beg leave to return my thanks to the President, and to yourself, Sir, for the expedition with which you were so good as to forward it, after it was obtained. Being advised that October is the best month of the autumn for a passage to America, I shall wish to sail about the first of that month; and as I have a family with me, and their baggage is considerable, I must endeavor to find a vessel bound directly for Virginia, if possible.

My last letters to you have been of the 5th and 12th instant. Since these, I received information from our bankers in Holland, that they had money in hand sufficient to answer the demands for the foreign officers, and for the captives; and that moreover, the residue of the bonds of the last loan were engaged. I hereupon wrote to Mr. Grand for an exact estimate of the sum necessary for the officers. He had stated it to me as being forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty-two livres eleven sous six deniers, a year, when I was going to Holland to propose the loan to Mr. Adams, and at that sum, you will see it was stated in the estimate we sent you from Amsterdam. He now informed me it was sixty

thousand three hundred and ninety-three livres seventeen sous ten deniers, a year. I called on him for an explanation. He showed me that his first information agreed with the only list of the officers and sums then in his possession, and his last with a new list lately sent from the treasury board in which other officers were set down, who had been omitted in the first. I wrote to our bankers an account of this error, and desired to know whether, after reserving the money necessary for the captives, they were in condition to furnish two hundred and fifty-four thousand livres for the officers. They answered me by sending the money, and the additional sum of twenty-six thousand livres, to complete the business of the medals. I delivered the bills to Messrs. Grand and company, to negotiate and pay away; and the arrears to the officers to the first day of the present year, are now in a course of payment. While on this subject, I will ask that an order may be forwarded to the bankers in Holland to furnish, and to Mr. Grand to pay, the arrearages which may be due on the first of January next. The money being in hand, it would be a pity that we should fail in payment a single day, merely for want of an order. The bankers further give it as their opinion, that our credit is so much advanced on the exchange of Amsterdam, that we may probably execute any money arrangements we may have occasion for, on this side the water. I have the honor to send you a copy of their letter. They have communicated to me apprehensions, that another house was endeavoring to obtain the business of our government. Knowing of no such endeavors myself, I have

assured them that I am a stranger to any applications on the subject. At the same time, I cannot but suspect that this jealousy has been one of the spurs, at least, to the prompt completion of our loan. The spirited proceedings of the new Congress in the business of revenue, has doubtless been the principal one.

An engagement has taken place between the Russian and Swedish fleets in the Baltic, which has been not at all decisive, no ship having been lost on either side. The Swedes claim a victory, because they remained in the field till the Russians quitted it. The latter effected a junction soon after with another part of their fleet, and being now about ten ships strongest, the Swedes retired into port, and it is imagined they will not appear again under so great disparity; so that the campaign by sea is supposed to be finished. Their commerce will be at the mercy of their enemies; but they have put it out of the power of the Russians to send any fleet to the Mediterranean this year.

A revolution has been effected very suddenly in the bishopric of Liege. Their constitution had been changed by force, by the reigning sovereign, about one hundred years ago. This subject had been lately revived and discussed in print. The people were at length excited to assemble tumultuously. They sent for their Prince, who was at his country seat, and required him to come to the town house to hear their grievances. Though in the night, he came instantly and was obliged to sign a restitution of their ancient constitution, which took place on the spot, and all became quiet without a drop of blood spilt. This fact is worthy notice,

only as it shows the progress of the spirit of revolution.

No act of violence has taken place in Paris since my last, except on account of the difference between the French and Swiss guards, which gave rise to occasional single combats, in which five or six were killed. The difference is made up. Some misunderstandings had arisen between the committees of the different districts of Paris, as to the form of the future municipal government. These gave uneasiness for awhile, but have been also reconciled. Still there is such a leaven of fermentation remaining in the body of the people, that acts of violence are always possible, and are quite unpunishable; there being, as yet, no judicature which can venture to act in any case, however small or great. The country is becoming more calm. The embarrassments of the government, for want of money, are extreme. The loan of thirty millions proposed by Mr. Neckar, has not succeeded at all. No taxes are paid. A total stoppage of all payment to the creditors of the State is possible every moment. These form a great mass in the city as well as country, and among the lower class of people too, who have been used to carry their little savings of their service into the public funds upon life rents of five, ten, twenty guineas a year, and many of whom have no other dependence for daily subsistence. A prodigious number of servants are now also thrown out of employ by domestic reforms, rendered necessary by the late events. Add to this, the want of bread, which is extreme. For several days past, a considerable proportion of the people have been without bread altogether; for

though the new harvest is begun, there is neither water nor wind to grind the grain. For some days past the people have besieged the doors of the bakers, scrambled with one another for bread, collected in squads all over the city, and need only some slight incident to lead them to excesses which may end in, nobody can tell what. The danger from the want of bread, however, which is the most imminent, will certainly lessen in a few days. What turn that may take which arises from the want of money, is difficult to be foreseen. Mr. Neckar is totally without influence in the National Assembly, and is, I believe, not satisfied with this want of importance. That Assembly has just finished their bill of rights. The question will then be, whether to take up first the constitution or the business of finance.

No plan of a constitution has been yet given in. But I can state to you the outlines of what the leading members have in contemplation. The executive power in a hereditary King, with power of dissolving the legislature, and a negative on their laws; his authority in forming treaties to be greatly restrained. The legislative to be a single House of representatives, chosen for two or three years. They propose a body whom they call a Senate, to be chosen by the Provincial Assemblies, as our federal Senate is, but with no power of negating or amending laws; they may only remonstrate on them to the representatives, who will decide by a simple majority the ultimate event of the law. This body will therefore be a mere council of revision. It is proposed that they shall be of a certain age and property, and be for life.

They may make them also their court of impeachment. They will suppress the parliaments, and establish a system of judicature somewhat like that of England, with trial by jury in criminal cases, perhaps also in civil. Each province will have a subordinate provincial government, and the great cities, a municipal one on a free basis. These are the ideas and views of the most distinguished members. But they may suffer great modifications from the Assembly, and the longer the delay, the greater will be the modifications. Considerable interval having taken place since any popular execution, the aristocratic party is raising its head. They are strengthened by a considerable defection from the patriots, in consequence of the general suppression of the abuses of the 4th of August, in which many were interested. Another faction too, of the most desperate views, has acquired strength in the Assembly, as well as out of it. These wish to dethrone the reigning branch, and transfer the crown to the Duke d'Orleans. The members of this faction are mostly persons of wicked and desperate fortunes, who have nothing at heart but to pillage from the wreck of their country. The Duke himself is as unprincipled as his followers; sunk in debaucheries of the lowest kind, and incapable of quitting them for business; not a fool, yet not head enough to conduct anything. In fact, I suppose him used merely as a tool, because of his immense wealth, and that he acquired a certain degree of popularity by his first opposition to the government, then credited to him as upon virtuous motives. He is certainly borrowing money on a large

scale. He is in understanding with the court of London, where he had been long in habits of intimacy. The ministry here are apprehensive, that that ministry will support his designs by war. I have no idea of this, but no doubt, at the same time, that they will furnish him money liberally to alimnt a civil war, and prevent the regeneration of this country.

It was suggested to me, some days ago, that the court of Versailles were treating with that of London, for a surrender of their West India possessions, in consideration of a great sum of money to relieve their present distress. Every principle of common sense was in opposition to this fact; yet it was so affirmed as to merit inquiry. I became satisfied the government had never such an idea; but that the story was not without foundation altogether; that something like this was in contemplation between the faction of Orleans and the court of London, as a means of obtaining money from that court. In a conversation with the Count de Montmorin, two days ago, he told me their colonies were speaking a language which gave them uneasiness, and for which there was no foundation. I asked him if he knew anything of what I have just mentioned. He appeared unapprized of it, but to see at once that it would be a probable speculation between two parties circumstanced and principled as those two are. I apologized to him for the inquiries I had made into this business, by observing that it would be much against our interest, that any one power should monopolize all the West India islands. "Parde, assurancement," was his answer.

The *emancipation* of their islands is an idea prevailing in the minds of several members of the National Assembly, particularly those most enlightened and most liberal in their views. Such a step by this country would lead to other emancipations or revolutions in the same quarter. I enclose you some papers received from Mr. Carmichael, relative to the capture of one of our vessels by a Morocco cruiser, and restitution by the Emperor. I shall immediately write to M. Chiappe, to express a proper sense of the Emperor's friendly dispositions to us. I forward also the public papers to the present date; and have the honor to be, with sentiments of the most perfect esteem and respect, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO JAMES MADISON

Paris, August 28, 1789.

Dear Sir,—My last to you was of July the 22d. Since that, I have received yours of May the 27th, June 13th and 30th. The tranquillity of the city has not been disturbed since my last. Dissensions between the French and Swiss guards occasioned some private combats, in which five or six were killed. These dissensions are made up. The want of bread for some days past, has greatly endangered the peace of the city. Some get a little, some none at all. The poor are the best served, because they besiege perpetually the doors of the bakers. Notwithstanding this distress, and the palpable importance of the city administration to furnish bread to the city, it was not till yesterday, that general leave was given to the bakers to go into the country and buy flour for themselves as they can. This will soon relieve us, because the wheat harvest is well advanced. Never was there a country where the practice of governing too much, had taken deeper root and done more mischief. Their declaration of rights is finished. If printed in time, I will enclose a copy with this. It is doubtful whether they will now take up the finance or the constitution first. The distress for money endangers everything. No taxes are paid, and no money can be borrowed. Mr. Neckar was yesterday to give in a memoir to the Assembly, on this

subject. I think they will give him leave to put into execution any plan he pleases, so as to debarrass themselves of this, and take up that of the constitution. No plan is yet reported; but the leading members (with some small difference of opinion) have in contemplation the following: The executive power in a hereditary King, with a negative on laws, and power to dissolve the legislature; to be considerably restrained in the making of treaties, and limited in his expenses. The legislative is a House of representatives. They propose a Senate also, chosen on the plan of our federal Senate by the Provincial Assemblies, but to be for life, of a certain age (they talk of forty years), and certain wealth (four or five hundred guineas a year), but to have no other power against the laws but to remonstrate against them to the representatives, who will then determine their fate by a simple majority. This, you will readily perceive, is a mere council of revision, like that of New York, which, in order to be something, must form an alliance with the King, to avail themselves of his veto. The alliance will be useful to both, and to the nation. The representatives to be chosen every two or three years. The judiciary system is less prepared than any other part of the plan; however, they will abolish the parliaments, and establish an order of judges and justices, general and provincial, a good deal like ours, with trial by jury in criminal cases certainly, perhaps also in civil. The provinces will have Assemblies for their provincial government, and the cities a municipal body for municipal government, all founded on the basis of popular

election. These subordinate governments, though completely dependent on the general one, will be intrusted with almost the whole of the details which our State governments exercise. They will have their own judiciary, final in all but great cases, the executive business will principally pass through their hands, and a certain local legislature will be allowed them. In short, ours has been professedly their model, in which such changes are made as a difference of circumstances rendered necessary, and some others neither necessary nor advantageous, but into which men will ever run, when versed in theory and new in the practice of government, when acquainted with man only as they see him in their books and not in the world. This plan will undoubtedly undergo changes in the Assembly, and the longer it is delayed, the greater will be the changes; for that Assembly, or rather the patriotic part of it, hooped together heretofore by a common enemy, are less compact since their victory. That enemy (the civil and ecclesiastical aristocracy) begins to raise its head. The leas, too, of the patriotic party, of wicked principles and desperate fortunes, hoping to pillage something in the wreck of their country, are attaching themselves to the faction of the Duke of Orleans; that faction is caballing with the populace, and intriguing at London, the Hague, and Berlin, and have evidently in view the transfer of the crown to the Duke of Orleans. He is a man of moderate understanding, of no principle, absorbed in low vice, and incapable of extracting himself from the filth of that, to direct anything else. His name and his money, therefore,

are mere tools in the hands of those who are duping him.

* * * * *

They may produce a temporary confusion, and even a temporary civil war, supported, as they will be, by the money of England; but they cannot have success ultimately. The King, the mass of the substantial people of the whole country, the army, and the influential part of the clergy, form a firm phalanx which must prevail. Should those delays which necessarily attend the deliberations of a body of one thousand two hundred men, give time to this plot to ripen and burst, so as to break up the Assembly before anything definite is done, a constitution, the principles of which are pretty well settled in the minds of the Assembly, will be proposed by the national militia (* * * * *), urged by the individual members of the Assembly, signed by the King, and supported by the nation, to prevail till circumstances shall permit its revision and more regular sanction. This I suppose the *pis aller* of their affairs, while their probable event is a peaceable settlement of them. They fear a war from England, Holland, and Prussia. I think England will give money, but not make war. Holland would soon be a fire, internally, were she to be embroiled in external difficulties. Prussia must know this, and act accordingly.

It is impossible to desire better dispositions towards us than prevail in this Assembly. Our proceedings have been viewed as

a model for them on every occasion; and though in the heat of debate, men are generally disposed to contradict every authority urged by their opponents, ours has been treated like that of the Bible, open to explanation, but not to question. I am sorry that in the moment of such a disposition, anything should come from us to check it. The placing them on a mere footing with the English, will have this effect. When of two nations, the one has engaged herself in a ruinous war for us, has spent her blood and money to save us, has opened her bosom to us in peace, and received us almost on the footing of her own citizens, while the other has moved heaven, earth, and hell to exterminate us in war, has insulted us in all her councils in peace, shut her doors to us in every part where her interests would admit it, libelled us in foreign nations, endeavored to poison them against the reception of our most precious commodities; to place these two nations on a footing, is to give a great deal more to one than to the other, if the maxim be true, that to make unequal quantities equal, you must add more to one than the other. To say, in excuse, that gratitude is never to enter into the motives of national conduct, is to revive a principle which has been buried for centuries with its kindred principles of the lawfulness of assassination, poison, perjury, &c. All of these were legitimate principles in the dark ages which intervened between ancient and modern civilization, but exploded and held in just horror in the eighteenth century. I know but one code of morality for men, whether acting singly or collectively. He who says I will be a rogue when I act in company

with a hundred others, but an honest man when I act alone, will be believed in the former assertion, but not in the latter. I would say with the poet, "*hic niger est, hunc tu Romane cavato.*" If the morality of one man produces a just line of conduct in him, acting individually, why should not the morality of one hundred men produce a just line of conduct in them, acting together? But I indulge myself in these reflections, because my own feelings run me into them; with you they were always acknowledged. Let us hope that our new government will take some other occasions to show, that they mean to proscribe no virtue from the canons of their conduct with other nations. In every other instance, the new government has ushered itself to the world as honest, masculine, and dignified. It has shown genuine dignity, in my opinion, in exploding adulatory titles; they are the offerings of abject baseness, and nourish that degrading vice in the people.

I must now say a word on the declaration of rights, you have been so good as to send me. I like it, as far as it goes; but I should have been for going further. For instance, the following alterations and additions would have pleased me. Article 4. "The people shall not be deprived of their right to speak, to write, or *otherwise* to publish anything but false facts affecting injuriously the life, liberty, property or reputation of others, or affecting the peace of the confederacy with foreign nations. Article 7. All facts put in issue before any judicature, shall be tried by jury, except, 1, in cases of admiralty jurisdiction, wherein a foreigner shall be interested; 2, in cases cognizable before a court

martial, concerning only the regular officers and soldiers of the United States, or members of the militia in actual service in time of war or insurrection; and 3, in impeachments allowed by the constitution. Article 8. No person shall be held in confinement more than – days after he shall have demanded and been refused a writ of habeas corpus by the judge appointed by law, nor more than – days after such a writ shall have been served on the person holding him in confinement, and no order given on due examination for his remandment or discharge, nor more than – hours in any place at a greater distance than – miles from the usual residence of some judge authorized to issue the writ of habeas corpus; nor shall that writ be suspended for any term exceeding one year, nor in any place more than – miles distant from the State or encampment of enemies or of insurgents. Article 9. Monopolies may be allowed to persons for their own productions in literature, and their own inventions in the arts, for a term not exceeding – years, but for no longer term, and no other purpose. Article 10. All troops of the United States shall stand *ipso facto* disbanded, at the expiration of the term for which their pay and subsistence shall have been last voted by Congress, and all officers and soldiers, not natives of the United States, shall be incapable of serving in their armies by land, except during a foreign war." These restrictions I think are so guarded, as to hinder evil only. However, if we do not have them now, I have so much confidence in my countrymen, as to be satisfied that we shall have them as soon as the degeneracy of our government

shall render them necessary.

I have no certain news of Paul Jones. I understand only, in a general way, that some persecution on the part of his officers occasioned his being called to St. Petersburg, and that though protected against them by the Empress, he is not yet restored to his station. Silas Deane is coming over to finish his days in America, not having one sou to subsist on, elsewhere. He is a wretched monument of the consequences of a departure from right. I will, before my departure, write Colonel Lee fully the measures I have pursued to procure success in his business, and which as yet offer little hope; and I shall leave it in the hands of Mr. Short to be pursued, if any prospect opens on him. I propose to sail from Havre as soon after the first of October as I can get a vessel; and shall consequently leave this place a week earlier than that. As my daughters will be with me, and their baggage somewhat more than that of mere *voyageures*, I shall endeavor, if possible, to obtain a passage for Virginia directly. Probably I shall be there by the last of November. If my immediate attendance at New York should be requisite for any purpose, I will leave them with a relation near Richmond, and proceed immediately to New York. But as I do not foresee any pressing purpose for that journey immediately on my arrival, and as it will be a great saving of time, to finish at once in Virginia, so as to have no occasion to return there after having once gone to the northward, I expect to proceed to my own house directly. Staying there two months (which I believe will be necessary), and allowing for the time I

am on the road, I may expect to be at New York in February, and to embark from thence or some eastern port.

You ask me if I would accept any appointment on that side of the water? You know the circumstances which led me from retirement, step by step, and from one nomination to another, up to the present. My object is a return to the same retirement; whenever, therefore, I quit the present, it will not be to engage in any other office, and most especially any one which would require a constant residence from home. The books I have collected for you will go off for Havre in three or four days, with my baggage. From that port, I shall try to send them by a direct occasion to New York. I am, with great and sincere esteem, dear Sir, your affectionate friend and servant.

P. S. I just now learn that Mr. Neckar proposed yesterday to the National Assembly a loan of eighty millions, on terms more tempting to the lender than the former, and that they approved it, leaving him to arrange the details, in order that they might occupy themselves at once about to the constitution.

TO JAMES MADISON

Paris, September 6, 1789.

Dear Sir,—I sit down to write to you without knowing by what occasion I shall send my letter. I do it, because a subject comes into my head, which I would wish to develop a little more than is practicable in the hurry of the moment of making up general despatches.

The question, whether one generation of men has a right to bind another, seems never to have been started either on this or our side of the water. Yet it is a question of such consequences as not only to merit decision, but place also among the fundamental principles of every government. The course of reflection in which we are immersed here, on the elementary principles of society, has presented this question to my mind; and that no such obligation can be transmitted, I think very capable of proof. I set out on this ground, which I suppose to be self-evident, that the *earth belongs in usufruct to the living*; that the dead have neither powers nor rights over it. The portion occupied by any individual ceases to be his when himself ceases to be, and reverts to the society. If the society has formed no rules for the appropriation of its lands in severality, it will be taken by the first occupants, and these will generally be the wife and children of the decedent. If they have formed rules of appropriation, those rules may give

it to the wife and children, or to some one of them, or to the legatee of the deceased. So they may give it to its creditor. But the child, the legatee or creditor, takes it, not by natural right, but by a law of the society of which he is a member, and to which he is subject. Then, no man can, by *natural right*, oblige the lands he occupied, or the persons who succeed him in that occupation, to the payment of debts contracted by him. For if he could, he might during his own life, eat up the usufruct of the lands for several generations to come; and then the lands would belong to the dead, and not to the living, which is the reverse of our principle.

What is true of every member of the society, individually, is true of them all collectively; since the rights of the whole can be no more than the sum of the rights of the individuals. To keep our ideas clear when applying them to a multitude, let us suppose a whole generation of men to be born on the same day, to attain mature age on the same day, and to die on the same day, leaving a succeeding generation in the moment of attaining their mature age, all together. Let the ripe age be supposed of twenty-one years, and their period of life thirty-four years more, that being the average term given by the bills of mortality to persons of twenty-one years of age. Each successive generation would, in this way, come and go off the stage at a fixed moment, as individuals do now. Then I say, the earth belongs to each of these generations during its course, fully and in its own right. The second generation receives it clear of the debts and incumbrances of the first, the third of the second, and so on.

For if the first could charge it with a debt, then the earth would belong to the dead and not to the living generation. Then, no generation can contract debts greater than maybe paid during the course of its own existence. At twenty-one years of age, they may bind themselves and their lands for thirty-four years to come, at twenty-two, for thirty-three; at twenty-three, for thirty-two; and at fifty-four, for one year only; because these are the terms of life which remain to them at the respective epochs. But a material difference must be noted, between the succession of an individual and that of a whole generation. Individuals are parts only of a society, subject to the laws of a whole. These laws may appropriate the portion of land occupied by a decedent, to his creditor, rather than to any other, or to his child, on condition he satisfies the creditor. But when a whole generation, that is, the whole society, dies, as in the case we have supposed, and another generation or society succeeds, this forms a whole, and there is no superior who can give their territory to a third society, who may have lent money to their predecessors, beyond their faculties of paying.

What is true of generations succeeding one another at fixed epochs, as has been supposed for clearer conception, is true for those renewed daily, as in the actual course of nature. As a majority of the contracting generation will continue in being thirty-four years, and a new majority will then come into possession, the former may extend their engagement to that term, and no longer. The conclusion then, is, that neither the

representatives of a nation, nor the whole nation itself assembled, can validly engage debts beyond what they may pay in their own time, that is to say, within thirty-four years of the date of the engagement.

To render this conclusion palpable, suppose that Louis the XIV. and XV. had contracted debts in the name of the French nation, to the amount of ten thousand milliards, and that the whole had been contracted in Holland. The interest of this sum would be five hundred milliards, which is the whole rent-roll or net proceeds of the territory of France. Must the present generation of men have retired from the territory in which nature produces them, and ceded it to the Dutch creditors? No; they have the same rights over the soil on which they were produced, as the preceding generations had. They derive these rights not from them, but from nature. They, then, and their soil are, by nature, clear of the debts of their predecessors. To present this in another point of view, suppose Louis XV. and his cotemporary generation, had said to the money lenders of Holland, give us money, that we may eat, drink, and be merry in our day; and on condition you will demand no interest till the end of thirty-four years, you shall then, forever after, receive an annual interest of fifteen per cent. The money is lent on these conditions, is divided among the people, eaten, drunk, and squandered. Would the present generation be obliged to apply the produce of the earth and of their labor, to replace their dissipations? Not at all.

I suppose that the received opinion, that the public debts of

one generation devolve on the next, has been suggested by our seeing, habitually, in private life, that he who succeeds to lands is required to pay the debts of his predecessor; without considering that this requisition is municipal only, not moral, flowing from the will of the society, which has found it convenient to appropriate the lands of a decedent on the condition of a payment of his debts; but that between society and society, or generation and generation, there is no municipal obligation, no umpire but the law of nature.

The interest of the national debt of France being, in fact, but a two thousandth part of its rent-roll, the payment of it is practicable enough; and so becomes a question merely of honor or of expediency. But with respect to future debts, would it not be wise and just for that nation to declare in the constitution they are forming, that neither the legislature nor the nation itself, can validly contract more debt than they may pay within their own age, or within the term of thirty-four years? And that all future contracts shall be deemed void, as to what shall remain unpaid at the end of thirty-four years from their date? This would put the lenders, and the borrowers also, on their guard. By reducing, too, the faculty of borrowing within its natural limits, it would bridle the spirit of war, to which too free a course has been procured by the inattention of money lenders to this law of nature, that succeeding generations are not responsible for the preceding.

On similar ground it may be proved, that no society can make a perpetual constitution, or even a perpetual law. The earth

belongs always to the living generation: they may manage it, then, and what proceeds from it, as they please, during their usufruct. They are masters, too, of their own persons, and consequently may govern them as they please. But persons and property make the sum of the objects of government. The constitution and the laws of their predecessors are extinguished then, in their natural course, with those whose will gave them being. This could preserve that being, till it ceased to be itself, and no longer. Every constitution, then, and every law, naturally expires at the end of thirty-four years. If it be enforced longer, it is an act of force, and not of right. It may be said, that the succeeding generation exercising, in fact, the power of repeal, this leaves them as free as if the constitution or law had been expressly limited to thirty-four years only. In the first place, this objection admits the right, in proposing an equivalent. But the power of repeal is not an equivalent. It might be, indeed, if every form of government were so perfectly contrived, that the will of the majority could always be obtained, fairly and without impediment. But this is true of no form. The people cannot assemble themselves; their representation is unequal and vicious. Various checks are opposed to every legislative proposition. Factions get possession of the public councils, bribery corrupts them, personal interests lead them astray from the general interests of their constituents; and other impediments arise, so as to prove to every practical man, that a law of limited duration is much more manageable than one which needs a repeal.

This principle, that the earth belongs to the living and not to the dead, is of very extensive application and consequences in every country, and most especially in France. It enters into the resolution of the questions, whether the nation may change the descent of lands holden in tail; whether they may change the appropriation of lands given anciently to the church, to hospitals, colleges, orders of chivalry, and otherwise in perpetuity; whether they may abolish the charges and privileges attached on lands, including the whole catalogue, ecclesiastical and feudal; it goes to hereditary offices, authorities and jurisdictions, to hereditary orders, distinctions and appellations, to perpetual monopolies in commerce, the arts or sciences, with a long train of *et ceteras*; and it renders the question of reimbursement, a question of generosity and not of right. In all these cases, the legislature of the day could authorize such appropriations and establishments for their own time, but no longer; and the present holders, even where they or their ancestors have purchased, are in the case of *bona fide* purchasers of what the seller had no right convey.

Turn this subject in your mind, my dear Sir, and particularly as to the power of contracting debts, and develop it with that cogent logic which is so peculiarly yours. Your station in the councils of our country gives you an opportunity of producing it to public consideration, of forcing it into discussion. At first blush it may be laughed at, as the dream of a theorist; but examination will prove it to be solid and salutary. It would furnish matter for a fine preamble to our first law for appropriating the public revenue;

and it will exclude, at the threshold of our new government, the ruinous and contagious errors of this quarter of the globe, which have armed despots with means which nature does not sanction, for binding in chains their fellow-men. We have already given, in example, one effectual check to the dog of war, by transferring the power of declaring war from the executive to the legislative body, from those who are to spend, to those who are to pay. I should be pleased to see this second obstacle held out by us also, in the first instance. No nation can make a declaration against the validity of long-contracted debts, so disinterestedly as we, since we do not owe a shilling which will not be paid, principal and interest, by the measures you have taken, within the time of our own lives. I write you no news, because when an occasion occurs, I shall write a separate letter for that.

I am always, with great and sincere esteem, dear Sir, your affectionate friend and servant.

TO DR. GEM

The hurry in which I wrote my letter to Mr. Madison, which is in your hands, occasioned an inattention to the difference between generations succeeding each other at fixed epochs, and generations renewed daily and hourly. It is true that in the former case, the generation when at twenty-one years of age, may contract a debt for thirty-four years, because a majority of them will live so long. But a generation consisting of all ages, and which legislates by all its members above the age of twenty-one years, cannot contract for so long a time, because their majority will be dead much sooner. Buffon gives us a table of twenty-three thousand nine hundred and ninety-four deaths, stating the ages at which they happened. To draw from these the result I have occasion for, I suppose a society in which twenty-three thousand nine hundred and ninety-four persons are born every year, and live to the age stated in Buffon's table. Then, the following inferences may be drawn. Such a society will consist constantly of six hundred and seventeen thousand seven hundred and three persons, of all ages. Of those living at any one instant of time, one half will be dead in twenty-four years and eight months. In such a society, ten thousand six hundred and seventy-five, will arrive every year at the age of twenty-one years complete. It will constantly have three hundred and forty-eight thousand four hundred and seventeen persons of all ages above twenty-

one years, and the half of those of twenty-one years and upwards living at any one instant of time, will be dead in eighteen years and eight months, or say nineteen years.

Then, the contracts, constitutions and laws of every such society become void in nineteen years from their date.

TO E. RUTLEDGE

Paris, September 18, 1789.

Dear Sir,—I have duly received your favor by Mr. Cutting, enclosing the paper from Doctor Trumbull, for which I am very thankful. The conjecture that inhabitants may have been carried from the coast of Africa to that of America, by the trade winds, is possible enough; and its probability would be greatly strengthened by ascertaining a similarity of language, which I consider as the strongest of all proofs of consanguinity among nations. Still a question would remain between the red men of the eastern and western sides of the Atlantic, which is the stock, and which the shoot? If a fact be true, which I suspect to be true, that there is a much greater number of radical languages among those of America than among those of the other hemisphere, it would be a proof of superior antiquity, which I can conceive no arguments strong enough to overrule.

When I received your letter, the time of my departure was too near, to permit me to obtain information from Constantinople, relative to the demand and price of rice there. I therefore wrote to a merchant at Versailles, concerned in the Levant trade, for the prices current of rice at Constantinople and at Marseilles for several years past. He has sent me only the present price at Marseilles, and that of a particular cargo at Constantinople. I

send you a copy of his letter. The Algerines form an obstacle; but the object of our commerce in the Mediterranean is so immense, that we ought to surmount that obstacle, and I believe it could be done by means in our power, and which, instead of fouling us with the dishonorable and criminal baseness of France and England, will place us in the road to respect with all the world.

I have obtained, and enclose to you, a state of all the rice imported into this country in the course of one year, which shows its annual consumption to be between eighty-one and eighty-two thousand quintals. I think you may supplant all the other furnishing States, except as to what is consumed at Marseilles and its neighborhood. In fact, Paris is the place of main consumption. Havre, therefore, is the port of deposit, where you ought to have one or two honest, intelligent and active consignees. The ill success of a first or second experiment should not damp the endeavors to open this market fully, but the obstacles should be forced by perseverance. I have obtained from different quarters seeds of the dry rice; but having had time to try them, I find they will not vegetate, having been too long kept. I have still several other expectations from the East Indies. If this rice be as good, the object of health will render it worth experiment with you. Cotton is a precious resource, and which cannot fail with you. I wish the cargo of olive plants sent by the way of Baltimore, and that which you will perceive my correspondent is preparing now to send, may arrive to you in good order. This is the object for the patriots of your country; for that tree once established there, will

be the source of the greatest wealth and happiness. But to insure success, perseverance may be necessary. An essay or two may fail. I think, therefore, that an annual sum should be subscribed, and it need not be a great one. A common country laborer should be engaged to make it his sole occupation, to prepare and pack plants and berries at Marseilles, and in the autumn to go with them himself through the canal of Languedoc to Bordeaux, and there to stay with them till he can put them on board a vessel bound directly for Charleston; and this repeated annually, till you have a sufficient stock insured, to propagate from without further importation. I should guess that fifty guineas a year would do this, and if you think proper to set such a subscription afoot, write me down for ten guineas of the money, yearly, during my stay in France, and offer my superintendance of the business on this side the water, if no better can be had.

Mr. Cutting does full justice to the honorable dispositions of the legislature of South Carolina towards their foreign creditors. None have yet come into the propositions sent to me, except the Van Staphorsts.

The danger of famine here, has not ceased with a plentiful harvest. A new and unskilful administration has not yet got into the way of bringing regular supplies to the Capital. We are in danger of hourly insurrection for the want of bread; and an insurrection once begun for that cause, may associate itself with those discontented for other causes, and produce incalculable events. But if the want of bread does not produce

a commencement of disorder, I am of opinion the other discontents will be stifled, and a good and free constitution established without opposition. In fact, the mass of the people, the clergy and army (excepting the higher orders of the three bodies), are in as compact an union as can be. The National Assembly have decided that their executive shall be hereditary, and shall have a suspensive negative on the laws; that the legislature shall be of one House, annual in its sessions and biennial in its elections. Their declaration of rights will give you their other general views. I am just on my departure for Virginia, where the arrangement of my affairs will detain me the winter; after which (say in February) I shall go on to New York, to embark from some northern port for France. In the meanwhile and always, I am, with great and sincere esteem, dear Sir, your friend and servant.

TO JOHN JAY

Paris, September 19, 1789.

Sir,—I had the honor of addressing you on the 30th of the last month. Since that, I have taken the liberty of consigning to you a box of officer's muskets, containing half a dozen, made by the person and on the plan which I mentioned to you in a letter which I cannot turn to at this moment, but I think it was of the year 1785. A more particular account of them you will find in the enclosed copy of a letter which I have written to General Knox. The box is marked T. J. No. 36, is gone to Havre, and will be forwarded to you by the first vessel bound to New York, by Mr. Nathaniel Cutting, an American gentleman establishing himself there.

Recalling to your mind the account I gave you of the number and size of ships fitted out by the English last year, for the northern whale fishery, and comparing with it what they have fitted out this year, for the same fishery, the comparison will stand thus:

By which you will perceive, that they have lost a third of that fishery in one year, which I think almost entirely, if not quite,

ascribable to the shutting the French ports against their oil. I have no account of their southern fishery of the present year.

As soon as I was informed that our bankers had the money ready for the redemption of our captives, I went to the General of the order of the Holy Trinity, who retained all his dispositions to aid us in that business. Having a very confidential agent at Marseilles, better acquainted than himself with the details, he wrote to him for his opinion and information on the subject. I enclose you a copy of his answer, the original of which was communicated to me. I thereupon have authorized the General to go as far as three thousand livres a head, for our captives, and for this purpose, to adopt the plan proposed, of sending one of his own religion at our expense, (which will be small,) or any other plan he thinks best. The honesty and goodness of his character places us in safety in his hands. To leave him without any hesitation in engaging himself for such a sum of money, it was necessary to deposit it in a banker's hands here. Mr. Grand's were agreeable to him, and I have therefore desired our banker at Amsterdam, to remit it here. I do not apprehend, in the progress of the present revolution, anything like a general bankruptcy which should pervade the whole class of bankers. Were such an event to appear imminent, the excessive caution of the house of Grand and Company, establishes it in the general opinion as the last that would give way, and consequently would give time to withdraw this money from their hands. Mr. Short will attend to this, and will withdraw the money on the first well-founded

appearance of danger. He has asked me what he shall do with it? Because it is evident, that when Grand cannot be trusted, no other individual at Paris can, and a general bankruptcy can only be the effect of such disorders, as would render every private house an insecure deposit. I have not hesitated to say to him, in such an event, "pay it to the government." In this case, it becomes only a change of destination and no loss at all. But this has passed between us for greater caution only, and on the worst case supposable; for though a suspension of payment by government might affect the bankers a little, I doubt if any of them have embarked so much in the hands of government as to endanger failure, and especially as they have had such long warning.

You will have known, that the ordinance passed by M. de Chillon in St. Domingo, for opening ports to our importations in another part of the island, was protested against by Marbois. He had always led the Count de La Luzerne by the nose, while Governor of that island. Marbois' representations, and Luzerne's prepossessions against our trade with their colonies, occasioned him, as minister of that department, not only to reverse the ordinance, but to recall Chillon and send out a successor. Chillon has arrived here, and having rendered himself very popular in the islands, their deputies in the National Assembly have brought the question before them. The Assembly has done nothing more, as yet, than to appoint a committee of inquiry. So much of Chillon's ordinance as admitted the importation of our provisions, is continued for a time. M. de Marbois, too, is recalled, I know

not why or how. M. de La Luzerne's conduct will probably come under view only incidentally to the general question urged by the colony deputies, whether they shall not be free in future, to procure provisions where they can procure them cheapest? But the deputies are disposed to treat M. de La Luzerne roughly. This, with the disgrace of his brother, the bishop de Langres, turned out of the presidentship of the National Assembly, for partiality in office to the aristocratic principles, and the disfavor of the Assembly towards M. de La Luzerne himself, as having been formerly of the *plot* (as they call it) with Breteuil and Broglio, will probably occasion him to be out of office soon.

The Treasury board have no doubt attended to the necessity of giving timely orders for the payment of the February interest at Amsterdam. I am well informed that our credit is now the first at that exchange, (England not borrowing at present.) Our five per cent. bonds have risen to ninety-seven and ninety-nine. They have been heretofore at ninety-three. There are, at this time, several companies and individuals here, in England and Holland, negotiating to sell large parcels of our *liquidated debt*. A bargain was concluded by one of these the other day, for six hundred thousand dollars. In the present state of our credit, every dollar of this debt will probably be transferred to Europe within a short time.

September the 20th. The combination of bankers and other ministerial tools, had led me into the error (when I wrote my last letter) into which they had led most people, that the loan lately

opened here went on well. The truth is, that very little has been borrowed, perhaps not more than six or eight millions. The King and his ministers were yesterday to carry their plate to the mint. The ladies are giving up their jewels to the National Assembly. A contribution of plate in the time of Louis XV. is said to have carried about eight millions to the treasury. Plate is much more common now, and therefore, if the example prevail now in the same degree it did then, it will produce more. The contribution of jewels will hardly be general, and will be unproductive. Mr. Neckar is, on the 25th, to go to the Assembly, to make some proposition. The hundredth penny is talked of.

The Assembly proceeds slowly in the forming their constitution. The original vice of their numbers causes this, as well as a tumultuous manner of doing business. They have voted that the elections of the legislature shall be biennial; that it shall be of a single body; but they have not yet decided what shall be its number, or whether they shall be all in one room, or in two, (which they call a division into sections). They have determined that the King shall have a *suspensive and iterative veto*; that is, that after negating a law, it cannot be presented again till after a new election. If he negatives it then, it cannot be presented a third time till after another new election. If it be then presented, he is obliged to pass it. This is perhaps justly considered as a more useful negative than an absolute one, which a King would be afraid to use. Mr. Neckar's influence with the Assembly is nothing at all. Having written to them, by order of the King, on

the subject of the veto, before it was decided, they refused to let his letter be read. Again, lately, when they desired the sanction of the King to their proceedings of the fourth of August, he wrote in the King's name a letter to them, remonstrating against an immediate sanction to the whole; but they persisted, and the sanction was given. His disgust at this want of influence, together with the great difficulties of his situation, make it believed that he is desirous of resigning. The public stocks were extremely low the day before yesterday. The *caisse d'escompte* at three thousand six hundred and forty, and the loan of one hundred and twenty-five millions, of 1784, was at fifteen per cent. loss. Yesterday they rose a little.

The sloth of the Assembly (unavoidable from their number) has done the most sensible injury to the public cause. The patience of a people who have less of that quality than any other nation in the world, is worn thread-bare. Time has been given to the aristocrats to recover from their panic, to cabal, to sow dissensions in the Assembly, and distrust out of it. It has been a misfortune, that the King and aristocracy together have not been able to make a sufficient resistance, to hoop the patriots in a compact body. Having no common enemy of such force as to render their union necessary, they have suffered themselves to divide. The assembly now consists of four distinct parties. 1. The aristocrats, comprehending the higher members of the clergy, military, nobility, and the parliaments of the whole kingdom. This forms a head without a body. 2. The moderate royalists,

who wish for a constitution nearly similar to that of England. 3. The republicans, who are willing to let their first magistracy be hereditary, but to make it very subordinate to the legislature, and to have that legislature consist of a single chamber. 4. The faction of Orleans. The second and third descriptions are composed of honest, well-meaning men, differing in opinion only, but both wishing the establishment of as great a degree of liberty as can be preserved. They are considered together as constituting the patriotic part of the Assembly, and they are supported by the soldiery of the army, the soldiery of the clergy, that is to say, the Curés and monks, the dissenters, and part of the nobility which is small, and the substantial Bourgeoise of the whole nation. The part of these collected in the cities, have formed themselves into municipal bodies, have chosen municipal representatives, and have organized an armed corps, considerably more numerous in the whole than the regular army. They have also the ministry, such as it is, and as yet, the King. Were the second and third parties, or rather these sections of the same party, to separate entirely, this great mass of power and wealth would be split, nobody knows how. But I do not think they will separate; because they have the same honest views; because, each being confident of the rectitude of the other, there is no rancor between them; because they retain the desire of coalescing. In order to effect this, they not long ago proposed a conference, and desired it might be at my house, which gave me an opportunity of judging of their views. They discussed together their points of difference

for six hours, and in the course of discussion agreed on mutual sacrifices. The effect of this agreement has been considerably defeated by the subsequent proceedings of the Assembly, but I do not know that it has been through any infidelity of the leaders to the compromise they had agreed on. Another powerful bond of union between these two parties, is our friend the Marquis de La Fayette. He left the Assembly while they as yet formed but one party. His attachment to both is equal, and he labors incessantly to keep them together. Should he be obliged to take part against either, it will be against that which shall first pass the Rubicon of reconciliation with the other. I should hope, in this event, that his weight would be sufficient to turn the scale decidedly in favor of the other. His command of the armed militia of Paris (thirty thousand in number, and comprehending the French guards who are five thousand regulars), and his influence with the municipality, would secure their city; and though the armed militia and municipalities of the other cities are in nowise subordinate to those of Paris, yet they look up to them with respect, and look particularly to the Marquis de La Fayette, as leading always to the rights of the people. This turn of things is so probable, that I do not think either section of the patriots will venture on any act, which will place themselves in opposition to him.

This being the face of things, troubled as you will perceive, civil war is much talked of and expected; and this talk and expectation has a tendency to beget it. What are the events which

may produce it? 1. The want of bread, were it to produce a commencement of disorder, might ally itself to more permanent causes of discontent, and thus continue the effect beyond its first cause. The scarcity of bread, which continues very great amidst a plenty of corn, is an enigma which can be solved only by observing, that the furnishing the city is in the new municipality, not yet masters of their trade. 2. A public bankruptcy. Great numbers of the lower as well as higher classes of the citizens, depend for subsistence on their property in the public funds. 3. The absconding of the King from Versailles. This has for some time been apprehended as possible. In consequence of this apprehension, a person whose information would have weight, wrote to the Count de Montmorin, adjuring him to prevent it by every possible means, and assuring him that the flight of the King would be the signal of a St. Barthelemi against the aristocrats in Paris, and perhaps through the kingdom. M. de Montmorin showed the letter to the Queen, who assured him solemnly that no such thing was in contemplation. His showing it to the Queen, proves he entertained the same mistrust with the public. It may be asked, what is the Queen disposed to do in the present situation of things? Whatever rage, pride and fear can dictate in a breast which never knew the presence of one moral restraint.

Upon the whole, I do not see it as yet probable that any actual commotion will take place; and if it does take place, I have strong confidence that the patriotic party will hold together, and their party in the nation be what I have described it. In this case,

there would be against them the aristocracy and the faction of Orleans. This consists, at this time, of only the Catalines of the Assembly, and some of the lowest description of the mob. Its force, *within the kingdom*, must depend on how much of this last kind of people it can debauch with money from its present bias to the right cause. This bias is as strong as any one can be, in a class which must accept its bread from him who will give it. Its resources *out of the kingdom* are not known. Without doubt, England will give money to produce and to feed the fire which should consume this country; but it is not probable she will engage in open war for that. If foreign troops should be furnished, it would be most probably by the King of Prussia, who seems to offer himself as the bull-dog of tyranny to all his neighbors. He might, too, be disturbed by the contagion of the same principles gaining his own subjects, as they have done those of the Austrian Netherlands, Liege, Cologne, and Hesse Cassel. The army of the latter Prince, joining with his subjects, are said to have possessed themselves of the treasures he had amassed by hiring troops to conquer us, and by other iniquities. Fifty-four millions of livres is the sum mentioned. But all these means, external and internal, must prove inadequate to their ultimate object, if the nation be united as it is at present. Expecting within a few days to leave Paris, and that this is my last letter on public subjects, I have indulged myself in giving you a general view of things, as they appear to me at the time of my leaving them. Mr. Short will have the honor of continuing the narration, and of correcting it, where

circumstances unknown or unforeseen may give a different turn to events.

I have the honor to be, with sentiments of the most perfect esteem and respect, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO MR. NECKAR

Paris, September 26, 1789.

Sir,—I had the honor of waiting on you at Versailles the day before yesterday, in order to present my respects on my departure to America. I was unlucky in the moment, as it was one in which you were gone out.

I wished to have put into your hands, at the same time, the enclosed state of the British northern fishery for the years 1788 and 1789, by which you will see that they have lost in one year one-third of that fishery, the effect, almost solely, of the *Arret* which shut the ports of France to their oils.

I wished also to know, whether, while in America, I could be useful towards encouraging supplies of provision to be brought to this country the ensuing year. I am persuaded a considerable relief to the city of Paris might be obtained, by permitting the importation of salted provisions from the United States. Our salted beef particularly (which, since the war, we have learned to prepare in the Irish manner, so as to be as good as the best of that country), could be sold out to the people of Paris for the half of what they pay for fresh meat. It would seem then, that the laborer paying but half the usual price for his meat, might pay the full price of his bread, and so relieve government from its loss on that article. The interest of the *gabelles* has been an

objection hitherto, to the importation of salted provisions. But that objection is lessened by the reduction of the price of salt, and done away entirely by the desire of the present government to consider the ease and happiness of the people as the first object. In every country as fully peopled as France, it would seem good policy to encourage the employment of its lands in the cultivation of corn, rather than in pasturage, and consequently to encourage the use of all kinds of salted provisions, because they can be imported from other countries. It may be apprehended, that the Parisian, habituated to fresh provision, would not use salted. Then he would not buy them, and of course they would not be brought, so that no harm can be done by the permission. On the contrary, if the people of Paris should readily adopt the use of salted provisions, the good would result which is before mentioned. Salt meat is not as good as fresh for soups, but it gives a higher flavor to the vegetables boiled with it. The experience of a great part of America, which is fed almost entirely on it, proves it to be as wholesome as fresh meat. The sea scurvy, ascribed by some to the use of salt meat, is equally unknown in America as in Europe. It is the want of vegetables at sea which produces the scurvy. I have thus hastily mentioned reasons and objections, to save you the time and trouble of recollecting them. To you, Sir, it suffices, barely to mention them. Mr. Short, Chargé des Affaires for the United States, will have the honor of delivering you this, and of giving you any further details which you may be pleased to require.

I shall hope, on my return in the spring, to find your health re-established, and your mind relieved, by a perfect settlement of the affairs of the nation; and with my felicitations on those accounts, to express to you those sentiments of profound respect and attachment with which I have the honor to be, your Excellency's most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO JOHN JAY

Havre, September 30, 1789.

Dear Sir,—No convenient ship having offered from any port of France, I have engaged one from London to take me up at Cowes, and am so far on my way thither. She will land me at Norfolk, and as I do not know any service that would be rendered by my repairing immediately to New York, I propose, in order to economise time, to go directly to my own house, get through the business which calls me there, and then repair to New York, where I shall be ready to re-embark for Europe. But should there be any occasion for government to receive any information I can give, immediately on my arrival, I will go to New York on receiving your orders at Richmond. They may probably be there before me, as this goes by Mr. Trumbull, bound directly for New York.

I enclose you herewith the proceedings of the National Assembly on Saturday last, wherein you will perceive that the committee had approved the plan of Mr. Neckar. I can add from other sure information received here, that the Assembly adopted it the same evening. This plan may possibly keep their payments alive till their new government gets into motion; though I do not think it very certain. The public stocks lowered so exceedingly the last days of my stay at Paris, that I wrote to our bankers at

Amsterdam, to desire they would retain till further orders the thirty thousand guilders, or so much of it as had not yet come on. And as to what might be already coming on, I recommended to Mr. Short to go and take the acceptance himself, and keep the bill in his own hands till the time of payment. He will by that time see what is best to be done with the money.

In taking leave of Monsieur de Montmorin, I asked him whether their West India ports would continue open to us awhile. He said they would be immediately declared open till February, and we may be sure they will be so till the next harvest. He agreed with me, that there would be two or three months' provision for the whole kingdom wanting for the ensuing year. The consumption of bread for the whole kingdom, is two millions of livres tournois a day. The people pay the real price of their bread everywhere, except at Paris and Versailles. There the price is suffered to vary very little as to them, and government pays the difference. It has been supposed that this difference for some time past, has cost a million a week. I thought the occasion favorable to propose to Monsieur de Montmorin the free admission of our salted provisions, observing to him particularly that our salted beef from the Eastern States could be dealt out to the people of Paris for five or six sols the pound, which is but half the common price they pay for fresh beef; that the Parisian paying less for his meat, might pay more for his bread, and so relieve government from its enormous loss on that article. His idea of this resource seemed unfavorable. We talked

over the objections of the supposed unhealthiness of that food, its tendency to produce scurvy, the chance of its taking with a people habituated to fresh meat, their comparative qualities of rendering vegetables eatable, and the interests of the gabelles. He concluded with saying the experiment might be tried, and with desiring me to speak with Mr. Neckar. I went to Mr. Neckar, but he had gone to the National Assembly. On my return to Paris, therefore, I wrote to him on the subject, going over the objections which Monsieur de Montmorin had started. Mr. Short was to carry the letter himself, and to pursue the subject.

Having observed that our commerce to Havre is considerably on the increase, and that most of our vessels coming there, and especially those from the eastward, are obliged to make a voyage round to the neighborhood of the Loire and Garonne for salt, a voyage attended with expense, delay, and more risk, I have obtained from the Farmers General, that they shall be supplied from their magazines at Honfleur, opposite to Havre, at a mercantile price. They fix it at present at sixty livres the *muid*, which comes to about fifteen sous, or seven and a half pence sterling our bushel; but it will vary as the price varies at the place from which they bring it. As this will be a great relief to such of our vessels coming to Havre, as might wish to take back salt, it may perhaps be proper to notify it to our merchants. I enclose herewith Mr. Neckar's discourse to the Assembly, which was not printed till I left Paris; and have the honor to be, with sentiments of the most perfect esteem and respect, Sir, your most obedient,

and most humble servant.

PART III.
LETTERS WRITTEN AFTER HIS
RETURN TO THE U. S. DOWN
TO THE TIME OF HIS DEATH.
1789-1826

TO THE PRESIDENT

Chesterfield, December 15, 1789.

Sir,—I have received at this place the honor of your letters of October the 13th and November the 30th, and am truly flattered by your nomination of me to the very dignified office of Secretary of State; for which, permit me here to return you my humble thanks. Could any circumstance seduce me to overlook the disproportion between its duties and my talents, it would be the encouragement of your choice. But when I contemplate the extent of that office, embracing as it does the principal mass of domestic administration, together with the foreign, I cannot be insensible of my inequality to it; and I should enter on it with gloomy forebodings from the criticisms and censures of a public, just indeed in their intentions, but sometimes misinformed and

misled, and always too respectable to be neglected. I cannot but foresee the possibility that this may end disagreeably for me, who, having no motive to public service but the public satisfaction, would certainly retire the moment that satisfaction should appear to languish. On the other hand, I feel a degree of familiarity with the duties of my present office, as far at least as I am capable of understanding its duties. The ground I have already passed over, enables me to see my way into that which is before me. The change of government too, taking place in a country where it is exercised, seems to open a possibility of procuring from the new rulers, some new advantages in commerce, which may be agreeable to our countrymen. So that as far as my fears, my hopes, or my inclinations might enter into this question, I confess they would not lead me to prefer a change.

But it is not for an individual to choose his post. You are to marshal us as may best be for the public good; and it is only in the case of its being indifferent to you, that I would avail myself of the option you have so kindly offered in your letter. If you think it better to transfer me to another post, my inclination must be no obstacle; nor shall it be, if there is any desire to suppress the office I now hold, or to reduce its grade. In either of these cases, be so good only as to signify to me by another line your ultimate wish, and I shall conform to it cordially. If it should be to remain at New York, my chief comfort will be to work under your eye, my only shelter the authority of your name, and the wisdom of measures to be dictated by you and implicitly executed by me.

Whatever you may be pleased to decide, I do not see that the matters which have called me hither, will permit me to shorten the stay I originally asked; that is to say, to set out on my journey northward till the month of March. As early as possible in that month, I shall have the honor of paying my respects to you in New York. In the meantime, I have that of tendering you the homage of those sentiments of respectful attachment with which I am, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO THE REV. CHARLES CLAY

Monticello, January 27, 1790.

Dear Sir,—I had hoped that during my stay here I could have had the pleasure of seeing you in Bedford, but I find it will be too short for that. Besides views of business in that country, I had wished again to visit that greatest of our curiosities, the Natural Bridge, and did not know but you might have the same desire. I do not know yet how I am to be disposed of, whether kept at New York, or sent back to Europe. If the former, one of my happinesses would be the possibility of seeing you there; for I understand you are a candidate for the representation of your district in Congress. I cannot be with you to give you my vote, nor do I know who are to be the competitors, but I am sure I shall be contented with such a representative as you will make; because I know you are too honest a patriot not to wish to see our country prosper by any means, though they be not exactly those you would have preferred; and that you are too well informed a politician, too good a judge of men, not to know, that the ground of liberty is to be gained by inches, that we must be contented to secure what we can get, from time to time, and eternally press forward for what is yet to get. It takes time to persuade men to do even what is for their own good. Wishing you every prosperity in this, and in all your other undertakings (for I am sure from my

knowledge of you they will always be just), I am, with sincere esteem and respect, dear Sir, your friend and servant.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Monticello, February 14, 1790.

Sir,—I have duly received the letter of the 21st of January with which you have honored me, and no longer hesitate to undertake the office to which you are pleased to call me. Your desire that I should come on as quickly as possible, is a sufficient reason for me to postpone every matter of business, however pressing, which admits postponement. Still, it will be the close of the ensuing week before I can get away, and then I shall have to go by the way of Richmond, which will lengthen my road. I shall not fail, however, to go on with all the despatch possible, nor to satisfy you, I hope, when I shall have the honor of seeing you in New York, that the circumstances which prevent my immediate departure, are not under my control. I have now that of being, with sentiments of the most perfect respect and attachment, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO JOHN JAY, CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE UNITED STATES

Monticello, February 14, 1790.

Dear Sir,—I am honored with your favor of December 12, and thank you for your friendly congratulations on my return to my native country, as well as for the interest you are pleased to express in the appointment with which I have been honored. I have thought it my duty to undertake it, though with no prepossessions in favor of my talents for executing it to the satisfaction of the public. With respect to the young gentlemen in the office of foreign affairs, their possession and your recommendation are the strongest titles. But I suppose the ordinance establishing my office, allows but one assistant; and I should be wanting in candor to you and them, were I not to tell you that another candidate has been proposed to me, on ground that cannot but command respect. I know neither him nor them, and my hope is, that, as but one can be named, the object is too small to occasion either mortification or disappointment to either. I am sure I shall feel more pain at not being able to avail myself of the assistance but of one of the gentlemen, than they will at the betaking themselves to some better pursuit. I ask it of your friendship, my dear Sir, to make them sensible of my situation, and to accept yourself assurances of the sincere esteem

and respect with which I have the honor to be, dear Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO WM. HUNTER, ESQ., MAYOR OF ALEXANDRIA

Alexandria, March 11, 1790.

Sir,—Accept my sincere thanks for yourself and the worthy citizens of Alexandria, for their kind congratulations on my return to my native country.

I am happy they have felt benefits from the encouragement of our commerce, which have been given by an allied nation. But truth and candor oblige me, at the same time, to declare, you are indebted for these encouragements solely to the friendly dispositions of that nation, which has shown itself ready on every occasion to adopt all arrangements which might strengthen our ties of mutual interest and friendship.

Convinced that the republican is the only form of government which is not eternally at open or secret war with the rights of mankind, my prayers and efforts shall be cordially distributed to the support of that we have so happily established. It is indeed an animating thought, that while we are securing the rights of ourselves and our posterity, we are pointing out the way to struggling nations, who wish like us to emerge from their tyrannies also. Heaven help their struggles, and lead them, as it has done us, triumphantly through them.

Accept, Sir, for yourself and the citizens of Alexandria, the

homage of my thanks for their civilities, and the assurance of those sentiments of respect and attachment with which I have the honor to be, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO M. RANDOLPH

New York, March 28, 1790.

Dear Sir,—I arrived here on the 21st instant, after as laborious a journey of a fortnight from Richmond as I ever went through; resting only one day at Alexandria, and another at Baltimore. I found my carriage and horses at Alexandria, but a snow of eighteen inches deep falling the same night, I saw the impossibility of getting on in my own carriage, so left it there, to be sent to me by water, and had my horses led on to this place, taking my passage in the stage, though relieving myself a little sometimes by mounting my horse. The roads through the whole way were so bad that we could never go more than three miles an hour, sometimes not more than two, and in the night but one. My first object was to look out a house in the Broadway, if possible, as being the centre of my business. Finding none there vacant for the present, I have taken a small one in Maiden Lane, which may give me time to look about me. Much business had been put by for my arrival, so that I found myself all at once involved under an accumulation of it. When this shall be got through, I will be able to judge whether the ordinary business of my department will leave me any leisure. I fear there will be little.

Letters from Paris to the 25th of December, inform me that the revolution there was still advancing with a steady pace. There

had been two riots since my departure. The one on the 5th and 6th of October, which occasioned the royal family to remove to Paris, in which nine or ten of the Gardes de Corps fell, and among these a Chevalier de Daricourt, brother of Madame de La Dillatte, and of Mademoiselle Daricourt – friend. The second was on the 21st of the same month, in which a baker had been hung by the mob. On this occasion, the government (*i. e.* the National Assembly) proclaimed Martial Law in Paris, and had two of the ringleaders of the mob seized, tried, and hung, which was effected without any movement on the part of the people. Others were still to be tried. The troubles in Brabant becomes serious. The insurgents have routed the regular troops in every rencounter.

Congress is principally occupied by the treasury report. The assumption of the State debts has been voted affirmatively in the first instance, but it is not certain it will hold its ground through all the changes of the bill when it shall be brought in. I have recommended Mr. D. R. to the President for the office he desired, in case of a vacancy. It seemed, however, as if the President had had no intimation before, that a vacancy was expected.

* * * * *

Yours affectionately.

TO GEORGE JOY

New York, March 31, 1790.

Sir,—I have considered your application for sea letters for the ship *Eliza*, and examined into the precedents which you supposed might influence the determination. The resolution of Congress, which imposes this duty on the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, provides expressly, "that it be made to appear to him by oath or affirmation, or *by such other evidence as shall by him be deemed satisfactory*, that the vessel is commanded by officers, citizens of the United States." Your affidavit satisfies me that one of the officers is a citizen of the United States; but you are unacquainted with the others and without evidence as to them, and even without a presumption that they are citizens, except so far as arises on the circumstances of the captain's being an American, and the ship sailing from an American port. Now, I cannot in my conscience say, that this is *evidence of the fact, satisfactory to my mind*. The precedents of relaxation by Mr. Jay, were all between the date of the resolution of Congress (February the 12th, 1788) and his public advertisement, announcing the evidence which must be produced. Since this last, the proceedings have been uniform and exact. Having perfect confidence in your good faith, and therefore without a suspicion of any fraud intended in the present case, I could have wished sincerely to grant the sea letter;

but besides the letter of the law which ties me down, the public security against a partial dispensation of justice, depends on its being dispensed by certain rules. The slightest deviation in one circumstance, becomes a precedent for another, that for a third, and so on, without bounds. A relaxation in a case where it is certain no fraud is intended, is laid hold of by others, afterwards, to cover fraud. I hope, therefore, you will be sensible of the necessity of my adhering to the rules which have been published and practised by my predecessor; and that I am with great respect, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO DOCTOR WILLARD

New York, April 1, 1790.

I have duly received the letter wherein you are so good as to notify to me the honor done me by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, in electing me one of their members, together with the diploma therein enclosed; and I beg leave through you, Sir, to return to the Academy the homage of my thanks for their favor, and to express to them the grateful sense I have of it. I only regret the small prospect I have of being useful to them, engaged as I continually am in occupations less pleasing to me, and which would be better performed by others. Unacquainted with the duties which the election into your Academy imposes on me, I can only express my desire of fulfilling them on their being made to me.

Mr. Read has explained to me his drawings and models. They prove that he merits the character you are pleased to give of him. He waits at present the passage of a law for securing to inventors the benefit of their own ingenuity. I have the honor to be, with the most respectful esteem, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE

New York, April 2, 1790.

Behold me, my dear friend, elected Secretary of State, instead of returning to the far more agreeable position which placed me in the daily participation of your friendship. I found the appointment in the newspapers the day of my arrival in Virginia. I had indeed been asked while in France, whether I would accept of any appointment at home, and I had answered that, not meaning to remain long where I was, I meant it to be the last office I should ever act in. Unfortunately this letter had not arrived at the time of arranging the new Government. I expressed freely to the President my desire to return. He left me free, but still showing his own desire. This, and the concern of others, more general than I had a right to expect, induced, after three months parleying, to sacrifice my own inclinations. I have been here, then, ten days harnessed in new gear. Wherever I am, or ever shall be, I shall be sincere in my friendship to you and to your nation. I think with others, that nations are to be governed with regard to their own interests, but I am convinced that it is their interest, in the long run, to be grateful, faithful to their engagements, even in the worst of circumstances, and honorable and generous always. If I had not known that the head of our government was in these sentiments, and that

his national and private ethics were the same, I would never have been where I am. I am sorry to tell you his health is less firm than it used to be. However, there is nothing in it to give alarm. The opposition to our new Constitution has almost totally disappeared. Some few indeed had gone such lengths in their declarations of hostility, that they feel it awkward perhaps to come over; but the amendments proposed by Congress, have brought over almost all their followers. If the President can be preserved a few years till habits of authority and obedience can be established generally, we have nothing to fear. The little vaurien, Rhode Island, will come over with a little more time. Our last news from Paris is of the 8th of January. So far it seemed that your revolution had got along with a steady peace; meeting indeed occasional difficulties and dangers, but we are not to expect to be translated from despotism to liberty in a feather-bed. I have never feared for the ultimate result, though I have feared for you personally. Indeed, I hope you will never see such another 5th or 6th of October. Take care of yourself, my dear friend, for though I think your nation would in any event work out her salvation, I am persuaded, were she to lose you, it would cost her oceans of blood, and years of confusion and anarchy. Kiss and bless your dear children for me. Learn them to be as you are, a cement between our two nations. I write to Madame de La Fayette, so have only to add assurances of the respect of your affectionate friend and humble servant.

MADAME DE CORNY

New York, April 2, 1790.

I had the happiness, my dear friend, to arrive in Virginia, after a voyage of twenty-six days only, of the finest autumn weather it was possible to have; the wind having never blown harder than we would have desired it. On my arrival I found my name in the newspapers announced as Secretary of State. I made light of it, supposing I had only to say "No," and there would be an end of it. It turned out, however, otherwise. For though I was left free to return to France, if I insisted on it, yet I found it better in the end to sacrifice my own inclinations to those of others. After holding off, therefore, near three months, I acquiesced. I did not write to you while this question was in suspense, because I was in constant hope of being able to say to you certainly that I should return. Instead of that, I am now to say certainly the contrary, and instead of greeting you personally in Paris, I am to write you a letter of adieu. Accept, then, my dear Madam, my cordial adieu, and my grateful thanks for all the civilities and kindnesses I have received from you. They have been greatly more than I had a right to expect, and they have excited in me a warmth of esteem which it was imprudent in me to have given way to for a person whom I was one day to be separated from. Since it is so, continue towards me those friendly sentiments I

have always flattered myself you entertained; let me hear from you sometimes, assured that I shall always feel a warm interest in your happiness. Your letter of November 25 afflicts me; but I hope that a revolution so pregnant with the general happiness of the nation, will not in the end injure the interests of persons who are so friendly to the general good of mankind as yourself and M. de Corny. Present to him my most affectionate esteem, and ask a place for me in his recollection.

* * * * *

Your affectionate friend and humble servant.

MADAME LA COMTESSE D'HOUDETOT

New York, April 2, 1790.

Being called by our Government to assist in its domestic administration, instead of paying my respects to you in person as I had hoped, I am to write you a letter of adieu. Accept, I pray you, Madam, my grateful acknowledgments for the manifold kindnesses by which you added so much to the happiness of my stay in Paris. I have found here a philosophic revolution, philosophically effected. Yours, though a little more turbulent, has, I hope by this time, issued in success and peace. Nobody prays for it more sincerely than I do, and nobody will do more to cherish a union with a nation, dear to us through many ties, and now more approximated by the change in its government.

I found our friend Doctor Franklin in his bed—cheerful and free from pain, but still in his bed. He took a lively interest in the details I gave him of your revolution. I observed his face often flushed in the course of it. He is much emaciated. Monsieur de Crevecoeur is well, but a little apprehensive that the spirit of reforming and economizing may reach his office. A good man will suffer if it does. Permit me, Madame la Comtesse, to place here my sincere respects to Monsieur le Comte Houdetot and to Monsieur de St. Lambert. The philosophy of the latter will have

been greatly gratified to see a regeneration of the condition of man in Europe so happily begun in his own country. Repeating to you, Madam, my sense of your goodness to me, and my wishes to prove it on every occasion, adding my sincere prayers that Heaven may bless you with many years of life and health, I pray you to accept here the homage of those sentiments of respect and attachment with which I have the honor to be, Madame la Comtesse, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO MADAME LA DUCHESSÉ D'AUVILLE

New York, April 2, 1790.

I had hoped, Madame la Duchesse, to have again had the pleasure of paying my respects to you in Paris, but the wish of our Government that I should take a share in its administration, has become a law to me. Could I have persuaded myself that public offices were made for private convenience, I should undoubtedly have preferred a continuance in that which placed me nearer to you; but believing, on the contrary, that a good citizen should take his stand where the public authority marshals him, I have acquiesced. Among the circumstances which will reconcile me to my new position, are the opportunities it will give me of cementing the friendship between our two nations. Be assured, that to do this is the first wish of my heart. I have but one system of ethics for men and for nations—to be grateful, to be faithful to all engagements under all circumstances, to be open and generous, promoting in the long run even the interests of both; and I am sure it promotes their happiness. The change in your government will approximate us to one another. You have had some checks, some horrors since I left you; but the way to Heaven, you know, has always been said to be strewn with thorns. Why your nation have had fewer than any other on earth,

I do not know, unless it be that it is the best on earth. I assure you, Madam, moreover, that I consider yourself personally as with the foremost of your nation in every virtue. It is not flattery, my heart knows not that; it is a homage to sacred truth, it is a tribute I pay with cordiality to a character in which I saw but one error, it was that of treating me with a degree of favor I did not merit. Be assured I shall always retain a lively sense of your goodness to me, which was a circumstance of principal happiness to me during my stay in Paris. I hope that by this time you have seen that my prognostications of a successful issue to your revolution, have been verified. I feared for you during a short interval; but after the declaration of the army, though there might be episodes of distress, the denouements was out of doubt. Heaven send that the glorious example of your country may be but the beginning of the history of European liberty, and that you may live many years in health and happiness to see at length that Heaven did not make man in its wrath. Accept the homage of those sentiments of sincere and respectful esteem with which I have the honor to be, Madame la Duchesse, your most affectionate and obedient humble servant.

TO THE DUKE DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULT

New York, April 3, 1790.

Dear Sir,—A call to take a part in the domestic administration of our Government, obliges me to abandon the expectation of paying my respects to you in person, in Paris. Though removed to a greater distance in future, and deprived of the pleasure and advantages of your conversation and society, which contributed so much to render my residence in Paris agreeable, I shall not be the less anxious for your health and happiness, and for the prosperous issue of the great revolution in which you have taken so zealous and distinguished a part. By this time I hope it is happily concluded, and that the new constitution, after receiving the finishing hand from the National Assembly, is now putting into regular motion by the convocation of a new legislature. I find my countrymen as anxious for your success as they ought to be; and thinking with the National Assembly in all points except that of a single house of legislation. They think their own experience has so decidedly proved the necessity of two Houses to prevent the tyranny of one, that they fear that this single error will shipwreck your new constitution. I am myself persuaded that theory and practice are not at variance in this instance, and that you will find it necessary hereafter to add

another branch. But I presume you provide a facility of amending your constitution, and perhaps the necessity may be altogether removed by a council of revision well constituted.

Accept, Sir, my sincere thanks for all your kindnesses, permit me to place here those which I owe to Madame La Duchesse de La Rochefoucault, and which I render with the greatest cordiality. Were her system of ethics and of government the system of every one, we should have no occasion for government at all. I hope you will both live long years of health and happiness to see in full ripeness the fruit of your own revolution, and also that which seems blossoming in other parts of Europe. Accept, both, the homage of that affectionate and respectful attachment with which I have the honor to be your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO THE COUNT DE MONTMORIN

New York, April 6, 1790.

Sir,—The President of the United States having thought proper to assign to me other functions than those of their Minister Plenipotentiary near the King, I have the honor of addressing to your Excellency my letters of recall, and of beseeching you to be so good as to present them, with the homage of my respectful adieus, to his Majesty.

It is with great satisfaction that I find myself authorized to conclude, as I had begun my mission, with assurances of the attachment of our government to the King and his people, and of its desire to preserve and strengthen the harmony and good understanding, which has hitherto so happily subsisted between the two nations.

Give me leave to place here, also, my acknowledgments to your Excellency, personally, for the facilities you have been pleased always to give in the negotiation of the several matters I have had occasion to treat with you, during my residence at your court. They were ever such as to evince, that the friendly dispositions towards our republic which you manifested even from its birth, were still found consistent with that patriotism of which you have continued to give such constant and disinterested proofs. May this union of interests forever be the patriot's creed

in both countries. Accept my sincere prayers that the King, with life and health, may be long blessed with so faithful and able a servant, and you with a Prince, the model of royal excellence; and permit me to retain to my latest hours, those sentiments of affectionate respect and attachment, with which I have the honor to be, your Excellency's most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO WILLIAM CARMICHAEL

New York, April 11, 1790.

Sir,—A vessel being about to sail from this port for Cadiz, I avail myself of it to inform you, that under the appointment of the President of the United States, I have entered on the duties of Secretary of State, comprehending the department of Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Jay's letter of October the 2d, acknowledged the receipt of the last of yours which have come to hand. Since that date he wrote you on the 7th of December, enclosing a letter for Mr. Chiappe.

The receipt of his letter of September the 9th, 1788, having never been acknowledged, the contents of which were important and an answer wished for, I send you herewith a duplicate, lest it should have miscarried.

You will also receive herewith, a letter of credence for yourself, to be delivered to the Count de Florida Blanca, after putting thereon the proper address, with which I am unacquainted. A copy of it is enclosed for your information.

I beg leave to recommend the case of Don Blas Gonzalez to your good offices with the court of Spain, enclosing you the documents necessary for its illustration. You will perceive, that two vessels were sent from Boston in the year 1787, on a voyage

of discovery and commercial experiment in general, but more particularly to try a fur trade with the Russian settlements, on the northwest coast of our continent, of which such wonders had been published in Captain Cook's voyages, that it excited similar expeditions from other countries also; and that the American vessels were expressly forbidden to touch at any Spanish port, but in cases of extreme distress. Accordingly, through the whole of their voyage through the extensive latitudes held by that crown, they never put into any port but in a single instance. In passing near the island of Juan Fernandez, one of them was damaged by a storm, her rudder broken, her masts disabled, and herself separated from her companion. She put into the island to refit, and at the same time, to wood and water, of which she began to be in want. Don Blas Gonzalez, after examining her, and finding she had nothing on board but provisions and charts, and that her distress was real, permitted her to stay a few days, to refit and take in fresh supplies of wood and water. For this act of common hospitality, he was immediately deprived of his government, unheard, by superior order, and remains still under disgrace. We pretend not to know the regulations of the Spanish government, as to the admission of foreign vessels into the ports of their colonies; but the generous character of the nation is a security to us, that their regulations can, in no instance, run counter to the laws of nature; and among the first of her laws, is that which bids us to succor those in distress. For an obedience to this law, Don Blas appears to have suffered; and we are satisfied, it is because

his case has not been able to penetrate to his Majesty's ministers, at least in its true colors. We would not choose to be committed by a formal solicitation, but we would wish you to avail yourself of any good opportunity of introducing the truth to the ear of the minister, and of satisfying him, that a redress of this hardship on the Governor, would be received here with pleasure, as a proof of respect to those laws of hospitality which we would certainly observe in a like case, as a mark of attention towards us, and of justice to an individual for whose sufferings we cannot but feel.

With the present letter, you will receive the public and other papers, as usual, and I shall thank you in return, for a regular communication of the best gazettes published in Madrid.

I have the honor to be, with sentiments of the most perfect esteem, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO MR. GRAND

New York, April 23, 1790.

Dear Sir,—You may remember that we were together at the Hotel de La Monnoye, to see Mr. Drost strike coins in his new manner, and that you were so kind as to speak with him afterwards on the subject of his coming to America. We are now in a condition to establish a mint, and should be desirous of engaging him in it. I suppose him to be at present in the service of Watts and Bolton, the latter of whom you may remember to have been present with us at the Monnoye. I know no means of communicating our dispositions to Drost so effectually as through your friendly agency, and therefore take the liberty of asking you to write to him, to know what emoluments he receives from Watts and Bolton, and whether he would be willing to come to us for the same? If he will, you may give him an expectation, but without an absolute engagement, that we will call for him immediately, and that with himself, we may probably take and pay him for all the implements of coinage he may have, suited to our purpose. If he asks higher terms, he will naturally tell you so, and what they are; and we must reserve a right to consider of them. In either case, I will ask your answer as soon as possible. I need not observe to you, that this negotiation should be known to nobody but yourself, Drost and Mr. Short. The good old Dr.

Franklin, so long the ornament of our country, and I may say, of the world, has at length closed his eminent career. He died on the 17th instant, of an imposthume of his lungs, which having suppurated and burst, he had not strength to throw off the matter, and was suffocated by it. His illness from this imposthume was of sixteen days. Congress wear mourning for him, by a resolve of their body.

I beg you to present my friendly respects to Madame Grand, the elder and younger, and to your son, and believe me to be, with sentiments of great esteem and attachment, dear Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LA LUZERNE

New York, April 30, 1790.

Sir,—When in the course of your legation to the United States, your affairs rendered it necessary that you should absent yourself awhile from that station, we flattered ourselves with the hope that that absence was not final. It turned out, in event, that the interests of your sovereign called for your talents and the exercise of your functions, in another quarter. You were pleased to announce this to the former Congress through their Secretary for Foreign Affairs, at a time when that body was closing its administration, in order to hand it over to a government then preparing on a different model. This government is now formed, organized, and in action; and it considers among its earliest duties, and assuredly among its most cordial, to testify to you the regret which the people and government of the United States felt at your removal from among them; a very general and sincere regret, and tempered only by the consolation of your personal advancement, which accompanied it. You will receive, Sir, by order of the President of the United States, as soon as they can be prepared, a medal and chain of gold, of which he desires your acceptance, in token of their esteem, and of the sensibility with which they will ever recall your legation to their memory.

But as this compliment may hereafter be rendered to other

missions, from which yours was distinguished by eminent circumstances, the President of the United States wishes to pay you the distinguished tribute of an express acknowledgment of your services, and our sense of them. You came to us, Sir, through all the perils which encompassed us on all sides. You found us struggling and suffering under difficulties, as singular and trying as our situation was new and unprecedented. Your magnanimous nation had taken side with us in the conflict, and yourself became the centre of our common councils, the link which connected our common operations. In that position you labored without ceasing, till all our labors were crowned with glory to your nation, freedom to ours, and benefit to both. During the whole, we had constant evidence of your zeal, your abilities, and your good faith. We desire to convey this testimony of it home to your own breast, and to that of your sovereign, our best and greatest friend; and this I do, Sir, in the name, and by the express instruction of the President of the United States.

I feel how flattering it is to me, Sir, to be the organ of the public sense on this occasion, and to be justified by that office, in adding to theirs, the homage of those sentiments of respect and esteem with which I have the honor to be, your Excellency's most obedient, and most humble servant.

TO WILLIAM SHORT

New York, April 30, 1790.

Dear Sir,—My last letter to you was of the 6th instant, acknowledging the receipt of your favors of the 2d and 6th of January. Since that, Mr. Jay has put into my hands yours of the 12th of January, and I have received your note of February the 10th, accompanying some newspapers.

Mine of the 6th covered the President's letter to the King for my recall, and my letters of leave for myself and of credence to you, for the Count de Montmorin, with copies of them for your information. Duplicates of all these accompany the present; and an original commission for you as chargé des affaires, signed by the President. At the date of my former letters, I had not had time to examine with minuteness the proper form of credentials under our new Constitution: I governed myself, therefore, by foreign precedents, according to which a chargé des affaires is furnished with only a letter of credence from one minister of Foreign Affairs to the other. Further researches have shown me, that under our new Constitution, all commissions (or papers amounting to that) must be signed by the President. You will judge whether any explanation on this subject to M. de Montmorin be necessary. I enclose you also the copy of a letter written to the Marquis de La Luzerne, to be communicated to

the Count de Montmorin, and by him to the King, if he thinks proper.

It has become necessary to determine on a present proper to be given to diplomatic characters on their taking leave of us; and it is concluded that a medal and chain of gold will be the most convenient. I have, therefore, to ask the favor of you to order the dies to be engraved with all the despatch practicable. The medal must be of thirty lines diameter, with a loop on the edge to receive the chain. On one side, must be the arms of the United States, of which I send you a written description, and several impressions in wax to render that more intelligible; round them, as a legend, must be "The United States of America." The device of the other side we do not decide on. One suggestion has been a Columbia (a fine female figure) delivering the emblems of peace and commerce to a Mercury, with a legend "Peace and Commerce" circumscribed, and the date of our republic, to wit, 4th July, MDCCLXXVI., subscribed as an exergum; but having little confidence in our own ideas in an art not familiar here, they are only suggested to you, to be altered, or altogether postponed to such better device as you may approve on consulting with those who are in the habit and study of medals. Duvivier and Dupré seem to be the best workmen; perhaps the last is the best of the two.

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