



# LETTERS AND ADDRESSES OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

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*This edition is largely based upon the complete works of THOMAS JEFFERSON, published under the auspices of the JEFFERSON MEMORIAL SOCIETY, that text having been followed in making the extracts, and the publishers gratefully acknowledge the courtesy of the SOCIETY in permitting them to utilize this valuable material.*

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# LETTERS AND ADDRESSES OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

## *On a Juvenile Experience*

*To John Page*

FAIRFIELD, December 25, 1762.

*Dear Page:* This very day, to others the day of greatest mirth and jollity, sees me overwhelmed with more and greater misfortunes than have befallen a descendant of Adam for these thousand years past, I am sure; and perhaps, after excepting Job, since the creation of the world. I think his misfortunes were somewhat greater than mine; for, although we may be pretty nearly on a level in other respects, yet, I thank my God, I have the advantage of brother Job in this, that Satan has not as yet put forth his hand to load me with bodily afflictions. You must know, dear Page, that I am now in a house surrounded with enemies, who take counsel together against my soul; and when I lay me down to rest, they say among themselves, come let us destroy him. I am sure if there is such a thing as a Devil in this world, he must have been here last night and have had some hand in contriving what happened to me. Do you think the cursed rats (at his instigation, I suppose) did not eat up my pocket-book, which was in my pocket, within a foot of my head? And not contented with plenty for the present, they carried away my jemy-worked silk garters, and half a dozen new minuets I had just got, to serve, I suppose, as provision for the winter. But of this I should not have accused the Devil, (because,



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you know rats will be rats, and hunger, without the addition of his instigations, might have urged them to do this), if something worse, and from a different quarter, had not happened. You know it rained last night, or if you do not know it, I am sure I do. When I went to bed, I laid my watch in the usual place, and going to take her up after I arose this morning, I found her in the same place, it's true, but *Quantum mutatus ab illo!* all afloat in water, let in at a leak in the roof of the house, and as silent and still as the rats that had eat my pocket-book. Now, you know, if chance had had anything to do in this matter, there were a thousand other spots where it might have chanced to leak as well as at this one, which was perpendicularly over my watch. But I'll tell you, it's my opinion that the Devil came and bored the hole over it on purpose. Well, as I was saying, my poor watch had lost her speech. I should not have cared much for this, but something worse attended it; the subtle particles of the water with which the case was filled, had, by their penetration, so overcome the cohesion of the particles of the paper, of which my dear picture and watch-paper were composed, that, in attempting to take them out to dry them, good God! *Mens horret referre!* My cursed fingers gave them such a rent, as I fear I never shall get over. This, cried I, was the last stroke Satan had in reserve for me; he knew I cared not for anything else he could do to me, and was determined to try his last most fatal expedient. "*Multis fortunæ vulneribus percussus, huic uni me imparem sensi, et penitus succubui!*" I would have cried bitterly, but I thought it beneath the dignity of a man, and a man too, who had read τῶν οὐτῶν, τὰ μὲν ἐφ' ἡμῖν, τὰ δ' ἐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν. However, whatever misfortunes may attend the picture or lover, my hearty prayers shall be, that all the health and happiness which Heaven can send may be the portion of the original, and

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that so much goodness may ever meet with what may be most agreeable in this world, as I am sure it must be in the next. And now, although the picture be defaced, there is so lively an image of her imprinted in my mind, that I shall think of her too often, I fear, for my peace of mind; and too often, I am sure, to get through old Coke this winter; for God knows I have not seen him since I packed him up in my trunk in Williamsburg. Well, Page, I do wish the Devil had old Coke, for I am sure I never was so tired of an old dull scoundrel in my life. What! are there so few inquietudes tacked to this momentary life of ours, that we must need be loading ourselves with a thousand more? Or, as brother Job says, (who, by the by, I think began to whine a little under his afflictions), "Are not my days few? Cease then, that I may take comfort a little before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death." But the old fellows say we must read to gain knowledge, and gain knowledge to make us happy and admired. *Mere jargon!* Is there any such thing as happiness in this world? No. And as for admiration, I am sure the man who powders most, perfumes most, embroiders most, and talks most nonsense, is most admired. Though to be candid, there are some who have too much good sense to esteem such monkey-like animals as these, in whose formation, as the saying is, the tailors and barbers go halves with God Almighty; and since these are the only persons whose esteem is worth a wish, I do not know but that, upon the whole, the advice of these old fellows may be worth following.

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### *On an Affair of the Heart*

*To John Page*

SHADWELL, July 15, 1763.

*Dear Page:* Yours of May 30th came safe to hand. The rival you mentioned I know not whether to think formidable or not, as there has been so great an opening for him during my absence. I say *has been*, because I expect there is one no longer. Since you have undertaken to act as my attorney, you advise me to go immediately and lay siege *in form*. You certainly did not think, at the time you wrote this, of that paragraph in my letter wherein I mentioned to you my resolution of going to Britain. And to begin an affair of that kind now, and carry it on so long a time in form, is by no means a proper plan. No, no, Page; whatever assurances I may give her in private of my esteem for her, or whatever assurances I may ask in return from her, depend on it—they must be kept in private. Necessity will oblige me to proceed in a method which is not generally thought fair; that of treating with a ward before obtaining the approbation of her guardian. I say necessity will oblige me to it, because I never can bear to remain in suspense so long a time. If I am to succeed, the sooner I know it, the less uneasiness I shall have to go through. If I am to meet with a disappointment, the sooner I know it, the more of life I shall have to wear it off; and if I do meet with one, I hope in God, and verily believe, it will be the last. I assure you, that I almost envy you your present freedom; and if Belinda will not accept of my service, it shall never be offered to another. That she may, I pray most sincerely; but that she will, she never gave me reason to hope. With regard to my not proceeding in form, I do

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not know how she may like it. I am afraid not much. That her guardians would not, if they should know of it, is very certain. But I should think that if they were consulted after I return, it would be sufficient. The greatest inconvenience would be my not having the liberty of visiting so freely. This is a subject worth your talking over with her; and I wish you would, and would transmit to me your whole confab at length. I should be scared to death at making her so unreasonable a proposal as that of waiting until I return from Britain, unless she could first be prepared for it. I am afraid it will make my chance of succeeding considerably worse. But the event at last must be this, that if she consents, I shall be happy; if she does not, I must *endeavor* to be as much so as possible. I have thought a good deal on your case, and as mine may perhaps be similar, I must endeavor to look on it in the same light in which I have often advised you to look on yours. Perfect happiness, I believe, was never intended by the Deity to be the lot of one of his creatures in this world; but that he has very much put in our power the nearness of our approaches to it, is what I have steadfastly believed.

The most fortunate of us, in our journey through life, frequently meet with calamities and misfortunes which may greatly afflict us; and, to fortify our minds against the attacks of these calamities and misfortunes, should be one of the principal studies and endeavors of our lives. The only method of doing this is to assume a perfect resignation to the Divine will, to consider that whatever does happen, must happen; and that, by our uneasiness, we cannot prevent the blow before it does fall, but we may add to its force after it has fallen. These considerations, and others such as these, may enable us in some measure to surmount the difficulties thrown in our way; to bear up with a tolerable degree of patience under this burthen of life; and to

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proceed with a pious and unshaken resignation, till we arrive at our journey's end, when we may deliver up our trust into the hands of Him who gave it, and receive such reward as to him shall seem proportioned to our merit. Such, dear Page, will be the language of the man who considers his situation in this life, and such should be the language of every man who would wish to render that situation as easy as the nature of it will admit. Few things will disturb him at all: nothing will disturb him much.

### *On Books*

*To Robert Skipwith*

AUGUST 3, 1771.

We never reflect whether the story we read be truth or fiction. If the painting be lively, and a tolerable picture of nature, we are thrown into a reverie, from which if we awaken it is the fault of the writer. I appeal to every reader of feeling and sentiment whether the fictitious murder of Duncan by Macbeth in Shakespeare does not excite in him as great a horror of villainy, as the real one of Henry IV. by Ravallac as related by Davila? And whether the fidelity of Nelson and generosity of Blandford in Marmontel do not dilate his breast and elevate his sentiments as much as any similar incident which real history can furnish? Does he not, in fact, feel himself a better man while reading them, and privately covenant to copy the fair example? We neither know nor care whether Laurence Sterne really went to France, whether he was there accosted by the Franciscan, at first rebuked him unkindly, and then gave him a peace-offering; or whether the whole be not fiction. In either case we equally are sorrowful at

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the rebuke, and secretly resolve *we* will never do so; we are pleased with the subsequent atonement, and view with emulation a soul candidly acknowledging its fault and making a just reparation. Considering history as a moral exercise, her lessons would be too infrequent if confined to real life. Of those recorded by historians few incidents have been attended with such circumstances as to excite in any high degree this sympathetic emotion of virtue. We are, therefore, wisely framed to be as warmly interested for a fictitious as for a real personage. The field of imagination is thus laid open to our use and lessons may be formed to illustrate and carry home to the heart every moral rule of life. Thus a lively and lasting sense of filial duty is more effectually impressed on the mind of a son or daughter by reading King Lear, than by all the dry volumes of ethics, and divinity that ever were written.

### *Jefferson's Opinion of Ossian*

*To Chas. McPherson*

ALBEMARLE, IN VIRGINIA, February 25, 1773.

*Dear Sir:* Encouraged by the small acquaintance which I had the pleasure of having contracted with you during your residence in this country, I take the liberty of making the present application to you. I understood you were related to the gentleman of your name (Mr. James McPherson), to whom the world is so much indebted for the elegant collection, arrangement, and translation of Ossian's poems. These pieces have been and will, I think, during my life, continue to be to me the sources of daily and exalted pleasures. The tender and the sublime emotions of the mind were never before so wrought up by the human

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hand. I am not ashamed to own that I think this rude bard of the North the greatest poet that has ever existed. Merely for the pleasure of reading his works, I am become desirous of learning the language in which he sung, and of possessing his songs in their original form. Mr. McPherson, I think, informs us he is possessed of the originals. Indeed, a gentleman has lately told me he had seen them in print; but I am afraid he has mistaken a specimen from "Temora," annexed to some of the editions of the translation, for the whole works. If they are printed, it will abridge my request and your trouble, to the sending me a printed copy; but if there be more such, my petition is, that you would be so good as to use your interest with Mr. McPherson to obtain leave to take a manuscript copy of them, and procure it to be done. I would choose it in a fair, round hand, on fine paper, with a good margin, bound in parchments as elegantly as possible, lettered on the back, and marbled or gilt on the edges of the leaves. I would not regard expense in doing this. I would further beg the favor of you to give me a catalogue of the books written in that language, and to send me such of them as may be necessary for learning it. These will, of course, include a grammar and dictionary. The cost of these, as well as the copy of Ossian, will be (for me), on demand, answered by Mr. Alexander McCaul, sometime of Virginia, merchant, but now of Glasgow, or by your friend Mr. Ninian Minzees, of Richmond, in Virginia, to whose care the books may be sent. You can, perhaps, tell me whether we may ever hope to see any more of those Celtic pieces published. Manuscript copies of any which are in print, it would at any time give me the greatest happiness to receive. The glow of one warm thought is to me worth more than money. I hear with pleasure from your friend that your path

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through life is likely to be smoothed by success. I wish the business and the pleasures of your situation would admit leisure now and then to scribble a line to one who wishes you every felicity, and would willingly merit the appellation of, dear sir,

Your friend and humble servant.

### *Attitude toward England*

*To John Randolph*

PHILADELPHIA, November 29, 1775.

Believe me, dear Sir, there is not in the British empire a man who more cordially loves a union with Great Britain than I do. But by the God that made me, I will cease to exist before I yield to a connection on such terms as the British Parliament propose; and in this, I think I speak the sentiments of America. We want neither inducement nor power, to declare and assert a separation. It is will, alone, which is wanting, and that is growing apace under the fostering hand of our King. One bloody campaign will probably decide, everlastingly, our future course; and I am sorry to find a bloody campaign is decided on. If our winds and waters should not combine to rescue their shores from slavery, and General Howe's re-enforcements should arrive in safety, we have hopes he will be inspirited to come out of Boston and take another drubbing; and we must drub him soundly, before the sceptred tyrant will know we are not mere brutes, to crouch under his hand, and kiss the rod with which he designs to scourge us.



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## *Declaration of Independence\**

A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States  
of America, in General Congress assembled

JUNE 20, 1776.

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with [inherent and] *certain* inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abol-

<sup>1</sup> The passages in brackets [ ] were included in the original draft, but omitted by the Committee or by Congress; those in italics, not in the original, were inserted by the same authorities. The last two paragraphs are printed in full in both their original and final form.

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ishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, [begun at a distinguished period and] pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to [expunge] *alter* their former systems of government. The history of the present king of Great Britain is a history of [unremitting] *repeated* injuries and usurpations, [among which appears no solitary fact to contradict the uniform tenor of the rest, but all have] *all having* in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world [for the truth of which we pledge a faith yet unsullied by falsehood.]

He has refused his assent to laws the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; and, when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature, a right inestimable to them, and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly [and continually] for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

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He has refused for a long time after such dissolutions to cause others to be elected, whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise, the state remaining, in the meantime, exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners, refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

He has [suffered] *obstructed* the administration of justice [totally to cease in some of these states] *by* refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made [our] judges dependent on his will alone for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices, [by a self-assumed power] and sent hither swarms of new officers to harass our people and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us in times of peace standing armies [and ships of war] without the consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the military independent of, and superior to, the civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitutions and unacknowledged by our laws, giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation for quartering large bodies of armed troops among us; for protecting them by a mock trial from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states; for cutting off our trade with all parts of the world; for imposing taxes on us without our consent; for depriving us *in many cases* of the benefits of trial by jury; for transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended

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offences; for abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries, so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these [states] *colonies*; for taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments; for suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated government here [withdrawing his governors, and declaring us out of his allegiance and protection] *by declaring us out of his protection, and waging war against us.*

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy *scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.*

He has constrained our fellow-citizens taken captive on the high seas, to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

He has *excited domestic insurrection among us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions [of existence].*

[He has incited treasonable insurrections of our fellow-citizens, with the allurements of forfeiture and confiscation of our property.

He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, vio-

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lating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where men should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce. And that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people on whom he also obtruded them: thus paying off former crimes committed against the liberties of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another.]

In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms: our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injuries.

A prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant is unfit to be the ruler of a *free* people [who mean to be free. Future ages will scarcely believe that the hardiness of one man adventured, within the short compass of twelve years only, to lay a foundation so broad and so undisguised for tyranny over a people fostered and fixed in principles of freedom].

Nor have we been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend [a] *an unwarrantable* jurisdiction over [these our states] *us*. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here, [no one of which could warrant so strange a pretension; that these were effected at the expense of our own

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blood and treasure, unassisted by the wealth or the strength of Great Britain; that in constituting indeed our several forms of government, we had adopted one common king, thereby laying a foundation for perpetual league and amity with them; but that submission to their parliament was no part of our constitution, nor ever in idea, if history may be credited; and,] we *have* appealed to their native justice and magnanimity [as well as to] *and we have conjured them by* the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations which [were likely to] *would inevitably* interrupt our connection and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity, [and when occasions have been given them, by the regular course of their laws, of removing from their councils the disturbers of our harmony, they have, by their free election, re-established them in power. At this very time too, they are permitting their chief magistrate to send over not only soldiers of our common blood, but Scotch and foreign mercenaries to invade and destroy us. These facts have given the last stab to agonizing affection, and manly spirit bids us to renounce forever these unfeeling brethren. We must endeavor to forget our former love for them, and hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends. We might have been a free and a great people together; but a communication of grandeur and of freedom, it seems, is below their dignity. Be it so, since they will have it. The road to happiness and to glory is open to us, too. We will tread it apart from them, and] *we must therefore acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our [eternal] separation and hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.*

We therefore the representatives of the United States of America in General Congress assembled, do in the name,

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and by the authority of the good people of these [states reject and renounce all allegiance and subjection to the kings of Great Britain and all others who may hereafter claim by, through, or under them; we utterly dissolve all political connection which may heretofore have subsisted between us and the people or parliament of Great Britain; and finally we do assert and declare these colonies to be free and independent states,] and that as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do.

And for the support of this declaration, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

*We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America in General Congress assembled, appealing to the supreme judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do in the name, and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; and that as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do.*

*And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.*

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## *On Retiring from Public Life*

*To Colonel James Monroe*

MONTICELLO, May 20, 1782.

Before I ventured to declare to my countrymen my determination to retire from public employment, I examined well my heart to know whether it were thoroughly cured of every principle of political ambition, whether no lurking particle remained which might leave me uneasy, when reduced within the limits of mere private life. I became satisfied that every fibre of that passion was thoroughly eradicated. I examined also, in other views, my right to withdraw. I considered that I had been thirteen years engaged in public service—that, during that time, I had so totally abandoned all attention to my private affairs as to permit them to run into great disorder and ruin—that I had now a family advanced to years which require my attention and instruction—that, to these, was added the hopeful offspring of a deceased friend, whose memory must be forever dear to me, and who have no other reliance for being rendered useful to themselves or their country—that by a constant sacrifice of time, labor, parental and friendly duties, I had, so far from gaining the affection of my countrymen, which was the only reward I ever asked or could have felt, even lost the small estimation I had before possessed.



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## *On American Genius*

*From Notes on Virginia*

(1782)

"America has not yet produced one good poet." When we shall have existed as a people as long as the Greeks did before they produced a Homer, the Romans a Virgil, the French a Racine and Voltaire, the English a Shakespeare and Milton, should this reproach be still true, we will inquire from what unfriendly causes it has proceeded, that the other countries of Europe and quarters of the earth shall not have inscribed any name in the roll of poets. But neither has America produced "one able mathematician, one man of genius in a single art or a single science." In war we have produced a Washington, whose memory will be adored while liberty shall have votaries, whose name shall triumph over time, and will in future ages assume its just station among the most celebrated worthies of the world, when that wretched philosophy shall be forgotten which would have arranged him among the degeneracies of nature. In physics we have produced a Franklin, than whom no one of the present age has made more important discoveries, nor has enriched philosophy with more, or more ingenious solutions of the phenomena of nature. We have supposed Mr. Rittenhouse second to no astronomer living; that in genius he must be the first, because he is self taught. As an artist he has exhibited as great a proof of mechanical genius as the world has ever produced. He has not indeed made a world; but he has by imitation approached nearer its Maker than any man who has lived from the creation to this day. As in philosophy and war, so in government, in oratory, in

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painting, in the plastic art, we might show that America, though but a child of yesterday, has already given hopeful proofs of genius, as well as of the nobler kinds, which arouse the best feelings of man, which call him into action, which substantiate his freedom, and conduct him to happiness, as of the subordinate, which serve to amuse him only. We therefore suppose that this reproach is as unjust as it is unkind; and that, of the geniuses which adorn the present age, America contributes its full share.

### *On Slavery*

#### *Proposed Revision of Constitution of Virginia From Notes on Virginia*

To establish religious freedom on the broadest bottom.

To emancipate all slaves born after the passing the act. The bill reported by the revisers does not itself contain this proposition; but an amendment containing it was prepared, to be offered to the legislature whenever the bill should be taken up, and further directing, that they should continue with their parents to a certain age, then to be brought up, at the public expense, to tillage, arts, or sciences, according to their geniuses, till the females should be eighteen, and the males twenty-one years of age, when they should be colonized to such place as the circumstances of the time should render most proper, sending them out with arms, implements of household and of the handicraft arts, seeds, pairs of the useful domestic animals, &c., to declare them a free and independent people, and extend to them our alliance and protection, till they have acquired strength; and to send vessels at the same time to other parts of the world for an equal number of white inhabitants; to induce them to migrate hither proper encouragements were to be pro-

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posed. It will probably be asked, Why not retain and incorporate the blacks into the State, and thus save the expense of supplying by importation of white settlers, the vacancies they will leave? Deep-rooted prejudices entertained by the whites; ten thousand recollections, by the blacks, of the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinctions which nature has made; and many other circumstances, will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions, which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race. To these objections, which are political, may be added others, which are physical and moral.

. . . They seem to require less sleep. A black, after hard labor through the day, will be induced by the slightest amusements to sit up till midnight, or later, though knowing he must be out with the first dawn of the morning. They are at least as brave, and more adventuresome. But this may perhaps proceed from a want of forethought, which prevents their seeing a danger till it be present. When present, they do not go through it with more coolness or steadiness than the whites. . . . Love seems with them to be more an eager desire, than a tender, delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation. Their griefs are transient. Those numberless afflictions, which render it doubtful whether Heaven has given life to us in mercy or in wrath, are less felt, and sooner forgotten with them. In general, their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection. To this must be ascribed their disposition to sleep when abstracted from their diversions, and unemployed in labor. An animal whose body is at rest, and who does not reflect must be disposed to sleep of course. Comparing them by their faculties of memory, reason, and imagination, it appears to me that in memory they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior, as I think one could scarce-

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ly be found capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of Euclid; and that in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous. . . . Never yet could I find that a black had uttered a thought above the level of plain narration; never saw even an elementary trait of painting or sculpture. In music they are more generally gifted than the whites with accurate ears for tune and time, and they have been found capable of imagining a small catch. Whether they will be equal to the composition of a more extensive run of melody, or of complicated harmony, is yet to be proved. Misery is often the parent of the most affecting touches in poetry. Among the blacks is misery enough, God knows, but no poetry. Love is the peculiar æstrum of the poet. Their love is ardent, but it kindles the senses only, not the imagination. Religion, indeed, has produced a Phyllis Whately; but it could not produce a poet.

### *On Slavery*

#### *From Notes on Virginia*

There must doubtless be an unhappy influence on the manners of our people produced by the existence of slavery among us. The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it; for man is an imitative animal. This quality is the germ of all education in him. From his cradle to his grave he is learning to do what he sees others do. If a parent could find no motive either in his philanthropy or his self-love, for restraining the intemperance of passion toward his slave, it should always be a sufficient one that his

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child is present. But generally it is not sufficient. The parent storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives a loose to the worst of passions, and thus nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities. The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances. And with what execration should the statesman be loaded, who, permitting one-half the citizens thus to trample on the rights of the other, transforms those into despots, and these into enemies, destroys the morals of the one part, and the *amor patriæ* of the other. For if a slave can have a country in this world, it must be any other in preference to that in which he is born to live and labor for another; in which he must lock up the faculties of his nature, contribute as far as depends on his individual endeavors to the evanishment of the human race, or entail his own miserable condition on the endless generations proceeding from him. With the morals of the people, their industry also is destroyed. For in a warm climate, no man will labor for himself who can make another labor for him. This is so true, that of the proprietors of slaves a very small proportion indeed are ever seen to labor. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever; that considering numbers, nature and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation is among possible events; that it may become probable by supernatural interference! The Almighty has no attribute which can take side with us in such a contest. But it is impossible to be temperate and

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to pursue this subject through the various considerations of policy, of morals, of history natural and civil. We must be contented to hope they will force their way into every one's mind. I think a change already perceptible, since the origin of the present revolution. The spirit of the master is abating, that of the slave rising from the dust, his condition mollifying, the way I hope preparing, under the auspices of heaven, for a total emancipation, and that this is disposed, in the order of events, to be with the consent of the masters, rather than by their extirpation.

### *On Religion*

#### *From Notes on Virginia*

The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. But it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg. If it be said, his testimony in a court of justice cannot be relied on, reject it then, and be the stigma on him. Constraint may make him worse by making him a hypocrite, but it will never make him a truer man. It may fix him obstinately in his errors, but will not cure them. Reason and free inquiry are the only effectual agents against error. Give a loose to them, they will support the true religion by bringing every false one to their tribunal, to the test of their investigation. They are the natural enemies of error and of error only. Had not the Roman Government permitted free inquiry, Christianity could never have been introduced. Had not free inquiry been indulged at the era of the Reformation, the corruptions of Christianity could not have been purged away. If it be restrained now, the present corruptions will

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be protected, and new ones encouraged. Was the Government to prescribe to us our medicine and diet, our bodies would be in such keeping as our souls are now. Thus in France the emetic was once forbidden as a medicine, and the potato as an article of food. Government is just as infallible, too, when it fixes systems in physics. Galileo was sent to the Inquisition for affirming that the earth was a sphere; the government had declared it to be as flat as a trencher, and Galileo was obliged to abjure his error. This error, however, at length prevailed, the earth became a globe, and Descartes declared it was whirled round its axis by a vortex. The government in which he lived was wise enough to see that this was no question of civil jurisdiction, or we should all have been involved by authority in vortices. In fact, the vortices have been exploded, and the Newtonian principle of gravitation is now more firmly established, on the basis of reason, than it would be were the government to step in, and to make it an article of necessary faith. Reason and experiment have been indulged, and error has fled before them. It is error alone which needs the support of government. Truth can stand by itself. Subject opinion to coercion: whom will you make your inquisitors? Fallible men; men governed by bad passions, by private as well as public reasons. And why subject it to coercion? To produce uniformity. But is uniformity of opinion desirable? No more than of face and stature. Introduce the bed of Procrustes then, and as there is danger that the large men may beat the small, make us all of a size, by lopping the former and stretching the latter. Difference of opinion is advantageous in religion. The several sects perform the office of a *ensor morum* over such other. Is uniformity attainable? Millions of innocent men, women, and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, imprisoned; yet we have not ad-

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vanced one inch toward uniformity. What has been the effect of coercion? To make one-half the world fools, and the other half hypocrites. To support roguery and error all over the earth. Let us reflect that it is inhabited by a thousand millions of people. That these profess probably a thousand different systems of religion. That ours is but one of that thousand. That if there be but one right, and ours that one, we should wish to see the nine hundred and ninety-nine wandering sects gathered into the fold of truth. But against such a majority we cannot effect this by force. Reason and persuasion are the only practicable instruments. To make way for these, free inquiry must be indulged; and how can we wish others to indulge it while we refuse it ourselves. But every State, says an inquisitor, has established some religion. No two, say I, have established the same. Is this a proof of the infallibility of establishments? Our sister States of Pennsylvania and New York, however, have long subsisted without any establishment at all. The experiment was new and doubtful when they made it. It has answered beyond conception. They flourish infinitely. Religion is well supported; of various kinds, indeed, but all good enough; all sufficient to preserve peace and order; or if a sect arises, whose tenets should subvert morals, good sense has fair play, and reasons and laughs it out of doors, without suffering the State to be troubled with it. They do not hang more malefactors than we do. They are not more disturbed with religious dissensions. On the contrary, their harmony is unparalleled, and can be ascribed to nothing but their unbounded tolerance, because there is no other circumstance in which they differ from every nation on earth. They have made the happy discovery, that the way to silence religious disputes, is to take no notice of them.



# LETTERS AND ADDRESSES

## *On Education*

*To Martha Jefferson*

ANNAPOLIS, November 28, 1783.

*Dear Patsy:* After four days' journey, I arrived here without any accident, and in as good health as when I left Philadelphia. The conviction that you would be more improved in the situation I have placed you than if still with me, has solaced me on my parting with you, which my love for you has rendered a difficult thing. The acquirements which I hope you will make under the tutors I have provided for you will render you more worthy of my love; and if they cannot increase it, they will prevent its diminution. Consider the good lady who has taken you under her roof, who has undertaken to see that you perform all your exercises, and to admonish you in all those wanderings from what is right or what is clever, to which your inexperience would expose you: consider her, I say, as your mother, as the only person to whom, since the loss with which Heaven has pleased to afflict you, you can now look up; and that her displeasure or disapprobation, on any occasion, will be an immense misfortune, which should you be so unhappy as to incur by any unguarded act, think no concession too much to regain her good-will. With respect to the distribution of your time, the following is what I should approve:

From 8 to 10, practise music.

From 10 to 1, dance one day and draw another.

From 1 to 2, draw on the day you dance, and write a letter next day.

From 3 to 4, read French.

From 4 to 5, exercise yourself in music.

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From 5 till bedtime, read English, write, etc.

Communicate this plan to Mrs. Hopkinson, and if she approves of it, pursue it. As long as Mrs. Trist remains in Philadelphia, cultivate her affection. She has been a valuable friend to you, and her good sense and good heart make her valued by all who know her, and by nobody on earth more than me. I expect you will write me by every post. Inform me what books you read, what tunes you learn, and enclose me your best copy of every lesson in drawing. Write also one letter a week either to your Aunt Eppes, your Aunt Skipwith, your Aunt Carr, or the little lady from whom I now enclose a letter, and always put the letter you so write under cover to me. Take care that you never spell a word wrong. Always before you write a word, consider how it is spelled, and, if you do not remember it, turn to a dictionary. It produces great praise to a lady to spell well. I have placed my happiness on seeing you good and accomplished; and no distress this world can now bring on me would equal that of your disappointing my hopes. If you love me, then strive to be good under every situation and to all living creatures, and to acquire those accomplishments which I have put in your power, and which will go far toward insuring you the warmest love of your affectionate father.

P. S.—Keep my letters and read them at times, that you may always have present in your mind those things which will endear you to me.

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### *On Expenses in Paris*

*To Colonel Monroe*

PARIS, June 17, 1785.

I thank you for your attention to my outfit. For the articles of household furniture, clothes, and a carriage, I have already paid twenty-eight thousand livres, and have still more to pay. For the greatest part of this, I have been obliged to anticipate my salary, from which, however, I shall never be able to repay it. I find, that by a rigid economy, bordering, however, on meanness, I can save perhaps five hundred livres a month, at least in the summer. The residue goes for expenses so much of course and of necessity, that I cannot avoid them without abandoning all respect to my public character. Yet I will pray you to touch this string, which I know to be a tender one with Congress, with the utmost delicacy. I had rather be ruined in my fortune than in their esteem. If they allow me half a year's salary as an outfit, I can get through my debts in time. If they raise the salary to what it was, or even pay our house rent and taxes, I can live with more decency.

### *On the Screw Propeller*

*To Dr. Styles*

PARIS, July 17, 1785.

A man in this city has invented a method of moving a vessel on the water, by a machine worked within the vessel. I went to see it. He did not know himself the principle of his own invention. It is a screw with a very broad thin

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worm, or rather it is a thin plate with its edge applied spirally round an axis. This being turned, operates on the air, as a screw does, and may be literally said to screw the vessel along; the thinness of the medium, and its want of resistance, occasion a loss of much of the force. The screw, I think, would be more effectual if placed below the surface of the water. I very much suspect that a countryman of ours, Mr. Bushnel, of Connecticut, is entitled to the merit of a prior discovery of this use of the screw. I remember to have heard of his submarine navigation during the war, and, from what Colonel Humphreys now tells me, I conjecture that the screw was the power he used. He joined to this a machine for exploding under water at a given moment. If it were not too great a liberty for a stranger to take, I would ask from him a narration of his actual experiments, with or without a communication of his principle, as he should choose. If he thought proper to communicate it, I would engage never to disclose it, unless I could find an opportunity of doing it for his benefit.

### *On Slavery*

*To Dr. Price*

PARIS, August 7, 1785.

In Maryland, I do not find such a disposition to begin the redress of this enormity [slavery] as in Virginia. This is the next State to which we may turn our eyes for the interesting spectacle of justice, in conflict with avarice and oppression; a conflict wherein the sacred side is gaining daily recruits, from the influx into office of young men grown, and growing up. These have sucked in the princi-

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ples of liberty, as it were, with their mother's milk; and it is to them I look with anxiety to turn the fate of this question.

### *Letter of Advice*

*To Peter Carr*

PARIS, August 19, 1785.

Make these, then, your first object. Give up money, give up fame, give up science, give the earth itself and all it contains, rather than do an immoral act. And never suppose, that in any possible situation, or under any circumstances, it is best for you to do a dishonorable thing, however slightly so it may appear to you. Whenever you are to do a thing, though it can never be known but to yourself, ask yourself how you would act were all the world looking at you, and act accordingly. Encourage all your virtuous dispositions, and exercise them whenever an opportunity arises, being assured that they will gain strength by exercise, as a limb of the body does, and that exercise will make them habitual. From the practice of the purest virtue, you may be assured you will derive the most sublime comforts in every moment of life, and in the moment of death. If ever you find yourself environed with difficulties and perplexing circumstances, out of which you are at a loss how to extricate yourself, do what is right, and be assured that that will extricate you the best out of the worst situations. Though you cannot see, when you take one step, what will be the next, yet follow truth, justice, and plain dealing, and never fear their leading you out of the labyrinth, in the easiest manner possible. The knot which you thought a Gordian one, will untie itself before you. Nothing is so

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mistaken as the supposition, that a person is to extricate himself from a difficulty, by intrigue, by chicanery, by dissimulation, by trimming, by an untruth, by an injustice. This increases the difficulties tenfold; and those, who pursue these methods, get themselves so involved at length, that they can turn no way but their infamy becomes more exposed. It is of great importance to set a resolution, not to be shaken, never to tell an untruth. There is no vice so mean, so pitiful, so contemptible; and he who permits himself to tell a lie once, finds it much easier to do it a second and third time, till at length it becomes habitual; he tells lies without attending to it, and truths without the world's believing him. This falsehood of the tongue leads to that of the heart, and in time depraves all its good dispositions.

An honest heart being the first blessing, a knowing head is the second. It is time for you now to begin to be choice in your reading; to begin to pursue a regular course in it; and not to suffer yourself to be turned to the right or left by reading anything out of that course. I have long ago digested a plan for you, suited to the circumstances in which you will be placed. This I will detail to you, from time to time, as you advance. For the present, I advise you to begin a course of ancient history, reading everything in the original and not in translations. First read Goldsmith's history of Greece. This will give you a digested view of that field. Then take up ancient history in the detail, reading the following books, in the following order: Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon's Anabasis, Arrian, Quintus Curtius, Diodorus Siculus, Justin. This shall form the first stage of your historical reading, and is all I need mention to you now. The next will be of Roman history. From that, we will come down to modern history. In Greek and Latin poetry, you have read or will read at school, Virgil, Terence, Horace, Anacreon, Theocritus, Homer, Euripides,

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Sophocles. Read also Milton's "Paradise Lost," Shakespeare, Ossian, Pope's and Swift's works, in order to form your style in your own language. In morality, read Epictetus, Xenophontis Memorabilia, Plato's Socratic dialogues, Cicero's philosophies, Antoninus, and Seneca. In order to assure a certain progress in this reading, consider what hours you have free from the school and the exercises of the school. Give about two of them, every day, to exercise; for health must not be sacrificed to learning. A strong body makes the mind strong. As to the species of exercise, I advise the gun. While this gives a moderate exercise to the body, it gives boldness, enterprise, and independence to the mind. Games played with the ball, and others of that nature, are too violent for the body, and stamp no character on the mind. Let your gun, therefore, be the constant companion of your walks. Never think of taking a book with you. The object of walking is to relax the mind. You should therefore not permit yourself even to think while you walk; but divert yourself by the objects surrounding you. Walking is the best possible exercise. Habituate yourself to walk very far. The Europeans value themselves on having subdued the horse to the uses of man; but I doubt whether we have not lost more than we have gained by the use, of this animal. No one has occasioned so much the degeneracy of the human body. An Indian goes on foot nearly as far in a day, for a long journey, as an enfeebled white does on his horse; and he will tire the best horses. There is no habit you will value so much as that of walking far without fatigue. I would advise you to take your exercise in the afternoon, not because it is the best time for exercise, for certainly it is not, but because it is the best time to spare from your studies; and habit will soon reconcile it to health, and render it nearly as useful as if you gave to that the more precious hours of the day. A little walk of

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half an hour, in the morning, when you first rise, is advisable also. It shakes off sleep, and produces other good effects in the animal economy. Rise at a fixed and an early hour, and go to bed at a fixed and early hour also. Sitting up late at night is injurious to the health, and not useful to the mind. Having ascribed proper hours to exercise, divide what remain (I mean of your vacant hours) into three portions. Give the principal to History, the other two, which should be shorter, to Philosophy and Poetry. Write to me once every month or two, and let me know the progress you make. Tell me in what manner you employ every hour in the day. The plan I have proposed for you is adapted to your present situation only. When that is changed, I shall propose a corresponding change of plan. I have ordered the following books to be sent to you from London, to the care of Mr. Madison: Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon's Hellenics, Anabasis, and Memorabilia, Cicero's works, Baretti's Spanish and English Dictionary, Martin's Philosophical Grammar, and Martin's Philosophia Britannica. I will send you the following from hence: Bezout's Mathematics, De la Lande's Astronomy, Muschenbrock's Physics, Quintus Curtius, Justin, a Spanish Grammar, and some Spanish books. You will observe that Martin, Bezout, De la Lande, and Muschenbrock are not in the preceding plan. They are not to be opened till you go to the University. You are now, I expect, learning French. You must push this; because the books which will be put into your hands when you advance into Mathematics, Natural philosophy, Natural history, etc., will be mostly French, these sciences being better treated by the French than the English writers. Our future connection with Spain renders that the most necessary of the modern languages, after the French. When you become a public man, you may have occasion for it, and the circumstance of your possessing that



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language, may give you a preference over other candidates. I have nothing further to add for the present, but husband well your time, cherish your instructors, strive to make everybody your friend; and be assured that nothing will be so pleasing as your success to, Dear Peter,

Yours affectionately.

### *On Superiority of Agriculture to Commerce*

*To John Jay*

(PRIVATE)

PARIS, August 23, 1785.

The present is occasioned by the question proposed in yours of June the 14th: "Whether it would be useful to us, to carry all our own productions, or none?"

Were we perfectly free to decide this question, I should reason as follows: We have now lands enough to employ an infinite number of people in their cultivation. Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country, and wedded to its liberty and interests, by the most lasting bonds. As long, therefore, as they can find employment in this line, I would not convert them into mariners, artisans, or anything else. But our citizens will find employment in this line, till their numbers, and of course their productions, become too great for the demand, both internal and foreign. This is not the case as yet, and probably will not be for a considerable time. As soon as it is, the surplus of hands must be turned to something else. I should then, perhaps, wish to turn them to the sea in preference to manufactures; because, comparing

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the characters of the two classes, I find the former the most valuable citizens. I consider the class of artificers as the panders of vice, and the instruments by which the liberties of a country are generally overturned. However, we are not free to decide this question on principles of theory only. Our people are decided in the opinion that it is necessary for us to take a share in the occupation of the ocean, and their established habits induce them to require that the sea be kept open to them, and that that line of policy be pursued, which will render the use of that element to them as great as possible. I think it a duty in those intrusted with the administration of their affairs, to conform themselves to the decided choice of their constituents; and that, therefore, we should, in every instance, preserve an equality of right to them in the transportation of commodities, in the right of fishing, and in the other uses of the sea.

But what will be the consequence? Frequent wars without a doubt. Their property will be violated on the sea, and in foreign ports, their persons will be insulted, imprisoned, etc., for pretended debts, contracts, crimes, contraband, etc., etc. These insults must be resented, even if we had no feelings, yet to prevent their eternal repetition; or, in other words, our commerce on the ocean and in other countries, must be paid for by frequent war. The justest dispositions possible in ourselves, will not secure us against it. It would be necessary that all other nations were just also. Justice indeed, on our part, will save us from those wars which would have been produced by a contrary disposition. But how can we prevent those produced by the wrongs of other nations? By putting ourselves in a condition to punish them. Weakness provokes insult and injury, while a condition to punish, often prevents them. This reasoning leads to the necessity of some naval force; that being the only weapon by which we can reach an

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enemy. I think it to our interest to punish the first insult, because an insult unpunished is the parent of many others. We are not, at this moment, in a condition to do it, but we should put ourselves into it, as soon as possible. If a war with England should take place, it seems to me that the first thing necessary would be a resolution to abandon the carrying trade, because we cannot protect it. Foreign nations must, in that case, be invited to bring us what we want, and to take our productions in their own bottoms. This alone could prevent the loss of those productions to us, and the acquisition of them to our enemy. Our seamen might be employed in depredations on their trade. But how dreadfully we shall suffer on our coasts, if we have no force on the water, former experience has taught us. Indeed, I look forward with horror to the very possible case of war with a European power, and think there is no protection against them, but from the possession of some force on the sea. Our vicinity to their West India possessions, and to the fisheries, is a bridle which a small naval force, on our part, would hold in the mouths of the most powerful of these countries. I hope our land office will rid us of our debts, and that our first attention then, will be, to the beginning, a naval force of some sort. This alone can countenance our people as carriers on the water, and I suppose them to be determined to continue such.

### *On the Superiority of the United States to France*

*To Mr. Bellini*

PARIS, September 30, 1785.

Behold me at length on the vaunted scene of Europe! It is not necessary for your information, that I should enter

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into details concerning it. But you are, perhaps, curious to know how this new scene has struck a savage of the mountains of America. Not advantageously, I assure you. I find the general fate of humanity here most deplorable. The truth of Voltaire's observation, offers itself perpetually, that every man here must be either the hammer or the anvil. It is a true picture of that country to which they say we shall pass hereafter, and where we are to see God and his angels in splendor, and crowds of the damned trampled under their feet. While the great mass of the people are thus suffering under physical and moral oppression, I have endeavored to examine more nearly the condition of the great, to appreciate the true value of the circumstances in their situation, which dazzle the bulk of spectators, and, especially, to compare it with that degree of happiness which is enjoyed in America, by every class of people. Intrigues of love occupy the younger, and those of ambition, the elder part of the great. Conjugal love having no existence among them, domestic happiness, of which that is the basis, is utterly unknown. In lieu of this, are substituted pursuits which nourish and invigorate all our bad passions, and which offer only moments of ecstasy, amid days and months of restlessness and torment. Much, very much inferior, this, to the tranquil, permanent felicity with which domestic society in America blesses most of its inhabitants; leaving them to follow steadily those pursuits which health and reason approve, and rendering truly delicious the intervals of those pursuits.

In science, the mass of the people are two centuries behind ours; their *literati*, half a dozen years before us. Books, really good, acquire just reputation in that time, and so become known to us, and communicate to us all their advances in knowledge. Is not this delay compensated, by our being placed out of the reach of that swarm of nonsen-

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sical publications which issues daily from a thousand presses, and perishes almost in issuing? With respect to what are termed polite manners, without sacrificing too much the sincerity of language, I would wish my countrymen to adopt just so much of European politeness, as to be ready to make all those little sacrifices of self, which really render European manners amiable, and relieve society from the disagreeable scenes to which rudeness often subjects it. Here, it seems that a man might pass a life without encountering a single rudeness. In the pleasures of the table, they are far before us, because, with good taste they unite temperance. They do not terminate the most sociable meals by transforming themselves into brutes. I have never yet seen a man drunk in France, even among the lowest of the people. Were I to proceed to tell you how much I enjoy their architecture, sculpture, painting, music, I should want words. It is in these arts they shine. The last of them, particularly, is an enjoyment, the deprivation of which, with us, cannot be calculated. I am almost ready to say, it is the only thing which from my heart I envy them, and which, in spite of all the authority of the Decalogue, I do covet. But I am running on in an estimate of things infinitely better known to you than to me, and which will only serve to convince you, that I have brought with me all the prejudices of country, habit, and age. But whatever I may allow to be charged to me as prejudice, in every other instance, I have one sentiment, at least, founded on reality: it is that of the perfect esteem which your merit and that of Mrs. Bellini have produced, and which will forever enable me to assure you of the sincere regard with which I am, dear sir, your friend and servant.

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## *On Education*

*To J. Bannister, Jr.*

PARIS, October 15, 1785.

Let us view the disadvantages of sending a youth to Europe. To enumerate them all, would require a volume. I will select a few. If he goes to England, he learns drinking, horse-racing, and boxing. These are the peculiarities of English education. The following circumstances are common to education in that, and the other countries of Europe. He acquires a fondness for European luxury and dissipation, and a contempt for the simplicity of his own country; he is fascinated with the privileges of the European aristocrats, and sees, with abhorrence, the lovely equality which the poor enjoy with the rich, in his own country; he contracts a partiality for aristocracy or monarchy; he forms foreign friendships which will never be useful to him, and loses the seasons of life for forming, in his own country, those friendships which, of all others, are the most faithful and permanent; he is led, by the strongest of all the human passions, into a spirit for female intrigue, destructive of his own and others' happiness, and learns to consider fidelity to the marriage-bed as an ungentlemanly practice, and inconsistent with happiness; he recollects the voluptuary dress and arts of the European women, and pities and despises the chaste affections and simplicity of those of his own country; he retains, through life, a fond recollection, and a hankering after those places, which were the scenes of his first pleasures and of his first connections; he returns to his own country, a foreigner, unacquainted with the practices of domestic economy, necessary to preserve him from ruin, speaking and writing his native tongue

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as a foreigner, and therefore unqualified to obtain those distinctions, which eloquence of the pen and tongue insures in a free country; for I would observe to you, that what is called style in writing or speaking is formed very early in life, while the imagination is warm, and impressions are permanent. I am of opinion, that there never was an instance of a man's writing or speaking his native tongue with elegance, who passed from fifteen to twenty years of age out of the country where it was spoken. Thus, no instance exists of a person's writing two languages perfectly. That will always appear to be his native language, which was most familiar to him in his youth. It appears to me, then, that an American, coming to Europe for education, loses in his knowledge, in his morals, in his health, in his habits, and in his happiness. I had entertained only doubts on this head before I came to Europe: what I see and hear, since I came here, proves more than I had even suspected. Cast your eye over America: who are the men of most learning, of most eloquence, most beloved by their countrymen and most trusted and promoted by them? They are those who have been educated among them, and whose manners, morals, and habits, are perfectly homogeneous with those of the country.

### *On New States*

*To Colonel Monroe*

PARIS, July 9, 1786.

With respect to the new States, were the question to stand simply in this form:—How may the ultramontane territory be disposed of, so as to produce the greatest and most immediate benefit to the inhabitants of the maritime States of

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the Union? The plan would be more plausible, of laying it off into two or three States only. Even on this view, however, there would still be something to be said against it, which might render it at least doubtful. But that it is a question which good faith forbids us to receive into discussion. This requires us to state the question in its just form: How may the Territories of the Union be disposed of, so as to produce the greatest degree of happiness to their inhabitants? With respect to the maritime States, little or nothing remains to be done. With respect, then, to the ultramontane States, will their inhabitants be happiest, divided into States of thirty thousand square miles, not quite as large as Pennsylvania, or into States of one hundred and sixty thousand square miles, each, that is to say, three times as large as Virginia within the Alleghany? They will not only be happier in States of moderate size, but it is the only way in which they can exist as a regular society. Considering the American character in general, that of those people particularly, and the energetic nature of our governments, a State of such extent as one hundred and sixty thousand square miles, would soon crumble into little ones. These are the circumstances which reduce the Indians to such small societies. They would produce an effect on our people, similar to this. They would not be broken into such small pieces, because they are more habituated to subordination, and value more a government of regular law. But you would surely reverse the nature of things, in making small States on the ocean, and large ones beyond the mountains. If we could, in our consciences, say, that great States beyond the mountains will make the people happiest, we must still ask, whether they will be contented to be laid off into large States? They certainly will not; and, if they decide to divide themselves, we are not able to restrain them. They will end by separating from our confederacy.



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and becoming its enemies. We had better, then, look forward, and see what will be the probable course of things. This will surely be a division of that country into States of a small, or, at most, of a moderate size. If we lay them off into such, they will acquiesce, and we shall have the advantage of arranging them, so as to produce the best combinations of interest. What Congress have already done in this matter is an argument the more in favor of the revolt of those States against a different arrangement, and of their acquiescence under a continuance of that. Upon this plan, we treat them as fellow-citizens; they will have a just share in their own government; they will love us, and pride themselves in an union with us. Upon the other, we treat them as subjects; we govern them, and not they themselves; they will abhor us as masters, and break off from us in defiance.

### *Doctrine of Force in Barbary States*

*To Colonel Monroe*

PARIS, August 11, 1786.

There is little prospect of accommodation between the Algerines, and the Portuguese and Neapolitans. A very valuable capture, too, lately made by them on the Empress of Russia, bids fair to draw her on them. The probability is, therefore, that these three nations will be at war with them, and the probability is, that could we furnish a couple of frigates, a convention might be formed with those powers establishing a perpetual cruise on the coast of Algiers, which would bring them to reason. Such a convention, being left open to all powers willing to come into it, should have for its object a general peace, to be guaranteed to

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each, by the whole. Were only two or three to begin a confederacy of this kind, I think every power in Europe would soon fall into it, except France, England, and perhaps Spain and Holland. Of these, there is only England, who would give any real aid to the Algerines. Morocco, you perceive, will be at peace with us. Were the honor and advantage of establishing such a confederacy out of the question, yet the necessity that the United States should have some marine force, and the happiness of this, as the ostensible cause for beginning it, would decide on its propriety. It will be said, there is no money in the Treasury. There never will be money in the Treasury, till the confederacy shows its teeth. The States must see the rod; perhaps it must be felt by some one of them. I am persuaded, all of them would rejoice to see every one obliged to furnish its contributions. It is not the difficulty of furnishing them, which beggars the Treasury, but the fear that others will not furnish as much. Every rational citizen must wish to see an effective instrument of coercion, and should fear to see it on any other element than the water. A naval force can never endanger our liberties, nor occasion bloodshed; a land force would do both. It is not in the choice of the States, whether they will pay money to cover their trade against the Algerines. If they obtain a peace by negotiation, they must pay a great sum of money for it; if they do nothing, they must pay a great sum of money, in the form of insurance; and in either way, as great a one as in the way of force, and probably less effectual.

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### *On the Cincinnati*

#### *To General Washington*

PARIS, November 14, 1786.

The author of the political part of the "Encyclopédie Methodique" desired me to examine his article, "États Unis." I did so. I found it a tissue of errors, for, in truth, they know nothing about us here. Particularly, however, the article "Cincinnati" was a mere philippic against that institution, in which it appeared that there was an utter ignorance of facts and motives. I gave him notes on it. He reformed it, as he supposed, and sent it again to me to revise. In this reformed state, Colonel Humphreys saw it. I found it necessary to write that article for him. Before I gave it to him, I showed it to the Marquis de La Fayette, who made a correction or two. I then sent it to the author. He used the materials, mixing a great deal of his own with them. In a work, which is sure of going down to the latest posterity, I thought it material to set facts to rights as much as possible. The author was well disposed, but could not entirely get the better of his original bias. I send you the article as ultimately published. If you find any material errors in it, and will be so good as to inform me of them, I shall probably have opportunities of setting this author to rights. What has heretofore passed between us on this institution, makes it my duty to mention to you, that I have never heard a person in Europe, learned or unlearned, express his thoughts on this institution, who did not consider it as dishonorable and destructive to our governments; and that every writing which has come out since my arrival here, in which it is mentioned, considers it, even as now reformed, as the germ whose de-

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velopment is one day to destroy the fabric we have reared. I did not apprehend this, while I had American ideas only. But I confess that what I have seen in Europe has brought me over to that opinion; and that though the day may be at some distance, beyond the reach of our lives, perhaps, yet it will certainly come, when a single fibre left of this institution will produce an hereditary aristocracy, which will change the form of our governments from the best to the worst in the world. To know the mass of evil which flows from this fatal source, a person must be in France; he must see the finest soil, the finest climate, the most compact State, the most benevolent character of people, and every earthly advantage combined, insufficient to prevent this scourge from rendering existence a curse to twenty-four out of twenty-five parts of the inhabitants of this country. With us, the branches of this institution cover all the States. The Southern ones, at this time, are aristocratical in their dispositions; and that that spirit should grow and extend itself, is within the natural order of things. I do not flatter myself with the immortality of our governments, but I shall think little also of their longevity, unless this germ of destruction be taken out. When the society themselves shall weigh the possibility of evil, against the impossibility of any good to proceed from this institution, I cannot help hoping they will eradicate it. I know they wish the permanence of our governments, as much as any individuals composing them.

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### *On the Simple Life*

*To Colonel Monroe*

PARIS, December 18, 1786.

You wish not to engage in the drudgery of the bar. You have two asylums from that. Either to accept a seat in the Council, or in the judiciary department. The latter, however, would require a little previous drudgery at the bar, to qualify you to discharge your duty with satisfaction to yourself. Neither of these would be inconsistent with a continued residence in Albemarle. It is but twelve hours' drive in a sulky from Charlottesville to Richmond, keeping a fresh horse always at the half-way, which would be a small annual expense. I am in hopes that Mrs. M. will have in her domestic cares, occupation and pleasure, sufficient to fill her time, and insure her against the *tedium vitæ*; that she will find, that the distractions of a town, and the waste of life under these, can bear no comparison with the tranquil happiness of domestic life. If her own experience has not yet taught her this truth, she has in its favor the testimony of one who has gone through the various scenes of business, of bustle, of office, of rambling, and of quiet retirement, and who can assure her, that the latter is the only point upon which the mind can settle at rest. Though not clear of inquietudes, because no earthly situation is so, they are fewer in number, and mixed with more objects of contentment than in any other mode of life. But I must not philosophize too much with her, lest I give her too serious apprehensions of a friendship I shall impose on her. I am with very great esteem, dear Sir, your sincere friend and servant.

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## *On Newspapers*

*To Colonel Edward Carrington*

PARIS, January 16, 1787.

The way to prevent irregular interpositions of the people, is to give them full information of their affairs through the channel of the public papers, and to contrive that those papers should penetrate the whole mass of the people. The basis of our governments being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter. But I should mean that every man should receive those papers, and be capable of reading them.

## *On the Theory of Government and on Louisiana.*

*To James Madison*

JANUARY 30, 1787.

*Dear Sir:* I am impatient to learn your sentiments on the late troubles in the Eastern States. So far as I have yet seen, they do not appear to threaten serious consequences. Those States have suffered by the stoppage of the channels of their commerce, which have not yet found other issues. This must render money scarce, and make the people uneasy. This uneasiness has produced acts absolutely unjustifiable; but I hope they will provoke no severities from their governments. A consciousness of

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those in power that their administration of the public affairs has been honest, may, perhaps, produce too great a degree of indignation; and those characters, wherein fear predominates over hope, may apprehend too much from these instances of irregularity. They may conclude too hastily, that nature has formed man insusceptible of any other government than that of force, a conclusion not founded in truth nor experience. Societies exist under three forms, sufficiently distinguishable. 1. Without government, as among our Indians. 2. Under governments, wherein the will of every one has a just influence; as is the case in England, in a slight degree, and in our States, in a great one. 3. Under governments of force; as is the case in all other monarchies, and in most of the other republics. To have an idea of the curse of existence under these last, they must be seen. It is a government of wolves over sheep. It is a problem, not clear in my mind, that the first condition is not the best. But I believe it to be inconsistent with any great degree of population. The second state has a great deal of good in it. The mass of mankind under that, enjoys a precious degree of liberty and happiness. It has its evils, too; the principal of which is the turbulence to which it is subject. But weigh this against the oppressions of monarchy, and it becomes nothing. *Malo periculosam libertatem quam quietam servitutem*. Even this evil is productive of good. It prevents the degeneracy of government, and nourishes a general attention to the public affairs. I hold it, that a little rebellion, now and then, is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical. Unsuccessful rebellions, indeed, generally establish the encroachments on the rights of the people, which have produced them. An observation of this truth should render honest republican governors so mild in their punishment of rebellions, as not to discourage them too

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much. It is a medicine necessary for the sound health of government.

If these transactions give me no uneasiness, I feel very differently at another piece of intelligence, to wit, the possibility that the navigation of the Mississippi may be abandoned to Spain. I never had any interest westward of the Alleghany; and I never will have any. But I have had great opportunities of knowing the character of the people who inhabit that country; and I will venture to say that the act which abandons the navigation of the Mississippi is an act of separation between the eastern and western country. It is a relinquishment of five parts out of eight, of the territory of the United States; an abandonment of the fairest subject for the payment of our public debts, and the chaining those debts on our own necks, *in perpetuum*. I have the utmost confidence in the honest intentions of those who concur in this measure; but I lament their want of acquaintance with the character and physical advantages of the people, who, right or wrong, will suppose their interest sacrificed on this occasion to the contrary interests of that part of the confederacy in possession of present power. If they declare themselves a separate people, we are incapable of a single effort to retain them. Our citizens can never be induced, either as militia or as soldiers, to go there to cut the throats of their own brothers and sons, or rather, to be themselves the subjects, instead of the perpetrators of the parricide. Nor would that country quit the cost of being retained against the will of its inhabitants, could it be done. But it cannot be done. They are able already to rescue the navigation of the Mississippi out of the hands of Spain, and to add New Orleans to their own territory. They will be joined by the inhabitants of Louisiana. This will bring on a war between them and Spain; and that will produce the question with us, whether it will not be worth our while to



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become parties with them in the war, in order to reunite them with us, and thus correct our error? And were I to permit my forebodings to go one step further, I should predict that the inhabitants of the United States would force their rulers to take the affirmative of that question. I wish I may be mistaken in all these opinions.

### *Character of John Adams*

*To James Madison*

PARIS, January 30, 1787.

You know the opinion I formerly entertained of my friend, Mr. Adams . . . and the Governor were the first who shook that opinion. I afterward saw proofs which convicted him of a degree of vanity, and of a blindness to it, of which no germ appeared in Congress. A seven months' intimacy with him here, and as many weeks in London, have given me opportunities of studying him closely. He is vain, irritable, and a bad calculator of the force and probable effect of the motives which govern men. This is all the ill which can possibly be said of him. He is as disinterested as the being who made him: he is profound in his views, and accurate in his judgment, except where knowledge of the world is necessary to form a judgment. He is so amiable, that I pronounce you will love him, if ever you become acquainted with him. He would be, as he was, a great man in Congress.

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## *A Letter of Courtesy*

*To Mrs. Bingham*

PARIS, February 7, 1787.

I know, Madam, that the twelvemonth is not yet expired; but it will be, nearly, before this will have the honor of being put into your hands. You are then engaged to tell me, truly and honestly, whether you do not find the tranquil pleasures of America, preferable to the empty bustle of Paris. For, to what does that bustle tend? At eleven o'clock, it is day, *chez madame*. The curtains are drawn. Propped on bolsters and pillows, and her head scratched into a little order, the bulletins of the sick are read, and the billets of the well. She writes to some of her acquaintance, and receives the visits of others. If the morning is not very thronged, she is able to get out and hobble round the cage of the Palais Royal; but she must hobble quickly, for the *coiffeur's* turn is come; and a tremendous turn it is! Happy, if he does not make her arrive when dinner is half over! The torpitude of digestion a little passed, she flutters half an hour through the streets, by way of paying visits, and then to the spectacles. These finished, another half hour is devoted to dodging in and out of the doors of her very sincere friends, and away to supper. After supper, cards; and after cards, bed; to rise at noon the next day, and to tread, like a mill-horse, the same trodden circle over again. Thus the days of life are consumed, one by one, without an object beyond the present moment; ever flying from the *ennui* of that, yet carrying it with us; eternally in pursuit of happiness, which keeps eternally before us. If death or bankruptcy happen to trip us out of the circle, it is matter for the buzz of the evening, and is

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completely forgotten by the next morning. In America, on the other hand, the society of your husband, the fond cares for the children, the arrangements of the house, the improvements of the grounds, fill every moment with a healthy and a useful activity. Every exertion is encouraging, because, to present amusement, it joins the promise of some future good. The intervals of leisure are filled by the society of real friends, whose affections are not thinned to cobweb, by being spread over a thousand objects. This is the picture, in the light it is presented to my mind; now let me have it in yours. If we do not concur this year, we shall the next; or if not then, in a year or two more. You see I am determined not to suppose myself mistaken.

### *Art et la Politesse*

*To Madame la Comtesse de Tesse*

NISMES, March 20, 1787.

Here I am, Madam, gazing whole hours at the Maison Quarrée, like a lover at his mistress. The stocking-weavers and silk-spinners around it consider me a hypochondriac Englishman, about to write with a pistol the last chapter of his history. This is the second time I have been in love since I left Paris. The first was with a Diana at the Chateau de Laye-Epinaye in Beaujolois, a delicious morsel of sculpture, by M. A. Slodtz. This, you will say, was in rule, to fall in love with a female beauty; but with a house! it is out of all precedent. No, Madam, it is not without a precedent in my own history. While in Paris, I was violently smitten with the Hotel de Salm, and used to go to the Tuileries almost daily, to look at it. The *loueuse des chaises*, inattentive to my passion, never had the complaisance to

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place a chair there, so that, sitting on the parapet, and twisting my neck round to see the object of my admiration, I generally left it with a *torti-collis*.

From Lyons to Nismes I have been nourished with the remains of Roman grandeur. They have always brought you to my mind, because I know your affection for whatever is Roman and noble. At Vienna I thought of you. But I am glad you were not there; for you would have seen me more angry than, I hope you will ever see me. The Prætorian Palace, as it is called, comparable, for its fine proportions, to the Maison Quarrée, defaced by the barbarians who have converted it to its present purpose, its beautiful fluted Corinthian columns cut out, in part, to make space for Gothic windows, and hewed down, in the residue, to the plane of the building, was enough, you must admit, to disturb my composure. . . .

Loving, as you do, madam, the precious remains of antiquity, loving architecture, gardening, a warm sun and a clear sky, I wonder you have never thought of moving Chaville to Nismes. This, as you know, has not always been deemed impracticable; and, therefore, the next time a *Sur-intendant des batiments du roi*, after the example of M. Colbert, sends persons to Nismes to move the Maison Quarrée to Paris, that they may not come empty-handed, desire them to bring Chaville with them, to replace it. . . .

From a correspondent at Nismes, you will not expect news. Were I to attempt to give you news, I should tell you stories one thousand years old. I should detail to you the intrigues of the courts of the Cæsars, how they affect us here, the oppressions of their prætors, prefects, etc. I am immersed in antiquities from morning to night. For me, the city of Rome is actually existing in all the splendor of its empire. I am filled with alarms for the event of the irruptions daily making on us, by the Goths, the Visigoths,

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Ostrogoths, and Vandals, lest they should reconquer us to our original barbarism. If I am sometimes induced to look forward to the eighteenth century, it is only when recalled to it by the recollection of your goodness and friendship, and by those sentiments of sincere esteem and respect with which I have the honor to be, Madam, your most obedient and most humble servant.

### *Travel and Science*

*To the Marquis de La Fayette*

APRIL —, 1787.

From the first olive fields of Pierrelatte, to the orange-ries of Hieres, has been continued rapture to me. I have often wished for you. I think you have not made this journey. It is a pleasure you have to come, and an improvement to be added to the many you have already made. It will be a great comfort to you, to know, from your own inspection, the condition of all the provinces of your own country, and it will be interesting to them at some future day, to be known to you. This is, perhaps, the only moment of your life in which you can acquire that knowledge. And to do it most effectually, you must be absolutely *incognito*; you must ferret the people out of their hovels as I have done, look into their kettles, eat their bread, loll on their beds under pretence of resting yourself, but in fact to find if they are soft. You will feel a sublime pleasure in the course of this investigation, and a sublimer one hereafter, when you shall be able to apply your knowledge to the softening of their beds, or the throwing a morsel of meat into their kettle of vegetables.

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## *On Rice Culture*

*To Edward Rutledge, Esq.*

PARIS, July 14, 1787.

*Dear Sir:* I was glad to find that the adaptation of your rice to this market was considered worth attention, as I had supposed it. I set out from hence impressed with the idea the rice-dealers here had given me, that the difference between your rice and that of Piedmont proceeded from a difference in the machine for cleaning it. At Marseilles I hoped to know what the Piedmont machine was, but I could find nobody who knew anything of it. I determined, therefore, to sift the matter to the bottom, by crossing the Alps into the rice country. I found their machine exactly such a one as you had described to me in Congress in the year 1783. There was but one conclusion then to be drawn, to wit, that the rice was of a different species, and I determined to take enough to put you in seed; they informed me, however, that its exportation in the husk was prohibited, so I could only bring off as much as my coat and surtout pockets would hold. I took measures with a muleteer to run a couple of sacks across the Apennines to Genoa, but have not great dependence on its success. The little, therefore, which I brought myself, must be relied on for fear we should get no more; and because, also, it is genuine from Vercilli, where the best is made of all the Sardinian Lombardy, the whole of which is considered as producing a better rice than the Milanese.

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## *On the Suppression of the Slave Trade*

*To Edward Rutledge, Esq.*

PARIS, July 14, 1787.

I congratulate you, my dear friend, on the law of your State, for suspending the importation of slaves, and for the glory you have justly acquired by endeavoring to prevent it forever. This abomination must have an end. And there is a superior bench reserved in heaven for those who hasten it.

## *On the National Character*

*To Alexander Donald*

PARIS, July 28, 1787.

Among many good qualities which my countrymen possess, some of a different character unhappily mix themselves. The most remarkable are, indolence, extravagance, and infidelity to their engagements. Cure the two first, and the last would disappear, because it is a consequence of them, and not proceeding from a want of morals. I know of no remedy against indolence and extravagance but a free course of justice. Everything else is merely palliative; but unhappily, the evil has gained too generally the mass of the nation, to leave the course of justice unobstructed. The maxim of buying nothing without the money in our pockets to pay for it, would make of our country one of the happiest upon earth. Experience during the war proved this; as I think every man will remember, that under all the privations it obliged him to submit to, during that period, he

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slept sounder, and awaked happier than he can do now. Desperate of finding relief from a free course of justice, I look forward to the abolition of all credit, as the only other remedy which can take place. I have seen, therefore, with pleasure, the exaggerations of our want of faith, with which the London papers teem. It is, indeed, a strong medicine for sensible minds, but it is a medicine. It will prevent their crediting us abroad, in which case we cannot be credited at home.

### *Division of Authority in Government*

*To Edward Carrington*

PARIS, August 4, 1787.

My general plan would be, to make the States one as to everything connected with foreign nations, and several as to everything purely domestic. But with all the imperfections of our present government, it is without comparison the best existing, or that ever did exist. Its greatest defect is the imperfect manner in which matters of commerce have been provided for. It has been so often said, as to be generally believed, that Congress have no power by the Confederation to enforce anything; for example, contributions of money. It was not necessary to give them that power expressly; they have it by the law of nature. When two parties make a compact, there results to each a power of compelling the other to execute it. Compulsion was never so easy as in our case, where a single frigate would soon levy on the commerce of any State the deficiency of its contributions; nor more safe than in the hands of Congress, which has always shown that it would wait, as it ought to do, to the last extremities, before it would execute any of its pow-



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ers which are disagreeable. I think it very material to separate, in the hands of Congress, the executive and legislative powers, as the judiciary already are, in some degree. This, I hope, will be done. The want of it has been the source of more evil than we have experienced from any other cause. Nothing is so embarrassing or so mischievous, in a great assembly, as the details of execution. The smallest trifle of that kind occupies as long as the most important act of legislation, and takes place of everything else. Let any man recollect, or look over, the files of Congress; he will observe the most important propositions hanging over, from week to week, and month to month, till the occasions have passed them and the things never done. I have ever viewed the executive details as the greatest cause of evil to us, because they in fact place us as if we had no federal head, by diverting the attention of that head from great to small subjects; and should this division of power not be recommended by the convention, it is my opinion Congress should make it itself by establishing an executive committee.

### *In Defence of Rebellions*

*To Colonel Smith*

PARIS, November 13, 1787.

Where did it [anarchy] ever exist, except in the single instance of Massachusetts? And can history produce an instance of rebellion so honorably conducted? I say nothing of its motives. They were founded in ignorance, not wickedness. God forbid we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion. The people cannot be all, and always, well informed. The part which is wrong will be

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discontented, in proportion to the importance of the facts they misconceive. If they remain quiet under such misconceptions, it is a lethargy, the forerunner of death to the public liberty. We have had thirteen States independent for eleven years. There has been one rebellion. That comes to one rebellion in a century and a half, for each State. What country before, ever existed a century and a half without a rebellion? And what country can preserve its liberties, if its rulers are not warned from time to time, that this people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms. The remedy is to set them right as to facts, pardon and pacify them. What signify a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time, with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure. Our convention has been too much impressed by the insurrection of Massachusetts; and on the spur of the moment, they are setting up a kite to keep the hen-yard in order.

### *On Emancipating Slaves*

*To Edward Bancroft*

PARIS, January 26, 1788.

*Dear Sir:* I have deferred answering your letter on the subject of slaves because you permitted me to do it till a moment of leisure, and that moment rarely comes, and because, too, I could not answer you with such a degree of certainty as to merit any notice. I do not recollect the conversation at Vincennes to which you allude, but can repeat still, on the same ground on which I must have done then, that as far as I can judge from the experiments which

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have been made, to give liberty to, or rather abandon, persons whose habits have been formed in slavery is like abandoning children. Many Quakers in Virginia seated their slaves on their lands as tenants; they were distant from me, and therefore I cannot be particular in the details because I never had very particular information. I cannot say whether they were to pay a rent in money or a share of the produce, but I remember that the landlord was obliged to plan their crops for them, to direct all their operations during every season and according to the weather; but, what is more afflicting, he was obliged to watch them daily and almost constantly to make them work and even to whip them. A man's moral sense must be unusually strong if slavery does not make him a thief. He who is permitted by law to have no property of his own can with difficulty conceive that property is founded on anything but force. These slaves chose to steal from their neighbors rather than work; they became public nuisances, and in most instances were reduced to slavery again. But I will beg of you to make no use of this imperfect information (unless in common conversation). I shall go to America in the spring and return in the fall. During my stay in Virginia I shall be in the neighborhood where many of these trials were made. I will inform myself very particularly of them and communicate the information to you.

Besides these there is an instance since I came away of a young man (Mr. Mays) who died and gave freedom to all his slaves, about 200; this is about a year ago. I shall know how they have turned out. Notwithstanding the discouraging result of these experiments I am decided on my final return to America to try this one. I shall endeavor to import as many Germans as I have grown slaves. I will settle them and my slaves on farms of fifty acres each, intermingled, and place all on the footing of the Metayers

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(Medictani) of Europe. Their children shall be brought up as others are in habits of property and foresight, and I have no doubt but that they will be good citizens. Some of their fathers will be so; others I suppose will need government; with these all that can be done is to oblige them to labor as the laboring poor of Europe do, and to apply to their comfortable subsistence the produce of their labor, retaining such a moderate portion of it as may be a just equivalent for the use of the lands they labor and the stocks and other necessary advances.

### *Philosophy of Life*

*To Alexander Donald*

PARIS, February 7, 1788.

I had rather be shut up in a very modest cottage, with my books, my family, and a few old friends, dining on simple bacon, and letting the world roll on as it liked, than to occupy the most splendid post, which any human power can give. I shall be glad to hear from you often. Give me the small news as well as the great. Tell Dr. Currie, that I believe I am indebted to him in a letter, but that like the mass of our countrymen, I am not, at this moment, able to pay all my debts.

### *On the Adoption of the Constitution*

*To Mr. A. Donald*

FEBRUARY, 1788.

I wish with all my soul, that the nine first conventions may accept the new Constitution, because this will secure to

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us the good it contains, which I think great and important. But I equally wish, that the four latest conventions, whichever they be, may refuse to accede to it, till a declaration of rights be annexed. This would probably command the offer of such a declaration, and thus give to the whole fabric, perhaps, as much perfection as any one of that kind ever had. By a declaration of rights, I mean one which shall stipulate freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of commerce against monopolies, trial by juries in all cases, no suspensions of the *habeas corpus*, no standing armies. These are fetters against doing evil, which no honest government should decline. There is another strong feature in the new Constitution, which I as strongly dislike. That is, the perpetual reëligibility of the President. Of this I expect no amendment at present, because I do not see that anybody has objected to it on your side the water. But it will be productive of cruel distress to our country, even in your day and mine. The importance to France and England, to have our government in the hands of a friend or a foe, will occasion their interference by money, and even by arms. Our President will be of much more consequence to them than a King of Poland. We must take care, however, that neither this, nor any other objection to the new form, produces a schism in our Union. That would be an incurable evil, because near friends falling out, never reunite cordially; whereas, all of us going together, we shall be sure to cure the evils of our new Constitution, before they do great harm.

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### *Potomac Canal—European Affairs—The Constitution*

*To General Washington*

PARIS, May 2, 1788.

*Dear Sir:* I am honored with your Excellency's letter by the last packet, and thank you for the information it contains on the communication between the Cayahoga and Big Beaver. I have ever considered the opening a canal between those two watercourses as the most important work in that line which the State of Virginia could undertake. It will infallibly turn through the Potomac all the commerce of Lake Erie, and the country west of that, except what may pass down the Mississippi; and it is important that it be soon done, lest that commerce should, in the meantime, get established in another channel. Having, in the spring of the last year, taken a journey through the southern parts of France, and particularly examined the canal of Languedoc, through its whole course, I take the liberty of sending you the notes I made on the spot, as you may find in them something, perhaps, which may be turned to account, some time or other, in the prosecution of the Potomac canal. Being merely a copy from my travelling notes, they are undigested and imperfect, but may still perhaps give hints capable of improvement in your mind. . . .

I had intended to have written a word to your Excellency on the subject of the new Constitution, but I have already spun out my letter to an immoderate length. I will just observe, therefore, that according to my ideas, there is a great deal of good in it. There are two things, however, which I dislike strongly: 1. The want of a declaration of rights. I

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am in hopes the opposition of Virginia will remedy this, and produce such a declaration. 2. The perpetual reëligibility of the President. This, I fear, will make that an office for life, first, and then hereditary. I was much an enemy to monarchies before I came to Europe. I am ten thousand times more so, since I have seen what they are. There is scarcely an evil known in these countries, which may not be traced to their king, as its source, nor a good, which is not derived from the small fibres of republicanism existing among them. I can further say, with safety, there is not a crowned head in Europe, whose talents or merits would entitle him to be elected a vestryman by the people of any parish in America. However, I shall hope, that before there is danger of this change taking place in the office of President, the good sense and free spirit of our countrymen, will make the changes necessary to prevent it.

### *National Credit*

*To Mr. James Madison*

PARIS, May 3, 1788.

*Dear Sir:* The existence of a nation having no credit is always precarious. The credit of England is the best. Their paper sells at par on the exchange of Amsterdam the moment any of it is offered, and they can command there any sum they please. The reason is, that they never borrow, without establishing taxes for the payment of the interest, and they never yet failed one day in that payment. The Emperor and Empress have good credit enough. They use it little and have been ever punctual. This country cannot borrow at all there; for, though they always pay their interest within the year, yet it is often some months behind.

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It is difficult to assign to our credit its exact station in this scale. They consider us as the most certain nation on earth for the principal, but they see that we borrow of themselves to pay the interest, so that this is only a conversion of their interest into principal. Our paper, for this reason, sells for from four to eight per cent. below par, on the exchange, and our loans are negotiated with the Patriots only. But the whole body of money-dealers, Patriot and Stadtholderian, look forward to our new government with a great degree of partiality and interest. They are disposed to have much confidence in it, and it was the prospect of its establishment, which enabled us to set the loan of last year into motion again. They will attend steadfastly to its first money operations. If these are injudiciously begun, correction, whenever they shall be corrected, will come too late. Our borrowings will always be difficult and disadvantageous. If they begin well, our credit will immediately take the first station. Equal provision for the interest, adding to it a certain prospect for the principal, will give us a preference to all nations, the English not excepted. The first act of the new government should be some operation, whereby they may assume to themselves this station. Their European debts form a proper subject for this. Digest the whole, public and private, Dutch, French, and Spanish, into a table, showing the sum of interest due every year, and the portions of principal payable the same year. Take the most certain branch of revenue, and one which shall suffice to pay the interest, and leave such a surplus as may accomplish all the payments of the capital, at terms somewhat short of those at which they will become due. Let the surpluses of those years, in which no reimbursement of principal falls, be applied to buy up our paper on the exchange of Amsterdam, and thus anticipate the demands of principal. In this way, our paper will be kept up at par; and this alone will enable



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us to command in four and twenty hours, at any time, on the exchange of Amsterdam, as many millions as that capital can produce. The same act which makes this provision for the existing debts, should go on to open a loan to their whole amount; the produce of that loan to be applied, as fast as received, to the payment of such parts of the existing debts as admit of payment. The rate of interest to be as the government should privately instruct their agent, because it must depend on the effect these measures would have on the exchange. Probably it could be lowered from time to time. Honest and annual publications of the payments made will inspire confidence, while silence would conceal nothing from those interested to know.

### *Navigation of the Mississippi*

*To John Brown*

PARIS, May 26, 1788.

*Dear Sir:* The navigation of the Mississippi was, perhaps, the strongest trial to which the justice of the federal government could be put. If ever they thought wrong about it, I trust they have got to rights. I should think it proper for the western country to defer pushing their right to that navigation to extremity, as long as they can do without it tolerably; but that the moment it becomes absolutely necessary for them, it will become the duty of the maritime States to push it to every extremity, to which they would their own right of navigating the Chesapeake, the Delaware, the Hudson, or any other water. A time of peace will not be the surest for obtaining this object. Those, therefore, who have influence in the new country, would act wisely to

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endeavor to keep things quiet till the western parts of Europe shall be engaged in war.

### *On Foreign Affairs—Commerce*

*To General Washington*

PARIS, December 4, 1788.

*Sir:* I have seen, with infinite pleasure, our new Constitution accepted by eleven States, not rejected by the twelfth, and that the thirteenth happens to be a State of the least importance. It is true, that the minorities in most of the accepting States have been very respectable; so much so as to render it prudent, were it not otherwise reasonable, to make some sacrifice to them. I am in hopes, that the annexation of a bill of rights to the Constitution will alone draw over so great a proportion of the minorities as to leave little danger in the opposition of the residue; and that this annexation may be made by Congress and the Assemblies, without calling a convention, which might endanger the most valuable parts of the system. Calculation has convinced me that circumstances may arise, and probably will arise, wherein all the resources of taxation will be necessary for the safety of the State. For though I am decidedly of opinion we should take no part in European quarrels, but cultivate peace and commerce with all, yet who can avoid seeing the source of war, in the tyranny of those nations, who deprive us of the natural right of trading with our neighbors? The produce of the United States will soon exceed the European demand; what is to be done with the surplus, when there shall be one? It will be employed, without question, to open, by force, a market for itself, with those placed on the same continent with us, and who

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wish nothing better. Other causes, too, are obvious, which may involve us in war, and war requires every resource of taxation and credit. The power of making war often prevents it, and in our case would give efficacy to our desire of peace. If the new government wears the front which I hope it will, I see no impossibility in the availing ourselves of the wars of others, to open the other parts of America to our commerce, as the price of our neutrality. . . .

In every event, I think the present disquiet will end well. The nation [France] has been awaked by our Revolution, they feel their strength, they are enlightened, their lights are spreading, and they will not retrograde. The first States-General may establish three important points, without opposition from the court: 1. Their own periodical convocation. 2. Their exclusive right of taxation (which has been confessed by the king). 3. The right of registering laws, and of previously proposing amendments to them, as the parliaments have, by usurpation, been in the habit of doing. The court will consent to this, from its hatred to the parliaments, and from the desire of having to do with one, rather than many legislatures. If the States are prudent, they will not aim at more than this at first, lest they should shock the dispositions of the court, and even alarm the public mind, which must be left to open itself by degrees to successive improvements. These will follow, from the nature of things; how far they can proceed, in the end, toward a thorough reformation of abuse, cannot be foreseen. In my opinion, a kind of influence which none of their plans of reform take into account, will elude them all; I mean the influence of women, in the Government. The manners of the nation allow them to visit, alone, all persons in office, to solicit the affairs of the husband, family, or friends, and their solicitations bid defiance to laws and regulations. This obstacle may seem less to those who, like

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our countrymen, are in the precious habit of considering right, as a barrier against all solicitation. Nor can such an one, without the evidence of his own eyes, believe in the desperate state to which things are reduced in this country from the omnipotence of an influence which, fortunately for the happiness of the sex itself, does not endeavor to extend itself in our country beyond the domestic line. . . .

I have laid my shoulder to the opening of the markets of this country to our produce, and rendering its transportation a nursery for our seamen. A maritime force is the only one, by which we can act on Europe. Our navigation law (if it be wise to have any) should be the reverse of that of England. Instead of confining *importations* to home-bottoms, or those of the *producing* nation, I think we should confine *exportations* to home-bottoms, or to those of nations *having treaties with us*. Our exportations are heavy, and would nourish a great force of our own, or be a tempting price to the nation to whom we should offer a participation of it, in exchange for free access to all their possessions. This is an object to which our Government alone is adequate, in the gross; but I have ventured to pursue it here, so far as the consumption of our productions by this country extends. Thus, in our arrangements relative to tobacco, none can be received here, but in French or American bottoms. This is employment for near two thousand seamen, and puts nearly that number of British out of employ. By the *Arret* of December, 1787, it was provided, that our whale oils should not be received here, but in French or American bottoms; and by later regulations, all oils, but those of France and America, are excluded. This will put one hundred English whale vessels immediately out of employ, and one hundred and fifty ere long, and call so many of French and American into service. We have had six thousand seamen formerly in this business, the whole of

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whom we have been likely to lose. The consumption of rice is growing fast in this country, and that of Carolina gaining ground on every other kind. I am of opinion, the whole of the Carolina rice can be consumed here. Its transportation employs two thousand five hundred sailors, almost all of them English at present, the rice being deposited at Cowes, and brought from thence here. It would be dangerous to confine this transportation to French and American bottoms, the ensuing year, because they will be much engrossed by the transportation of wheat and flour hither, and the crop of rice might lie on hand for want of vessels; but I see no objections to the extensions of our principle to this article also, beginning with the year 1790.

### *American Influence on the French Revolution*

*To Dr. Price*

PARIS, January 8, 1789.

You say you are not sufficiently informed about the nature and circumstances of the present struggle here. Having been on the spot from its first origin, and watched its movements as an uninterested spectator, with no other bias than a love of mankind, I will give you my ideas of it. Though celebrated writers of this and other countries had already sketched good principles on the subject of government, yet the American war seems first to have awakened the thinking part of this nation in general from the sleep of despotism in which they were sunk. The officers, too, who had been to America, were mostly young men, less shackled by habit and prejudice, and more ready to assent to the dictates of common sense and common right. They came back impressed with these. The press, notwithstanding its shack-

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les, began to disseminate them; conversation, too, assumed new freedom; politics became the theme of all societies, male and female, and a very extensive and zealous party was formed, which may be called the Patriotic party, who, sensible of the abusive government under which they lived, longed for occasions of reforming it. This party comprehended all the honesty of the kingdom, sufficiently at its leisure to think; the men of letters, the easy *bourgeois*, the young nobility, partly from reflection, partly from mode; for those sentiments became a matter of mode, and as such united most of the young women to the party.

### *On Party*

*To Francis Hopkinson*

PARIS, March 13, 1789.

I am not a federalist, because I never submitted the whole system of my opinions to the creed of any party of men whatever, in religion, in philosophy, in politics, or in anything else, where I was capable of thinking for myself. Such an addiction, is the last degradation of a free and moral agent. If I could not go to heaven but with a party, I would not go there at all. Therefore, I am not of the party of federalists. But I am much farther from that of the antifederalists. . . . I am neither federalist nor antifederalist; I am of neither party, nor yet a trimmer between parties. . . . I never had an opinion in politics or religion, which I was afraid to own. A costive reserve on these subjects might have procured me more esteem from some people, but less from myself. My great wish is, to go on in a strict but silent performance of my duty; to avoid attracting notice, and to keep my name out of newspapers,

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because I find the pain of a little censure, even when it is unfounded, is more acute than the pleasure of much praise.

### *On the Character of Washington*

*To Francis Hopkinson*

PARIS, March 13, 1789.

I would wish it [the Constitution] not to be altered during the life of our great leader, whose executive talents are superior to those, I believe, of any man in the world, and who, alone, by the authority of his name and the confidence reposed in his perfect integrity, is fully qualified to put the new government so under way, as to secure it against the efforts of opposition. But, having derived from our error all the good there was in it, I hope we shall correct it, the moment we can no longer have the same name at the helm.

### *On Canals*

*To General Washington*

PARIS, May 10, 1789.

*Sir:* 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

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enlarge our field immensely, and would certainly be effected by a union of the upper waters of the Ohio and Lake Erie. The Big Beaver and Cuyahoga 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 *bateau* there may be navigation for a *bateau*. 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 Cuyahoga 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.

### *On Political Consistency*

*To General Washington*

PARIS, May 10, 1789.

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 État, and it is not possible he could continue long



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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 clew, 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 État. 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.

### *On his Appointment as Secretary of State*

#### *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

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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.

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### *On Hamilton's Finance—Post-roads*

*To James Madison*

MONTICELLO, March 6, 1790.

*Dear Sir:* I do not at all wonder at the condition in which the finances of the United States are found. Hamilton's object from the beginning, was to throw them into forms which should be utterly undecipherable. I ever said he did not understand their condition himself, nor was able to give a clear view of the excess of our debts beyond our credits, nor whether we were diminishing or increasing the debt. My own opinion was, that from the commencement of this Government to the time I ceased to attend to the subject, we had been increasing our debt about a million of dollars annually. If Mr. Gallatin would undertake to reduce this chaos to order, present us with a clear view of our finances, and put them into a form as simple as they will admit, he will merit immortal honor. The accounts of the United States ought to be, and may be made as simple as those of a common farmer, and capable of being understood by common farmers. . . .

P. S.—Have you considered all the consequences of your proposition respecting post-roads? I view it as a source of boundless patronage to the Executive, jobbing to members of Congress and their friends, and a bottomless abyss of public money. You will begin by only appropriating the surplus of the post-office revenues; but the other revenues will soon be called into their aid, and it will be a source of eternal scramble among the members, who can get the most money wasted in their State; and they will always get most who are meanest. We have thought, hitherto, that the roads of a State could not be so well administered even by

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the State legislature as by the magistracy of the county, on the spot. How will they be when a member of New Hampshire is to mark out a road for Georgia? Does the power to *establish* post-roads, given you by the Constitution, mean that you shall *make* the roads, or only *select* from those already made, those on which there shall be a post? If the term be equivocal (and I really do not think it so), which is the safest construction? That which permits a majority of Congress to go to cutting down mountains and bridging of rivers, or the other, which, if too restricted, may be referred to the States for amendment, securing still due measures and proportion among us, and providing some means of information to the members of Congress tantamount to that ocular inspection, which, even in our county determinations, the magistrate finds cannot be supplied by any other evidence? The fortification of harbors was liable to great objection. But national circumstances furnished some color. In this case there is none. The roads of America are the best in the world except those of France and England. But does the state of our population, the extent of our internal commerce, the want of sea and river navigation, call for such expense on roads here, or are our means adequate to it? Think of all this, and a great deal more which your good judgment will suggest, and pardon my freedom.

### *On the Control of the Mississippi*

*To William Carmichael*

NEW YORK, August 2, 1790.

The unsettled state of our dispute with Spain, may give a turn to it very different from what we would wish. As it is important that you should be fully apprised of our way of

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thinking on this subject, I have sketched, in the enclosed paper, general heads of consideration arising from present circumstances. These will be readily developed by your own reflections, and in conversations with Colonel Humphreys, who, possessing the sentiments of the executive on this subject, being well acquainted with the circumstances of the Western country in particular, and of the state of our affairs in general, comes to Madrid expressly for the purpose of giving you a thorough communication of them. He will, therefore, remain there as many days or weeks as may be necessary for this purpose. With this information, written and oral, you will be enabled to meet the minister in conversations on the subject of the navigation of the Mississippi, to which we wish you to lead his attention immediately. Impress him thoroughly with the necessity of an early, and even an immediate settlement of this matter, and of a return to the field of negotiation for this purpose; and though it must be done delicately, yet he must be made to understand unequivocally that a resumption of the negotiation is not desired on our part, unless he can determine, in the first opening of it, to yield the immediate and full enjoyment of that navigation. (I say nothing of the claims of Spain to our territory north of the thirty-first degree, and east of the Mississippi. They never merited the respect of an answer; and you know it has been admitted at Madrid, that they were not to be maintained.) It may be asked, What need of negotiation, if the navigation is to be ceded at all events? You know that the navigation cannot be practised without a port, where the sea and river vessels may meet and exchange loads, and where those employed about them may be safe and unmolested. The right to use a thing, comprehends a right to the means necessary to its use, and without which it would be useless. The fixing on a proper port, and the degree of freedom it is to enjoy in its opera-

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tions, will require negotiation, and be governed by events. There is danger, indeed, that even the unavoidable delay of sending a negotiator here, may render the mission too late for the preservation of peace. It is impossible to answer for the forbearance of our Western citizens. We endeavor to quiet them with the expectation of an attainment of their rights by peaceable means. But should they, in a moment of impatience, hazard others, there is no saying how far we may be led; for neither themselves nor their rights will ever be abandoned by us.

You will be pleased to observe; that we press these matters warmly and firmly, under this idea, that the war between Spain and Great Britain will be begun before you receive this; and such a moment must not be lost. But should an accommodation take place, we retain, indeed, the same object and the same resolutions unalterably; but your discretion will suggest, that in that event, they must be pressed more softly, and that patience and persuasion must temper your conferences, till either these may prevail, or some other circumstance turn up, which may enable us to use other means for the attainment of an object which we are determined, in the end, to obtain at every risk.

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

### *On the Constitutionality of a National Bank*

FEBRUARY 15, 1791.

The bill for establishing a National Bank undertakes among other things:

1. To form the subscribers into a corporation.
2. To enable them in their corporate capacities to receive grants of land; and so far is against the laws of *Mortmain*.

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3. To make alien subscribers capable of holding lands; and so far is against the laws of *alienage*.

4. To transmit these lands, on the death of a proprietor, to a certain line of successors; and so far changes the course of *Descents*.

5. To put the lands out of the reach of forfeiture or escheat; and so far is against the laws of *Forfeiture and Escheat*.

6. To transmit personal chattels to successors in a certain line; and so far is against the laws of *Distribution*.

7. To give them the sole and exclusive right of banking under the national authority; and so far is against the laws of Monopoly.

8. To communicate to them a power to make laws paramount to the laws of the States; for so they must be construed, to protect the institution from the control of the State legislatures; and so, probably, they will be construed.

I consider the foundation of the Constitution as laid on this ground: That "all powers not delegated to the United States, by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States or to the people." (XIIth amendment.) To take a single step beyond the boundaries thus specially drawn around the powers of Congress, is to take possession of a boundless field of power, no longer susceptible of any definition.

The incorporation of a bank, and the powers assumed by this bill, have not, in my opinion, been delegated to the United States, by the Constitution.

I. They are not among the powers specially enumerated: for these are: 1st. A power to lay taxes for the purpose of paying the debts of the United States; but no debt is paid by this bill, nor any tax laid. . . .

2d. "To borrow money." But this bill neither borrows money nor insures the borrowing it. . . .

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3d. To "regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the States, and with the Indian tribes." To erect a bank and to regulate commerce, are very different acts. . . . Still less are these powers covered by any other of the special enumerations.

II. Nor are they within either of the general phrases, which are the two following:

1. To lay taxes to provide for the general welfare of the United States, that is to say, "to lay taxes for *the purpose* of providing for the general welfare." For the laying of taxes is the *power*, and the general welfare the *purpose* for which the power is to be exercised. They are not to lay taxes *ad libitum for any purpose they please*; but only to *pay the debts or provide for the welfare of the Union*. In like manner, they are not to *do anything they please* to provide for the general welfare, but only to *lay taxes* for that purpose. To consider the latter phrase, not as describing the purpose of the first, but as giving a distinct and independent power to do any act they please, which might be for the good of the Union, would render all the preceding and subsequent enumerations of power completely useless.

It would reduce the whole instrument to a single phrase, that of instituting a Congress with power to do whatever would be for the good of the United States; and, as they would be the sole judges of the good or evil, it would be also a power to do whatever evil they please.

It is an established rule of construction where a phrase will bear either of two meanings, to give it that which will allow some meaning to the other parts of the instrument, and not that which would render all the others useless. Certainly no such universal power was meant to be given them. It was intended to lace them up straitly within the enumerated powers, and those without which, as means, these powers could not be carried into effect. It is known



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that the very power now proposed *as a means* was rejected *as an end* by the Convention which formed the Constitution. A proposition was made to them to authorize Congress to open canals, and an amendatory one to empower them to incorporate. But the whole was rejected, and one of the reasons for rejection urged in debate was, that then they would have a power to erect a bank, which would render the great cities, where there were prejudices and jealousies on the subject, adverse to the reception of the Constitution.

2. The second general phrase is, "to make all laws *necessary* and proper for carrying into execution the enumerated powers." But they can all be carried into execution without a bank. A bank therefore is not *necessary*, and consequently not authorized by this phrase.

It has been urged that a bank will give great facility or convenience in the collection of taxes. Suppose this were true: yet the Constitution allows only the means which are "*necessary*," not those which are merely "*convenient*" for effecting the enumerated powers. If such a latitude of construction be allowed to this phrase as to give any non-enumerated power, it will go to every one, for there is not one which ingenuity may not torture into a *convenience* in some instance *or other*, to *some one* of so long a list of enumerated powers. It would swallow up all the delegated powers, and reduce the whole to one power, as before observed. Therefore it was that the Constitution restrained them to the *necessary* means, that is to say, to those means without which the grant of power would be nugatory. . . .

Can it be thought that the Constitution intended that for a shade or two of *convenience*, more or less, Congress should be authorized to break down the most ancient and fundamental laws of the several States; such as those against Mortmain, the laws of Alienage, the rules of descent, the acts of distribution, the laws of escheat and forfeiture, the

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laws of monopoly? Nothing but a necessity invincible by any other means, can justify such a prostitution of laws, which constitute the pillars of our whole system of jurisprudence. Will Congress be too straitlaced to carry the Constitution into honest effect, unless they may pass over the foundation-laws of the State government for the slightest convenience of theirs?

The negative of the President is the shield provided by the Constitution to protect against the invasions of the legislature: 1. The right of the Executive. 2. Of the Judiciary. 3. Of the States and State legislatures. The present is the case of a right remaining exclusively with the States, and consequently one of those intended by the Constitution to be placed under its protection.

It must be added, however, that unless the President's mind on a view of everything which is urged for and against this bill, is tolerably clear that it is unauthorized by the Constitution; if the pro and the con hang so even as to balance his judgment, a just respect for the wisdom of the legislature would naturally decide the balance in favor of their opinion. It is chiefly for cases where they are clearly misled by error, ambition, or interest, that the Constitution has placed a check in the negative of the President.

### *On Frankliniana*

To——

PHILADELPHIA, February 19, 1791.

*Dear Sir:* I feel both the wish and the duty to communicate, in compliance with your request, whatever, within my knowledge, might render justice to the memory of our great countryman, Dr. Franklin, in which Philosophy has

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to deplore one of its principal luminaries extinguished. But my opportunities of knowing the interesting facts of his life, have not been equal to my desire of making them known. I could, indeed, relate a number of those *bon-mots*, with which he used to charm every society, having heard many of them. But these are not your object. Particulars of greater dignity happened not to occur during his stay of nine months, after my arrival in France.

A little before that, Argand had invented his celebrated lamp, in which the flame is spread into a hollow cylinder, and thus brought into contact with the air within as well as without. Dr. Franklin had been on the point of the same discovery. The idea had occurred to him; but he had tried a bulrush as a wick, which did not succeed. His occupations did not permit him to repeat and extend his trials to the introduction of a larger column of air than could pass through the stem of a bulrush.

The animal magnetism, too, of the maniac Mesmer, had just received its death wound from his hand in conjunction with his brethren of the learned committee appointed to unveil that compound of fraud and folly. But after this, nothing very interesting was before the public, either in philosophy or politics, during his stay; and he was principally occupied in winding up his affairs there.

I can only therefore testify in general, that there appeared to me more respect and veneration attached to the character of Dr. Franklin in France, than to that of any other person in the same country, foreign or native. I had opportunities of knowing particularly how far these sentiments were felt by the foreign ambassadors and ministers at the court of Versailles. The fable of his capture by the Algerines, propagated by the English newspapers, excited no uneasiness, as it was seen at once to be a dish cooked up to the palate of their readers. But nothing could exceed

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the anxiety of his diplomatic brethren, on a subsequent report of his death, which, though premature, bore some marks of authenticity.

I found the ministers of France equally impressed with the talents and integrity of Dr. Franklin. The Count de Vergennes particularly gave me repeated and unequivocal demonstrations of his entire confidence in him.

When he left Passy, it seemed as if the village had lost its patriarch. On taking leave of the court, which he did by letter, the King ordered him to be handsomely complimented, and furnished him with a litter and mules of his own, the only kind of conveyance the state of his health could bear.

No greater proof of his estimation in France can be given than the late letters of condolence on his death, from the National Assembly of that country, and the community of Paris, to the President of the United States and to Congress, and their public mourning on that event. It is, I believe, the first instance of that homage having been paid by a public body of one nation to a private citizen of another.

His death was an affliction which was to happen to us at some time or other. We have reason to be thankful he was so long spared; that the most useful life should be the longest also; that it was protracted so far beyond the ordinary span allotted to man, as to avail us of his wisdom in the establishment of our own freedom, and to bless him with a view of its dawn in the east, where they seemed, till now, to have learned everything, but how to be free.

The succession to Dr. Franklin, at the Court of France, was an excellent school of humility. On being presented to any one as the minister of America, the commonplace question used in such cases was, "*c'est vous, Monsieur, qui remplace le Docteur Franklin?*" "it is you, sir, who replace

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Dr. Franklin?" I generally answered, "no one can replace him, Sir; I am only his successor."

These small offerings to the memory of our great and dear friend, whom time will be making greater while it is sponging us from its records, must be accepted by you, Sir, in that spirit of love and veneration for him, in which they are made; and not according to their insignificance in the eyes of a world, who did not want this mite to fill up the measure of his worth.

I pray you to accept, in addition, assurances of the sincere esteem and respect with which I have the honor to be, sir, most obedient, and most humble servant.

### *On the Control of the Mississippi*

*To William Carmichael*

PHILADELPHIA, March 12, 1791.

We cannot omit this occasion of urging on the court of Madrid, the necessity of hastening a final acknowledgment of our right to navigate the Mississippi; a right which has been long suspended in exercise, with extreme inconvenience on our part, merely with a desire of reconciling Spain to what it is impossible for us to relinquish. An accident at this day, like that now complained of, would put further parley beyond our power; yet to such accidents we are every day exposed by the irregularities of their officers, and the impatience of our citizens. Should any spark kindle these dispositions of our borderers into a flame, we are involved beyond recall by the eternal principles of justice to our citizens, which we will never abandon. In such an event, Spain cannot possibly gain, and what may she not lose?

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## *A Letter of Explanation*

*To John Adams*

PHILADELPHIA, July 17, 1791.

*Dear Sir:* I have a dozen times taken up my pen to write to you, and as often laid it down again, suspended between opposing considerations. I determined, however, to write from a conviction that truth, between candid minds, can never do harm. The first of Paine's pamphlets on the rights of man, which came to hand here, belonged to Mr. Beckley. He lent it to Mr. Madison, who lent it to me; and while I was reading it, Mr. Beckley called on me for it, and, as I had not finished it, he desired me, as soon as I should have done so, to send it to Mr. Jonathan B. Smith, whose brother meant to reprint it. I finished reading it, and, as I had no acquaintance with Mr. Jonathan B. Smith, propriety required that I should explain to him why I, a stranger to him, sent him the pamphlet. I accordingly wrote a note of compliment, informing him that I did it at the desire of Mr. Beckley, and, to take off a little of the dryness of the note, I added that I was glad it was to be reprinted here, and that something was to be publicly said against the political heresies which had sprung up among us, etc. I thought so little of this note, that I did not even keep a copy of it; nor ever heard a tittle more of it, till, the week following, I was thunderstruck with seeing it come out at the head of the pamphlet. I hoped, however, it would not attract notice. But I found, on my return from a journey of a month, that a writer came forward, under the signature of Publicola, attacking not only the author and principles of the pamphlet, but myself as its sponsor, by name. Soon after came hosts of other writers, defending the pam-

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phlet, and attacking you, by name, as the writer of *Publicola*. Thus were our names thrown on the public stage as public antagonists. That you and I differ in our ideas of the best form of government, is well known to us both; but we have differed as friends should do, respecting the purity of each other's motives, and confining our difference of opinion to private conversation. And I can declare with truth, in the presence of the Almighty, that nothing was further from my intention or expectation than to have either my own or your name brought before the public on this occasion. The friendship and confidence which have so long existed between us, required this explanation from me, and I know you too well to fear any misconstruction of the motives of it. Some people here, who would wish me to be, or to be thought, guilty of improprieties, have suggested that I was *Agricola*, that I was *Brutus*, etc., etc. I never did in my life, either by myself or by any other, have a sentence of mine inserted in a newspaper without putting my name to it; and I believe I never shall.

### *On a National Indian Policy*

*To General Knox*

PHILADELPHIA, August 10, 1791.

*Dear Sir:* I have now the honor to return you the petition of Mr. Moultrie on behalf of the South Carolina Yazoo Company. Without noticing that some of the highest functions of sovereignty are assumed in the very papers which he annexes as his justification, I am of opinion that Government should firmly maintain this ground; that the Indians have a right to the occupation of their lands, independent of the States within whose chartered lines they

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happen to be; that until they cede them by treaty or other transaction equivalent to a treaty, no act of a State can give a right to such lands; that neither under the present Constitution, nor the ancient confederation, had any State or person a right to treat with the Indians, without the consent of the General Government; that that consent has never been given to any treaty for the cession of the lands in question; that the Government is determined to exert all its energy for the patronage and protection of the rights of the Indians, and the preservation of peace between the United States and them; and that if any settlements are made on lands not ceded by them, *without the previous consent of the United States*, the Government will think itself bound, not only to declare to the Indians that such settlements are without the authority or protection of the United States, but to remove them also by the public force.

### *On Obligations and Discomforts of Public Office*

*To the President of the United States*

PHILADELPHIA, May 23, 1792.

*Dear Sir:* I have determined to make the subject of a letter what for some time past has been a subject of inquietude to my mind, without having found a good occasion of disburshing itself to you in conversation, during the busy scenes which occupied you here. Perhaps, too, you may be able in your present situation, or on the road, to give it more time and reflection than you could do here at any moment.

When you first mentioned to me your purpose of retiring from the Government, though I felt all the magnitude of the



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event, I was in a considerable degree silent. I knew that, to such a mind as yours, persuasion was idle and impertinent; that before forming your decision you had weighed all the reasons for and against the measure, had made up your mind on full view of them, and that there could be little hope of changing the result. Pursuing my reflections, too, I knew we were some day to try to walk alone, and if the essay should be made while you should be alive and looking on, we should derive confidence from that circumstance, and resource, if it failed. The public mind, too, was calm and confident, and therefore in a favorable state for making the experiment. Had no change of circumstances intervened, I should not, with any hopes of success, have now ventured to propose to you a change of purpose. But the public mind is no longer confident and serene; and that from causes in which you are no ways personally mixed. Though these causes have been hackneyed in the public papers in detail, it may not be amiss, in order to calculate the effect they are capable of producing, to take a view of them in the mass, giving to each the form, real or imaginary, under which they have been presented.

It has been urged, then, that a public debt, greater than we can possibly pay, before other causes of adding new debt to it will occur, has been artificially created by adding together the whole amount of the debtor and creditor sides of accounts, instead of only taking their balances, which could have been paid off in a short time; that this accumulation of debt has taken forever out of our power those easy sources of revenue which, applied to the ordinary necessities and exigencies of government, would have answered them habitually, and covered us from habitual murmurings against taxes and tax-gatherers, reserving extraordinary calls for those extraordinary occasions which would animate the people to meet them; that though the calls for money have

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been no greater than we must expect generally, for the same or equivalent exigencies, yet we are already obliged to strain the impost till it produces clamor, and will produce evasion and war on our own citizens to collect it, and even to resort to an *excise* law of odious character with the people, partial in its operation, unproductive unless enforced by arbitrary and vexatious means, and committing the authority of the Government in parts where resistance is most probable and coercion least practicable. They cite propositions in Congress, and suspect other projects on foot still to increase the mass of debt. They say, that by borrowing at two-thirds of the interest, we might have paid off the principal in two-thirds of the time; but that from this we are precluded by its being made irredeemable but in small portions and long terms; that this irredeemable quality was given it for the avowed purpose of inviting its transfer to foreign countries. They predict that this transfer of the principal, when completed, will occasion an exportation of three millions of dollars annually for the interest, a drain of coin, of which, as there has been no examples, no calculation can be made of its consequences: that the banishment of our coin will be complicated by the creation of ten millions of paper-money, in the form of bank-bills now issuing into circulation. They think the ten or twelve per cent. annual profit paid to the lenders of this paper medium taken out of the pockets of the people, who would have had without interest the coin it is banishing: that all the capital employed in paper speculation is barren and useless, producing, like that on a gaming-table, no accession to itself, and is withdrawn from commerce and agriculture, where it would have produced addition to the common mass: that it nourishes in our citizens habits of vice and idleness, instead of industry and morality: that it has furnished effectual means of corrupting

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such a portion of the legislature as turns the balance between the honest voters, whichever way it is directed: that this corrupt squadron, deciding the voice of the legislature, have manifested their dispositions to get rid of the limitations imposed by the Constitution on the general legislature, limitations, on the faith of which, the States acceded to that instrument: that the ultimate object of all this is to prepare the way for a change from the present republican form of government to that of a monarchy, of which the English Constitution is to be the model: that this was contemplated by the convention is no secret, because its partisans have made more of it. To effect it then was impracticable, but they are still eager after their object, and are predisposing everything for its ultimate attainment. So many of them have got into the Legislature, that, aided by the corrupt squadron of paper dealers, who are at their devotion, they make a majority in both houses. The republican party, who wish to preserve the government in its present form, are fewer in number; they are fewer even when joined by the two, three, or half dozen antifederalists, who, though they dare not avow it, are still opposed to any General Government; but, being less so to a republican than a monarchical one, they naturally join those whom they think pursuing the lesser evil.

Of all the mischiefs objected to the system of measures before mentioned, none is so afflicting and fatal to every honest hope, as the corruption of the Legislature. As it was the earliest of these measures, it became the instrument for producing the risk, and will be the instrument for producing in future a king, lords and commons, or whatever else those who direct it may choose. Withdrawn such a distance from the eye of their constituents, and these so dispersed as to be inaccessible to public information, and particularly to that of the conduct of their own representatives,

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they will form the most corrupt government on earth, if the means of their corruption be not prevented. The only hope of safety hangs now on the numerous representation which is to come forward the ensuing year. Some of the new members will be, probably, either in principle or interest, with the present majority; but it is expected that the great mass will form an accession to the republican party. They will not be able to undo all which the two preceding Legislatures, and especially the first, have done. Public faith and right will oppose this. But some parts of the system may be rightfully reformed, a liberation from the rest unremittingly pursued as fast as right will permit, and the door shut in future against similar commitments of the nation. Should the next Legislature take this course, it will draw upon them the whole monarchical and paper interest; but the latter, I think, will not go all lengths with the former, because creditors will never, of their own accord, fly off entirely from their debtors; therefore, this is the alternative least likely to produce convulsion. But should the majority of the new members be still in the same principles with the present, and show that we have nothing to expect but a continuance of the same practices, it is not easy to conjecture what would be the result, nor what means would be resorted to for correction of the evil. True wisdom would direct that they should be temperate and peaceable; but the division of sentiment and interest happens unfortunately to be so geographical, that no mortal can say that what is most wise and temperate would prevail against what is most easy and obvious. I can scarcely contemplate a more incalculable evil than the breaking of the Union into two or more parts. Yet when we consider the mass which opposed the original coalescence; when we consider that it lay chiefly in the Southern quarter; that the Legislature have availed themselves of no occasion of allaying it, but on the contrary,

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whenever Northern and Southern prejudices have come into conflict, the latter have been sacrificed and the former soothed; that the owners of the debt are in the Southern, and the holders of it in the Northern division; that the anti-federal champions are now strengthened in argument by the fulfilment of their predictions; that this has been brought about by the monarchical federalists themselves, who, having been for the new government merely as a stepping-stone to monarchy, have themselves adopted the very constructions of the Constitution, of which, when advocating its acceptance before the tribunal of the people, they declared it unsusceptible; that the republican federalists who espoused the same government for its intrinsic merits, are disarmed of their weapons; that which they denied as prophecy, having now become true history, who can be sure that these things may not proselyte the small number which was wanting to place the majority on the other side? And this is the event at which I tremble, and to prevent which I consider your continuing at the head of affairs as of the last importance. The confidence of the whole Union is centred in you. Your being at the helm will be more than an answer to every argument which can be used to alarm and lead the people in any quarter, into violence and secession. North and South will hang together if they have you to hang on; and if the first correction of a numerous representation should fail in its effect, your presence will give time for trying others, not inconsistent with the union and peace of the States.

I am perfectly aware of the oppression under which your present office lays your mind, and of the ardor with which you pant for domestic life. But there is sometimes an eminence of character on which society have such peculiar claims as to control the predilections of the individual for a particular walk of happiness, and restrain him to that

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alone arising from the present and future benedictions of mankind. This seems to be your condition, and the law imposed on you by Providence in forming your character, and fashioning the events on which it was to operate; and it is to motives like these, and not to personal anxieties of mine or others who have no right to call on you for sacrifices, that I appeal, and urge a revisal of it, on the ground of change in the aspect of things. Should an honest majority result from the new and enlarged representation; should those acquiesce whose principles or interest they may control, your wishes for retirement would be gratified with less danger, as soon as that shall be manifest, without awaiting the completion of the second period of four years. One or two sessions will determine the crisis; and I cannot but hope that you can resolve to add more to the many years you have already sacrificed to the good of mankind.

The fear of suspicion that any selfish motive of continuance in office may enter into this solicitation on my part obliges me to declare that no such motive exists. It is a thing of mere indifference to the public whether I retain or relinquish my purpose of closing my tour with the first periodical renovation of the Government. I know my own measure too well to suppose that my services contribute anything to the public confidence, or the public utility. Multitudes can fill the office in which you have been pleased to place me, as much to their advantage and satisfaction. I have, therefore, no motive to consult but my own inclination, which is bent irresistibly on the tranquil enjoyment of my family, my farm, and my books. I should repose among them, it is true, in far greater security, if I were to know that you remained at the watch; and I hope it will be so. To the inducements urged from a view of our domestic affairs, I will add a bare mention, of what indeed need only to be mentioned, that weighty motives for your continuance are to

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be found in our foreign affairs. I think it probable that both the Spanish and English negotiations, if not completed before your purpose is known, will be suspended from the moment it is known, and that the latter nation will then use double diligence in fomenting the Indian War.

### *On the French Revolution*

*To William Short*

PHILADELPHIA, January 3, 1793.

The liberty of the whole earth was depending on the issue of the contest [the French Revolution], and was ever such a prize won with so little innocent blood? My own affections have been deeply wounded by some of the martyrs to this cause, but rather than it should have failed I would have seen half the earth desolated; were there but an Adam and an Eve left in every country, and left free, it would be better than as it now is.

### *On Obligations to Public Service and the Simple Life*

*To James Madison*

PHILADELPHIA, June 9, 1793.

I acknowledge . . . that a tour of duty, in whatever line he can be most useful to his country, is due from every individual. It is not easy perhaps to say of what length exactly this tour should be, but we may safely say of what length it should not be. Not of our whole life, for instance, for that would be to be born a slave—not even of a very

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large portion of it. I have now been in the public service four and twenty years; one-half of which has been spent in total occupation with their affairs, and absence from my own. I have served my tour then. No positive engagement, by word or deed, binds me to their further service. No commitment of their interests in any enterprise by me requires that I should see them through it. I am pledged by no act which gives any tribunal a call upon me before I withdraw. Even my enemies do not pretend this. I stand clear then of public right on all points—my friends I have not committed. No circumstances have attended my passage from office to office, which could lead them, and others through them, into deception as to the time I might remain, and particularly they and all have known with what reluctance I engaged and have continued in the present one, and of my uniform determination to return from it at an early date. If the public then has no claim on me, and my friends nothing to justify, the decision will rest on my own feelings alone. There has been a time when these were very different from what they are now; when perhaps the esteem of the world was of higher value in my eye than everything in it. But age, experience and reflection preserving to that only its due value, have set a higher on tranquillity. The motion of my blood no longer keeps time with the tumult of the world. It leads me to seek for happiness in the lap and love of my family, in the society of my neighbors and my books, in the wholesome occupations of my farm and my affairs, in an interest or affection in every bud that opens, in every breath that blows around me, in an entire freedom of rest, of motion, of thought, owing account to myself alone of my hours and actions. What must be the principle of that calculation which should balance against these the circumstances of my present existence—worn down with labors from morning to



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night, and day to day; knowing them as fruitless to others as they are vexatious to myself, committed singly in desperate and eternal contest against a host who are systematically undermining the public liberty and prosperity, even the rare hours of relaxation sacrificed to the society of persons in the same intentions, of whose hatred I am conscious even in those moments of conviviality when the heart wishes most to open itself to the effusions of friendship and confidence, cut off from my family and friends, my affairs abandoned to chaos and derangement, in short, giving everything I love in exchange for everything I hate, and all this without a single gratification in possession or prospect, in present enjoyment or future wish. Indeed, my dear friend, duty being out of the question, inclination cuts off all argument, and so never let there be more between you and me, on this subject.

### *From the Report of Secretary of State on Trade and the Tariff*

DECEMBER 16, 1793.

The following principles, being founded in reciprocity, appear perfectly just, and to offer no cause of complaint to any nation:

1. Where a nation imposes high duties on our productions, or prohibits them altogether, it may be proper for us to do the same by theirs; first burdening or excluding those productions which they bring here, in competition with our own of the same kind; selecting next, such manufactures as we take from them in greatest quantity, and which, at the same time, we could the soonest furnish to ourselves, or obtain from other countries; imposing on them duties lighter

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at first, but heavier and heavier afterward as other channels of supply open. Such duties having the effect of indirect encouragement to domestic manufactures of the same kind, may induce the manufacturer to come himself into these States, where cheaper subsistence, equal laws, and a vent of his wares, free of duty, may insure him the highest profits from his skill and industry. And here, it would be in the power of the State governments to coöperate essentially, by opening the resources of encouragement which are under their control, extending them liberally to artists in those particular branches of manufacture for which their soil, climate, population and other circumstances have matured them, and fostering the precious efforts and progress of *household* manufacture, by some patronage suited to the nature of its objects, guided by the local informations they possess, and guarded against abuse by their presence and attentions. The oppressions on our agriculture, in foreign ports, would thus be made the occasion of relieving it from a dependence on the councils and conduct of others, and of promoting arts, manufactures, and population at home.

2. Where a nation refuses permission to our merchants and factors to reside within certain parts of their dominions, we may, if it should be thought expedient, refuse residence to theirs in any and every part of ours, or modify their transactions.

3. Where a nation refuses to receive in our vessels any productions but our own, we may refuse to receive, in theirs, any but their own productions. The first and second clauses of the bill reported by the committee, are well formed to effect this object.

4. Where a nation refuses to consider any vessel as ours which has not been built within our territories, we should refuse to consider as theirs, any vessel not built within their territories.

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5. Where a nation refuses to our vessels the carriage even of our own productions, to certain countries under their domination, we might refuse to theirs of every description, the carriage of the same productions to the same countries. But as justice and good neighborhood would dictate that those who have no part in imposing the restriction on us, should not be the victims of measures adopted to defeat its effect, it may be proper to confine the restrictions to vessels owned or navigated by any subjects of the same dominant power, other than the inhabitants of the country to which the said productions are to be carried. And to prevent all inconvenience to the said inhabitants, and to our own, by too sudden a check on the means of transportation, we may continue to admit the vessels marked for future exclusion, on an advanced tonnage, and for such length of time only, as may be supposed necessary to provide against that inconvenience.

The establishment of some of these principles by Great Britain alone, has already lost us in our commerce with that country and its possessions, between eight and nine hundred vessels of near 40,000 tons burden, according to statements from official materials, in which they have confidence. This involves a proportional loss of seamen, shipwrights, and ship-building, and is too serious a loss to admit forbearance of some effectual remedy.

It is true we must expect some inconvenience in practice from the establishment of discriminating duties. But in this, as in so many other cases, we are left to choose between two evils. These inconveniences are nothing when weighed against the loss of wealth and loss of force, which will follow our perseverance in the plan of indiscrimination. When once it shall be perceived that we are either in the system or in the habit of giving equal advantages to those who extinguish our commerce and navigation by duties and

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prohibitions, as to those who treat both with liberality and justice, liberality and justice will be converted by all into duties and prohibitions. It is not to the moderation and justice of others we are to trust for fair and equal access to market with our productions, or for our due share in the transportation of them; but to our own means of independence, and the firm will to use them. Nor do the inconveniences of discrimination merit consideration. Not one of the nations before mentioned, perhaps not a commercial nation on earth, is without them. In our case one distinction alone will suffice: that is to say, between nations who favor our productions and navigation, and those who do not favor them. One set of moderate duties, say the present duties, for the first, and a fixed advance on these as to some articles, and prohibitions as to others, for the last.

Still, it must be repeated that friendly arrangements are preferable with all who will come into them; and that we should carry into such arrangements all the liberality and spirit of accommodation which the nature of the case will admit.

### *On Rural Life*

*To George Washington*

MONTICELLO, April 25, 1794.

*Dear Sir:* I am to thank you for the book you were so good as to transmit me, as well as the letter covering it, and your felicitations on my present quiet. The difference of my present and past situation is such as to leave me nothing to regret, but that my retirement has been postponed four years too long. The principles on which I calculated the value of life, are entirely in favor of my present

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course. I return to farming with an ardor which I scarcely knew in my youth, and which has got the better entirely of my love of study. Instead of writing ten or twelve letters a day, which I have been in the habit of doing as a thing in course, I put off answering my letters now, farmer-like, till a rainy day, and then find them sometimes postponed by other necessary occupations.

### *On Political Theory*

*To Monsieur D'Ivernois*

MONTICELLO, February 6, 1795.

I suspect that the doctrine, that small States alone are fitted to be republics, will be exploded by experience, with some other brilliant fallacies accredited by Montesquieu and other political writers. Perhaps it will be found, that to obtain a just republic (and it is to secure our just rights that we resort to government at all) it must be so extensive as that local egoisms may never reach its greater part; that on every particular question, a majority may be found in its councils free from particular interests, and giving, therefore, an uniform prevalence to the principles of justice. The smaller the societies the more violent and more convulsive their schisms. We have chanced to live in an age which will probably be distinguished in history, for its experiments in government on a larger scale than has yet taken place. But we shall not live to see the result. The grosser absurdities, such as hereditary magistracies, we shall see exploded in our day, long experience having already pronounced condemnation against them. But what is to be the substitute? This our children or grandchildren will answer. We may be satisfied with the certain knowl-

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edge that none can ever be tried, so stupid, so unrighteous, so oppressive, so destructive of every end for which honest men enter into government, as that which their forefathers had established, and their fathers alone venture to tumble headlong from the stations they have so long abused. It is unfortunate, that the efforts of mankind to recover the freedom of which they have been so long deprived, will be accompanied with violence, with errors, and even with crimes. But while we weep over the means, we must pray for the end.

### *On Education, Rogues, and Honest Men*

*To Mann Page*

MONTICELLO, August 30, 1795.

If anything could ever induce me to sleep another night out of my own house, it would have been your friendly invitation and my solicitude for the subject of it, the education of our youth. I do most anxiously wish to see the highest degrees of education given to the higher degrees of genius, and to all degrees of it, so much as may enable them to read and understand what is going on in the world, and to keep their part of it going on right: for nothing can keep it right but their own vigilant and distrustful superintendence. I do not believe with the Rochefoucaults and Montaignes, that fourteen out of fifteen men are rogues: I believe a great abatement from that proportion may be made in favor of general honesty. But I have always found that rogues would be uppermost, and I do not know that the proportion is too strong for the higher orders, and for those who, rising above the swinish multitude, always contrive to nestle themselves into the places of power

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and profit. These rogues set out with stealing the people's good opinion, and then steal from them the right of withdrawing it, by contriving laws and associations against the power of the people themselves. Our part of the country is in considerable fermentation, on what they suspect to be a recent roguery of this kind. They say that while all hands were below deck mending sails, splicing ropes, and every one at his own business, and the captain in his cabin attending to his log-book and chart, a rogue of a pilot has run them into an enemy's port. But metaphor apart, there is much dissatisfaction with Mr. Jay and his treaty. For my part, I consider myself now but as a passenger, leaving the world and its government to those who are likely to live longer in it. That you may be among the longest of these is my sincere prayer.

### *On the Jay Treaty*

*To Col. James Monroe*

MONTICELLO, March 21, 1796.

All America is a-tiptoe to see what the House of Representatives will decide on it [the Jay Treaty]. We conceive the constitutional doctrine to be, that though the President and Senate have the general power of making treaties, yet wherever they include in a treaty matters confided by the Constitution to the three branches of Legislature, an act of legislation will be requisite to confirm these articles, and that the House of Representatives, as one branch of the Legislature, are perfectly free to pass the act or to refuse it, governing themselves by their own judgment whether it is for the good of their constituents to let the treaty go into effect or not. On the precedent now to be set will depend

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the future construction of our Constitution, and whether the powers of legislation shall be transferred from the President, Senate, and House of Representatives, to the President and Senate, and Piamingo or any other Indian, Algerine, or other chief. It is fortunate that the first decision is to be in a case so palpably atrocious, as to have been predetermined by all America. The appointment of Ellsworth Chief Justice, and Chase one of the judges, is doubtless communicated to you.

### *On Party Lines*

*To Phillip Mazzei*

MONTICELLO, April 24, 1796.

The aspect of our politics has wonderfully changed since you left us. In place of that noble love of liberty and republican government which carried us triumphantly through the war, an Anglican monarchical aristocratical party has sprung up, whose avowed object is to draw over us the substance, as they have already done the forms, of the British government. The main body of our citizens, however, remain true to their republican principles; the whole landed interest is republican, and so is a great mass of talents. Against us are the Executive, the Judiciary, two out of three branches of the Legislature, all the officers of the government, all who want to be officers, all timid men who prefer the calm of despotism to the boisterous sea of liberty, British merchants and Americans trading on British capital, speculators and holders in the banks and public funds, a contrivance invented for the purposes of corruption, and for assimilating us in all things to the rotten as well as the sound parts of the British model. It would give you a fever



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were I to name to you the apostates who have gone over to these heresies, men who were Samsons in the field and Solomons in the council, but who have had their heads shorn by the harlot England. In short, we are likely to preserve the liberty we have obtained only by unremitting labors and perils. But we shall preserve it; and our mass of weight and wealth on the good side is so great, as to leave no danger that force will ever be attempted against us. We have only to awake and snap the Lilliputian cords with which they have been entangling us during the first sleep which succeeded our labors.

### *On Adams for President*

*To James Madison*

MONTICELLO, December 17, 1796.

Your favor of the 5th came to hand last night. The first wish of my heart was, that you should have been proposed for the administration of the government. On your declining it, I wish anybody rather than myself; and there is nothing I so anxiously hope, as that my name may come out either second or third. These would be indifferent to me; as the last would leave me at home the whole year, and the other two-thirds of it. I have no expectation that the Eastern States will suffer themselves to be so much outwitted, as to be made the tools for bringing in P. instead of A. I presume they will throw away their second vote. In this case, it begins to appear possible, that there may be an equal division where I had supposed the republican vote would have been considerably minor. It seems also possible, that the Representatives may be divided. This is a difficulty from which the Constitution has provided no issue. It is both my

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duty and inclination, therefore, to relieve the embarrassment, should it happen; and in that case, I pray you and authorize you fully, to solicit on my behalf that Mr. Adams may be preferred. He has always been my senior, from the commencement of our public life, and the expression of the public will being equal, this circumstance ought to give him the preference. And when so many motives will be operating to induce some of the members to change their vote, the addition of my wish may have some effect to preponderate the scale.

### *On his Relations to Adams*

*To James Madison*

MONTICELLO, January 30, 1797.

Yours of the 18th came to hand yesterday. I am very thankful for the discretion you have exercised over the letter. That has happened to be the case, which I knew to be possible, that the honest expression of my feelings toward Mr. Adams might be rendered *malapropos* from circumstances existing, and known at the seat of government, but not known by me in my retired situation. Mr. Adams and myself were cordial friends from the beginning of the Revolution. Since our return from Europe, some little incidents have happened, which were capable of affecting a jealous mind like his. His deviation from that line of politics on which we had been united, has not made me less sensible of the rectitude of his heart; and I wished him to know this, and also another truth, that I am sincerely pleased at having escaped the late draft for the helm, and have not a wish which he stands in the way of. That he should be convinced of these truths, is important to our mutual satisfac-

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tion, and perhaps to the harmony and good of the public service. But there was a difficulty in conveying them to him, and a possibility that the attempt might do mischief there or somewhere else; and I would not have hazarded the attempt, if you had not been in place to decide upon its expediency. It has now become unnecessary to repeat it by a letter.

. . . . .

### *On his Relations with Adams and Attitude toward England*

*To Elbridge Gerry*

PHILADELPHIA, May 13, 1797.

I entirely commend your dispositions toward Mr. Adams, knowing his worth as intimately and esteeming it as much as any one, and acknowledging the preference of his claims, if any I could have had, to the high office conferred on him. But in truth, I had neither claims nor wishes on the subject, though I know it will be difficult to obtain belief of this. When I retired from this place and the office of Secretary of State, it was in the firmest contemplation of never more returning here. There had indeed been suggestions in the public papers, that I was looking toward a succession to the President's chair, but feeling a consciousness of their falsehood, and observing that the suggestions came from hostile quarters, I considered them as intended merely to excite public odium against me. I never in my life exchanged a word with any person on the subject, till I found my name brought forward generally, in competition with that of Mr. Adams. Those with whom I then communicated, could say, if it were necessary, whether I met the call

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with desire, or even with a ready acquiescence, and whether from the moment of my first acquiescence, I did not devoutly pray that the very thing might happen which has happened. The second office of the Government is honorable and easy, the first is but a splendid misery.

You express apprehensions that stratagems will be used, to produce a misunderstanding between the President and myself. Though not a word having this tendency has ever been hazarded to me by any one, yet I consider as a certainty that nothing will be left untried to alienate him from me. These machinations will proceed from the Hamiltonians by whom he is surrounded, and who are only a little less hostile to him than to me. It cannot but damp the pleasure of cordiality, when we suspect that it is suspected. I cannot help thinking, that it is impossible for Mr. Adams to believe that the state of my mind is what it really is; that he may think I view him as an obstacle in my way. I have no supernatural power to impress truth on the mind of another, nor he any to discover that the estimate which he may form, on a just view of the human mind as generally constituted, may not be just in its application to a special constitution. This may be a source of private uneasiness to us; I honestly confess that it is so to me at this time. But neither of us is capable of letting it have effect on our public duties. Those who may endeavor to separate us, are probably excited by the fear that I might have influence on the executive councils; but when they shall know that I consider my office as constitutionally confined to legislative functions, and that I could not take any part whatever in executive consultations, even were it proposed, their fears may perhaps subside, and their object be found not worth a machination.

I do sincerely wish with you, that we could take our stand on a ground perfectly neutral and independent toward all

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nations. It has been my constant object through my public life; and with respect to the English and French, particularly, I have too often expressed to the former my wishes, and made to them propositions verbally and in writing, officially and privately, to official and private characters, for them to doubt of my views, if they would be content with equality. Of this they are in possession of several written and formal proofs, in my own handwriting. But they have wished a monopoly of commerce and influence with us; and they have in fact obtained it. When we take notice that theirs is the workshop to which we go for all we want; that with them centre either immediately or ultimately all the labors of our hands and lands; that to them belongs either openly or secretly the great mass of our navigation; that even the factorage of their affairs here, is kept to themselves by factitious citizenships; that these foreign and false citizens now constitute the great body of what are called our merchants, fill our seaports, are planted in every little town and district of the interior country, sway everything in the former places by their own votes, and those of their dependents, in the latter, by their insinuations and the influence of their ledgers; that they are advancing fast to a monopoly of our banks and public funds, and thereby placing our public finances under their control; that they have in their alliance the most influential characters in and out of office; when they have shown that by all these bearings on the different branches of the government, they can force it to proceed in whatever direction they dictate, and bend the interests of this country entirely to the will of another; when all this, I say, is attended to, it is impossible for us to say we stand on independent ground, impossible for a free mind not to see and to groan under the bondage in which it is bound. If anything after this could excite surprise, it would be that they have been able so far to throw dust in

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the eyes of our own citizens, as to fix on those who wish merely to recover self-government the charge of subserving one foreign influence, because they resist submission to another. But they possess our printing-presses, a powerful engine in their government of us. At this very moment, they would have drawn us into a war on the side of England, had it not been for the failure of her bank. Such was their open and loud cry, and that of their gazettes till this event. After plunging us in all the broils of the European nations, there would remain but one act to close our tragedy, that is, to break up our Union; and even this they have ventured seriously and solemnly to propose and maintain by arguments in a Connecticut paper. I have been happy, however, in believing, from the stifling of this effort, that that dose was found too strong, and excited as much repugnance there as it did horror in other parts of our country, and that whatever follies we may be led into as to foreign nations, we shall never give up our Union, the last anchor of our hope, and that alone which is to prevent this heavenly country from becoming an arena of gladiators. Much as I abhor war, and view it as the greatest scourge of mankind, and anxiously as I wish to keep out of the broils of Europe, I would yet go with my brethren into these, rather than separate from them. But I hope we may still keep clear of them, notwithstanding our present thralldom, and that time may be given us to reflect on the awful crisis we have passed through, and to find some means of shielding ourselves in future from foreign influence, political, commercial, or in whatever other form it may be attempted. I can scarcely withhold myself from joining in the wish of Silas Deane, that there were an ocean of fire between us and the Old World.

A perfect confidence that you are as much attached to peace and union as myself, that you equally prize inde-

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pendence of all nations, and the blessings of self-government, has induced me freely to unbosom myself to you, and let you see the light in which I have viewed what has been passing among us from the beginning of the war. And I shall be happy, at all times, in an intercommunication of sentiments with you, believing that the dispositions of the different parts of our country have been considerably misrepresented and misunderstood in each part, as to the other, and that nothing but good can result from an exchange of information and opinions between those whose circumstances and morals admit no doubt of the integrity of their views.

### *On the Position of the United States*

*To Edward Rutledge*

PHILADELPHIA, June 24, 1797.

They [the peace party] believe the present is the last campaign of Europe, and wish to rub through this fragment of a year as they have through the four preceding ones, opposing patience to insult, and interest to honor. They will, therefore, immediately adjourn. This is, indeed, a most humiliating state of things, but it commenced in 1793. Causes have been adding to causes, and effects accumulating on effects, from that time to this. We had, in 1793, the most respectable character in the universe. What the neutral nations think of us now, I know not; but we are low indeed with the belligerents. Their kicks and cuffs prove their contempt. If we weather the present storm, I hope we shall avail ourselves of the calm of peace, to place our foreign connections under a new and different arrangement. We must make the interest of every nation stand surety for

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their justice, and their own loss to follow injury to us, as effect follows its cause. As to everything except commerce, we ought to divorce ourselves from them all. But this system would require time, temper, wisdom, and occasional sacrifice of interest; and how far all of these will be ours, our children may see, but we shall not. The passions are too high at present, to be cooled in our day. You and I have formerly seen warm debates and high political passions. But gentlemen of different politics would then speak to each other, and separate the business of the Senate from that of society. It is not so now. Men who have been intimate all their lives, cross the streets to avoid meeting, and turn their heads another way, lest they should be obliged to touch their hats. This may do for young men with whom passion is enjoyment. But it is afflicting to peaceable minds. Tranquillity is the old man's milk. I go to enjoy it in a few days, and to exchange the roar and tumult of bulls and bears, for the prattle of my grandchildren and senile rest. Be these yours, my dear friend, through long years, with every other blessing, and the attachment of friends as warm and sincere, as yours affectionately.

### *On Farming*

*To —*

PHILADELPHIA, March 23, 1798.

*Dear Sir:* I have to acknowledge the receipt of your favors of August 16th and 18th, together with the box of seed accompanying the former, which has just come to hand. The letter of the 4th of June, which you mention to have committed to Mr. King, has never been received. It has most likely been intercepted on the sea, now become a field



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of lawless and indiscriminate rapine and violence. The first box which came through Mr. Donald, arrived safely the last year, but being a little too late for that season, its contents have been divided between Mr. Randolph and myself, and will be committed to the earth now immediately. The peas and the vetch are most acceptable indeed. Since you were here, I have tried that species of your field pea which is cultivated in New York, and begin to fear that that plant will scarcely bear our sun and soil. A late acquisition too of a species of our country pea, called the cow-pea, has pretty well supplied the place in my husbandry which I had destined for the European field pea. It is very productive, excellent food for man and beast, awaits without loss our leisure for gathering, and shades the ground very closely through the hottest months of the year. This with the loosening of the soil, I take to be the chief means by which the pea improves the soil. We know that the sun in our cloudless climate is the most powerful destroyer of fertility in naked ground, and therefore that the perpetual fallows will not do here, which are so beneficial in a cloudy climate. Still I shall with care try all the several kinds of pea you have been so good as to send me, and having tried all hold fast that which is good. Mr. Randolph is peculiarly happy in having the barleys committed to him, as he had been desirous of going considerably into that culture. I was able at the same time to put into his hands Siberian barley, sent me from France. I look forward with considerable anxiety to the success of the winter vetch, for it gives us a good winter crop, and helps the succeeding summer one. It is something like doubling the produce of the field. I know it does well in Italy, and therefore have the more hope here. My experience leaves me no fear as to the success of clover. I have never seen finer than in some of my fields which have never been manured. My rotation is triennial, to wit:

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one year of wheat and two of clover in the stronger fields, or two of peas in the weaker, with a crop of Indian corn and potatoes between every other rotation, that is to say once in seven years. Under this easy course of culture, aided with some manure, I hope my fields will recover their pristine fertility, which had in some of them been completely exhausted by perpetual crops of Indian corn and wheat alternately. The atmosphere is certainly the great workshop of nature for elaborating the fertilizing principles and insinuating them into the soil. It has been relied on as the sole means of regenerating our soil by most of the landholders in the canton I inhabit, and where rest has been resorted to before a total exhaustion, the soil has never failed to recover. If, indeed, it be so run down as to be incapable of throwing weeds or herbage of any kind, to shade the soil from the sun, it either goes off in gullies, and is entirely lost, or remains exhausted till a growth springs up of such trees as will rise in the poorest soils. Under the shade of these and the cover soon formed of their deciduous leaves, and a commencing herbage, such fields sometimes recover in a long course of years; but this is too long to be taken into a course of husbandry. Not so, however, is the term within which the atmosphere alone will reintegrate a soil rested in due season. A year of wheat will be balanced by one, two, or three years of rest and atmospheric influence, according to the quality of the soil. It has been said that no rotation of crops will keep the earth in the same degree of fertility without the aid of manure. But it is well known here that a space of rest greater or less in spontaneous herbage, will restore the exhaustion of a single crop. This then is a rotation; and as it is not to be believed that spontaneous herbage is the only or best covering during rest, so may we expect that a substitute for it may be found which will yield profitable crops. Such perhaps are clover, peas, vetches,

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etc. A rotation then may be found, which, by giving time for the slow influence of the atmosphere, will keep the soil in a constant and equal state of fertility. But the advantage of manuring, is that it will do more in one than the atmosphere would require several years to do, and consequently enables you so much the oftener to take exhausting crops from the soil, a circumstance of importance where there is more labor than land. I am much indebted.

### *On Newspaper Libels*

*To James Lewis, Jr.*

PHILADELPHIA, May 9, 1798.

Party passions are indeed high. Nobody has more reason to know it than myself. I receive daily bitter proofs of it from people who never saw me, nor know anything of me but through Porcupine and Fenno. At this moment all the passions are boiling over, and one who keeps himself cool and clear of the contagion, is so far below the point of ordinary conversation, that he finds himself insulated in every society. However, the fever will not last. War, land tax and stamp tax, are sedatives which must cool its ardor. They will bring on reflection, and that, with information, is all which our countrymen need to bring themselves and their affairs to rights. They are essentially Republicans. They retain unadulterated the principles of '75, and those who are conscious of no change in themselves have nothing to fear in the long run. It is our duty still to endeavor to avoid war; but if it shall actually take place, no matter by whom brought on, we must defend ourselves. If our house be on fire, without inquiring whether it was fired from within or without, we must try to extinguish

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it. In that, I have no doubt, we shall act as one man. But if we can ward off actual war till the crisis of England is over, I shall hope we may escape it altogether.

### *On Sectional Politics—Possibility of Division*

*To John Taylor*

PHILADELPHIA, June 1, 1798.

Mr. New showed me your letter on the subject of the patent, which gave me an opportunity of observing what you said as to the effect, with you, of public proceedings, and that it was not unwise now to estimate the separate mass of Virginia and North Carolina, with a view to their separate existence. It is true that we are completely under the saddle of Massachusetts and Connecticut, and that they ride us very hard, cruelly insulting our feelings, as well as exhausting our strength and subsistence. Their natural friends, the three other Eastern States join them from a sort of family pride, and they have the art to divide certain other parts of the Union, so as to make use of them to govern the whole. This is not new, it is the old practice of despots; to use a part of the people to keep the rest in order. And those who have once got an ascendancy, and possessed themselves of all the resources of the nation, their revenues and offices, have immense means for retaining their advantage. But our present situation is not a natural one. The republicans, through every part of the Union, say, that it was the irresistible influence and popularity of General Washington played off by the cunning of Hamilton, which turned the Government over to anti-republican hands, or turned the republicans chosen by the people into antirepublicans. He delivered it over to his successor in this

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state, and very untoward events since, improved with great artifice, have produced on the public mind the impressions we see. But still I repeat it, this is not the natural state. Time alone would bring round an order of things more correspondent to the sentiments of our constituents. But are there no events impending which will do it within a few months? The crisis with England, the public and authentic avowal of sentiments hostile to the leading principles of our Constitution, the prospect of a war, in which we shall stand alone, land-tax, stamp-tax, increase of public debt, etc. Be this as it may, in every free and deliberating society, there must, from the nature of man, be opposite parties, and violent dissensions and discords; and one of these, for the most part, must prevail over the other for a longer or shorter time. Perhaps this party division is necessary to induce each to watch and delate to the people the proceedings of the other. But if on a temporary superiority of the one party, the other is to resort to a scission of the Union, no federal government can ever exist. If to rid ourselves of the present rule of Massachusetts and Connecticut, we break the Union, will the evil stop there? Suppose the New England States alone cut off, will our nature be changed? Are we not men still to the south of that, and with all the passions of men? Immediately, we shall see a Pennsylvania and a Virginia party arise in the residuary confederacy, and the public mind will be distracted with the same party spirit. What a game too will the one party have in their hands, by eternally threatening the other that unless they do so and so, they will join their Northern neighbors. If we reduce our Union to Virginia and North Carolina, immediately the conflict will be established between the representatives of these two States, and they will end by breaking into their simple units. Seeing, therefore, that an association of men who will not quarrel with one another is a thing

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which never yet existed, from the greatest confederacy of nations down to a town meeting or a vestry; seeing that we must have somebody to quarrel with, I had rather keep our New England associates for that purpose, than to see our bickerings transferred to others. They are circumscribed within such narrow limits, and their population so full, that their numbers will ever be the minority, and they are marked, like the Jews, with such a perversity of character, as to constitute, from that circumstance, the natural division of our parties. A little patience, and we shall see the reign of witches pass over, their spells dissolved, and the people recovering their true sight, restoring their government to its true principles. It is true, that in the meantime, we are suffering deeply in spirit, and incurring the horrors of a war, and long oppressions of enormous public debt. But who can say what would be the evils of a scission, and when and where they would end? Better keep together as we are, haul off from Europe as soon as we can, and from all attachments to any portions of it; and if they show their power just sufficiently to hoop us together, it will be the happiest situation in which we can exist. If the game runs sometimes against us at home, we must have patience till luck turns, and then we shall have an opportunity of winning back the *principles* we have lost. For this is a game where principles are the stake. Better luck, therefore, to us all, and health, happiness and friendly salutations to yourself. Adieu.

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## *On Public Debt*

*To John Taylor*

MONTICELLO, November 26, 1798.

I wish it were possible to obtain a single amendment to our Constitution. I would be willing to depend on that alone for the reduction of the administration of our government to the genuine principles of its Constitution; I mean an additional article, taking from the federal government the power of borrowing. I now deny their power of making paper money or anything else a legal tender. I know that to pay all proper expenses within the year, would, in case of war, be hard on us. But not so hard as ten wars instead of one. For wars would be reduced in that proportion; besides that the State governments would be free to lend *their credit* in borrowing quotas. For the present, I should be for resolving the alien and sedition laws to be against the Constitution and merely void, and for addressing the other States to obtain similar declarations; and I would not do anything at this moment which should commit us further, but reserve ourselves to shape our future, measures or no measures, by the events which may happen. It is a singular phenomenon, that while our State governments are the very *best in the world*, without exception or comparison, our General Government has, in the rapid course of nine or ten years, become more arbitrary, and has swallowed more of the public liberty than even that of England. I inclose you a column, cut out of a London paper, to show you that the English, though charmed with our making their enemies our enemies, yet blush and weep over our sedition law.

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### *Resolutions Relative to the Alien and Sedition Laws*

1. *Resolved*, That the several States composing the United States of America, are not united on the principle of unlimited submission to their General Government; but that, by a compact under the style and title of a Constitution for the United States, and of amendments thereto, they constituted a General Government for special purposes,—delegated to that government certain definite powers, reserving, each State to itself, the residuary mass of right to their own self-government; and that whensoever the General Government assumes undelegated powers, its acts are unauthorized, void, and of no force: that to this compact each State acceded as a State, and is an integral party, its co-States forming, as to itself, the other party: that the government created by this compact was not made the exclusive or final judge of the extent of the powers delegated to itself; since that would have made its discretion, and not the Constitution, the measure of its powers; but that, as in all other cases of compact among powers having no common judge, each party has an equal right to judge for itself, as well of infractions as of the mode and measure of redress.

2. *Resolved*, That the Constitution of the United States, having delegated to Congress a power to punish treason, counterfeiting the securities and current coin of the United States, piracies, and felonies committed on the high seas, and offences against the law of nations, and no other crimes whatsoever; and it being true as a general principle, and one of the amendments to the Constitution having also declared, that “the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people,” there-



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fore the act of Congress, passed on the 14th day of July, 1798, and intituled "An Act in addition to the act intituled An Act for the punishment of certain crimes against the United States," as also the act passed by them on the — day of June, 1798, intituled "An Act to punish frauds committed on the bank of the United States," (and all their other acts which assume to create, define, or punish crimes, other than those so enumerated in the Constitution), are altogether void, and of no force; and that the power to create, define, and punish such other crimes is reserved, and, of right, appertains solely and exclusively to the respective States, each within its own territory.

3. *Resolved*, That it is true as a general principle, and is also expressly declared by one of the amendments to the Constitution, that "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people"; and that no power over the freedom of religion, freedom of speech, or freedom of the press being delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, all lawful powers respecting the same did of right remain, and were reserved to the States or the people: that thus was manifested their determination to retain to themselves the right of judging how far the licentiousness of speech and of the press may be abridged without lessening their useful freedom, and how far those abuses which cannot be separated from their use should be tolerated, rather than the use be destroyed. And thus also they guarded against all abridgment by the United States of the freedom of religious opinions and exercises, and retained to themselves the right of protecting the same, as this State, by a law passed on the general demand of its citizens, had already protected them from all human restraint or interference. And that in addition to this

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general principle and express declaration, another and more special provision has been made by one of the amendments to the Constitution, which expressly declares, that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press:" thereby guarding in the same sentence, and under the same words, the freedom of religion, of speech, and of the press: insomuch, that whatever violated either, throws down the sanctuary which covers the others, and that libels, falsehood, and defamation, equally with heresy and false religion, are withheld from the cognizance of federal tribunals. That, therefore, the act of Congress of the United States, passed on the 14th day of July, 1798, intituled "An Act in addition to the act intituled An Act for the punishment of certain crimes against the United States," which does abridge the freedom of the press, is not law, but is altogether void, and of no force.

4. *Resolved*, That alien friends are under the jurisdiction and protection of the laws of the State wherein they are: that no power over them has been delegated to the United States, nor prohibited to the individual States, distinct from their power over citizens. And it being true as a general principle, and one of the amendments to the Constitution having also declared, that "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people," the act of the Congress of the United States, passed on the — day of July, 1798, intituled "An Act concerning aliens," which assumes powers over alien friends, not delegated by the Constitution, is not law, but is altogether void, and of no force. (. . .)

7. *Resolved*, That the construction applied by the General Government (as is evidenced by sundry of their pro-

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ceedings) to those parts of the Constitution of the United States which delegate to Congress a power "to lay and collect taxes, duties, imports, and excises, to pay the debts, and provide for the common defence and general welfare of the United States," and "to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the powers vested by the Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof," goes to the destruction of all limits prescribed to their power by the Constitution: that words meant by the instrument to be subsidiary only to the execution of limited powers, ought not to be so construed as themselves to give unlimited powers, nor a part to be so taken as to destroy the whole residue of that instrument: that the proceedings of the General Government under color of these articles, will be a fit and necessary subject of revisal and correction, at a time of greater tranquillity, while those specified in the preceding resolutions call for immediate redress.

8. *Resolved*, That a committee of conference and correspondence be appointed, who shall have in charge to communicate the preceding resolutions to the legislatures of the several States; to assure them that this commonwealth continues in the same esteem of their friendship and union which it has manifested from that moment at which a common danger first suggested a common union: that it considers union, for specified national purposes, and particularly to those specified in their late federal compact, to be friendly to the peace, happiness and prosperity of all the States: that faithful to that compact, according to the plain intent and meaning in which it was understood and acceded to by the several parties, it is sincerely anxious for its preservation: that it does also believe, that to take from the States all the powers of self-government and transfer them to a general and consolidated government, without regard to the

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special delegations and reservations solemnly agreed to in that compact, is not for the peace, happiness or prosperity of these States; and that therefore this commonwealth is determined, as it doubts not its co-States are, to submit to undelegated, and consequently unlimited powers in no man, or body of men on earth: that in cases of an abuse of the delegated powers, the members of the General Government, being chosen by the people, a change by the people would be the constitutional remedy; but, where powers are assumed which have not been delegated, a nullification of the act is the rightful remedy: that every State has a natural right in cases not within the compact, (*casus non fæderis*), to nullify of their own authority all assumptions of power by others within their limits: that without this right, they would be under the dominion, absolute and unlimited, of whosoever might exercise this right of judgment for them: that nevertheless, this commonwealth, from motives of regard and respect for its co-States, has wished to communicate with them on the subject: that with them alone it is proper to communicate, they alone being parties to the compact, and solely authorized to judge in the last resort of the powers exercised under it, Congress being not a party, but merely the creature of the compact, and subject as to its assumptions of power to the final judgment of those by whom, and for whose use itself and its powers were all created and modified: that if the acts before specified should stand, these conclusions would flow from them; that the General Government may place any act they think proper on the list of crimes, and punish it themselves whether enumerated or not enumerated by the Constitution as cognizable by them: that they may transfer its cognizance to the President, or any other person, who may himself be the accuser, counsel, judge and jury, whose *suspitions* may be the evidence, his *order* the sen-

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tence, his *officer* the executioner, and his breast the sole record of the transaction: that a very numerous and valuable description of the inhabitants of these States being, by this precedent, reduced, as outlaws, to the absolute dominion of one man, and the barrier of the Constitution thus swept away from us all, no rampart now remains against the passions and the powers of a majority in Congress to protect from a like exportation, or other more grievous punishment, the minority of the same body, the legislatures, judges, governors, and counsellors of the States, nor their other peaceable inhabitants, who may venture to reclaim the constitutional rights and liberties of the States and people, or who for other causes, good or bad, may be obnoxious to the views, or marked by the suspicions of the President, or be thought dangerous to his or their election, or other interests, public or personal: that the friendless alien has indeed been selected as the safest subject of a first experiment; but the citizen will soon follow, or rather, has already followed, for already has a sedition act marked him as its prey: that these and successive acts of the same character, unless arrested at the threshold, necessarily drive these States into revolution and blood, and will furnish new calumnies against republican government, and new pretexts for those who wish it to be believed that man cannot be governed but by a rod of iron: that it would be a dangerous delusion were a confidence in the men of our choice to silence our fears for the safety of our rights: that confidence is everywhere the parent of despotism—free government is founded in jealousy, and not in confidence; it is jealousy and not confidence which prescribes limited constitutions, to bind down those whom we are obliged to trust with power: that our Constitution has accordingly fixed the limits to which, and no further, our confidence may go; and let the honest advocate of confidence read the alien and sedition acts, and say if the

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Constitution has not been wise in fixing limits to the government it created, and whether we should be wise in destroying those limits. Let him say what the government is, if it be not a tyranny, which the men of our choice have conferred on our President, and the President of our choice has assented to, and accepted over the friendly strangers to whom the mild spirit of our country and its laws have pledged hospitality and protection: that the men of our choice have more respected the bare *suspensions* of the President, than the solid right of innocence, the claims of justification, the sacred force of truth, and the forms and substance of law and justice. In questions of power, then, let no more be heard of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution. That this commonwealth does therefore call on its co-States for an expression of their sentiments on the acts concerning aliens, and for the punishment of certain crimes hereinbefore specified, plainly declaring whether these acts are or are not authorized by the federal compact. And it doubts not that their sense will be so announced as to prove their attachment unaltered to limited government, whether general or particular. And that the rights and liberties of their co-States will be exposed to no dangers by remaining embarked in a common bottom with their own. That they will concur with this commonwealth in considering the said acts as so palpably against the Constitution as to amount to an undisguised declaration that that compact is not meant to be the measure of the powers of the General Government, but that it will proceed in the exercise over these States, of all powers whatsoever: that they will view this as seizing the rights of the States, and consolidating them in the hands of the General Government, with a power assumed to bind the States (not merely as the cases made federal, *casus fœderis*), but in all cases whatsoever, by laws made, not with their

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consent, but by others against their consent: that this would be to surrender the form of government we have chosen, and live under one deriving its powers from its own will, and not from our authority; and that the co-States, recurring to their natural right in cases not made federal, will concur in declaring these acts void, and of no force, and will each take measures of its own for providing that neither these acts, nor any others of the General Government not plainly and intentionally authorized by the Constitution, shall be exercised within their respective territories.

9. *Resolved*, That the said committee be authorized to communicate by writing or personal conferences, at any times or places whatever, with any person or persons who may be appointed by any one or more co-States to correspond or confer with them; and that they lay their proceedings before the next session of Assembly.

### *On Yellow Fever and Growth of Cities*

*To Dr. Benjamin Rush*

MONTICELLO, September 23, 1800.

*Dear Sir:* I congratulate you on the healthiness of your city. Still Baltimore, Norfolk and Providence admonish us that we are not clear of our new scourge. When great evils happen, I am in the habit of looking out for what good may arise from them as consolations to us, and Providence has in fact so established the order of things, as that most evils are the means of producing some good. The yellow fever will discourage the growth of great cities in our nation, and I view great cities as pestilential to the morals, the health and the liberties of man. True, they nourish some of the elegant arts, but the useful ones can thrive else-

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where, and less perfection in the others, with more health, virtue and freedom, would be my choice.

### *First Inauguration Address—March 4, 1801*

*Friends and Fellow Citizens:*—Called upon to undertake the duties of the first executive office of our country, I avail myself of the presence of that portion of my fellow-citizens which is here assembled, to express my grateful thanks for the favor with which they have been pleased to look toward me, to declare a sincere consciousness that the task is above my talents, and that I approach it with those anxious and awful presentiments which the greatness of the charge and the weakness of my powers so justly inspire. A rising nation, spread over a wide and fruitful land, traversing all the seas with the rich productions of their industry, engaged in commerce with nations who feel power and forget right, advancing rapidly to destinies beyond the reach of mortal eye—when I contemplate these transcendent objects, and see the honor, the happiness, and the hopes of this beloved country committed to the issue and the auspices of this day, I shrink from the contemplation, and humble myself before the magnitude of the undertaking. Utterly indeed, should I despair, did not the presence of many whom I here see remind me, that in the other high authorities provided by our constitution, I shall find resources of wisdom, of virtue, and of zeal, on which to rely under all difficulties. To you, then, gentlemen, who are charged with the sovereign functions of legislation, and to those associated with you, I look with encouragement for that guidance and support which may enable us to steer with safety the vessel in which we are all embarked amid the conflicting elements of a troubled world.



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During the contest of opinion through which we have passed, the animation of discussion and of exertions has sometimes worn an aspect which might impose on strangers unused to think freely and to speak and to write what they think; but this being now decided by the voice of the nation, announced according to the rules of the constitution, all will, of course, arrange themselves under the will of the law, and unite in common efforts for the common good. All, too, will bear in mind this sacred principle, that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will, to be rightful, must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal laws must protect, and to violate which would be oppression. Let us, then, fellow-citizens, unite with one heart and one mind. Let us restore to social intercourse that harmony and affection without which liberty and even life itself are but dreary things. And let us reflect that having banished from our land that religious intolerance under which mankind so long bled and suffered, we have yet gained little if we countenance a political intolerance as despotic, as wicked, and capable of as bitter and bloody persecutions. During the throes and convulsions of the ancient world, during the agonizing spasms of infuriated man, seeking through blood and slaughter his long-lost liberty, it was not wonderful that the agitation of the billows should reach even this distant and peaceful shore; that this should be more felt and feared by some and less by others; that this should divide opinions as to measures of safety. But every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. We have called by different names brethren of the same principle. We are all republicans—we are federalists. If there be any among us who would wish to dissolve this Union or to change its republican form, let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat

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it. I know, indeed, that some honest men fear that a republican government cannot be strong; that this government is not strong enough. But would the honest patriot, in the full tide of successful experiment, abandon a government which has so far kept us free and firm, on the theoretic and visionary fear that this government, the world's best hope, may by possibility want energy to preserve itself? I trust not. I believe this, on the contrary, the strongest government on earth. I believe it is the only one where every man, at the call of the laws, would fly to the standard of the law, and would meet invasions of the public order as his own personal concern. Sometimes it is said that man cannot be trusted with the government of himself. Can he, then, be trusted with the government of others? Or have we found angels in the forms of kings to govern him? Let history answer this question.

Let us, then, with courage and confidence pursue our own federal and republican principles, our attachment to our union and representative government. Kindly separated by nature and a wide ocean from the exterminating havoc of one quarter of the globe; too high-minded to endure the degradations of the others; possessing a chosen country, with room enough for our descendants to the hundredth and thousandth generation; entertaining a due sense of our equal right to the use of our own faculties, to the acquisitions of our industry, to honor and confidence from our fellow-citizens, resulting not from birth but from our actions and their sense of them; enlightened by a benign religion, professed, indeed, and practised in various forms, yet all of them including honesty, truth, temperance, gratitude, and the love of man; acknowledging and adoring an overruling Providence, which by all its dispensations proves that it delights in the happiness of man here and his greater happiness hereafter; with all these blessings, what more is neces-

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sary to make us a happy and prosperous people? Still one thing more, fellow citizens—a wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, which shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government, and this is necessary to close the circle of our felicities.

About to enter, fellow citizens, on the exercise of duties which comprehend everything dear and valuable to you, it is proper that you should understand what I deem the essential principles of our government, and consequently those which ought to shape its administration. I will compress them within the narrowest compass they will bear, stating the general principle, but not all its limitations. Equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political; peace, commerce, and honest friendship, with all nations—entangling alliances with none; the support of the state governments in all their rights, as the most competent administrations for our domestic concerns and the surest bulwarks against anti-republican tendencies; the preservation of the General Government in its whole constitutional vigor, as the sheet-anchor of our peace at home and safety abroad; a jealous care of the right of election by the people—a mild and safe corrective of abuses which are lopped by the sword of the revolution where peaceable remedies are unprovided; absolute acquiescence in the decisions of the majority—the vital principle of republics, from which there is no appeal but to force the vital principle and immediate parent of despotism; a well-disciplined militia—our best reliance in peace and for the first moments of war, till regulars may relieve them; the supremacy of the civil over the military authority; economy in the public expense, that labor may be lightly burdened; the honest payment of

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our debts and sacred preservation of the public faith; encouragement of agriculture, and of commerce as its handmaid; the diffusion of information and the arraignment of all abuses at the bar of public reason; freedom of religion; freedom of the press; freedom of person under the protection of the *habeas corpus*; and trial by juries impartially selected—these principles form the bright constellation which has gone before us, and guided our steps through an age of revolution and reformation. The wisdom of our sages and the blood of our heroes have been devoted to their attainment. They should be the creed of our political faith—the text of civil instruction—the touchstone by which to try the services of those we trust; and should we wander from them in moments of error or alarm, let us hasten to retrace our steps and to regain the road which alone leads to peace, liberty, and safety.

I repair, then, fellow-citizens, to the post you have assigned me. With experience enough in subordinate offices to have seen the difficulties of this, the greatest of all, I have learned to expect that it will rarely fall to the lot of imperfect man to retire from this station with the reputation and the favor which bring him into it. Without pretensions to that high confidence reposed in our first and great revolutionary character, whose preëminent services had entitled him to the first place in his country's love, and destined for him the fairest page in the volume of faithful history, I ask so much confidence only as may give firmness and effect to the legal administration of your affairs. I shall often go wrong through defect of judgment. When right, I shall often be thought wrong by those whose positions will not command a view of the whole ground. I ask your indulgence for my own errors, which will never be intentional; and your support against the errors of others, who may condemn what they would not if seen in all its parts. The

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approbation implied by your suffrage is a consolation to me for the past; and my future solicitude will be to retain the good opinion of those who have bestowed it in advance, to conciliate that of others by doing them all the good in my power, and to be instrumental to the happiness and freedom of all.

Relying, then, on the patronage of your good-will, I advance with obedience to the work, ready to retire from it whenever you become sensible how much better choice it is in your power to make. And may that Infinite Power which rules the destinies of the universe, lead our councils to what is best, and give them a favorable issue for your peace and prosperity.

### *First Message to Congress*

DECEMBER 8, 1801.

*Sir:* The circumstances under which we find ourselves placed rendering inconvenient the mode heretofore practised of making by personal address the first communication between the legislative and executive branches, I have adopted that by message, as used on all subsequent occasions through the session. In doing this, I have had principal regard to the convenience of the legislature, to the economy of their time, to their relief from the embarrassment of immediate answers on subjects not yet fully before them, and to the benefits thence resulting to the public affairs. Trusting that a procedure founded in these motives will meet their approbation, I beg leave, through you, sir, to communicate the inclosed message, with the documents accompanying it, to the honorable the senate, and pray you to accept, for yourself and them, the homage of my high respect and consideration.

*The Hon. the President of the Senate.*

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### *Tribute to Samuel Adams*

WASHINGTON, March 29, 1801.

I addressed a letter to you, my very dear and ancient friend, on the 4th of March: not indeed to you by name, but through the medium of some of my fellow-citizens, whom occasion called on me to address. In meditating the matter of that address, I often asked myself, is this exactly in the spirit of the patriarch, Samuel Adams? Is it as he would express it? Will he approve of it? I have felt a great deal for our country in the times we have seen. But individually for no one so much as yourself. When I have been told that you were avoided, insulted, frowned on, I could but ejaculate, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." I confess I felt an indignation for you, which for myself I have been able, under every trial, to keep entirely passive. However, the storm is over, and we are in port. The ship was not rigged for the service she was put on. We will show the smoothness of her motions on her republican tack. I hope we shall once more see harmony restored among our citizens, and an entire oblivion of past feuds. Some of the leaders who have most committed themselves cannot come into this. But I hope the great body of our fellow-citizens will do it. I will sacrifice everything but principle to procure it. A few examples of justice on officers who have perverted their functions to the oppression of their fellow-citizens, must, in justice to those citizens, be made. But opinion, and the just maintenance of it, shall never be a crime in my view, nor bring injury on the individual. Those whose misconduct in office ought to have produced their removal even by my predecessor, must not be protected by the delicacy due only to honest men. How much I lament that time has deprived me of your aid! It

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would have been a day of glory which should have called you to the first office of the administration. But give us your counsel, my friend, and give us your blessing; and be assured that there exists not in the heart of man a more faithful esteem than mine to you, and that I shall ever bear you the most affectionate veneration and respect.

### *On the Policy as to Purchase of Louisiana*

*To the United States Minister to France*

*(Robert E. Livingston)*

WASHINGTON, April 18, 1802.

The cession of Louisiana and the Floridas by Spain to France, works most sorely on the United States. On this subject the Secretary of State has written to you fully, yet I cannot forbear recurring to it personally, so deep is the impression it makes on my mind. It completely reverses all the political relations of the United States, and will form a new epoch in our political course. Of all nations of any consideration, France is the one which, hitherto, has offered the fewest points on which we could have any conflict of right, and the most points of a communion of interests. From these causes, we have ever looked to her as our *natural friend*, as one with which we never could have an occasion of difference. Her growth, therefore, we viewed as our own, her misfortunes ours. There is on the globe one single spot, the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy. It is New Orleans, through which the produce of three-eighths of our territory must pass to market, and from its fertility it will ere long yield more than half of our whole produce, and contain more than half of our inhabitants. France, placing herself in that door, assumes to us

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the attitude of defiance. Spain might have retained it quietly for years. Her pacific dispositions, her feeble state, would induce her to increase our facilities there, so that her possession of the place would be hardly felt by us, and it would not, perhaps, be very long before some circumstance might arise, which might make the cession of it to us the price of something of more worth to her. Not so can it ever be in the hands of France: the impetuosity of her temper, the energy and restlessness of her character, placed in a point of eternal friction with us, and our character, which, though quiet and loving peace and the pursuit of wealth, is high-minded, despising wealth in competition with insult or injury, enterprising and energetic as any nation on earth; these circumstances render it impossible that France and the United States can continue long friends, when they meet in so irritable a position. They, as well as we, must be blind if they do not see this; and we must be very improvident if we do not begin to make arrangements on that hypothesis. The day that France takes possession of New Orleans, fixes the sentence which is to restrain her forever within her low-water mark. It seals the union of two nations, who, in conjunction, can maintain exclusive possession of the ocean. From that moment, we must marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation. We must turn all our attention to a maritime force, for which our resources place us on very high ground; and having formed and connected together a power which may render reënforcement of her settlements here impossible to France, make the first cannon which shall be fired in Europe the signal for the tearing up any settlement she may have made, and for holding the two continents of America in sequestration for the common purposes of the United British and American nations. This is not a state of things we seek or desire. It is one which this measure, if adopted by France, forces on us as necessarily,



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as any other cause, by the laws of nature, brings on its necessary effect. It is not from a fear of France that we deprecate this measure proposed by her. For however greater her force is than ours, compared in the abstract, it is nothing in comparison of ours, when to be exerted on our soil. But it is from a sincere love of peace, and a firm persuasion, that bound to France by the interests and the strong sympathies still existing in the minds of our citizens, and holding relative positions which insure their continuance, we are secure of a long course of peace. Whereas, the change of friends, which will be rendered necessary if France changes that position, embarks us necessarily as a belligerent power in the first war of Europe. In that case, France will have held possession of New Orleans during the interval of a peace, long or short, at the end of which it will be wrested from her. Will this short-lived possession have been an equivalent to her for the transfer of such a weight into the scale of her enemy? Will not the amalgamation of a young, thriving nation, continue to that enemy the health and force which are at present so evidently on the decline? And will a few years' possession of New Orleans add equally to the strength of France? She may say she needs Louisiana for the supply of her West Indies. She does not need it in time of peace, and in war she could not depend on them, because they would be so easily intercepted. I should suppose that all these considerations might, in some proper form, be brought into view of the Government of France. Though stated by us, it ought not to give offence; because we do not bring them forward as a menace, but as consequences not controllable by us, but inevitable from the course of things. We mention them, not as things which we desire by any means, but as things we deprecate; and we beseech a friend to look forward and to prevent them for our common interest.

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If France considers Louisiana, however, as indispensable for her views, she might perhaps be willing to look about for arrangements which might reconcile it to our interests. If anything could do this, it would be the ceding to us the island of New Orleans and the Floridas. This would certainly, in a great degree, remove the causes of jarring and irritation between us, and perhaps for such a length of time, as might produce other means of making the measure permanently conciliatory to our interests and friendships. It would, at any rate, relieve us from the necessity of taking immediate measures for countervailing such an operation by arrangements in another quarter. But still we should consider New Orleans and the Floridas as no equivalent for the risk of a quarrel with France, produced by her vicinage. . . .

Every eye in the United States is now fixed on the affairs of Louisiana. Perhaps nothing since the revolutionary war, has produced more uneasy sensations through the body of the nation. Notwithstanding temporary bickerings have taken place with France, she has still a strong hold on the affections of our citizens generally. I have thought it not amiss, by way of supplement to the letters of the Secretary of State, to write you this private one, to impress you with the importance we affix to this transaction. I pray you to cherish Dupont. He has the best disposition for the continuance of friendship between the two nations, and perhaps you may be able to make a good use of him.

Accept assurances of my affectionate esteem and high consideration.

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### *On the Colonization of Slaves in Sierra Leone*

*To Rufus King*

WASHINGTON, July 13, 1802.

*Dear Sir:* The course of things in the neighboring islands of the West Indies, appear to have given a considerable impulse to the minds of the slaves in different parts of the United States. A great disposition to insurgency has manifested itself among them, which, in one instance, in the State of Virginia, broke out into actual insurrection. This was easily suppressed; but many of those concerned (between twenty and thirty, I believe) fell victims to the law. So extensive an execution could not but excite sensibility in the public mind, and begat a regret that the laws had not provided for such cases, some alternative, combining more mildness with equal efficacy. The Legislature of the State at a subsequent meeting took the subject into consideration, and have communicated to me through the Governor of the State, their wish that some place could be provided, out of the limits of the United States, to which slaves guilty of insurgency might be transported; and they have particularly looked to Africa as offering the most desirable receptacle. We might, for this purpose, enter into negotiations with the natives, on some part of the coast, to obtain a settlement; and, by establishing an African company, combine with it commercial operations, which might not only reimburse expenses, but procure profit also. But there being already such an establishment on that coast by the English Sierra Leone company, made for the express purpose of colonizing civilized blacks to that country, it would seem better, by incorporating our emigrants with theirs, to make one strong,

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rather than two weak colonies. This would be the more desirable because the blacks settled at Sierra Leone, having chiefly gone from the States, would often receive among those we should send, their acquaintances and relatives. The object of this letter, therefore, is to ask the favor of you to enter into conference with such persons private and public as would be necessary to give us permission to send thither the persons under contemplation. It is material to observe that they are not felons, or common malefactors, but persons guilty of what the safety of society, under actual circumstances, obliges us to treat as a crime, but which their feelings may represent in a far different shape. They are such as will be a valuable acquisition to the settlement already existing there, and well calculated to coöperate in the plan of civilization.

As the expense of so distant a transportation would be very heavy, and might weigh unfavorably in deciding between the modes of punishment, it is very desirable that it should be lessened as much as practicable. If the regulations of the place would permit these emigrants to dispose of themselves, as the Germans and others do who come to this country poor, by giving their labor for a certain time to some one who will pay their passage; and if the master of the vessel could be permitted to carry articles of commerce from this country and take back others from that, which might yield him a mercantile profit sufficient to cover the expenses of the voyage, a serious difficulty would be removed. I will ask your attention therefore to arrangements necessary for this purpose.

The consequences of permitting emancipations to become extensive, unless the condition of emigration be annexed to them, furnish also matter of solicitation to the Legislature of Virginia, as you will perceive by their resolution inclosed to you. Although provision for the settlement of

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emancipated negroes might perhaps be obtainable nearer home than Africa, yet it is desirable that we should be free to expatriate this description of people also to the colony of Sierra Leone, if considerations respecting either themselves or us should render it more expedient. I will pray you therefore to get the same permission extended to the reception of these as well as the first mentioned. Nor will there be a selection of bad subjects; the emancipations, for the most part, being either of the whole slaves of the master, or of such individuals as have particularly deserved well; the latter is most frequent.

### *On Indian Policy*

*To General Andrew Jackson*

WASHINGTON, February 16, 1803.

*Dear Sir:* Your favor of the 14th was received on the same day, and will be duly attended to in the course of our affairs with the Creeks. In keeping agents among the Indians, two objects are principally in view: 1. The preservation of peace. 2. The obtaining lands. Toward effecting the latter object, we consider the leading the Indians to agriculture as the principal means from which we can expect much effect in future. When they shall cultivate small spots of earth, and see how useless their extensive forests are, they will sell, from time to time, to help out their personal labor in stocking their farms and procuring clothes and comforts from our trading houses. Toward the attainment of our two objects of peace and lands, it is essential that our agent acquire that sort of influence over the Indians, which rests on confidence.

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## *On Religion*

*To Doctor Benjamin Rush*

WASHINGTON, April 21, 1803.

*Dear Sir:* In some of the delightful conversations with you, in the evenings of 1798-99, and which served as an anodyne to the afflictions of the crisis through which our country was then laboring, the Christian religion was sometimes our topic; and I then promised you, that one day or other, I would give you my views of it. They are the result of a life of inquiry and reflection, and very different from that anti-Christian system imputed to me by those who know nothing of my opinions. To the corruptions of Christianity I am, indeed, opposed; but not to the genuine precepts of Jesus Himself. I am a Christian, in the only sense in which He wished any one to be: sincerely attached to His doctrines, in preference to all others; ascribing to Himself every *human* excellence; and believing He never claimed any other. At the short interval since these conversations, when I could justifiably abstract my mind from public affairs, the subject has been under my contemplation. But the more I considered it, the more it expanded beyond the measure of either my time or information. In the moment of my late departure from Monticello, I received from Dr. Priestley, his little treatise of "Socrates and Jesus Compared." This being a section of the general view I had taken of the field, it became a subject of reflection while on the road, and unoccupied otherwise. The result was, to arrange in my mind a syllabus, or outline of such an estimate of the comparative merits of Christianity, as I wished to see executed by some one of more leisure and information for the task,

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than myself. This I now send you, as the only discharge of my promise I can probably ever execute. And in confiding it to you, I know it will not be exposed to the malignant perversions of those who make every word from me a text for new misrepresentations and calumnies. I am moreover averse to the communication of my religious tenets to the public, because it would countenance the presumption of those who have endeavored to draw them before that tribunal, and to seduce public opinion to erect itself into that inquisition over the rights of conscience, which the laws have so justly proscribed. It behooves every man who values liberty of conscience for himself, to resist invasions of it in the case of others, or their case may, by change of circumstances, become his own. It behooves him, too, in his own case, to give no example of concession, betraying the common right of independent opinion, by answering questions of faith, which the laws have left between God and himself. Accept my affectionate salutations.

### *Syllabus of an Estimate of the Merit of the Doctrines of Jesus, compared with those of others*

In a comparative view of the ethics of the enlightened nations of antiquity, of the Jews and of Jesus, no notice should be taken of the corruptions of reason among the ancients, to wit, the idolatry and superstition of the vulgar, nor of the corruptions of Christianity by the learned among its professors.

Let a just view be taken of the moral principles inculcated by the most esteemed of the sects of ancient philosophy, or of their individuals; particularly Pythagoras, Socrates, Epicurus, Cicero, Epictetus, Seneca, Antoninus.

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I. Philosophers. 1. Their precepts related chiefly to ourselves, and the government of those passions which, unrestrained, would disturb our tranquillity of mind. In this branch of philosophy they were really great.

2. In developing our duties to others, they were short and defective. They embraced, indeed, the circles of kindred and friends, and inculcated patriotism, or the love of our country in the aggregate, as a primary obligation: toward our neighbors and countrymen they taught justice, but scarcely viewed them as within the circle of benevolence. Still less have they inculcated peace, charity, and love to our fellow men, or embraced with benevolence the whole family of mankind.

II. Jews. 1. Their system was Deism; that is, the belief in one only God. But their ideas of Him and of His attributes were degrading and injurious.

2. Their ethics were not only imperfect, but often irreconcilable with the sound dictates of reason and morality, as they respect intercourse with those around us; and repulsive and anti-social, as respecting other nations. They needed reformation, therefore, in an eminent degree.

III. Jesus. In this state of things among the Jews, Jesus appeared. His parentage was obscure; His condition poor; His education null; His natural endowments great; His life correct and innocent; He was meek, benevolent, patient, firm, disinterested, and of the sublimest eloquence.

The disadvantages under which His doctrines appear are remarkable.

1. Like Socrates and Epictetus, He wrote nothing Himself.

2. But He had not, like them, a Xenophon or an Arrian to write for Him. I name not Plato, who only used the name of Socrates to cover the whimsies of his own brain. On the contrary, all the learned of His country, intrenched



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in its power and riches, were opposed to Him, lest His labors should undermine their advantages; and the committing to writing His life and doctrines fell on unlettered and ignorant men, who wrote, too, from memory, and not till long after the transactions had passed.

3. According to the ordinary fate of those who attempt to enlighten and reform mankind, He fell an early victim to the jealousy and combination of the altar and the throne, at about thirty-three years of age, His reason having not yet attained the *maximum* of its energy, nor the course of His preaching, which was but of three years at most, presented occasions for developing a complete system of morals.

4. Hence the doctrines which He really delivered were defective as a whole, and fragments only of what He did deliver have come to us mutilated, misstated, and often unintelligible.

5. They have been still more disfigured by the corruptions of schismatizing followers, who have found an interest in sophisticating and perverting the simple doctrines He taught, by engrafting on them the mysticisms of a Grecian sophist, frittering them into subtleties, and obscuring them with jargon, until they have caused good men to reject the whole in disgust, and to view Jesus Himself as an impostor.

Notwithstanding these disadvantages, a system of morals is presented to us which, if filled up in the style and spirit of the rich fragments He left us, would be the most perfect and sublime that has ever been taught by man.

The question of His being a member of the Godhead, or in direct communication with it, claimed for Him by some of His followers, and denied by others, is foreign to the present view, which is merely an estimate of the intrinsic merits of His doctrines.

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1. He corrected the Deism of the Jews, confirming them in their belief of one only God, and giving them juster notions of His attributes and government.

2. His moral doctrines, relating to kindred and friends, were more pure and perfect than those of the most correct of the philosophers, and greatly more so than those of the Jews; and they went far beyond both in inculcating universal philanthropy, not only to kindred and friends, to neighbors and countrymen, but to all mankind, gathering all into one family, under the bonds of love, charity, peace, common wants, and common aids. A development of this head will evince the peculiar superiority of the system of Jesus over all others.

3. The precepts of philosophy, and of the Hebrew code, laid hold of actions only. He pushed His scrutinies into the heart of man; erected His tribunal in the region of his thoughts, and purified the waters at the fountain-head.

4. He taught, emphatically, the doctrines of a future state, which was either doubted, or disbelieved by the Jews; and wielded it with efficacy, as an important incentive, supplementary to the other motives to moral conduct.

### *On the Constitutionality of the Louisiana Purchase*

*To Wilson C. Nicholas*

MONTICELLO, September 7, 1803.

*Dear Sir:* I inclose you a letter from Monroe on the subject of the late treaty. You will observe a hint in it, to do without delay what we are bound to do. There is reason, in the opinion of our ministers, to believe, that if the thing were to do over again, it could not be obtained,

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and that if we give the least opening they will declare the treaty void. A warning amounting to that has been given to them, and an unusual kind of letter written by their minister to our Secretary of State, direct. Whatever Congress shall think it necessary to do, should be done with as little debate as possible, and particularly so far as respects the constitutional difficulty. I am aware of the force of the observations you make on the power given by the Constitution to Congress, to admit new States into the Union, without restraining the subject to the territory then constituting the United States. But when I consider that the limits of the United States are precisely fixed by the treaty of 1783, that the Constitution expressly declares itself to be made for the United States, I cannot help believing the intention was not to permit Congress to admit into the Union new States, which should be formed out of the territory for which, and under whose authority alone, they were then acting. I do not believe it was meant that they might receive England, Ireland, Holland, etc., into it, which would be the case on your construction. When an instrument admits two constructions, the one safe, the other dangerous, the one precise, the other indefinite, I prefer that which is safe and precise. I had rather ask an enlargement of power from the nation, where it is found necessary, than to assume it by a construction which would make our powers boundless. Our peculiar security is in the possession of a written Constitution. Let us not make it a blank paper by construction. I say the same as to the opinion of those who consider the grant of the treaty-making power as boundless. If it is, then we have no Constitution. If it has bounds, they can be no others than the definitions of the powers which that instrument gives. It specifies and delineates the operations permitted to the federal government, and gives all the powers necessary to

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carry these into execution. Whatever of these enumerated objects is proper for a law, Congress may make the law; whatever is proper to be executed by way of a treaty, the President and Senate may enter into the treaty; whatever is to be done by a judicial sentence, the judges may pass the sentence. Nothing is more likely than that their enumeration of powers is defective. This is the ordinary case of all human works. Let us go on then perfecting it, by adding, by way of amendment to the Constitution, those powers which time and trial show are still wanting. But it has been taken too much for granted, that by this rigorous construction the treaty power would be reduced to nothing. I had occasion once to examine its effect on the French treaty, made by the old Congress, and found that out of thirty odd articles which that contained, there were one, two, or three only which could not now be stipulated under our present Constitution. I confess, then, I think it important, in the present case, to set an example against broad construction, by appealing for new power to the people. If, however, our friends shall think differently, certainly I shall acquiesce with satisfaction; confiding, that the good sense of our country will correct the evil of construction when it shall produce ill effects.

### *Third Annual Message—October 17, 1803*

Congress witnessed, at their last session, the extraordinary agitation produced in the public mind by the suspension of our right of deposit at the port of New Orleans, no assignment of another place having been made according to treaty. They were sensible that the continuance of that privation would be more injurious to our nation than any consequences which could flow from any mode of redress,

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but reposing just confidence in the good faith of the Government whose officer had committed the wrong, friendly and reasonable representations were resorted to, and the right of deposit was restored.

Previous, however, to this period, we had not been unaware of the danger to which our peace would be perpetually exposed while so important a key to the commerce of the Western country remained under foreign power. Difficulties, too, were presenting themselves as to the navigation of other streams, which, arising within our territories, pass through those adjacent. Propositions had therefore been authorized for obtaining, on fair conditions, the sovereignty of New Orleans, and of other possessions in that quarter interesting to our quiet, to such extent as was deemed practicable; and the provisional appropriation of two millions of dollars, to be applied and accounted for by the President of the United States, intended as part of the price, was considered as conveying the sanction of Congress to the acquisition proposed. The enlightened Government of France saw, with just discernment, the importance to both nations of such liberal arrangements as might best and permanently promote the peace, friendship, and interests of both; and the property and sovereignty of all Louisiana, which had been restored to them, have on certain conditions been transferred to the United States by instruments bearing date the 30th of April last. When these shall have received the constitutional sanction of the Senate, they will without delay be communicated to the representatives also, for the exercise of their functions, as to those conditions which are within the powers vested by the Constitution in Congress. While the property and sovereignty of the Mississippi and its waters secure an independent outlet for the produce of the Western States, and an uncontrolled navigation through their whole course,

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free from collision with other powers and the dangers to our peace from that source, the fertility of the country, its climate and extent, promise in due season important aids to our treasury, an ample provision for our posterity, and a wide-spread field for the blessings of freedom and equal laws.

With the wisdom of Congress it will rest to take those ulterior measures which may be necessary for the immediate occupation and temporary government of the country; for its incorporation into our Union; for rendering the change of government a blessing to our newly adopted brethren; for securing to them the rights of conscience and of property; for confirming to the Indian inhabitants their occupancy and self-government, establishing friendly and commercial relations with them, and for ascertaining the geography of the country acquired. Such materials for your information, relative to its affairs in general, as the short space of time has permitted me to collect, will be laid before you when the subject shall be in a state for your consideration.

### *On Learning and Agriculture*

*To David Williams*

WASHINGTON, November 14, 1803.

*Sir:* The greatest evils of populous society have ever appeared to me to spring from the vicious distribution of its members among the occupations called for. I have no doubt that those nations are essentially right, which leave this to individual choice, as a better guide to an advantageous distribution than any other which could be devised. But when, by a blind concurrence, particular occupations are

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ruinously overcharged, and others left in want of hands, the national authorities can do much toward restoring the equilibrium. On the revival of letters, learning became the universal favorite. And with reason, because there was not enough of it existing to manage the affairs of a nation to the best advantage, nor to advance its individuals to the happiness of which they were susceptible, by improvements in their minds, their morals, their health, and in those conveniences which contribute to the comfort and embellishment of life. All the efforts of the society, therefore, were directed to the increase of learning, and the inducements of respect, ease, and profit were held up for its encouragement. Even the charities of the nation forgot that misery was their object, and spent themselves in founding schools to transfer to science the hardy sons of the plough. To these incitements, were added the powerful fascinations of great cities. These circumstances have long since produced an overcharge in the class of competitors for learned occupation, and great distress among the supernumerary candidates; and the more, as their habits of life have disqualified them for re-entering into the laborious class. The evil cannot be suddenly, nor perhaps ever entirely cured; nor should I presume to say by what means it may be cured. Doubtless there are many engines which the nation might bring to bear on this object. Public opinion, and public encouragement are among these. The class principally defective is that of agriculture. It is the first in utility, and ought to be the first in respect. The same artificial means which have been used to produce a competition in learning, may be equally successful in restoring agriculture to its primary dignity in the eyes of men. It is a science of the very first order. It counts among its handmaids the most respectable sciences, such as Chemistry, Natural Philosophy, Mechanics, Mathematics

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generally, Natural History, Botany. In every College and University, a professorship of agriculture, and the class of its students, might be honored as the first. Young men closing their academical education with this, as the crown of all other sciences, fascinated with its solid charms, and at a time when they are to choose an occupation, instead of crowding the other classes, would return to the farms of their fathers, their own, or those of others, and replenish and invigorate a calling, now languishing under contempt and oppression. The charitable schools, instead of storing their pupils with a lore which the present state of society does not call for, converted into schools of agriculture, might restore them to that branch qualified to enrich and honor themselves, and to increase the productions of the nation instead of consuming them. A gradual abolition of the useless offices, so much accumulated in all governments, might close this drain also from the labors of the field, and lessen the burdens imposed on them. By these, and the better means which will occur to others, the surcharge of the learned, might in time be drawn off to recruit the laboring class of citizens, the sum of industry be increased, and that of misery diminished.

Among the ancients, the redundance of population was sometimes checked by exposing infants. To the moderns, America has offered a more humane resource. Many, who cannot find employment in Europe, accordingly come here. Those who can labor do well, for the most part. Of the learned class of emigrants, a small portion find employments analogous to their talents. But many fail, and return to complete their course of misery in the scenes where it began. Even here we find too strong a current from the country to the towns; and instances beginning to appear of that species of misery, which you are so humanely endeavoring to relieve with you. Although we have in the



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old countries of Europe the lesson of their experience to warn us, yet I am not satisfied we shall have the firmness and wisdom to profit by it. The general desire of men to live by their heads rather than their hands, and the strong allurements of great cities to those who have any turn for dissipation, threaten to make them here, as in Europe, the sinks of voluntary misery. I perceive, however, that I have suffered my pen to run into a disquisition, when I had taken it up only to thank you for the volume you had been so kind as to send me, and to express my approbation of it. After apologizing, therefore, for having touched on a subject so much more familiar to you, and better understood, I beg leave to assure you of my high consideration and respect.

### *On the Danger of the National Bank to the Government*

*To Albert Gallatin*

WASHINGTON, December 13, 1803.

From a passage in the letter of the President, I observe an idea of establishing a branch bank of the United States in New Orleans. This institution is one of the most deadly hostility existing, against the principles and form of our Constitution. The nation is, at this time, so strong and united in its sentiments, that it cannot be shaken at this moment. But suppose a series of untoward events should occur, sufficient to bring into doubt the competency of a republican government to meet the crisis of great danger, or to unhinge the confidence of the people in the public functionaries; an institution like this, penetrating by its branches every part of the Union, acting by

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command and in phalanx, may, in a critical moment, upset the government. I deem no government safe which is under the vassalage of any self-constituted authorities, or any other authority than that of the nation, or its regular functionaries. What an obstruction could not this bank of the United States, with all its branch banks, be in time of war! It might dictate to us the peace we should accept, or withdraw its aids. Ought we then to give further growth to an institution so powerful, so hostile? That it is so hostile we know: 1, from a knowledge of the principles of the persons composing the body of directors in every bank, principal or branch; and those of most of the stockholders; 2, from their opposition to the measures and principles of the government, and to the election of those friendly to them; and 3, from the sentiments of the newspapers they support. Now, while we are strong, it is the greatest duty we owe to the safety of our Constitution, to bring this powerful enemy to a perfect subordination under its authorities. The first measure would be to reduce them to an equal footing only with other banks, as to the favors of the government. But, in order to be able to meet a general combination of the banks against us, in a critical emergency, could we not make a beginning toward an independent use of our own money, toward holding our own bank in all the deposits where it is received, and letting the treasurer give his draft or note for payment at any particular place, which, in a well-conducted government, ought to have as much credit as any private draft, or bank-note, or bill, and would give us the same facilities which we derive from the banks?

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### *Advance toward Reconciliation with John Adams*

*To Mrs. John Adams*

WASHINGTON, June 13, 1804.

*Dear Madam:* The affectionate sentiments which you have had the goodness to express in your letter of May the 20th, toward my dear departed daughter, have awakened in me sensibilities natural to the occasion, and recalled your kindnesses to her, which I shall ever remember with gratitude and friendship. I can assure you with truth, they had made an indelible impression on her mind, and that to the last, on our meetings after long separations, whether I had heard lately of you, and how you did, were among the earliest of her inquiries. In giving you this assurance I perform a sacred duty for her, and, at the same time, am thankful for the occasion furnished me, of expressing my regret that circumstances should have arisen, which have seemed to draw a line of separation between us. The friendship with which you honored me has ever been valued, and fully reciprocated; and although events have been passing which might be trying to some minds, I never believed yours to be of that kind, nor felt that my own was. Neither my estimate of your character, nor the esteem founded in that, has ever been lessened for a single moment, although doubts whether it would be acceptable may have forbidden manifestations of it.

Mr. Adams' friendship and mine began at an earlier date. It accompanied us through long and important scenes. The different conclusions we had drawn from our political reading and reflections, were not permitted to les-

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sen personal esteem, each party being conscious they were the result of an honest conviction in the other. Like differences of opinion existing among our fellow-citizens, attached them to one or the other of us, and produced a rivalry in their minds which did not exist in ours. We never stood in one another's way; for if either had been withdrawn at any time, his favorers would not have gone over to the other, but would have sought for some one of homogeneous opinions. This consideration was sufficient to keep down all jealousy between us, and to guard our friendship from any disturbance by sentiments of rivalry; and I can say with truth, that one act of Mr. Adams' life, and one only, ever gave me a moment's personal displeasure. I did consider his last appointments to office as personally unkind. They were from among my most ardent political enemies, from whom no faithful co-operation could ever be expected, and laid me under the embarrassment of acting through men whose views were to defeat mine, or to encounter the odium of putting others in their places. It seems but common justice to leave a successor free to act by instruments of his own choice. If my respect for him did not permit me to ascribe the whole blame to the influence of others, it left something for friendship to forgive, and after brooding over it for some little time, and not always resisting the expression of it, I forgave it cordially, and returned to the same state of esteem and respect for him which had so long subsisted. Having come into life a little later than Mr. Adams, his career has preceded mine, as mine is followed by some other; and it will probably be closed at the same distance after him which time originally placed between us. I maintain for him, and shall carry into private life, an uniform and high measure of respect and good-will, and for yourself a sincere attachment.

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I have thus, my dear Madam, opened myself to you without reserve, which I have long wished an opportunity of doing; and, without knowing how it will be received, I feel relief from being unbosomed. And I have now only to entreat your forgiveness for this transition from a subject of domestic affliction, to one which seems of a different aspect. But though connected with political events, it has been viewed by me most strongly in its unfortunate bearings on my private friendships. The injury these have sustained has been a heavy price for what has never given me equal pleasure. That you may both be favored with health, tranquillity, and long life is the prayer of one who tenders you the assurance of his highest consideration and esteem.

### *On the Loss of his Daughter*

*To Governor John Page*

WASHINGTON, June 25, 1804.

Others may lose of their abundance, but I, of my want, have lost even the half of all I had. My evening prospects now hang on the slender thread of a single life. Perhaps I may be destined to see even this last cord of parental affection broken! The hope with which I had looked forward to the moment, when, resigning public cares to younger hands, I was to retire to that domestic comfort from which the last great step is to be taken, is fearfully blighted. When you and I look back on the country over which we have passed, what a field of slaughter does it exhibit! Where are all the friends who entered it with us, under all the inspiring energies of health and hope? As if pursued by the havoc of war, they

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are strewed by the way, some earlier, some later, and scarce a few stragglers remain to count the numbers fallen, and to mark yet, by their own fall, the last footsteps of their party. Is it a desirable thing to bear up through the heat of the action, to witness the death of all our companions, and merely be the last victim? I doubt it. We have, however, the traveller's consolation. Every step shortens the distance we have to go; the end of our journey is in sight, the bed wherein we are to rest, and to rise in the midst of the friends we have lost. "We sorrow not then as others who have no hope"; but look forward to the day which "joins us to the great majority." But whatever is to be our destiny, wisdom, as well as duty, dictates that we should acquiesce in the will of Him whose it is to give and take away, and be contented in the enjoyment of those who are still permitted to be with us. Of those connected by blood, the number does not depend on us. But friends we have, if we have merited them. Those of our earliest years stand nearest in our affections. But in this, too, you and I have been unlucky. Of our college friends (and they are the dearest) how few have stood with us in the great political questions which have agitated our country; and these were of a nature to justify agitation. I did not believe the Lilliputian fetters of that day strong enough to have bound so many. Will not Mrs. Page, yourself and family, think it prudent to seek a healthier region for the months of August and September? And may we not flatter ourselves that you will cast your eye on Monticello? We have not many summers to live. While fortune places us, then, within striking distance, let us avail ourselves of it, to meet and talk over the tales of other times.

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## *On Politics*

*To Judge John Tyler*

WASHINGTON, June 28, 1804.

The terms in which you are so good as to express your satisfaction with the course of the present administration cannot but give me great pleasure. I may err in my measures, but never shall deflect from the intention to fortify the public liberty by every possible means, and to put it out of the power of the few to riot on the labors of the many. No experiment can be more interesting than that we are now trying, and which we trust will end in establishing the fact, that man may be governed by reason and truth. Our first object should therefore be, to leave open to him all the avenues to truth. The most effectual hitherto found, is the freedom of the press. It is, therefore, the first shut up by those who fear the investigation of their actions. The firmness with which the people have withstood the late abuses of the press, the discernment they have manifested between truth and falsehood, show that they may safely be trusted to hear everything true and false, and to form a correct judgment between them. As little is it necessary to impose on their senses, or dazzle their minds by pomp, splendor, or forms. Instead of this artificial, how much surer is that real respect, which results from the use of their reason and the habit of bringing everything to the test of common sense.

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### *Qualifies Condemnation of Cities and Manufactures*

*To Mr. Lithson*

WASHINGTON, January 4, 1805.

Mr. Duane informed me that he meant to publish a new edition of the "Notes on Virginia," and I had in contemplation some particular alterations which would require little time to make. My occupations by no means permit me at this time to revise the text, and make those changes in it which I should now do. I should in that case certainly qualify several expressions in the nineteenth chapter, which have been construed differently from what they were intended. I had under my eye, when writing, the manufacturers of the great cities in the old countries, at the present time, with whom the want of food and clothing necessary to sustain life, has begotten a depravity of morals, a dependence and corruption, which renders them an undesirable accession to a country whose morals are sound. My expressions looked forward to the time when our own great cities would get into the same state. But they have been quoted as if meant for the present time here. As yet our manufacturers are as much at their ease, as independent and moral as our agricultural inhabitants, and they will continue so as long as there are vacant lands for them to resort to; because whenever it shall be attempted by the other classes to reduce them to the minimum of subsistence, they will quit their trades and go to laboring the earth. A first question is, Whether it is desirable for us to receive at present the dissolute and demoralized handicraftsmen of the old cities of Europe? A second and more difficult one is, when even good handi-



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craftsmen arrive here, is it better for them to set up their trade, or go to the culture of the earth? Whether their labor in their trade is worth more than their labor on the soil, increased by the creative energies of the earth? Had I time to revise that chapter, this question should be discussed, and other views of the subject taken, which are presented by the wonderful changes which have taken place here since 1781, when the "Notes on Virginia" were written. Perhaps when I retire, I may amuse myself with a serious review of this work; at present it is out of the question. Accept my salutations and good wishes.

### *Second Inaugural Address—March 4, 1805*

Proceeding, fellow-citizens, to that qualification which the Constitution requires before my entrance on the charge again conferred upon me, it is my duty to express the deep sense I entertain of this new proof of confidence from my fellow-citizens at large, and the zeal with which it inspires me, so to conduct myself as may best satisfy their just expectations.

On taking this station on a former occasion, I declared the principles on which I believed it my duty to administer the affairs of our commonwealth. My conscience tells me that I have, on every occasion, acted up to that declaration, according to its obvious import, and to the understanding of every candid mind.

In the transaction of your foreign affairs, we have endeavored to cultivate the friendship of all nations, and especially of those with which we have the most important relations. We have done them justice on all occasions, favored where favor was lawful, and cherished mutual interests and intercourse on fair and equal terms. We are

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firmly convinced, and we act on that conviction, that with nations, as with individuals, our interests soundly calculated, will ever be found inseparable from our moral duties; and history bears witness to the fact, that a just nation is taken on its word, when recourse is had to armaments, and wars to bridle others.

At home, fellow-citizens, you best know whether we have done well or ill. The suppression of unnecessary offices, of useless establishments and expenses, enabled us to discontinue our internal taxes. These covering our land with officers, and opening our doors to their intrusions, had already begun that process of domiciliary vexation which, once entered, is scarcely to be restrained from reaching successively every article of produce and property. If among these taxes some minor ones fell which had not been inconvenient, it was because their amount would not have paid the officers who collected them, and because, if they had any merit, the state authorities might adopt them, instead of others less approved.

The remaining revenue on the consumption of foreign articles, is paid cheerfully by those who can afford to add foreign luxuries to domestic comforts, being collected on our seaboards and frontiers only, and incorporated with the transactions of our mercantile citizens, it may be the pleasure and pride of an American to ask, What farmer, what mechanic, what laborer, ever sees a tax-gatherer of the United States? These contributions enable us to support the current expenses of the Government, to fulfil contracts with foreign nations, to extinguish the native right of soil within our limits, to extend those limits, and to apply such a surplus to our public debts, as places at a short day their final redemption, and that redemption once effected, the revenue thereby liberated may, by a just repartition among the States, and a corresponding amend-

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ing of the Constitution, be applied, *in time of peace*, to rivers, canals, roads, arts, manufactures, education, and other great objects within each State. *In time of war*, if injustice, by ourselves or others, must sometimes produce war, increased as the same revenue will be increased by population and consumption, and aided by other resources reserved for that crisis, it may meet within the year all the expenses of the year, without encroaching on the rights of future generations by burdening them with the debts of the past. War will then be but a suspension of useful works, and a return to a state of peace a return to the progress of improvement.

I have said, fellow-citizens, that the income reserved had enabled us to extend our limits; but that extension may possibly pay for itself before we are called on, and in the meantime, may keep down the accruing interest; in all events, it will repay the advances we have made. I know that the acquisition of Louisiana has been disapproved by some, from a candid apprehension that the enlargement of our territory would endanger its union. But who can limit the extent to which the federative principle may operate effectively? The larger our association, the less will it be shaken by local passions; and in any view, is it not better that the opposite bank of the Mississippi should be settled by our own brethren and children, than by strangers of another family? With which shall we be most likely to live in harmony and friendly intercourse?

In matters of religion, I have considered that its free exercise is placed by the Constitution independent of the powers of the General Government. I have therefore undertaken, on no occasion, to prescribe the religious exercises suited to it, but have left them, as the Constitution found them, under the direction and discipline of State or Church authorities acknowledged by the several religious societies.

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The aboriginal inhabitants of these countries I have regarded with the commiseration their history inspires. Endowed with the faculties and the rights of men, breathing an ardent love of liberty and independence, and occupying a country which left them no desire but to be undisturbed, the stream of overflowing population from other regions directed itself on these shores; without power to divert, or habits to contend against, they have been overwhelmed by the current, or driven before it; now reduced within limits too narrow for the hunter's state, humanity enjoins us to teach them agriculture and the domestic arts; to encourage them to that industry which alone can enable them to maintain their place in existence, and to prepare them in time for that state of society, which to bodily comforts adds the improvement of the mind and morals. We have therefore liberally furnished them with the implements of husbandry and household use; we have placed among them instructors in the arts of first necessity; and they are covered with the ægis of the law against aggressors from among ourselves.

But the endeavors to enlighten them on the fate which awaits their present course of life, to induce them to exercise their reason, follow its dictates, and change their pursuits with the change of circumstances, have powerful obstacles to encounter; they are combated by the habits of their bodies, prejudice of their minds, ignorance, pride, and the influence of interested and crafty individuals among them, who feel themselves something in the present order of things, and fear to become nothing in any other. These persons inculcate a sanctimonious reverence for the customs of their ancestors; that whatsoever they did, must be done through all time; that reason is a false guide, and to advance under its counsel, in their physical, moral, or political condition, is perilous innovation; that their duty

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is to remain as their Creator made them, ignorance being safety, and knowledge full of danger; in short, my friends, among them is seen the action and counteraction of good sense and bigotry; they, too, have their anti-philosophers, who find an interest in keeping things in their present state, who dread reformation, and exert all their faculties to maintain the ascendancy of habit over the duty of improving our reason, and obeying its mandates.

In giving these outlines, I do not mean, fellow-citizens, to arrogate to myself the merit of the measures; that is due, in the first place, to the reflecting character of our citizens at large, who, by the weight of public opinion, influence and strengthen the public measures; it is due to the sound discretion with which they select from among themselves those to whom they confide the legislative duties; it is due to the zeal and wisdom of the characters thus selected, who lay the foundations of public happiness in wholesome laws, the execution of which alone remains for others; and it is due to the able and faithful auxiliaries, whose patriotism has associated with me in the executive functions.

During this course of administration, and in order to disturb it, the artillery of the press has been levelled against us, charged with whatsoever its licentiousness could devise or dare. These abuses of an institution so important to freedom and science, are deeply to be regretted, inasmuch as they tend to lessen its usefulness, and to sap its safety; they might, indeed, have been corrected by the wholesome punishments reserved and provided by the laws of the several States against falsehood and defamation; but public duties more urgent press on the time of public servants, and the offenders have therefore been left to find their punishment in the public indignation.

Nor was it uninteresting to the world, that an experiment

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should be fairly and fully made, whether freedom of discussion, unaided by power, is not sufficient for the propagation and protection of truth—whether a government, conducting itself in the true spirit of its constitution, with zeal and purity, and doing no act which it would be unwilling the whole world should witness, can be written down by falsehood and defamation. The experiment has been tried; you have witnessed the scene; our fellow-citizens have looked on, cool and collected; they saw the latent source from which these outrages proceeded; they gathered around their public functionaries, and when the Constitution called them to the decision by suffrage, they pronounced their verdict, honorable to those who had served them, and consolatory to the friend of man, who believes he may be intrusted with his own affairs.

No inference is here intended, that the laws, provided by the state against false and defamatory publications, should not be enforced; he who has time renders a service to public morals and public tranquillity, in reforming these abuses by the salutary coercions of the law; but the experiment is noted to prove that, since truth and reason have maintained their ground against false opinions in league with false facts, the press, confined to truth, needs no other legal restraint; the public judgment will correct false reasonings and opinions, on a full hearing of all parties; and no other definite line can be drawn between the inestimable liberty of the press and its demoralizing licentiousness. If there be still improprieties which this rule would not restrain, its supplement must be sought in the censorship of public opinion.

Contemplating the union of sentiment now manifested so generally, as auguring harmony and happiness to our future course, I offer to our country sincere congratulations. With those, too, not yet rallied to the same point,

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the disposition to do so is gaining strength; facts are piercing through the veil drawn over them, and our doubting brethren will at length see, that the mass of their fellow-citizens, with whom they cannot yet resolve to act, as to principles and measures, think as they think, and desire what they desire; that our wish, as well as theirs, is, that the public efforts may be directed honestly to the public good, that peace be cultivated, civil and religious liberty unassailed, law and order preserved, equality of rights maintained, and that state of property, equal or unequal, which results to every man from his own industry, or that of his fathers. When satisfied of these views, it is not in human nature that they should not approve and support them; in the meantime, let us cherish them with patient affection; let us do them justice, and more than justice, in all competitions of interest; and we need not doubt that truth, reason, and their own interests, will at length prevail, will gather them into the fold of their country, and will complete their entire union of opinion, which gives to a nation the blessing of harmony, and the benefit of all its strength.

I shall now enter on the duties to which my fellow-citizens have again called me, and shall proceed in the spirit of those principles which they have approved. I fear not that any motives of interest may lead me astray; I am sensible of no passion which could seduce me knowingly from the path of justice; but the weakness of human nature and the limits of my own understanding, will produce errors of judgment sometimes injurious to your interests. I shall need, therefore, all the indulgence I have heretofore experienced—the want of it will certainly not lessen with increasing years. I shall need, too, the favor of that Being in whose hands we are, who led our forefathers, as Israel of old, from their native land, and planted them in a country

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flowing with all the necessities and comforts of life; who has covered our infancy with His providence, and our riper years with His wisdom and power; and to whose goodness I ask you to join with me in supplications, that He will so enlighten the minds of your servants, guide their councils, and prosper their measures, that whatsoever they do, shall result in your good, and shall secure to you the peace, friendship, and approbation of all nations.

### *On the Conduct of a Newspaper*

*To John Norvell*

WASHINGTON, June 11, 1807.

To your request of my opinion of the manner in which a newspaper should be conducted, so as to be most useful, I should answer, "by restraining it to true facts and sound principles only." Yet I fear such a paper would find few subscribers. It is a melancholy truth, that a suppression of the press could not more completely deprive the nation of its benefits, than is done by its abandoned prostitution to falsehood. Nothing can now be believed which is seen in a newspaper. Truth itself becomes suspicious by being put into that polluted vehicle. The real extent of this state of misinformation is known only to those who are in situations to confront facts within their knowledge with the lies of the day. I really look with commiseration over the great body of my fellow-citizens, who, reading newspapers, live and die in the belief, that they have known something of what has been passing in the world in their time; whereas the accounts they have read in newspapers are just as true a history of any other period of the world as of the present, except that the real names of the day are affixed to



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their fables. General facts may indeed be collected from them, such as that Europe is now at war, that Bonaparte has been a successful warrior, that he has subjected a great portion of Europe to his will, etc., etc.; but no details can be relied on. I will add, that the man who never looks into a newspaper is better informed than he who reads them, inasmuch as he who knows nothing is nearer to truth than he whose mind is filled with falsehoods and errors. He who reads nothing will still learn the great facts, and the details are all false.

Perhaps an editor might begin a reformation in some such way as this. Divide his paper into four chapters, heading the 1st, Truths. 2d, Probabilities. 3d, Possibilities. 4th, Lies. The first chapter would be very short, as it would contain little more than authentic papers, and information from such sources, as the editor would be willing to risk his own reputation for their truth. The second would contain what, from a mature consideration of all circumstances, his judgment should conclude to be probably true. This, however, should rather contain too little than too much. The third and fourth should be professedly for those readers who would rather have lies for their money than the blank paper they would occupy.

Such an editor, too, would have to set his face against the demoralizing practice of feeding the public mind habitually on slander, and the depravity of taste which this nauseous aliment induces. Defamation is becoming a necessary of life; insomuch, that a dish of tea in the morning or evening cannot be digested without this stimulant. Even those who do not believe these abominations, still read them with complaisance to their auditors, and instead of the abhorrence and indignation which should fill a virtuous mind, betray a secret pleasure in the possibility that some may believe them, though they do not themselves. It

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seems to escape them, that it is not he who prints, but he who pays for printing a slander, who is its real author.

### *On Torpedoes*

*To Col. Robert Fulton*

MONTICELLO, August 16, 1807.

*Sir:* I consider your torpedoes as very valuable means of the defence of harbors, and have no doubt that we should adopt them to a considerable degree. Not that I go the whole length (as I believe you do) of considering them as solely to be relied on. Neither a nation nor those intrusted with its affairs, could be justifiable, however sanguine its expectations, in trusting solely to an engine not yet sufficiently tried, under all the circumstances which may occur, and against which we know not as yet what means of parrying may be devised. If, indeed, the mode of attaching them to the cable of a ship be the only one proposed, modes of prevention cannot be difficult. But I have ever looked to the submarine boat as most to be depended on for attaching them, and though I see no mention of it in your letter, or your publications, I am in hopes it is not abandoned as impracticable. I should wish to see a corps of young men trained to this service. It would belong to the engineers if at hand, but being nautical, I suppose we must have a corps of naval engineers, to practise and use them. I do not know whether we have authority to put any part of our existing naval establishment in a course of training, but it shall be the subject of a consultation with the Secretary of the Navy. General Dearborn has informed you of the urgency of our want of you at New Orleans for the locks there. I salute you with great respect and esteem.

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### *Proposed Alliance with Great Britain*

*To the Secretary of State  
(James Madison)*

MONTICELLO, August 27, 1805.

I think you have misconceived the nature of the treaty I thought we should propose to England. I have no idea of committing ourselves immediately or independently of our further will to the war. The treaty should be provisional only, to come into force on the event of our being engaged in war with either France or Spain during the present war in Europe. In that event we should make common cause, and England should stipulate not to make peace without our obtaining the objects for which we go to war, to wit, the acknowledgment by Spain of the rightful boundaries of Louisiana (which we should reduce to our minimum by a secret article) and indemnification for spoliations, for which purpose we should be allowed to make reprisal on the Floridas and *retain them* as an indemnification. Our co-operation in the war (if we should actually enter into it) would be sufficient consideration for Great Britain to engage for its object; and it being generally known to France and Spain that we had entered into treaty with England, would probably insure us a peaceable and immediate settlement of both points. But another motive much more powerful would indubitably induce England to go much further. Whatever ill-humor may at times have been expressed against us by individuals of that country, the first wish of every Englishman's heart is to see us once more fighting by their sides against France; nor could the King or his ministers do an act so popular as to enter into an alliance with us. The nation would not weigh the consideration by grains and scruples. They would consider it

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as the price and pledge of an indissoluble friendship. I think it possible that for such a provisional treaty they would give us their general guarantee of Louisiana and the Floridas. At any rate we might try them. A failure would not make our situation worse. If such a one could be obtained we might await our own convenience for calling up the *casus fœderis*. I think it important that England should receive an overture as early as possible, as it might prevent her listening to terms of peace. If I recollect rightly, we had instructed Moreau, when he went to Paris, to settle the deposit; if he failed in that object to propose a treaty to England immediately. We could not be more engaged to secure the deposit then than we are the country now, after paying fifteen millions for it. I do expect, therefore, that, considering the present state of things as analogous to that, and virtually within his instructions, he will very likely make the proposition to England.

### *Introducing his Grandson—Estimate of Character*

*To Dr. Benjamin Rush*

WASHINGTON, January 3, 1808.

*Dear Sir:* In the ensuing autumn, I shall be sending on to Philadelphia a grandson of about fifteen years of age, to whom I shall ask your friendly attentions. Without that bright fancy which captivates, I am in hopes he possesses sound judgment and much observation; and, what I value more than all things, good humor. For thus I estimate the qualities of the mind: 1, good humor; 2, integrity; 3, industry; 4, science. The preference of the first to the

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second quality may not at first be acquiesced in; but certainly we had all rather associate with a good-humored, light-principled man, than with an ill-tempered rigorist in morality.

### *Urging Him to Run for Congress*

*To William Wirt, Esq.*

WASHINGTON, January 10, 1808.

*Dear Sir:* I pray you that this letter may be sacredly secret, because it meddles in a line wherein I should myself think it wrong to intermeddle, were it not that it looks to a period when I shall be out of office; but others might think it wrong notwithstanding that circumstance. I suspected, from your desire to go into the army, that you disliked your profession, notwithstanding that your prospects in it were inferior to none in the State. Still I know that no profession is open to stronger antipathies than that of the law. The object of this letter, then, is to propose to you to come into Congress. That is the great commanding theatre of this nation, and the threshold to whatever department of office a man is qualified to enter. With your reputation, talents, and correct views, used with the necessary prudence, you will at once be placed at the head of the republican body in the House of Representatives; and after obtaining the standing which a little time will insure you, you may look, at your own will, into the military, the judiciary, diplomatic, or other civil departments, with a certainty of being in either whatever you please. And in the present state of what may be called the eminent talents of our country, you may be assured of being engaged through life in the most honorable employments. If you come in at

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the next election, you will begin your course with a new administration. That administration will be opposed by a faction, small in numbers, but governed by no principle but the most envenomed malignity. They will endeavor to batter down the Executive before it will have time, by its purity and correctness, to build up a confidence with the people, founded on experiment. By supporting them you will lay for yourself a broad foundation in the public confidence, and indeed you will become the Colossus of the republican government of your country. I will not say that public life is the line for making a fortune. But it furnishes a decent and honorable support, and places one's children on good grounds for public favor. The family of a beloved father will stand with the public on the most favorable ground of competition. Had General Washington left children, what would have been denied to them?

### *Reasons for Refusing to Proclaim a Fast*

*To the Rev. Samuel Miller*

WASHINGTON, January 23, 1808.

*Sir:* I consider the Government of the United States as interdicted by the Constitution from intermeddling with religious institutions, their doctrines, discipline, or exercises. This results not only from the provision that no law shall be made respecting the establishment or free exercise of religion, but from that also which reserves to the States the powers not delegated to the United States. Certainly, no power to prescribe any religious exercise, or to assume authority in religious discipline, has been delegated to the General Government. It must then rest with the States, as far as it can be in any human authority. But it is only

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proposed that I should *recommend*, not prescribe a day of fasting and prayer. That is, that I should *indirectly* assume to the United States an authority over religious exercises, which the Constitution has directly precluded them from. It must be meant, too, that this recommendation is to carry some authority, and to be sanctioned by some penalty on those who disregard it; not indeed of fine and imprisonment, but of some degree of proscription, perhaps in public opinion. And does the change in the nature of the penalty make the recommendation less a *law* of conduct for those to whom it is directed? I do not believe it is for the interest of religion to invite the civil magistrate to direct its exercises, its discipline, or its doctrines; nor of the religious societies, that the General Government should be invested with the power of effecting any uniformity of time or matter among them. Fasting and prayer are religious exercises; the enjoining them an act of discipline. Every religious society has a right to determine for itself the times for these exercises, and the objects proper for them, according to their own particular tenets; and this right can never be safer than in their own hands, where the Constitution has deposited it.

### *On Public Ownership*

*To William B. Bibb*

MONTICELLO, July 28, 1808.

*Sir:* I received duly your favor of July 1st, covering an offer of Mr. McDonald of an iron mine to the public, and I thank you for taking the trouble of making the communication, as it might have its utility. But having always observed that public works are much less advantageously

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managed than the same are by private hands, I have thought it better for the public to go to market for whatever it wants which is to be found there; for there competition brings it down to the minimum of value. I have no doubt we can buy brass cannon at market cheaper than we could make iron ones. I think it material, too, not to abstract the high executive officers from those functions which nobody else is charged to carry on, and to employ them in superintending works which are going on abundantly in private hands. Our predecessors went on different principles; they bought iron mines, and sought for copper ones. We own a mine at Harper's Ferry of the finest iron ever put into a cannon, which we are afraid to attempt to work. We have rented it heretofore, but it is now without a tenant.

### *Advice as to Conduct and Character*

*To Thomas Jefferson Randolph*

WASHINGTON, November 24, 1808.

*My dear Jefferson:* . . . Your situation, thrown at such a distance from us, and alone, cannot but give us all great anxieties for you. As much has been secured for you, by your particular position and the acquaintance to which you have been recommended, as could be done toward shielding you from the dangers which surround you. But thrown on a wide world, among entire strangers, without a friend or guardian to advise, so young, too, and with so little experience of mankind, your dangers are great, and still your safety must rest on yourself. A determination never to do what is wrong, prudence, and good-humor, will go far toward securing to you the estimation of the world. When I recollect that at fourteen years of



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age, the whole care and direction of myself was thrown on myself entirely, without a relation or friend qualified to advise or guide me, and recollect the various sorts of bad company with which I associated from time to time, I am astonished I did not turn off with some of them, and become as worthless to society as they were. I had the good fortune to become acquainted very early with some characters of very high standing, and to feel the incessant wish that I could ever become what they were. Under temptations and difficulties, I would ask myself what would Dr. Small, Mr. Wythe, Peyton Randolph do in this situation? What course in it will insure me their approbation? I am certain that this mode of deciding on my conduct, tended more to correctness than any reasoning powers I possessed. Knowing the even and dignified line they pursued, I could never doubt for a moment which of two courses would be in character for them. Whereas, seeking the same object through a process of moral reasoning, and with the jaundiced eye of youth, I should often have erred. From the circumstances of my position, I was often thrown into the society of horse-racers, card-players, fox-hunters, scientific and professional men, and of dignified men; and many a time have I asked myself, in the enthusiastic moment of the death of a fox, the victory of a favorite horse, the issue of a question eloquently argued at the bar, or in the great council of the nation, well, which of these kinds of reputation should I prefer? That of a horse-jockey, a fox-hunter, an orator, or the honest advocate of my country's rights? Be assured, my dear Jefferson, that these little returns into ourselves, this self-catechising habit, is not trifling nor useless, but leads to the prudent selection and steady pursuit of what is right.

I have mentioned good-humor as one of the preservatives of our peace and tranquillity. It is among the most effect-

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ual, and its effect is so well imitated and aided, artificially, by politeness, that this also becomes an acquisition of first-rate value. In truth, politeness is artificial good humor, it covers the natural want of it, and ends by rendering habitual a substitute nearly equivalent to the real virtue. It is the practice of sacrificing to those whom we meet in society, all the little conveniences and preferences which will gratify them, and deprive us of nothing worth a moment's consideration; it is the giving a pleasing and flattering turn to our expressions, which will conciliate others, and make them pleased with us as well as themselves. How cheap a price for the good will of another! When this is in return for a rude thing said by another, it brings him to his senses, it mortifies and corrects him in the most salutary way, and places him at the feet of your good nature in the eyes of the company. But in stating prudential rules for our government in society, I must not omit the important one of never entering into dispute or argument with another. I never saw an instance of one of two disputants convincing the other by argument. I have seen many, on their getting warm, becoming rude, and shooting one another. Conviction is the effect of our own dispassionate reasoning, either in solitude, or weighing within ourselves, dispassionately, what we hear from others, standing uncommitted in argument ourselves. It was one of the rules which, above all others, made Dr. Franklin the most amiable of men in society, "never to contradict anybody." If he was urged to announce an opinion, he did it rather by asking questions, as if for information, or by suggesting doubts. When I hear another express an opinion which is not mine, I say to myself, He has a right to his opinion, as I to mine; why should I question it? His error does me no injury, and shall I become a Don Quixote, to bring all men by force of argument to one opinion? If a fact be

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misstated, it is probable he is gratified by a belief of it, and I have no right to deprive him of the gratification. If he wants information, he will ask it, and then I will give it in measured terms; but if he still believes his own story, and shows a desire to dispute the fact with me, I hear him and say nothing. It is his affair, not mine, if he prefers error. There are two classes of disputants most frequently to be met with among us. The first is of young students, just entered the threshold of science, with a first view of its outlines, not yet filled up with the details and modifications which a further progress would bring to their knowledge. The other consists of the ill-tempered and rude men in society, who have taken up a passion for politics. (Good-humor and politeness never introduce into mixed society, a question on which they foresee there will be a difference here of opinion.) From both of these classes of disputants, my dear Jefferson, keep aloof, as you would from the infected subjects of yellow fever or pestilence. Consider yourself, when with them, as among the patients of Bedlam, needing medical more than moral counsel. Be a listener only, keep within yourself, and endeavor to establish with yourself the habit of silence, especially on politics. In the fevered state of our country, no good can ever result from any attempt to set one of these fiery zealots to rights, either in fact or principle. They are determined as to the facts they will believe, and the opinions on which they will act. Get by them, therefore, as you would by an angry bull; it is not for a man of sense to dispute the road with such an animal. You will be more exposed than others to have these animals shaking their horns at you, because of the relation in which you stand with me. Full of political venom, and willing to see me and to hate me as a chief in the antagonist party, your presence will be to them what the vomit grass is to the sick dog, a

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nostrum for producing ejaculation. Look upon them exactly with that eye, and pity them as objects to whom you can administer only occasional ease. My character is not within their power. It is in the hands of my fellow-citizens at large, and will be consigned to honor or infamy by the verdict of the republican mass of our country, according to what themselves will have seen, not what their enemies and mine shall have said. Never, therefore, consider these puppies in politics as requiring any notice from you, and always show that you are not afraid to leave my character to the umpirage of public opinion. Look steadily to the pursuits which have carried you to Philadelphia, be very select in the society you attach yourself to, avoid taverns, drinkers, smokers, idlers, and dissipated persons generally; for it is with such that broils and contentions arise, and you will find your path more easy and tranquil. The limits of my paper warn me that it is time for me to close with my affectionate adieu.

### *Valedictory to Congress—December, 1808*

#### *Last Annual Message*

Availing myself of this the last occasion which will occur of addressing the two houses of the Legislature at their meeting, I cannot omit the expression of my sincere gratitude for the repeated proofs of confidence manifested to me by themselves and their predecessors since my call to the administration, and the many indulgences experienced at their hands. The same grateful acknowledgments are due to my fellow-citizens generally, whose support has been my great encouragement under all embarrassments. In the transaction of their business I cannot have

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escaped error. It is incident to our imperfect nature. But I may say with truth, my errors have been of the understanding, not of intention; and that the advancement of their rights and interests has been the constant motive for every measure. On these considerations I solicit their indulgence. Looking forward with anxiety to their future destinies, I trust that in their steady character unshaken by difficulties, in their love of liberty, obedience to law, and support of the public authorities, I see a sure guarantee of the permanence of our Republic; and retiring from the charge of their affairs, I carry with me the consolation of a firm persuasion that Heaven has in store for our beloved country long ages to come of prosperity and happiness.

### *Advice to Indian Chiefs*

*To Captain Hendrick, the Delawares, Mohicans, and Munries*

WASHINGTON, December 21, 1808.

*My Son and my Children:* I am glad to see you here, to receive your salutations, and to return them by taking you by the hand, and renewing to you the assurances of my friendship. I learn with pleasure that the Miamis and Powtawatamies have given you some of their lands on the White River to live on, and that you propose to gather there your scattered tribes, and to dwell on it all your days.

The picture which you have drawn, my son, of the increase of our numbers and the decrease of yours is just, the causes are very plain, and the remedy depends on yourselves alone. You have lived by hunting the deer and buffalo—all these have been driven westward; you have

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sold out on the sea-board and moved westwardly in pursuit of them. As they became scarce there, your food has failed you; you have been a part of every year without food, except the roots and other unwholesome things you could find in the forest. Scanty and unwholesome food produce diseases and death among your children, and hence you have raised few and your numbers have decreased. Frequent wars, too, and the abuse of spirituous liquors, have assisted in lessening your numbers. The whites, on the other hand, are in the habit of cultivating the earth, of raising stocks of cattle, hogs, and other domestic animals, in much greater numbers than they could kill of deer and buffalo. Having always a plenty of food and clothing they raise abundance of children, they double their numbers every twenty years, the new swarms are continually advancing upon the country like flocks of pigeons, and so they will continue to do. Now, my children, if we wanted to diminish our numbers, we would give up the culture of the earth, pursue the deer and buffalo, and be always at war; this would soon reduce us to be as few as you are, and if you wish to increase your numbers you must give up the deer and buffalo, live in peace, and cultivate the earth. You see then, my children, that it depends on yourselves alone to become a numerous and great people. Let me entreat you, therefore, on the lands now given you to begin to give every man a farm; let him enclose it, cultivate it, build a warm house on it, and when he dies, let it belong to his wife and children after him. Nothing is so easy as to learn to cultivate the earth; all your women understand it, and to make it easier, we are always ready to teach you how to make ploughs, hoes, and necessary utensils. If the men will take the labor of the earth from the women they will learn to spin and weave and to clothe their families. In this way you will also

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raise many children, you will double your numbers every twenty years, and soon fill the land your friends have given you, and your children will never be tempted to sell the spot on which they have been born, raised, have labored and called their own. When once you have property, you will want laws and magistrates to protect your property and persons, and to punish those among you who commit crimes. You will find that our laws are good for this purpose; you will wish to live under them, you will unite yourselves with us, join in our Great Councils and form one people with us, and we shall all be Americans; you will mix with us by marriage, your blood will run in our veins, and will spread with us over this great island. Instead, then, my children, of the gloomy prospect you have drawn of your total disappearance from the face of the earth, which is true, if you continue to hunt the deer and buffalo and go to war, you see what a brilliant aspect is offered to our future history, if you give up war and hunting. Adopt the culture of the earth and raise domestic animals; you see how from a small family you may become a great nation by adopting the course which from the small beginning you describe has made us a great nation.

My children, I will give you a paper declaring your right to hold, against all persons, the lands given you by the Miamis and Powtawatamies, and that you never can sell them without their consent. But I must tell you that if ever they and you agree to sell, no paper which I can give you can prevent your doing what you please with your own. The only way to prevent this is to give to every one of your people a farm, which shall belong to him and his family, and which the nation shall have no right to take from them and sell; in this way alone can you insure the lands to your descendants through all generations, and that it shall never be sold from under their feet. It is not the

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keeping your lands which will keep your people alive on them after the deer and buffalo shall have left them; it is the cultivating them alone which can do that. The hundredth part in corn and cattle will support you better than the whole in deer and buffalo.

My son Hendrick, deliver these words to your people. I have spoken to them plainly, that they may see what is before them, and that it is in their own power to go on dwindling to nothing, or to become again a great people. It is for this reason I wish them to live in peace with all people, to teach their young men to love agriculture, rather than war and hunting. Let these words sink deep in their hearts, and let them often repeat them and consider them. Tell them that I hold them fast by the hand, and that I will ever be their friend to advise and to assist them in following the true path to their future happiness.

### *On Manufactures*

*To Thomas Leiper*

WASHINGTON, January 21, 1809.

I have lately inculcated the encouragement of manufactures to the extent of our own consumption, at least, in all articles of which we raise the raw material. On this the federal papers and meetings have sounded the alarm of Chinese policy, destruction of commerce, etc.; that is to say, the iron which we make must not be wrought here into ploughs, axes, hoes, etc., in order that the ship-owner may have the profit of carrying it to Europe, and bringing it back in a manufactured form, as if after manufacturing our own raw materials for our own use, there would not be a surplus produce sufficient to employ a due



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proportion of navigation in carrying it to market and exchanging it for those articles of which we have not the raw material. Yet this absurd hue and cry has contributed much to federalize New England; their doctrine goes to the sacrificing agriculture and manufactures to commerce; to the calling all our people from the interior country to the sea-shore to turn merchants, and to convert this great agricultural country into a city of Amsterdam. But I trust the good sense of our country will see that its greatest prosperity depends on a due balance between agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, and not in this protuberant navigation which has kept us in hot water from the commencement of our Government, and is now engaging us in war. That this may be avoided, if it can be done without a surrender of rights, is my sincere prayer. Accept the assurances of my constant esteem and respect.

### *On the Annexation of Cuba*

*To the President of the United States*  
(James Madison)

MONTICELLO, April 27, 1809.

As to Bonaparte, I should not doubt the revocation of his edicts were he governed by reason. But his policy is so crooked that it eludes conjecture. . . . He ought the more to conciliate our good will, as we can be such an obstacle to the new career opening on him in the Spanish colonies. That he would give us the Floridas to withhold intercourse with the residue of those colonies, cannot be doubted. But that is no price; because they are ours in the first moment of the first war; and until a war they are of no particular necessity to us. But, although with difficulty, he will consent to our receiving Cuba into our Union,

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to prevent our aid to Mexico and the other provinces. That would be a price, and I would immediately erect a column on the southernmost limit of Cuba, and inscribe on it a *ne plus ultra* as to us in that direction. We should then have only to include the North in our Confederacy, which would be of course in the first war, and we should have such an empire for Liberty as she has never surveyed since the creation; and I am persuaded no constitution was ever before so well calculated as ours for extensive empire and self-government. As the *Mentor* went away before this change, and will leave France probably while it is still a secret in that hemisphere, I presume the expediency of pursuing her by a swift sailing despatch was considered. It will be objected to our receiving Cuba, that no limit can then be drawn to our future acquisitions. Cuba can be defended by us without a navy, and this develops the principle which ought to limit our views. Nothing should ever be accepted which would require a navy to defend it.

### *On the Choice of a Profession*

*To Judge David Campbell*

MONTICELLO, January 28, 1810.

Law is quite overdone. It is fallen to the ground, and a man must have great powers to raise himself in it to either honor or profit. The mob of the profession get as little money and less respect than they would by digging the earth. The followers of Esculapius are also numerous. Yet I have remarked that wherever one sets himself down in a good neighborhood, not pre-occupied, he secures to himself its practice, and if prudent, is not long in acquiring whereon to retire and live in comfort. The physician is happy in the

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attachment of the families in which he practises. All think he has saved some one of them, and he finds himself everywhere a welcome guest, a home in every house. If, to the consciousness of having saved some lives, he can add that of having at no time, from want of caution, destroyed the boon he was called on to save, he will enjoy, in age, the happy reflection of not having lived in vain; while the lawyer has only to recollect how many, by his dexterity, have been cheated of their right and reduced to beggary.

### *On his Manner of Life*

*To General Thaddeus Kosciusko*

MONTICELLO, February 26, 1810.

So much as to my country. Now a word as to myself. I am retired to Monticello, where, in the bosom of my family, and surrounded by my books, I enjoy a repose to which I have been long a stranger. My mornings are devoted to correspondence. From breakfast to dinner, I am in my shops, my garden, or on horseback among my farms; from dinner to dark, I give to society and recreation with my neighbors and friends; and from candle-light to early bedtime, I read. My health is perfect; and my strength considerably reënforced by the activity of the course I pursue; perhaps it is as great as usually falls to the lot of near sixty-seven years of age. I talk of ploughs and harrows, of seeding and harvesting, with my neighbors, and of politics, too, if they choose, with as little reserve as the rest of my fellow-citizens, and feel, at length, the blessing of being free to say and do what I please, without being responsible for it to any mortal. A part of my occupation, and by no means the least pleasing, is the direction of the studies of

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such young men as ask it. They place themselves in the neighboring village, and have the use of my library and counsel, and make a part of my society. In advising the course of their reading, I endeavor to keep their attention fixed on the main objects of all science, the freedom and happiness of man. So that coming to bear a share in the councils and governments of their country, they will keep ever in view the sole objects of all legitimate government.

### *On the Breeding of Kings*

*To Governor John Langdon*

MONTICELLO, March 5, 1810.

When I observed, that the King of England was a cipher, I did not mean to confine the observation to the mere individual now on that throne. The practice of Kings marrying only in the families of Kings has been that of Europe for some centuries. Now, take any race of animals, confine them in idleness and inaction, whether in a sty, a stable, or a state-room, pamper them with high diet, gratify all their sexual appetites, immerse them in sensualities, nourish their passions, let everything bend before them, and banish whatever might lead them to think, and in a few generations they become all body and no mind; and this, too, by a law of nature, by that very law by which we are in the constant practice of changing the characters and propensities of the animals we raise for our own purposes. Such is the regimen in raising Kings, and in this way they have gone on for centuries. While in Europe, I often amused myself with contemplating the characters of the then reigning sovereigns of Europe. Louis the XVI. was a fool, of my own knowledge, and in despite of the answers made for him at

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his trial. The King of Spain was a fool, and of Naples the same. They passed their lives in hunting, and despatched two couriers a week, one thousand miles, to let each other know what game they had killed the preceding days. The King of Sardinia was a fool. All these were Bourbons. The Queen of Portugal, a Braganza, was an idiot by nature. And so was the King of Denmark. Their sons, as regents, exercised the powers of government. The King of Prussia, successor to the great Frederick, was a mere hog in body as well as in mind. Gustavus of Sweden, and Joseph of Austria, were really crazy, and George of England, you know, was in a strait-waistcoat. There remained, then, none but old Catharine, who had been too lately picked up to have lost her common sense. In this state Bonaparte found Europe; and it was this state of its rulers which lost it with scarce a struggle. These animals had become without mind and powerless; and so will every hereditary monarch be after a few generations. Alexander, the grandson of Catharine, is as yet an exception. He is able to hold his own. But he is only of the third generation. His race is not yet worn out. And so endeth the book of Kings, from all of whom the Lord deliver us, and have you, my friend, and all such good men and true, in His holy keeping.

### *Account of Break with Adams*

*To Doctor Benjamin Rush*

MONTICELLO, January 16, 1811.

*Dear Sir:* I receive with sensibility your observations on the discontinuance of friendly correspondence between Mr. Adams and myself, and the concern you take in its restoration. This discontinuance has not proceeded from me, nor

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from the want of sincere desire and of effort on my part, to renew our intercourse. You know the perfect coincidence of principle and of action, in the early part of the Revolution, which produced a high degree of mutual respect and esteem between Mr. Adams and myself. Certainly no man was ever truer than he was, in that day, to those principles of rational republicanism which, after the necessity of throwing off our monarchy, dictated all our efforts in the establishment of a new government. And although he swerved, afterward, toward the principles of the English constitution, our friendship did not abate on that account. While he was Vice-President, and I Secretary of State, I received a letter from President Washington, then at Mount Vernon, desiring me to call together the heads of departments, and to invite Mr. Adams to join us (which, by the bye, was the only instance of that being done) in order to determine on some measure which required despatch; and he desired me to act on it, as decided, without again recurring to him. I invited them to dine with me, and after dinner, sitting at our wine, having settled our question, other conversation came on, in which a collision of opinion arose between Mr. Adams and Colonel Hamilton, on the merits of the British constitution, Mr. Adams giving it as his opinion, that, if some of its defects and abuses were corrected, it would be the most perfect constitution of government ever devised by man. Hamilton, on the contrary, asserted that, with its existing vices, it was the most perfect model of government that could be formed; and that the correction of its vices would render it an impracticable government. And this you may be assured was the real line of difference between the political principles of these two gentlemen. Another incident took place on the same occasion, which will further delineate Mr. Hamilton's political principles. The room being hung around with a collection of the portraits of remarkable men,

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among them those of Bacon, Newton, and Locke, Hamilton asked me who they were. I told him they were my trinity of the three greatest men the world had ever produced, naming them. He paused for some time: "The greatest man," said he, "that ever lived, was Julius Cæsar." Mr. Adams was honest as a politician, as well as a man; Hamilton honest as a man, but, as a politician, believing in the necessity of either force or corruption to govern men.

You remember the machinery which the federalists played off, about that time, to beat down the friends to the real principles of our Constitution, to silence by terror every expression in their favor, to bring us into war with France and alliance with England, and finally to homologize our Constitution with that of England. Mr. Adams, you know, was overwhelmed with feverish addresses, dictated by the fear, and often by the pen, of the *bloody buoy*, and was seduced by them into some open indications of his new principles of government, and, in fact, was so elated as to mix with his kindness a little superciliousness toward me. Even Mrs. Adams, with all her good sense and prudence, was sensibly flushed. And you recollect the short suspension of our intercourse, and the circumstance which gave rise to it, which you were so good as to bring to an early explanation, and have set to rights, to the cordial satisfaction of us all. The nation at length passed condemnation on the political principles of the federalists, by refusing to continue Mr. Adams in the Presidency. On the day on which we learned in Philadelphia the vote of the city of New York, which it was well known would decide the vote of the State, and that, again, the vote of the Union, I called on Mr. Adams on some official business. He was very sensibly affected, and accosted me with these words: "Well, I understand that you are to beat me in this contest, and I will only say that I will be as faithful a subject as any you will have."

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"Mr. Adams," said I, "this is no personal contest between you and me. Two systems of principles on the subject of government divide our fellow-citizens into two parties. With one of these you concur, and I with the other. As we have been longer on the public stage than most of those now living, our names happen to be more generally known. One of these parties, therefore, has put your name at its head, the other mine. Were we both to die to-day, to-morrow two other names would be in the place of ours, without any change in the motion of the machinery. Its motion is from its principle, not from you or myself." "I believe you are right," said he, "that we are but passive instruments, and should not suffer this matter to affect our personal dispositions." But he did not long retain this just view of the subject. I have always believed that the thousand calumnies which the federalists, in bitterness of heart, and mortification at their ejection, daily invented against me, were carried to him by their busy intriguers, and made some impression. When the election between Burr and myself was kept in suspense by the federalists, and they were meditating to place the President of the Senate at the head of the Government, I called on Mr. Adams with a view to have this desperate measure prevented by his negative. He grew warm in an instant, and said with a vehemence he had not used toward me before, "Sir, the event of the election is within your own power. You have only to say you will do justice to the public creditors, maintain the navy, and not disturb those holding offices and the Government will instantly be put into your hands. We know it is the wish of the people it should be so." "Mr. Adams," said I, "I know not what part of my conduct, in either public or private life, can have authorized a doubt of my fidelity to the public engagements. I say, however, I will not come into the Government by capitulation. I will not enter on it, but in perfect free-



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dom to follow the dictates of my own judgment." I had before given the same answer to the same intimation from Gouverneur Morris. "Then," said he, "things must take their course." I turned the conversation to something else, and soon took my leave. It was the first time in our lives we had ever parted with anything like dissatisfaction. And then followed those scenes of midnight appointment, which have been condemned by all men. The last day of his political power, the last hours, and even beyond the midnight, were employed in filling all offices, and especially permanent ones, with the bitterest federalists, and providing for me the alternative, either to execute the Government by my enemies, whose study it would be to thwart and defeat all my measures, or to incur the odium of such numerous removals from office, as might bear me down. A little time and reflection effaced in my mind this temporary dissatisfaction with Mr. Adams, and restored me to that just estimate of his virtues and passions, which a long acquaintance had enabled me to fix. And my first wish became that of making his retirement easy by any means in my power, for it was understood he was not rich. I suggested to some republican members of the delegation from his State, the giving him, either directly or indirectly, an office, the most lucrative in that State, and then offered to be resigned, if they thought he would not deem it affrontive. They were of opinion he would take great offence at the offer; and moreover, that the body of Republicans would consider such a step in the outset as auguring very ill of the course I meant to pursue. I dropped the idea, therefore, but did not cease to wish for some opportunity of renewing our friendly understanding.

Two or three years after, having had the misfortune to lose a daughter, between whom and Mrs. Adams there had been a considerable attachment, she made it the occasion of writing me a letter, in which, with the tenderest expressions

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of concern at this event, she carefully avoided a single one of friendship toward myself, and even concluded it with the wishes "of her who *once* took pleasure in subscribing herself your friend, Abigail Adams." Unpromising as was the complexion of this letter, I determined to make an effort toward removing the cloud from between us. This brought on a correspondence which I now enclose for your perusal, after which be so good as to return it to me, as I have never communicated it to any mortal breathing, before. I send it to you, to convince you I have not been wanting either in the desire, or the endeavor to remove this misunderstanding. Indeed, I thought it highly disgraceful to us both, as indicating minds not sufficiently elevated to prevent a public competition from affecting our personal friendship. I soon found from the correspondence that conciliation was desperate, and yielding to an intimation in her last letter, I ceased from further explanation. I have the same good opinion of Mr. Adams which I ever had. I know him to be an honest man, an able one with his pen, and he was a powerful advocate on the floor of Congress. He has been alienated from me, by belief in the lying suggestions, contrived for electioneering purposes, that I perhaps mixed in the activity and intrigues of the occasion. My most intimate friends can testify that I was perfectly passive. They would sometimes, indeed, tell me what was going on; but no man ever heard me take part in such conversations; and none ever misrepresented Mr. Adams in my presence, without my asserting his just character. With very confidential persons I have doubtless disapproved of the principles and practices of his administration. This was unavoidable. But never with those with whom it could do him any injury. Decency would have required this conduct from me, if disposition had not; and I am satisfied Mr. Adams's conduct was equally honorable toward me. But

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I think it part of his character to suspect foul play in those of whom he is jealous, and not easily to relinquish his suspicions.

I have gone, my dear friend, into these details, that you might know everything which had passed between us, might be fully possessed of the state of facts and dispositions, and judge for yourself whether they admit a revival of that friendly intercourse for which you are so kindly solicitous. I shall certainly not be wanting in anything on my part which may second your efforts, which will be the easier with me, inasmuch as I do not entertain a sentiment of Mr. Adams, the expression of which could give him reasonable offence. And I submit the whole to yourself, with the assurance that whatever be the issue, my friendship and respect for yourself will remain unaltered and unalterable.

### *Personalia*

*To Dr. Benjamin Rush*

POPLAR FOREST, August 17, 1811.

*Dear Sir:* I write to you from a place ninety miles from Monticello, near the New London of this State, which I visit three or four times a year, and stay from a fortnight to a month at a time. I have fixed myself comfortably, keep some books here, bring others occasionally, am in the solitude of a hermit, and quite at leisure to attend to my absent friends. I note this to show that I am not in a situation to examine the dates of our letters, whether I have overgone the annual period of asking how you do? I know that within that time I have received one or more letters from you, accompanied by a volume of your introductory lectures, for which accept my thanks. I have read

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them with pleasure and edification, for I acknowledge facts in medicine as far as they go, distrusting only their extension by theory. Having to conduct my grandson through his course of mathematics, I have resumed that study with great avidity. It was ever my favorite one. We have no theories there, no uncertainties remain on the mind; all is demonstration and satisfaction. I have forgotten much, and recover it with more difficulty than when in the vigor of my mind I originally acquired it. It is wonderful to me that old men should not be sensible that their minds keep pace with their bodies in the progress of decay. Our old Revolutionary friend Clinton, for example, who was a hero, but never a man of mind, is wonderfully jealous on this head. He tells eternally the stories of his younger days to prove his memory, as if memory and reason were the same faculty. Nothing betrays imbecility so much as the being insensible of it. Had not a conviction of the danger to which an unlimited occupation of the executive chair would expose the republican Constitution of our Government, made it conscientiously a duty to retire when I did, the fear of becoming a dotard and of being insensible of it, would of itself have resisted all solicitations to remain. I have had a long attack of rheumatism, without fever and without pain while I keep myself still. A total prostration of the muscles of the back, hips, and thighs, deprived me of the power of walking, and leaves it still in a very impaired state. A pain when I walk, seems to have fixed itself in the hip, and to threaten permanence. I take moderate rides, without much fatigue; but my journey to this place, in a hard-going gig, gave me great sufferings which I expect will be renewed on my return as soon as I am able. The loss of the power of taking exercise would be a sore affliction to me. It has been the delight of my retirement to be in constant bodily activity looking after my

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affairs. It was never damped, as the pleasures of reading are, by the question of *cui bono?* for what object? I hope your health of body continues firm. Your works show that of your mind. The habits of exercise which your calling has given to both, will tend long to preserve them. The sedentary character of my public occupations sapped a constitution naturally sound and vigorous, and draws it to an earlier close. But it will still last quite as long as I wish it. There is a fulness of time when men should go, and not occupy too long the ground to which others have a right to advance. We must continue while here to exchange occasionally our mutual good wishes. I find friendship to be like wine, raw when new, ripened with age, the true old man's milk and restorative cordial. God bless you and preserve you through a long and healthy old age.

### *Federalists and Republicans*

*To John Melish*

MONTICELLO, January 13, 1812.

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

Amid this mass of approbation which is given to every other part of the work, there is a single sentiment which I cannot help wishing to bring to what I think the correct one; and, on a point so interesting, I value your opinion too highly not to ambition its concurrence with my own.

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Stating in volume one, page sixty-three, the principle of difference between the two great political parties here, you conclude it to be, "whether the controlling power shall be vested in this or that set of men." That each party endeavors to get into the administration of the Government, and exclude the other from power, is true, and may be stated as a motive of action; but this is only secondary, the primary motive being a real and radical difference of political principle. I sincerely wish our differences were but personally who should govern, and that the principles of our Constitution were those of both parties. Unfortunately, it is otherwise; and the question of preference between monarchy and republicanism, which has so long divided mankind elsewhere, threatens a permanent division here.

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

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

The party called Republican is steadily for the support of the present Constitution. They obtained at its commencement all the amendments to it they desired. These reconciled them to it perfectly, and if they have any ulterior

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view, it is only, perhaps, to popularize it further by shortening the senatorial term and devising a process for the responsibility of judges, more practicable than that of impeachment. They esteem the people of England and France equally, and equally detest the governing powers of both.

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

You expected to discover the difference of our party principles in General Washington's valedictory, and my inaugural address. Not at all. General Washington did not harbor one principle of federalism. He was neither an Angloman, a monarchist, nor a separatist. He sincerely wished the people to have as much self-government as they were competent to exercise themselves. The only point on which he and I ever differed in opinion, was, that I had more confidence than he had in the natural integrity and discretion of the people, and in the safety and extent to



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which they might trust themselves with a control over their Government. He has asseverated to me a thousand times his determination that the existing Government should have a fair trial, and that in support of it he would spend the last drop of his blood. He did this the more repeatedly, because he knew General Hamilton's political bias, and my apprehensions from it. It is a mere calumny, therefore, in the monarchists, to associate General Washington with their principles. But that may have happened in this case which has been often seen in ordinary cases, that, by oft repeating an untruth, men come to believe it themselves. It is a mere artifice in this party to bolster themselves up on the revered name of that first of our worthies. If I have dwelt longer on this subject than was necessary, it proves the estimation in which I hold your ultimate opinions, and my desire of placing the subject truly before them. In so doing, I am certain I risk no use of the communication which may draw me into contention before the public. Tranquillity is the *summum bonum* of a Septagenaire.

### *On Reconciliation*

*To John Adams*

MONTICELLO, January 21, 1812.

A letter from you calls up recollections very dear to my mind. It carries me back to the times when, beset with difficulties and dangers, we were fellow-laborers in the same cause, struggling for what is most valuable to man, his right of self-government. Laboring always at the same oar, with some wave ever a head, threatening to overwhelm us, and yet passing harmless under our bark,

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we knew not how we rode through the storm with heart and hand, and made a happy port. Still, we did not expect to be without rubs and difficulties; and we have had them. First, the detention of the western posts, then the coalition of Pilnitz, outlawing our commerce with France, and the British enforcement of the outlawry. In your day, French depredations; in mine, English, and the Berlin and Milan decrees; now, the English orders of council, and the piracies they authorize. When these shall be over, it will be the impressment of our seamen or something else; and so we have gone on, and so we shall go on, puzzled and prospering beyond example in the history of man. And I do believe we shall continue to grow, to multiply and prosper until we exhibit an association, powerful, wise, and happy, beyond what has yet been seen by men. As for France and England, with all their preëminence in science, the one is a den of robbers, and the other of pirates. And if science produces no better fruits than tyranny, murder, rapine and destitution of national morality, I would rather wish our country to be ignorant, honest, and estimable, as our neighboring savages are. But whither is senile garrulity leading me? Into politics, of which I have taken final leave. I think little of them and say less. I have given up newspapers in exchange for Tacitus and Thucydides, for Newton and Euclid, and I find myself much the happier. Sometimes, indeed, I look back to former occurrences, in remembrance of our old friends and fellow-laborers, who have fallen before us. Of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, I see now living not more than half a dozen on your side of the Potomac, and on this side, myself alone. You and I have been wonderfully spared, and myself with remarkable health, and a considerable activity of body and mind. I am on horseback three or four hours of every day; visit three or four times a year a possession I have ninety

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miles distant, performing the winter journey on horseback. I walk little, however, a single mile being too much for me, and I live in the midst of my grandchildren, one of whom has lately promoted me to be a great-grandfather. I have heard with pleasure that you also retain good health, and a greater power of exercise in walking than I do. But I would rather have heard this from yourself, and that, writing a letter like mine, full of egotisms, and of details of your health, your habits, occupations, and enjoyments, I should have the pleasure of knowing that in the race of life, you do not keep, in its physical decline, the same distance ahead of me which you have done in political honors and achievements. No circumstances have lessened the interest I feel in these particulars respecting yourself; none have suspended for one moment my sincere esteem for you, and I now salute you with unchanged affection and respect.

### *On Foreign Affairs*

*To James Maury*

MONTICELLO, April 25, 1812.

*My dear and ancient Friend and Classmate:* Often has my heart smote me for delaying acknowledgments to you, receiving, as I do, such frequent proofs of your kind recollection in the transmission of papers to me. But instead of acting on the good old maxim of not putting off to to-morrow what we can do to-day, we are too apt to reverse it, and not to do to-day what we can put off to to-morrow. But this duty can be no longer put off. To-day we are at peace; to-morrow, war. The curtain of separation is drawing between us, and probably will not be with-

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drawn till one, if not both of us, will be at rest with our fathers. Let me now, then, while I may, renew to you the declarations of my warm attachment, which in no period of life has ever been weakened, and seems to become stronger as the remaining objects of our youthful affections are fewer.

Our two countries are to be at war, but not you and I. And why should our two countries be at war, when by peace we can be so much more useful to one another? Surely the world will acquit our Government from having sought it. Never before has there been an instance of a nation's bearing so much as we have borne. Two items alone in our catalogue of wrongs will forever acquit us of being the aggressors: the impressment of our seamen, and the excluding us from the ocean. The first foundations of the social compact would be broken up, were we definitively to refuse to its members the protection of their persons and property, while in their lawful pursuits. I think the war will not be short, because the object of England, long obvious, is to claim the ocean as her domain, and to exact transit duties from every vessel traversing it. This is the sum of her orders of council, which were only a step in this bold experiment, never meant to be retracted if it could be permanently maintained. And this object must continue her in war with all the world. To this I see no termination, until her exaggerated efforts, so much beyond her natural strength and resources, shall have exhausted her to bankruptcy. The approach of this crisis is, I think, visible in the departure of her precious metals, and depreciation of her paper medium. We, who have gone through that operation, know its symptoms, its course, and consequences. In England they will be more serious than elsewhere, because half the wealth of her people is now in that medium, the private revenue of her money-holders, or rather of her

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paper-holders, being, I believe, greater than that of her land-holders. Such a proportion of property, imaginary and baseless as it is, cannot be reduced to vapor but with great explosion. She will rise out of its ruins, however, because her lands, her houses, her arts will remain, and the greater part of her men. And these will give her again that place among nations which is proportioned to her natural means, and which we all wish her to hold. We believe that the just standing of all nations is the health and security of all. We consider the overwhelming power of England on the ocean, and of France on the land, as destructive of the prosperity and happiness of the world, and wish both to be reduced only to the necessity of observing moral duties. We believe no more in Bonaparte's fighting merely for the liberty of the seas, than in Great Britain's fighting for the liberties of mankind. The object of both is the same, to draw to themselves the power, the wealth, and the resources of other nations. We resist the enterprises of England first, because they first come vitally home to us. And our feelings repel the logic of bearing the lash of George the III. for fear of that of Bonaparte at some future day. When the wrongs of France shall reach us with equal effect, we shall resist them also. But one at a time is enough; and having offered a choice to the champions, England first takes up the gauntlet.

The English newspapers suppose me the personal enemy of their nation. I am not so. I am an enemy to its injuries, as I am to those of France. If I could permit myself to have national partialities, and if the conduct of England would have permitted them to be directed toward her, they would have been so. I thought that in the administration of Mr. Addington, I discovered some dispositions toward justice, and even friendship and respect for us, and began to pave the way for cherishing these

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

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

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

### *On the English Common Law in America*

*To Judge John Tyler*

MONTICELLO, June 17, 1812.

*Dear Sir:* On the other subject of your letter, the application of the common law to our present situation, I deride with you the ordinary doctrine, that we brought with us from England the *common law rights*. This narrow notion was a favorite in the first moment of rallying to our rights against Great Britain. But it was that of men who felt their rights before they had thought of their explanation. The truth is, that we brought with us the *rights of men*—of expatriated men. On our arrival here, the question would at once arise, By what law will we govern ourselves?

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The resolution seems to have been, by that system, with which we are familiar, to be altered by ourselves occasionally, and adapted to our new situation. The proofs of this resolution are to be found in the form of the oaths of the judges, 1. Hening's Stat. 169, 187; of the Governor, *ib.* 504; in the act for a provisional government, *ib.* 372; in the preamble to the laws of 1661-62; the uniform current of opinions and decisions, and in the general recognition of all our statutes, framed on that basis. But the state of the English law at the date of our emigration, constituted the system adopted here. We may doubt, therefore, the propriety of quoting in our courts English authorities subsequent to that adoption; still more, the admission of authorities posterior to the Declaration of Independence, or rather to the accession of that King, whose reign, *ab initio*, was the very tissue of wrongs which rendered the Declaration at length necessary. The reason for it had inception at least as far back as the commencement of his reign. This relation to the beginning of his reign, would add the advantage of getting us rid of all Mansfield's innovations, or civilizations of the common law. For however I admit the superiority of the civil over the common law code, as a system of perfect justice, yet an incorporation of the two would be like Nebuchadnezzar's image of metals and clay, a thing without cohesion of parts. The only natural improvement of the common law is through its homogeneous ally, the chancery, in which new principles are to be examined, concocted, and digested. But when, by repeated decisions and modifications, they are rendered pure and certain, they should be transferred by statute to the courts of common law, and placed within the pale of juries. The exclusion from the courts of the malign influence of all authorities after the *Georgium sidus* became ascendant, would uncanonize Blackstone, whose book, although the



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most elegant and best digested of our law catalogue, has been perverted more than all others, to the degeneracy of legal science. A student finds there a smattering of everything, and his indolence easily persuades him that if he understands that book, he is master of the whole body of the law. The distinction between these, and those who have drawn their stores from the deep and rich mines of Coke and Littleton, seems well understood even by the unlettered common people, who apply the appellation of Blackstone lawyers to these ephemeral insects of the law.

Whether we should undertake to reduce the common law, our own, and so much of the English statutes as we have adopted, to a text, is a question of transcendent difficulty. It was discussed at the first meeting of the committee of the revised code, in 1776, and decided in the negative, by the opinions of Wythe, Mason, and myself, against Pendleton and Thomas Lee. Pendleton proposed to take Blackstone for that text, only purging him of what was inapplicable or unsuitable to us. In that case, the meaning of every word of Blackstone would have become a source of litigation, until it had been settled by repeated legal decisions. And to come at that meaning, we should have had produced, on all occasions, that very pile of authorities from which it would be said he drew his conclusion, and which, of course, would explain it, and the terms in which it is couched. Thus we should have retained the same chaos of law-lore from which we wished to be emancipated, added to the evils of the uncertainty which a new text and new phrases would have generated. An example of this may be found in the old statutes, and commentaries on them, in Coke's second institute, but more remarkably in the institute of Justinian, and the vast masses explanatory or supplementary of that which fill the libraries of the civilians. We were deterred from the attempt by these

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considerations, added to which, the bustle of the times did not admit leisure for such an undertaking.

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

### *On Practical Politics*

*To John Adams*

MONTICELLO, June 15, 1813.

One of the questions, you know, on which our parties took different sides, was on the improvability of the human mind in science, in ethics, in government, etc. Those who advocated reformation of institutions, *pari passu* with the progress of science, maintained that no definite limits could be assigned to that progress. The enemies of reform, on the other hand, denied improvement, and advocated steady adherence to the principles, practices, and institutions of our fathers, which they represented as the consummation of wisdom, and acme of excellence, beyond which the human mind could never advance. Although in the passage of your answer alluded to, you expressly disclaim the wish to influence the freedom of inquiry, you predict that that will produce nothing more worthy of transmission to posterity than the principles, institutions, and systems of education received from their ancestors. I do not consider this as your deliberate opinion. You pos-

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sess, yourself, too much science, not to see how much is still ahead of you, unexplained and unexplored. Your own consciousness must place you as far before our ancestors as in the rear of our posterity. I consider it as an expression lent to the prejudices of your friends; and although I happened to cite it from you, the whole letter shows I had them only in view. In truth, my dear sir, we were far from considering you as the author of all the measures we blamed. They were placed under the protection of your name, but we were satisfied they wanted much of your approbation. We ascribed them to their real authors, the Pickerings, the Wolcotts, the Tracys, the Sedgwicks, *et id genus omne*, with whom we supposed you in a state of *duresse*. I well remember a conversation with you in the morning of the day on which you nominated to the Senate a substitute for Pickering, in which you expressed a just impatience under "the legacy of secretaries which General Washington had left you," and whom you seemed, therefore, to consider as under public protection. Many other incidents showed how differently you would have acted with less impassioned advisers; and subsequent events have proved that your minds were not together. You would do me great injustice, therefore, by taking to yourself what was intended for men who were then your secret, as they are now your open enemies. Should you write on the subject, as your propose, I am sure we shall see you place yourself farther from them than from us.

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### *On Finance—National Debt—Paper Money*

*To John W. Eppes*

MONTICELLO, June 24, 1813.

It is a wise rule, and should be fundamental in a government disposed to cherish its credit, and at the same time to restrain the use of it within the limits of its faculties, "never to borrow a dollar without laying a tax in the same instant for paying the interest annually, and the principal within a given term; and to consider that tax as pledged to the creditors on the public faith." On such a pledge as this, sacredly observed, a government may always command, on a *reasonable interest*, all the lendable money of their citizens, while the necessity of an equivalent tax is a salutary warning to them and their constituents against oppressions, bankruptcy, and its inevitable consequence, revolution. But the term of redemption must be moderate, and at any rate within the limits of their rightful powers. But what limits, it will be asked, does this prescribe to their powers? What is to hinder them from creating a perpetual debt? The laws of nature, I answer. The earth belongs to the living, not to the dead. The will and the power of man expire with his life, by nature's law. Some societies give it an artificial continuance, for the encouragement of industry; some refuse it, as our aboriginal neighbors, whom we call barbarians. The generations of men may be considered as bodies or corporations. Each generation has the usufruct of the earth during the period of its continuance. When it ceases to exist, the usufruct passes on to the succeeding generation, free and unincumbered, and so on, successively, from one generation to another forever. We may consider each

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generation as a distinct nation, with a right, by the will of its majority, to bind themselves, but none to bind the succeeding generation, more than the inhabitants of another country. Or the case may be likened to the ordinary one of a tenant for life, who may hypothecate the land for his debts, during the continuance of his usufruct; but at his death, the reversioner (who is also for life only) receives it exonerated from all burthen. The period of a generation, or the term of its life, is determined by the laws of mortality which, varying a little only in different climates, offer a general average, to be found by observation. I turn, for instance, to Buffon's tables, of twenty-three thousand nine hundred and ninety-four deaths, and the ages at which they happened, and I find that of the numbers of all ages living at one moment, half will be dead in twenty-four years and eight months. But (leaving out minors, who have not the power of self-government) of the adults (of twenty-one years of age) living at one moment, a majority of whom act for the society, one-half will be dead in eighteen years and eight months. At nineteen years, then, from the date of a contract, the majority of the contractors are dead, and their contract with them. Let this general theory be applied to a particular case. Suppose the annual births of the State of New York to be twenty-three thousand nine hundred and ninety-four, the whole number of its inhabitants, according to Buffon, will be six hundred and seventeen thousand seven hundred and three, of all ages. Of these there would constantly be two hundred and sixty-nine thousand two hundred and eighty-six minors, and three hundred and forty-eight thousand four hundred and seventeen adults, of which last, one hundred and seventy-four thousand two hundred and nine will be a majority. Suppose that majority, on the first day of the year 1794, had borrowed a sum of money

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equal to the fee-simple value of the State, and to have consumed it in eating, drinking, and making merry in their day; or, if you please, in quarrelling and fighting with their unoffending neighbors. Within eighteen years and eight months, one-half of the adult citizens were dead. Till then, being the majority, they might rightfully levy the interest of their debt annually on themselves and their fellow-revellers or fellow-champions. But at that period, say at this moment, a new majority have come into place, in their own right, and not under the rights, the conditions, or laws of their predecessors. Are they bound to acknowledge the debt, to consider the preceding generation as having had a right to eat up the whole soil of their country, in the course of a life, to alienate it from them, (for it would be an alienation to the creditors), and would they think themselves either legally or morally bound to give up their country and emigrate to another for subsistence? Every one will say no; that the soil is the gift of God to the living, as much as it had been to the deceased generation; and that the laws of nature impose no obligation on them to pay this debt. And although, like some other natural rights, this has not yet entered into any declaration of rights, it is no less a law, and ought to be acted on by honest governments. It is, at the same time, a salutary curb on the spirit of war and indebtment, which, since the modern theory of the perpetuation of debt, has drenched the earth with blood, and crushed its inhabitants under burdens ever accumulating. Had this principle been declared in the British bill of rights, England would have been placed under the happy disability of waging eternal war, and of contracting her thousand millions of public debt. In seeking, then, for an ultimate term for the redemption of our debts, let us rally to this principle, and provide for their payment within the term of nineteen

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years at the farthest. Our Government has not, as yet, begun to act on the rule of loans and taxation going hand in hand. Had any loan taken place in my time, I should have strongly urged a redeeming tax. For the loan which has been made since the last session of Congress, we should now set the example of appropriating some particular tax, sufficient to pay the interest annually, and the principal within a fixed term, less than nineteen years. And I hope yourself and your committee will render the immortal service of introducing this practice. Not that it is expected that Congress should formally declare such a principle. They wisely enough avoid deciding on abstract questions. But they may be induced to keep themselves within its limits.

I am sorry to see our loans begin at so exorbitant an interest. And yet, even at that you will soon be at the bottom of the loan-bag. We are an agricultural nation. Such an one employs its sparings in the purchase or improvement of land or stocks. The lendable money among them is chiefly that of orphans and wards in the hands of executors and guardians, and that which the farmer lays by till he has enough for the purchase in view. In such a nation there is one and one only resource for loans, sufficient to carry them through the expense of a war, and that will always be sufficient, and in the power of an honest government, punctual in the preservation of its faith. The fund I mean, is *the mass of circulating coin*. Every one knows, that although not literally, it is nearly true, that every paper dollar emitted banishes a silver one from the circulation. A nation, therefore, making its purchases and payments with bills fitted for circulation, thrusts an equal sum of coin out of circulation. This is equivalent to borrowing that sum, and yet the vendor receiving payment in a medium as effectual as coin for his

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



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

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their actual specie, by gathering up their paper, and running it constantly on them. The national paper might thus take place even in the non-complying States. In this way, I am not without a hope, that this great, this sole resource for loans in an agricultural country, might yet be recovered for the use of the nation during war, and, if obtained *in perpetuum*, it would always be sufficient to carry us through any war; provided, that in the interval between war and war, all the outstanding paper should be called in, coin be permitted to flow in again, and to hold the field of circulation until another war should require its yielding place again to the national medium.

But, it will be asked, are we to have no banks? Are merchants and others to be deprived of the resource of short accommodations, found so convenient? I answer, let us have banks; but let them be such as are alone to be found in any country on earth, except Great Britain. There is not a bank of discount on the Continent of Europe (at least there was not one when I was there) which offers anything but cash in exchange for discounted bills. No one has a natural right to the trade of a money-lender, but he who has the money to lend. Let those then among us, who have a moneyed capital, and who prefer employing it in loans rather than otherwise, set up banks, and give cash or national bills for the notes they discount. Perhaps, to encourage them, a larger interest than is legal in the other cases might be allowed them, on the condition of their lending for short periods only. It is from Great Britain we copy the idea of giving paper in exchange for discounted bills; and while we have derived from that country some good principles of government and legislation, we unfortunately run into the most servile imitation of all her practices, ruinous as they prove to her, and with the gulf yawning before us into which these very practices

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are precipitating her. The unlimited emission of bank paper has banished all her specie, and is now, by a depreciation acknowledged by her own statesmen, carrying her rapidly to bankruptcy, as it did France, as it did us, and will do us again, and every country permitting paper to be circulated, other than that by public authority, rigorously limited to the just measure for circulation. Private fortunes, in the present state of our circulation, are at the mercy of those self-created money-lenders, and are prostrated by the floods of nominal money with which their avarice deluges us. He who lent his money to the public or to an individual, before the institution of the United States Bank, twenty years ago, when wheat was well sold at a dollar the bushel; and receives now his nominal sum when it sells at two dollars, is cheated of half his fortune; and by whom? By the banks, which, since that, have thrown into circulation ten dollars of their nominal money where was one at that time.

### *On Political History*

*To John Adams*

MONTICELLO, June 27, 1813.

Ἰδαν ἐς πολυδενδρον ἀνῆρ ὕλητομος ἐλθων

Παπταίνει, παρεοντος ἀδην, ποθεν ἀρξεται ἐργω

Τι πρᾶτον καταλέξω; ἐπεὶ παρα μυρία εἶπην.

And I, too, my dear sir, like the wood-cutter of Ida, should doubt where to begin, were I to enter the forest of opinions, discussions, and contentions which have occurred in our day. I should say with Theocritus, *Τι πρᾶτον καταλέξω; ἐπεὶ παρα μυρία εἶπην.* But I shall not do it.

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The *summum bonum* with me is now truly Epicurean, ease of body and tranquillity of mind; and to these I wish to consign my remaining days. Men have differed in opinion, and been divided into parties by these opinions, from the first origin of societies, and in all governments where they have been permitted freely to think and to speak. The same political parties which now agitate the United States, have existed through all time. Whether the power of the people or that of the *apoiotai* should prevail, were questions which kept the States of Greece and Rome in eternal convulsions, as they now schismatize every people whose minds and mouths are not shut up by the gag of a despot. And, in fact, the terms of whig and tory belong to natural as well as to civil history. They denote the temper and constitution of mind of different individuals. To come to our own country, and to the times when you and I became first acquainted, we will remember the violent parties which agitated the old Congress, and their bitter contests. There you and I were together, and the Jays, and the Dickinsons, and other anti-independents, were arrayed against us. They cherished the monarchy of England, and we the rights of our countrymen. When our present Government was in the mew, passing from Confederation to Union, how bitter was the schism between the Feds and Antis! Here you and I were together again. For although, for a moment, separated by the Atlantic from the scene of action, I favored the opinion that nine States should confirm the Constitution, in order to secure it, and the others hold off until certain amendments, deemed favorable to freedom, should be made. I rallied in the first instant to the wiser proposition of Massachusetts, that all should confirm, and then all instruct their delegates to urge those amendments. The amendments were made, and all were reconciled to the Government. But as soon as it was put into motion, the

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line of division was again drawn. We broke into two parties, each wishing to give the Government a different direction: the one to strengthen the most popular branch, the other the more permanent branches, and to extend their permanence. Here you and I separated for the first time, and as we had been longer than most others on the public theatre, and our names therefore were more familiar to our countrymen, the party which considered you as thinking with them, placed your name at their head; the other, for the same reason, selected mine. But neither decency nor inclination permitted us to become the advocates of ourselves, or to take part personally in the violent contests which followed. We suffered ourselves, as you so well expressed it, to be passive subjects of public discussion. And these discussions, whether relating to men, measures, or opinions, were conducted by the parties with an animosity, a bitterness, and an indecency which had never been exceeded. All the resources of reason and of wrath were exhausted by each party in support of its own, and to prostrate the adversary opinions; one was upbraided with receiving the anti-federalists, the other the old tories and refugees, into their bosom. Of this acrimony, the public papers of the day exhibit ample testimony, in the debates of Congress, of State Legislatures, of stump-orators, in addresses, answers, and newspaper essays; and to these, without question, may be added the private correspondences of individuals; and the less guarded in these, because not meant for the public eye, not restrained by the respect due to that, but poured forth from the overflowings of the heart into the bosom of a friend, as a momentary easement of our feelings. In this way, and in answers to addresses, you and I could indulge ourselves. We have probably done it, sometimes with warmth, often with prejudice, but always, as we believed, adhering to

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truth. I have not examined my letters of that day. I have no stomach to revive the memory of its feelings. But one of these letters, it seems, has got before the public, by accident and infidelity, by the death of one friend to whom it was written, and of his friend to whom it had been communicated, and by the malice and treachery of a third person, of whom I had never before heard, merely to make mischief, and in the same satanic spirit in which the same enemy had intercepted and published, in 1776, your letter animadverting on Dickinson's character. How it happened that I quoted you in my letter to Dr. Priestley, and for whom, and not for yourself, the strictures were meant, has been explained to you in my letter of the 15th, which had been committed to the post eight days before I received yours of the 10th, 11th, and 14th. That gave you the reference which these asked to the particular answer alluded to in the one to Priestley. The renewal of these old discussions, my friend, would be equally useless and irksome. To the volumes then written on these subjects, human ingenuity can add nothing new, and the rather, as lapse of time has obliterated many of the facts. And shall you and I, my dear sir, at our age, like Priam of old, gird on the "*arma, diu desueta, trementibus ævo humeris?*" Shall we, at our age, become the *Athletæ* of party, and exhibit ourselves as gladiators in the arena of the newspapers? Nothing in the universe could induce me to it. My mind has been long fixed to bow to the judgment of the world, who will judge by my acts, and will never take counsel from me as to what that judgment shall be. If your objects and opinions have been misunderstood, if the measures and principles of others have been wrongfully imputed to you, as I believe they have been, that you should leave an explanation of them, would be an act of justice to yourself. I will add, that it has been hoped that

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you would leave such explanations as would place every saddle on its right horse, and replace on the shoulders of others the burdens they shifted on yours.

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

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### *On Term of Office and Massachusetts Politics*

*To James Martin*

MONTICELLO, September 20, 1813.

*Sir:* Your quotation from the former paper alludes, as I presume, to the term of office to our Senate; a term, like that of the judges, too long for my approbation. I am for responsibilities at short periods, seeing neither reason nor safety in making public functionaries independent of the nation for life, or even for long terms of years. On this principle I prefer the Presidential term of four years, to that of seven years, which I myself had at first suggested, annexing to it, however, ineligibility forever after; and I wish it were now annexed to the second quadrennial election of President.

The conduct of Massachusetts, which is the subject of your address to Mr. Quincy, is serious, as embarrassing the operations of the war, and jeopardizing its issue; and still more so, as an example of contumacy against the Constitution. One method of proving their purpose, would be to call a convention of their State, and to require them to declare themselves members of the Union, and obedient to its determinations, or not members, and let them go. Put this question solemnly to their people, and their answer cannot be doubtful. One-half of them are republicans, and would cling to the Union from principle. Of the other half, the dispassionate part would consider: 1st. That they do not raise bread sufficient for their own subsistence, and must look to Europe for the deficiency, if excluded from our ports, which vital interests would force us to do. 2d. That they are navigating people without a stick of timber for the hull of a ship, or a pound of anything to ex-



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port in it, which would be admitted at any market. 3d. That they are also a manufacturing people, and left by the exclusive system of Europe, without a market but ours. 4th. That as the rivals of England in manufactures, in commerce, in navigation, and fisheries, they would meet her competition in every point. 5th. That England would feel no scruples in making the abandonment and ruin of such a rival the price of a treaty with the producing States, whose interest, too, it would be to nourish a navigation beyond the Atlantic, rather than a hostile one at our own door. And 6th. That in case of war with the Union, which occurrences between coterminous nations frequently produce, it would be a contest of one against fifteen. The remaining portion of the federal moiety of the State would, I believe, brave all these obstacles, because they are monarchists in principle, bearing deadly hatred to the republican fellow-citizens, impatient under the ascendancy of republican principles, devoted in their attachment to England, and preferring to be placed under her despotism, if they cannot hold the helm of government here. I see, in their separation, no evil but the example, and I believe that the effect of that would be corrected by an early and humiliating return to the Union, after losing much of the population of their country, insufficient in its own resources to feed her numerous inhabitants, and inferior in all its allurements to the more inviting soils, climates, and governments of the other States. Whether a dispassionate discussion before the public, of the advantages and disadvantages of separation to both parties, would be the best medicine for this dialytic fever, or to consider it as sacrilege ever to touch, the question, may be doubted. I am, myself, generally disposed to indulge, and to follow reason; and believe that in no case would it be safer than in the present. Their refractory course, however, will not be unpunished by the indignation

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of their co-States, their loss of influence with them, the censures of history, and the stain on the character of their State.

### *The Monroe Doctrine Foreshadowed*

*Baron Alexander von Humboldt*

MONTPELIER, December 6, 1813.

I think it most fortunate that your travels in those countries were so timed as to make them known to the world in the moment they were about to become actors on its stage. That they will throw off their European dependence I have no doubt, but in what kind of government their revolution will end I am not so certain. History, I believe, furnishes no example of a priest-ridden people maintaining a free civil government. This marks the lowest grade of ignorance, of which their civil as well as religious leaders will always avail themselves for their own purposes. The vicinity of New Spain to the United States, and their consequent intercourse, may furnish schools for the higher, and example for the lower classes of their citizens. And Mexico, where we learn from you that men of science are not wanting, may revolutionize itself under better auspices than the Southern provinces. These last, I fear, must end in military despotisms. The different castes of their inhabitants, their mutual hatreds and jealousies, their profound ignorance and bigotry, will be played off by cunning leaders, and each be made the instrument of enslaving the others. But of all this you can best judge, for in truth we have little knowledge of them to be depended on, but through you. But in whatever governments they end they will be *American* governments, no longer to be involved in the never-ceasing broils of Europe. The European nations

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constitute a separate division of the globe; their localities make them part of a distinct system; they have a set of interests of their own in which it is our business never to engage ourselves. America has a hemisphere to itself. It must have its separate system of interests, which must not be subordinated to those of Europe. The insulated state in which nature has placed the American continent, should so far avail it that no spark of war kindled in the other quarters of the globe should be wafted across the wide oceans which separate us from them. And it will be so. In fifty years more the United States alone will contain fifty millions of inhabitants, and fifty years are soon gone over. The peace of 1763 is within that period. I was then twenty years old, and of course remember well all the transactions of the war preceding it. And you will live to see the epoch now equally ahead of us; and the numbers which will then be spread over the other parts of the American hemisphere, catching long before that the principles of our portion of it, and concurring with us in the maintenance of the same system. You see how readily we run into ages beyond the grave; and even those of us to whom that grave is already opening its quiet bosom. I am anticipating events of which you will be the bearer to me in the Elysian fields fifty years hence.

### *On the Character of Washington*

*To Dr. Walter Jones*

MONTICELLO, January 2, 1814.

I think I knew General Washington intimately and thoroughly; and were I called on to delineate his character, it should be in terms like these.

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His mind was great and powerful, without being of the very first order; his penetration strong, though not so acute as that of a Newton, Bacon, or Locke; and as far as he saw, no judgment was ever sounder. It was slow in operation, being little aided by invention or imagination, but sure in conclusion. Hence the common remark of his officers, of the advantage he derived from councils of war, where hearing all suggestions, he selected whatever was best; and certainly no general ever planned his battles more judiciously. But if deranged during the course of the action, if any member of his plan was dislocated by sudden circumstances, he was slow in re-adjustment. The consequence was, that he often failed in the field, and rarely against an enemy in station, as at Boston and York. He was incapable of fear, meeting personal dangers with the calmest unconcern. Perhaps the strongest feature in his character was prudence, never acting until every circumstance, every consideration, was maturely weighed; refraining if he saw a doubt, but, when once decided, going through with his purpose, whatever obstacles opposed. His integrity was most pure, his justice the most inflexible I have ever known, no motives of interest or consanguinity, of friendship or hatred, being able to bias his decision. He was, indeed, in every sense of the words, a wise, a good, and a great man. His temper was naturally irritable and high toned; but reflection and resolution had obtained a firm and habitual ascendancy over it. If ever, however, it broke its bonds, he was most tremendous in his wrath. In his expenses he was honorable, but exact; liberal in contributions to whatever promised utility; but frowning and unyielding on all visionary projects, and all unworthy calls on his charity. His heart was not warm in its affections; but he exactly calculated every man's value, and gave him a solid esteem proportioned to it. His person, you know,

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was fine, his stature exactly what one would wish, his deportment easy, erect and noble; the best horseman of his age, and the most graceful figure that could be seen on horseback. Although in the circle of his friends, where he might be unreserved with safety, he took a free share in conversation, his colloquial talents were not above mediocrity, possessing neither copiousness of ideas, nor fluency of words. In public, when called on for a sudden opinion, he was unready, short and embarrassed. Yet he wrote readily, rather diffusely, in an easy and correct style. This he had acquired by conversation with the world, for his education was merely reading, writing and common arithmetic, to which he added surveying at a later day. His time was employed in action chiefly, reading little, and that only in agriculture and English history. His correspondence became necessarily extensive, and, with journalizing his agricultural proceedings, occupied most of his leisure hours within doors. On the whole, his character was, in its mass, perfect, in nothing bad, in few points indifferent; and it may truly be said, that never did nature and fortune combine more perfectly to make a man great, and to place him in the same constellation with whatever worthies have merited from man an everlasting remembrance. For his was the singular destiny and merit, of leading the armies of his country successfully through an arduous war, for the establishment of its independence; of conducting its councils through the birth of a government, new in its forms and principles, until it had settled down into a quiet and orderly train; and of scrupulously obeying the laws through the whole of his career, civil and military, of which the history of the world furnishes no other example.

How, then, can it be perilous for you to take such a man on your shoulders? I am satisfied the great body of republicans think of him as I do. We were, indeed, dis-

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satisfied with him on his ratification of the British treaty. But this was short-lived. We knew his honesty, the wiles with which he was encompassed, and that age had already begun to relax the firmness of his purposes; and I am convinced he is more deeply seated in the love and gratitude of the republicans, than in the Pharisaical homage of the federal monarchists. For he was no monarchist from preference of his judgment. The soundness of that gave him correct views of the rights of man, and his severe justice devoted him to them. He has often declared to me that he considered our new Constitution as an experiment on the practicability of republican government, and with what dose of liberty man could be trusted for his own good; that he was determined the experiment should have a fair trial, and would lose the last drop of his blood in support of it. And these declarations he repeated to me the oftener and more pointedly, because he knew my suspicions of Colonel Hamilton's views, and probably had heard from him the same declarations which I had, to wit, "that the British constitution, with its unequal representation, corruption and other existing abuses, was the most perfect government which had ever been established on earth, and that a reformation of those abuses would make it an impracticable government." I do believe that General Washington had not a firm confidence in the durability of our government. He was naturally distrustful of men, and inclined to gloomy apprehensions; and I was ever persuaded that a belief that we must at length end in something like a British constitution, had some weight in his adoption of the ceremonies of levees, birthdays, pompous meetings with Congress, and other forms of the same character, calculated to prepare us gradually for a change which he believed possible, and to let it come on with as little shock as might be to the public mind.

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These are my opinions of General Washington, which I would vouch at the judgment seat of God, having been formed on an acquaintance of thirty years. I served with him in the Virginia legislature from 1769 to the Revolutionary war, and again, a short time in Congress, until he left us to take command of the army. During the war and after it we corresponded occasionally, and in the four years of my continuance in the office of Secretary of State, our intercourse was daily, confidential and cordial. After I retired from that office, great and malignant pains were taken by our federal monarchists, and not entirely without effect, to make him view me as a theorist, holding French principles of government, which would lead infallibly to licentiousness and anarchy. And to this he listened the more easily, from my known disapprobation of the British treaty. I never saw him afterwards, or these malignant insinuations should have been dissipated before his just judgment, as mists before the sun. I felt on his death, with my countrymen, that "verily a great man hath fallen this day in Israel."

More time and recollection would enable me to add many other traits of his character; but why add them to you who knew him well? And I cannot justify to myself a longer detention of your paper.

*Vale, proprieque tuum, me esse tibi persuadeas.*

### *On the Basis of Morality*

*To Thomas Law*

POPLAR FOREST, June 13, 1814.

Of all the theories on this question, the most whimsical seems to have been that of Wollaston, who con-

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siders *truth* as the foundation of morality. The thief who steals your guinea does wrong only inasmuch as he acts a lie in using your guinea as if it were his own. Truth is certainly a branch of morality, and a very important one to society. But presented as its foundation, it is as if a tree taken up by the roots, had its stem reversed in the air, and one of its branches planted in the ground. Some have made the *love of God* the foundation of morality. This, too, is but a branch of our moral duties, which are generally divided into duties to God and duties to man. If we did a good act merely from the love of God and a belief that it is pleasing to Him, whence arises the morality of the Atheist? It is idle to say, as some do, that no such being exists. We have the same evidence of the fact as of most of those we act on, to wit: their own affirmations, and their reasonings in support of them. I have observed, indeed, generally, that while in Protestant countries the defections from the Platonic Christianity of the priests is to Deism, in Catholic countries they are to Atheism. Diderot, D'Alembert, D'Holbach, Condorcet, are known to have been among the most virtuous of men. Their virtue, then, must have had some other foundation than the love of God.

The *To καλον* of others is founded in a different faculty, that of taste, which is not even a branch of morality. We have indeed an innate sense of what we call beautiful, but that is exercised chiefly on subjects addressed to the fancy, whether through the eye in visible forms, as landscape, animal figure, dress, drapery, architecture, the composition of colors, etc., or to the imagination directly, as imagery, style, or measure in prose or poetry, or whatever else constitutes the domain of criticism or taste, a faculty entirely distinct from the moral one. Self-interest, or rather self-love, or *egoism*, has been more plausibly substituted as the basis of



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morality. But I consider our relations with others as constituting the boundaries of morality. With ourselves we stand on the ground of identity, not of relation, which last, requiring two subjects, excludes self-love confined to a single one. To ourselves, in strict language, we can owe no duties, obligation requiring also two parties. Self-love, therefore, is no part of morality. Indeed it is exactly its counterpart. It is the sole antagonist of virtue, leading us constantly by our propensities to self-gratification in violation of our moral duties to others. Accordingly, it is against this enemy that are erected the batteries of moralists and religionists, as the only obstacle to the practice of morality. Take from man his selfish propensities, and he can have nothing to seduce him from the practice of virtue. Or subdue those propensities by education, instruction or restraint, and virtue remains without a competitor. Egoism, in a broader sense, has been thus presented as the source of moral action. It has been said that we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, bind up the wounds of the man beaten by thieves, pour oil and wine into them, set him on our own beast and bring him to the inn, because we receive ourselves pleasure from these acts. . . . These good acts give us pleasure, but how happens it that they give us pleasure? Because nature hath implanted in our breasts a love of others, a sense of duty to them, a moral instinct, in short, which prompts us irresistibly to feel and to succor their distresses. . . . The Creator would indeed have been a bungling artist, had he intended man for a social animal, without planting in him social dispositions. It is true they are not planted in every man, because there is no rule without exceptions; but it is false reasoning which converts exceptions into the general rule. Some men are born without the organs of sight, or of hearing, or without hands. Yet it would be wrong to say that man is born

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without these faculties, and sight, hearing, and hands may with truth enter into the general definition of man.

The want or imperfection of the moral sense in some men, like the want or imperfection of the senses of sight and hearing in others, is no proof that it is a general characteristic of the species. When it is wanting, we endeavor to supply the defect by education, by appeals to reason and calculation, by presenting to the being so unhappily conformed, other motives to do good and to eschew evil, such as the love, or the hatred, or rejection of those among whom he lives, and whose society is necessary to his happiness and even existence; demonstrations by sound calculation that honesty promotes interest in the long run; the rewards and penalties established by the laws; and ultimately the prospects of a future state of retribution for the evil as well as the good done while here. These are the correctives which are supplied by education, and which exercise the functions of the moralist, the preacher, and legislator; and they lead into a course of correct action all those whose disparity is not too profound to be eradicated. Some have argued against the existence of a moral sense, by saying that if nature had given us such a sense, impelling us to virtuous actions, and warning us against those which are vicious, then nature would also have designated, by some particular ear-marks, the two sets of actions which are, in themselves, the one virtuous and the other vicious. Whereas, we find, in fact, that the same actions are deemed virtuous in one country and vicious in another. The answer is, that nature has constituted *utility* to man, the standard and test of virtue. Men living in different countries, under different circumstances, different habits and regimens, may have different utilities; the same act, therefore, may be useful, and consequently virtuous in one country which is injurious and vicious in another differently circumstanced.

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I sincerely, then, believe with you in the general existence of a moral instinct. I think it the brightest gem with which the human character is studded, and the want of it as more degrading than the most hideous of the bodily deformities.

### *Comparison of Great Britain and the United States*

*To Dr. Thomas Cooper*

MONTICELLO, September 10, 1814.

A comparison of the conditions of Great Britain and the United States, which is the subject of your letter of August 17th, would be an interesting theme indeed. To discuss it minutely and demonstratively would be far beyond the limits of a letter. I will give you, therefore, in brief only, the result of my reflections on the subject. I agree with you in your facts, and in many of your reflections. My conclusion is without doubt, as I am sure yours will be, when the appeal to your sound judgment is seriously made. The population of England is composed of three descriptions of persons (for those of minor note are too inconsiderable to affect a general estimate). These are, 1. The aristocracy, comprehending the nobility, the wealthy commoners, the high grades of priesthood, and the officers of government. 2. The laboring class. 3. The eleemosynary class, or paupers, who are about one-fifth of the whole. The aristocracy, which have the laws and government in their hands, have so managed them as to reduce the third description below the means of supporting life, even by labor; and to force the second, whether employed in agriculture or the arts, to the maximum of labor which the construction of the human body can endure, and to the minimum of food, and of the meanest kind, which will

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preserve it in life, and in strength sufficient to perform its functions. To obtain food enough, and clothing, not only their whole strength must be unremittingly exerted, but the utmost dexterity also which they can acquire; and those of great dexterity only can keep their ground, while those of less must sink into the class of paupers. Nor is it manual dexterity alone, but the acutest resources of the mind also which are impressed into this struggle for life; and such as have means a little above the rest, as the master-workmen, for instance, must strengthen themselves by acquiring as much of the philosophy of their trade as will enable them to compete with their rivals, and keep themselves above ground. Hence the industry and manual dexterity of their journeymen and day-laborers, and the science of their master-workmen, keep them in the foremost ranks of competition with those of other nations; and the less dexterous individuals, falling into the eleemosynary ranks, furnish materials for armies and navies to defend their country, exercise piracy on the ocean, and carry conflagration, plunder and devastation, on the shores of all those who endeavor to withstand their aggressions. A society thus constituted possesses certainly the means of defence. But what does it defend? The pauperism of the lowest class, the abject oppression of the laboring, and the luxury, the riot, the domination and the vicious happiness of the aristocracy. In their hands, the paupers are used as tools to maintain their own wretchedness, and to keep down the laboring portion by shooting them whenever the desperation produced by the cravings of their stomachs drives them into riots. Such is the happiness of scientific England; now let us see the American side of the medal.

And, first, we have no paupers, the old and crippled among us, who possess nothing and have no families to take care of them, being too few to merit notice as a separate

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section of society, or to affect a general estimate. The great mass of our population is of laborers; our rich, who can live without labor, either manual or professional, being few, and of moderate wealth. Most of the laboring class possess property, cultivate their own lands, have families, and from the demand for their labor are enabled to exact from the rich and the competent such prices as enable them to be fed abundantly, clothed above mere decency, to labor moderately and raise their families. They are not driven to the ultimate resources of dexterity and skill, because their wares will sell although not quite so nice as those of England. The wealthy, on the other hand, and those at their ease, know nothing of what the Europeans call luxury. They have only somewhat more of the comforts and deficiencies of life than those who furnish them. Can any condition of society be more desirable than this? Nor in the class of laborers do I mean to withhold from the comparison that portion whose color has condemned them, in certain parts of our Union, to a subjection to the will of others. Even these are better fed in these States, warmer clothed, and labor less than the journeymen or day-laborers of England. They have the comfort, too, of numerous families, in the midst of whom they live without want, or fear of it; a solace which few of the laborers of England possess. They are subject, it is true, to bodily coercion; but are not the hundreds of thousands of British soldiers and seamen subject to the same, without seeing, at the end of their career, when age and accident shall have rendered them unequal to labor, the certainty, which the other has, that he will never want? And has not the British seaman, as much as the African, been reduced to this bondage by force, in flagrant violation of his own consent, and of his natural right in his own person? and with the laborers of England generally, does not the moral coercion of want

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subject their will as despotically to that of their employer, as the physical constraint does the soldier, the seaman, or the slave? But do not mistake me. I am not advocating slavery. I am not justifying the wrongs we have committed on a foreign people, by the example of another nation committing equal wrongs on their own subjects. On the contrary, there is nothing I would not sacrifice to a practicable plan of abolishing every vestige of this moral and political depravity. But I am at present comparing the condition and degree of suffering to which oppression has reduced the man of one color, with the condition and degree of suffering to which oppression has reduced the man of another color; equally condemning both. Now let us compute by numbers the sum of happiness of the two countries. In England, happiness is the lot of the aristocracy only, and the proportion they bear to the laborers and paupers, you know better than I do. Were I to guess that they are four in every hundred, then the happiness of the nation would be to its misery as one in twenty-five. In the United States it is as eight millions to zero, or as all to none. But it is said they possess the means of defence, and that we do not. How so? Are we not men? Yes; but our men are so happy at home that they will not hire themselves to be shot at for a shilling a day. Hence we can have no standing armies for defence, because we have no paupers to furnish the materials. The Greeks and Romans had no standing armies, yet they defended themselves. The Greeks by their laws, and the Romans by the spirit of their people, took care to put into the hands of their rulers no such engine of oppression as a standing army. Their system was to make every man a soldier, and oblige him to repair to the standard of his country whenever that was reared. This made them invincible; and the same remedy will make us so.

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### *On Courses of Study*

*To Dr. Thomas Cooper*

MONTICELLO, October 7, 1814.

I agree with yours of the 22d, that a professorship of Theology should have no place in our institution. But we cannot always do what is absolutely best. Those with whom we act, entertaining different views, have the power and the right of carrying them into practice. Truth advances, and error recedes step by step only; and to do to our fellow men the most good in our power, we must lead where we can, follow where we cannot, and still go with them, watching always the favorable moment for helping them to another step. Perhaps I should concur with you also in excluding the *theory* (not the *practice*) of medicine. This is the charlatanerie of the body, as the other is of the mind. For classical learning I have ever been a zealous advocate; and in this, as in his theory of bleeding and mercury, I was ever opposed to my friend Rush, whom I greatly loved; but who has done much harm, in the sincerest persuasion that he was preserving life and happiness to all around him. I have not, however, carried so far as you do my ideas of the importance of a hypercritical knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages. I have believed it sufficient to possess a substantial understanding of their authors.

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## *On Banks*

*To Albert Gallatin*

MONTICELLO, October 16, 1815.

We are undone, my dear Sir, if this banking mania be not suppressed. *Aut Carthago, aut Roma delenda est.* The war, had it proceeded, would have upset our government; and a new one, whenever tried, will do it. And so it must be while our money, the nerve of war, is much or little, real or imaginary, as our bitterest enemies choose to make it. Put down the banks, and if this country could not be carried through the longest war against her most powerful enemy, without ever knowing the want of a dollar, without dependence on the traitorous classes of her citizens, without bearing hard on the resources of the people, or loading the public with an indefinite burden of debt, I know nothing of my countrymen. Not by any novel project, not by any charlatanerie, but by ordinary and well-experienced means; by the total prohibition of all private paper at all times, by reasonable taxes in war aided by the necessary emissions of public paper of circulating size, this bottomed on special taxes, redeemable annually as this special tax comes in, and finally within a moderate period—even with the flood of private paper by which we were deluged, would the treasury have ventured its credit in bills of circulating size, as of five or ten dollars, etc., they would have been greedily received by the people in preference to bank paper. But unhappily the towns of America were considered as the nation of America, the dispositions of the inhabitants of the former as those of the latter, and the treasury, for want of confidence in the country, delivered itself bound hand and foot to bold and bankrupt advent-



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urers and pretenders to be money-holders, whom it could have crushed at any moment. Even the last half-bold, half-timid threat of the treasury, showed at once that these jugglers were at the feet of government. For it never was, and is not, any confidence in their frothy bubbles, but the want of all other medium, which induced, or now induces, the *country* people to take their paper; and at this moment, when nothing else is to be had, no man will receive it but to pass it away instantly, none for distant purposes. We are now without any common measure of the value of property, and private fortunes are up or down at the will of the worst of our citizens. Yet there is no hope of relief from the legislatures who have immediate control over this subject. As little seems to be known of the principles of political economy as if nothing had ever been written or practised on the subject, or as was known in old times, when the Jews had their rulers under the hammer. It is an evil, therefore, which we must make up our minds to meet and to endure as those of hurricanes, earthquakes and other casualties: let us turn over therefore another leaf.

### *On Local Government*

*To Joseph C. Cabell*

MONTICELLO, February 2, 1816.

No, my friend, the way to have good and safe government, is not to trust it all to one, but to divide it among the many, distributing to every one exactly the functions he is competent to. Let the national government be intrusted with the defence of the nation, and its foreign and federal relations; the State governments with the civil rights, laws, police, and administration of what concerns

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the State generally; the counties with the local concerns of the counties, and each ward direct the interests within itself. It is by dividing and subdividing these republics from the great national one down through all its subordinations, until it ends in the administration of every man's farm by himself; by placing under every one what his own eye may superintend, that all will be done for the best. What has destroyed liberty and the rights of man in every government which has ever existed under the sun? The generalizing and concentrating all cares and powers into one body, no matter whether of the autocrats of Russia or France, or of the aristocrats of a Venetian senate. And I do believe that if the Almighty has not decreed that man shall never be free (and it is a blasphemy to believe it), that the secret will be found to be in the making himself the depository of the powers respecting himself, so far as he is competent to them, and delegating only what is beyond his competence by a synthetical process, to higher and higher orders of functionaries, so as to trust fewer and fewer powers in proportion as the trustees become more and more oligarchical. The elementary republics of the wards, the county republics, the State republics, and the republic of the Union, would form a gradation of authorities, standing each on the basis of law, holding every one its delegated share of powers, and constituting truly a system of fundamental balances and checks for the government. Where every man is a sharer in the direction of his ward-republic, or of some of the higher ones, and feels that he is a participator in the government of affairs, not merely at an election one day in the year, but every day; when there shall not be a man in the State who will not be a member of some one of its councils, great or small, he will let the heart be torn out of his body sooner than his power be wrested from him by a Cæsar or a Bonaparte.

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How powerfully did we feel the energy of this organization in the case of embargo? I felt the foundations of the government shaken under my feet by the New England townships. There was not an individual in their States whose body was not thrown with all its momentum into action; and although the whole of the other States were known to be in favor of the measure, yet the organization of this little selfish minority enabled it to overrule the Union. What would the unwieldy counties of the Middle, the South, and the West do? Call a county meeting, and the drunken loungers at and about the court-houses would have collected, the distances being too great for the good people and the industrious generally to attend. The character of those who really met would have been the measure of the weight they would have had in the scale of public opinion. As Cato, then, concluded every speech with the words, "*Carthago delenda est*," so do I every opinion, with the injunction, "divide the counties into wards." Begin them only for a single purpose; they will soon show for what others they are the best instruments.

### *On Aiding the South American Colonies of Spain*

*To James Monroe*

MONTICELLO, February 4, 1816.

The ground you have taken with Spain is sound in every part. It is the true ground, especially, as to the South Americans. When subjects are able to maintain themselves in the field, they are then an independent power as to all neutral nations, are entitled to their commerce, and to protection within their limits. Every kindness which can be shown the South Americans, every friendly office and aid

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within the limits of the law of nations, I would extend to them, without fearing Spain or her Swiss auxiliaries. For this is but an assertion of our own independence. But to join in their war, as General Scott proposes, and to which even some members of Congress seem to squint, is what we ought not to do as yet. On the question of our interest in their independence, were that alone a sufficient motive of action, much may be said on both sides. When they are free, they will drive every article of our produce from every market, by underselling it, and change the condition of our existence, forcing us into other habits and pursuits. We shall, indeed, have in exchange some commerce with them, but in what I know not, for we shall have nothing to offer which they cannot raise cheaper; and their separation from Spain seals our everlasting peace with her. On the other hand, so long as they are dependent, Spain, from her jealousy, is our natural enemy, and always in either open or secret hostility with us. These countries, too, in war, will be a powerful weight in her scale, and, in peace, totally shut to us. Interest then, on the whole, would wish their independence, and justice makes the wish a duty. They have a right to be free, and we a right to aid them, as a strong man has a right to assist a weak one assailed by a robber or murderer. That a war is brewing between us and Spain cannot be doubted. When that disposition is matured on both sides, and open rupture can no longer be deferred, then will be the time for our joining the South Americans, and entering into treaties of alliance with them. There will then be but one opinion, at home or abroad, that we shall be justifiable in choosing to have them with us, rather than against us. In the meantime, they will have organized regular governments, and perhaps have formed themselves into one or more confederacies; more than one I hope, as in single mass they would be a very formidable

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neighbor. The geography of their country seems to indicate three: 1. What is north of the Isthmus. 2. What is south of it on the Atlantic; and 3. The southern part on the Pacific. In this form, we might be the balancing power.

### *On the Philosophy of Life*

*To John Adams*

MONTICELLO, April 8, 1816.

You ask, if I would agree to live my seventy or rather seventy-three years over again? To which I say, yea. I think with you, that it is a good world on the whole; that it has been framed on a principle of benevolence, and more pleasure than pain dealt out to us. There are, indeed, (who might say nay) gloomy and hypochondriac minds, inhabitants of diseased bodies, disgusted with the present, and despairing of the future; always counting that the worst will happen, because it may happen. To these I say, how much pain have cost us the evils which have never happened! My temperament is sanguine. I steer my bark with Hope in the head, leaving Fear astern. My hopes, indeed, sometimes fail; but not oftener than the forebodings of the gloomy. There are, I acknowledge, even in the happiest life, some terrible convulsions, heavy set-offs against the opposite page of the account. I have often wondered for what good end the sensations of grief could be intended. All our other passions, within proper bounds, have an useful object. And the perfection of the moral character is, not in a stoical apathy, so hypocritically vaunted, and so untruly too, because impossible, but in a just equilibrium of all the passions. I wish the pathologists then, would tell us what is the use of grief in the

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economy, and of what good it is the cause, proximate or remote.

### *On Educational Qualifications*

*To Monsieur Dupont de Nemours*

POPLAR FOREST, April 24, 1816.

In the Constitution of Spain, as proposed by the late Cortes, there was a principle entirely new to me, and not noticed in yours, that no person, born after that day, should ever acquire the rights of citizenship until he could read and write. It is impossible sufficiently to estimate the wisdom of this provision. Of all those which have been thought of for securing fidelity in the administration of the government, constant ralliance to the principles of the Constitution, and progressive amendments with the progressive advances of the human mind, or changes in human affairs, it is the most effectual. Enlighten the people generally, and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day. Although I do not, with some enthusiasts, believe that the human condition will ever advance to such a state of perfection as that there shall no longer be pain or vice in the world, yet I believe it susceptible of much improvement, and most of all, in matters of government and religion; and that the diffusion of knowledge among the people is to be the instrument by which it is to be effected.

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### *On the True Republic*

*To John Taylor*

MONTICELLO, May 28, 1816.

It must be acknowledged, that the term *republic* is of very vague application in every language. Witness the self-styled republics of Holland, Switzerland, Genoa, Venice, Poland. Were I to assign to this term a precise and definite idea, I would say, purely and simply, it means a government by its citizens in mass, acting directly and personally, according to rules established by the majority; and that every other government is more or less republican in proportion, as it has in its composition more or less of this ingredient of the direct action of the citizens. Such a government is evidently restrained to very narrow limits of space and population. I doubt if it would be practicable beyond the extent of a New England township. The first shade from this pure element, which, like that of pure vital air, cannot sustain life of itself, would be where the powers of the government, being divided, should be exercised each by representatives chosen either *pro hac vice*, or for such short terms as should render secure the duty of expressing the will of their constituents. This I should consider as the nearest approach to a pure republic, which is practicable on a large scale of country or population. And we have examples of it in some of our State Constitutions, which, if not poisoned by priest-craft, would prove its excellence over all mixtures with other elements; and, with only equal doses of poison, would still be the best. Other shades of republicanism may be found in other forms of government, where the executive, judiciary and legislative functions, and the different branches of the latter, are chosen by the people more or less directly, for longer terms

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of years, or for life, or made hereditary; or where there are mixtures of authorities, some dependent on, and others independent of the people. The further the departure from direct and constant control by the citizens, the less has the government of the ingredient of republicanism; evidently none where the authorities are hereditary, as in France, Venice, etc., or self-chosen, as in Holland; and little, where for life, in proportion as the life continues in being after the act of election.

The purest republican feature in the government of our own State, is the House of Representatives. The Senate is equally so the first year, less the second, and so on. The Executive still less, because not chosen by the people directly. The Judiciary seriously anti-republican, because for life; and the national arm wielded, as you observe, by military leaders, irresponsible but to themselves. Add to this the vicious constitution of our county courts (to whom the justice, the executive administration, the taxation, police, the military appointments of the county, and nearly all our daily concerns are confided), self-appointed, self-continued, holding their authorities for life, and with an impossibility of breaking in on the perpetual succession of any faction once possessed of the bench. They are in truth, the executive, the judiciary, and the military of their respective counties, and the sum of the counties makes the State. And add, also, that one-half of our brethren who fight and pay taxes, are excluded, like Helots, from the rights of representation, as if society were instituted for the soil, and not for the men inhabiting it; or one-half of these could dispose of the rights and the will of the other half, without their consent.

“What constitutes a State?  
Not high-raised battlements, or labor'd mound,  
Thick wall, or moated gate;  
Not cities proud, with spires and turrets crown'd;



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No : men, high-minded men ;  
Men, who their duties know ;  
But know their rights ; and knowing, dare maintain.  
These constitute a State."

In the General Government, the House of Representatives is mainly republican; the Senate scarcely so at all, as not elected by the people directly, and so long secured even against those who do elect them; the Executive more republican than the Senate, from its shorter term, its election by the people, in *practice*, (for they vote for A only on an assurance that he will vote for B), and because, in *practice also*, a principle of rotation seems to be in a course of establishment; the judiciary independent of the nation, their coercion by impeachment being found nugatory.

If, then, the control of the people over the organs of their government be the measure of its republicanism, and I confess I know no other measure, it must be agreed that our governments have much less of republicanism than ought to have been expected; in other words, that the people have less regular control over their agents, than their rights and their interests require. And this I ascribe, not to any want of republican dispositions in those who formed these Constitutions, but to a submission of true principle to European authorities, to speculators on government, whose fears of the people have been inspired by the populace of their own great cities, and were unjustly entertained against the independent, the happy, and therefore orderly citizens of the United States. Much I apprehend that the golden moment is past for reforming these heresies. The functionaries of public power rarely strengthen in their dispositions to abridge it, and an unorganized call for timely amendment is not likely to prevail against an organized opposition to it. We are always told that things are going on well; why change them? "*Chi sta bene, non*

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*si muove*," said the Italian, "let him who stands well, stand still." This is true; and I verily believe they would go on well with us under an absolute monarch, while our present character remains, of order, industry and love of peace, and restrained, as he would be, by the proper spirit of the people. But it is while it remains such, we should provide against the consequences of its deterioration. And let us rest in the hope that it will yet be done, and spare ourselves the pain of evils which may never happen.

On this view of the import of the term *republic*, instead of saying, as has been said, "that it may mean anything or nothing," we may say with truth and meaning, that governments are more or less republican, as they have more or less of the element of popular election and control in their composition; and believing, as I do, that the mass of the citizens is the safest depositary of their own rights and especially, that the evils flowing from the duperies of the people, are less injurious than those from the egoism of their agents, I am a friend to that composition of government which has in it the most of this ingredient. And I sincerely believe, with you, that banking establishments are more dangerous than standing armies; and that the principle of spending money to be paid by posterity, under the name of funding, is but swindling futurity on a large scale.

### *Concerning his Religion*

*To Mrs. M. Harrison Smith*

MONTICELLO, August 6, 1816.

I have ever thought religion a concern purely between our God and our consciences, for which we were ac-

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countable to Him, and not to the priests. I never told my own religion, nor scrutinized that of another. I never attempted to make a convert, nor wished to change another's creed. I have ever judged of the religion of others by their lives, and by this test, my dear Madam, I have been satisfied yours must be an excellent one, to have produced a life of such exemplary virtue and correctness. For it is in our lives, and not from our words, that our religion must be read. By the same test the world must judge me.

### *On Slavery*

*To Dr. Thomas Humphreys*

MONTICELLO, February 8, 1817.

*Dear Sir:* Your favor of January 2d did not come to my hands until the 5th instant. I concur entirely in your leading principles of gradual emancipation, of establishment on the coast of Africa, and the patronage of our nation until the emigrants shall be able to protect themselves. The subordinate details might be easily arranged. But the bare proposition of purchase by the United States generally, would excite infinite indignation in all the States north of Maryland. The sacrifice must fall on the States alone which hold them; and the difficult question will be how to lessen this so as to reconcile our fellow citizens to it. Personally I am ready and desirous to make any sacrifice which shall insure their gradual but complete retirement from the State, and effectually, at the same time, establish them elsewhere in freedom and safety. But I have not perceived the growth of this disposition in the rising generation, of which I once had sanguine hopes. No symptoms inform me that it will take place in my day.

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I leave it, therefore, to time, and not at all without hope that the day will come, equally desirable and welcome to us as to them. Perhaps the proposition now on the carpet at Washington to provide an establishment on the coast of Africa for voluntary emigrations of people of color, may be the corner stone of this future edifice. Praying for its completion as early as may most promote the good of all, I salute you with great esteem and respect.

### *On Internal Improvements*

*To Albert Gallatin*

MONTICELLO, June 16, 1817.

You will have learned that an act for internal improvement, after passing both Houses, was negatived by the President. The act was founded, avowedly, on the principle that the phrase in the Constitution which authorizes Congress "to lay taxes, to pay the debts and provide for the general welfare," was an extension of the powers specifically enumerated to whatever would promote the general welfare; and this, you know, was the federal doctrine. Whereas, our tenet ever was, and, indeed, it is almost the only landmark which now divides the federalists from the republicans, that Congress had not unlimited powers to provide for the general welfare, but were restrained to those specifically enumerated; and that, as it was never meant they should provide for that welfare but by the exercise of the enumerated powers, so it could not have been meant they should raise money for purposes which the enumeration did not place under their action; consequently, that the specification of powers is a limitation of the purposes for which they may raise money. I think the passage

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and rejection of this bill a fortunate incident. Every State will certainly concede the power; and this will be a national confirmation of the grounds of appeal to them, and will settle forever the meaning of this phrase, which, by a mere grammatical quibble, has countenanced the General Government in a claim of universal power. For in the phrase, "to lay taxes, to pay the debts and provide for the general welfare," it is a mere question of syntax, whether the two last infinitives are governed by the first or are distinct and co-ordinate powers; a question unequivocally decided by the exact definition of powers immediately following. It is fortunate for another reason, as the States, in conceding the power, will modify it, either by requiring the federal ratio of expense in each State, or otherwise, so as to secure us against its partial exercise. Without this caution, intrigue, negotiation, and the barter of votes might become as habitual in Congress, as they are in those Legislatures which have the appointment of officers, and which, with us, is called "logging," the term of the farmers for their exchanges of aid in rolling together the logs of their newly-cleared grounds.

### *On the Tax on Wine*

*To M. de Neuville*

MONTICELLO, December 13, 1818.

I rejoice, as a moralist, at the prospect of a reduction of the duties on wine, by our national legislature. It is an error to view a tax on that liquor as merely a tax on the rich. It is a prohibition of its use to the middling class of our citizens, and a condemnation of them to the poison of whiskey, which is desolating their houses. No

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nation is drunken where wine is cheap; and none sober, where the dearness of wine substitutes ardent spirits as the common beverage. It is, in truth, the only antidote to the bane of whiskey. Fix but the duty at the rate of other merchandise, and we can drink wine here as cheap as we do grog; and who will not prefer it? Its extended use will carry health and comfort to a much enlarged circle. Every one in easy circumstances (as the bulk of our citizens are) will prefer it to the poison to which they are now driven by their government. And the treasury itself will find that a penny apiece from a dozen, is more than a groat from a single one.

### *Personal Regimen*

*To Dr. Vine Utley*

MONTICELLO, March 21, 1819.

*Sir:* The request of the history of my physical habits would have puzzled me not a little, had it not been for the model with which you accompanied it, of Dr. Rush's answer to a similar inquiry. I live so much like other people, that I might refer to ordinary life as the history of my own. Like my friend the Doctor, I have lived temperately, eating little animal food, and that not as an aliment, so much as a condiment for the vegetables, which constitute my principal diet. I double however, the Doctor's glass and a half of wine, and even treble it with a friend; but halve its effects by drinking the weak wines only. The ardent wines I cannot drink, nor do I use ardent spirits in any form. Malt liquors and cider are my table drinks, and my breakfast, like that also of my friend, is of tea and coffee. I have been blessed with organs of di-

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gestion which accept and concoct, without ever murmuring, whatever the palate chooses to consign to them, and I have not yet lost a tooth by age. I was a hard student until I entered on the business of life, the duties of which leave no idle time to those disposed to fulfil them; and now, retired, and at the age of seventy-six, I am again a hard student. Indeed, my fondness for reading and study revolts me from the drudgery of letter-writing. And a stiff wrist, the consequence of an early dislocation, makes writing both slow and painful. I am not so regular in my sleep as the Doctor says he was, devoting to it from five to eight hours, according as my company or the book I am reading interests me; and I never go to bed without an hour, or half hour's previous reading of something moral whereon to ruminate in the intervals of sleep. But whether I retire to bed early or late, I rise with the sun. I use spectacles at night, but not necessarily in the day, unless in reading small print. My hearing is distinct in particular conversation, but confused when several voices cross each other, which unfits me for the society of the table. I have been more fortunate than my friend in the article of health. So free from catarrhs that I have not had one, (in the breast, I mean) on an average of eight or ten years through life. I ascribe this exemption partly to the habit of bathing my feet in cold water every morning, for sixty years past. A fever of more than twenty-four hours I have not had above two or three times in my life. A periodical headache has afflicted me occasionally, once, perhaps, in six or eight years, for two or three weeks at a time, which seems now to have left me; and except on a late occasion of indisposition, I enjoy good health; too feeble, indeed, to walk much, but riding without fatigue six or eight miles a day, and sometimes thirty or forty. I may end these egotisms, therefore, as I began, by saying that my life has been so much like

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that of other people, that I might say with Horace, to every one "*nomine mutato, narratur fabula de te.*" I must not end, however, without due thanks for the kind sentiments of regard you are so good as to express toward myself; and with my acknowledgments for these, be pleased to accept the assurances of my respect and esteem.

### *On the Supreme Court*

*To Judge Spencer Roane*

POPLAR FOREST, September 6, 1819.

*Dear Sir:* In denying the right they [the judiciary] usurp of exclusively explaining the Constitution, I go further than you do, if I understand rightly your quotation from the *Federalist*, of an opinion that "the judiciary is the last resort in relation to the other departments of the government, but not in relation to the rights of the parties to the compact under which the judiciary is derived." If this opinion be sound, then indeed is our Constitution a complete *felo de se*. For intending to establish three departments, co-ordinate and independent, that they might check and balance one another, it has given, according to this opinion, to one of them alone, the right to prescribe rules for the government of the others, and to that one, too, which is unelected by, and independent of the nation. For experience has already shown that the impeachment it has provided is not even a scare-crow; that such opinions as the one you combat, sent cautiously out, as you observe also, by detachment, not belonging to the case often, but sought for out of it, as if to rally the public opinion beforehand to their views, and to indicate the line they are to walk in, have been so quietly passed over as never to have excited



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animadversion, even in a speech of any one of the body intrusted with impeachment. The Constitution, on this hypothesis, is a mere thing of wax in the hands of the judiciary, which they may twist and shape into any form they please. It should be remembered, as an axiom of eternal truth in politics, that whatever power in any government is independent, is absolute also; in theory only, at first, while the spirit of the people is up, but in practice, as fast as that relaxes. Independence can be trusted nowhere but with the people in mass. They are inherently independent of all but moral law. My construction of the Constitution is very different from that you quote. It is that each department is truly independent of the others, and has an equal right to decide for itself what is the meaning of the Constitution in the cases submitted to its action; and especially, where it is to act ultimately and without appeal.

### *On the Possibility of Secession*

*To John Holmes*

MONTICELLO, April 22, 1820.

I thank you, dear sir, for the copy you have been so kind as to send me of the letter to your constituents on the Missouri question. It is a perfect justification to them. I had for a long time ceased to read newspapers, or pay any attention to public affairs, confident they were in good hands, and content to be a passenger in our bark to the shore from which I am not distant. But this momentous question, like a fire-bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell of the Union. It is hushed, indeed, for the moment. But this is a reprieve only, not a final sentence. A geographical

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line, coinciding with a marked principle, moral and political, once conceived and held up to the angry passions of men, will never be obliterated; and every new irritation will mark it deeper and deeper. I can say, with conscious truth, that there is not a man on earth who would sacrifice more than I would to relieve us from this heavy reproach, in any *practicable* way. The cession of that kind of property, for so it is misnamed, is a bagatelle which would not cost me a second thought, if, in that way, a general emancipation and *expatriation* could be effected; and, gradually, and with due sacrifices, I think it might be. But as it is, we have the wolf by the ears, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. Justice is in one scale, and self-preservation in the other. Of one thing I am certain, that as the passage of slaves from one State to another, would not make a slave of a single human being who would not be so without it, so their diffusion over a greater surface would make them individually happier, and proportionally facilitate the accomplishment of their emancipation, by dividing the burden on a greater number of coadjutors. An abstinence too, from this act of power, would remove the jealousy excited by the undertaking of Congress to regulate the condition of the different descriptions of men composing a State. This certainly is the exclusive right of every State, which nothing in the Constitution has taken from them and given to the General Government. Could Congress, for example, say, that the non-freemen of Connecticut shall be freemen, or that they shall not emigrate into any other State?

I regret that I am now to die in the belief, that the useless sacrifice of themselves by the generation of 1776, to acquire self-government and happiness to their country, is to be thrown away by the unwise and unworthy passions of their sons, and that my only consolation is to be, that

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I live not to weep over it. If they would but dispassionately weigh the blessings they will throw away, against an abstract principle more likely to be effected by union than by scission, they would pause before they would perpetrate this act of suicide on themselves, and of treason against the hopes of the world. To yourself, as the faithful advocate of the Union, I tender the offering of my high esteem and respect.

### *On Religion*

*To William Short*

MONTICELLO, August 4, 1820.

*Dear Sir:* I owe you a letter for your favor of June the 29th, which was received in due time; and there being no subject of the day, of particular interest, I will make this a supplement to mine of April the 13th. My aim in that was to justify the character of Jesus against the fictions of His pseudo-followers, which have exposed Him to the inference of being an impostor. For if we could believe that He really countenanced the follies, the falsehoods, and the charlatanisms which His biographers father on Him, and admit the misconstructions, interpolations, and theorizations of the fathers of the early, and fanatics of the latter ages, the conclusion would be irresistible by every sound mind, that He was an impostor. I give no credit to their falsifications of His actions and doctrines, and to rescue His character, the postulate in my letter asked only what is granted in reading every other historian. . . . This free exercise of reason is all I ask for the vindication of the character of Jesus. We find in the writings of His biographers matter of two distinct descriptions. First, a ground-work

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of vulgar ignorance, of things impossible, of superstitions, fanaticisms, and fabrications. Intermixed with these, again, are sublime ideas of the Supreme Being, aphorisms, and precepts of the purest morality and benevolence, sanctioned by a life of humility, innocence, and simplicity of manners, neglect of riches, absence of worldly ambition and honors, with an eloquence and persuasiveness which have not been surpassed. These could not be inventions of the grovelling authors who relate them. They are far beyond the powers of their feeble minds. They show that there was a character, the subject of their history, whose splendid conceptions were above all suspicion of being interpolations from their hands. Can we be at a loss in separating such materials, and ascribing each to its genuine author? The difference is obvious to the eye and to the understanding, and we may read as we run to each his part; and I will venture to affirm, that he who, as I have done, will undertake to winnow this grain from the chaff, will find it not to require a moment's consideration. The parts fall asunder of themselves, as would those of an image of metal and clay.

There are, I acknowledge, passages not free from objection, which we may, with probability, ascribe to Jesus Himself; but claiming indulgence from the circumstances under which He acted. His object was the reformation of some articles in the religion of the Jews, as taught by Moses. That sect had presented for the object of their worship, a Being of terrific character, cruel, vindictive, capricious, and unjust. Jesus, taking for His type the best qualities of the human head and heart, wisdom, justice, goodness, and adding to them power, ascribed all of these, but in infinite perfection, to the Supreme Being, and formed Him really worthy of their adoration. Moses had either not believed in a future state of existence, or

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had not thought it essential to be explicitly taught to his people. Jesus inculcated that doctrine with emphasis and precision. Moses had bound the Jews to many idle ceremonies, mummeries, and observances, of no effect toward producing the social utilities which constitute the essence of virtue; Jesus exposed their futility and insignificance. The one instilled into his people the most anti-social spirit toward other nations; the other preached philanthropy and universal charity and benevolence. The office of reformer of the superstitions of a nation, is ever dangerous. Jesus had to walk on the perilous confines of reason and religion; and a step to right or left might place Him within the grasp of the priests of the superstition, a bloodthirsty race, as cruel and remorseless as the Being whom they represented as the family God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, and the local God of Israel. They were constantly laying snares, too, to entangle Him in the web of the law. He was justifiable, therefore, in avoiding these by evasions, by sophisms, by misconstructions and misapplications of scraps of the prophets, and in defending Himself with these their own weapons, as sufficient, *ad homines*, at least. That Jesus did not mean to impose Himself on mankind as the Son of God, physically speaking, I have been convinced by the writings of men more learned than myself in that lore. But that He might conscientiously believe himself inspired from above, is very possible. The whole religion of the Jew, inculcated on Him from His infancy, was founded in the belief of divine inspiration. The fumes of the most disordered imaginations were recorded in their religious code, as special communications of the Deity; and as it could not but happen that, in the course of ages, events would now and then turn up to which some of these vague rhapsodies might be accommodated by the aid of allegories, figures, types,

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and other tricks upon words, they have not only preserved their credit with the Jews of all subsequent times, but are the foundation of much of the religions of those who have schismatized from them. Elevated by the enthusiasm of a warm and pure heart, conscious of the high strains of an eloquence which had not been taught Him, He might readily mistake the coruscations of His own fine genius for inspirations of a higher order. This belief carried, therefore, no more personal imputation, than the belief of Socrates, that himself was under the care and admonitions of a guardian Daemon. And how many of our wisest men still believe in the reality of these inspirations, while perfectly sane on all other subjects. Excusing, therefore, on these considerations, those passages in the Gospels which seem to bear marks of weakness in Jesus, ascribing to Him what alone is consistent with the great and pure character of which the same writings furnish proofs, and to their proper authors their own trivialities and imbecilities, I think myself authorized to conclude the purity and distinction of His character, in opposition to the impostures which those authors would fix upon Him; and that the postulate of my former letter is no more than is granted in all other historical works.

### *On the Spoils System*

*To James Madison*

POPLAR FOREST, November 29, 1820.

*Dear Sir:* The enclosed letter . . . is a sample of the effects we may expect from the late mischievous law vacating every four years nearly all the executive offices of the government. It saps the constitutional and salutary func-

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tions of the President, and introduces a principle of intrigue and corruption, which will soon leaven the mass, not only of Senators, but of citizens. It is more baneful than the attempt which failed in the beginning of the government, to make all officers irremovable but with the consent of the Senate. This places, every four years, all appointments under their power, and even obliges them to act on every one nomination. It will keep in constant excitement all the hungry cormorants for office, render them, as well as those in place, sycophants to their Senators, engage these in eternal intrigue to turn out one and put in another, in cabals to swap work; and make of them what all executive directories become, mere sinks of corruption and faction. This must have been one of the midnight signatures of the President, when he had not time to consider, or even to read the law; and the more fatal as being ir-repealable but with the consent of the Senate, which will never be obtained.

### *On the Kentucky Resolutions*

*To Mr. Nicholas*

MONTICELLO, December 11, 1821.

*Dear Sir:* Your letter of December the 19th places me under a dilemma, which I cannot solve but by an exposition of the naked truth. I would have wished this rather to have remained as hitherto, without inquiry; but your inquiries have a right to be answered. I will do it as exactly as the great lapse of time and a waning memory will enable me. I may misremember indifferent circumstances, but can be right in substance.

At the time when the republicans of our country were

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so much alarmed at the proceedings of the federal ascendancy in Congress, in the executive and the judiciary departments, it became a matter of serious consideration how head could be made against their enterprises on the Constitution. The leading republicans in Congress found themselves of no use there, browbeaten, as they were, by a bold and overwhelming majority. They concluded to retire from that field, take a stand in the State legislatures, and endeavor there to arrest their progress. The alien and sedition laws furnished the particular occasion. The sympathy between Virginia and Kentucky was more cordial, and more intimately confidential, than between any other two States of republican policy. Mr. Madison came into the Virginia legislature. I was then in the Vice-Presidency, and could not leave my station. But your father, Colonel W. C. Nicholas, and myself happening to be together, the engaging the co-operation of Kentucky in an energetic protestation against the constitutionality of those laws, became a subject of consultation. Those gentlemen pressed me strongly to sketch resolutions for that purpose, your father undertaking to introduce them to that legislature, with a solemn assurance, which I strictly required, that it should not be known from what quarter they came. I drew and delivered them to him, and in keeping their origin secret, he fulfilled his pledge of honor. Some years after this, Colonel Nicholas asked me if I would have any objection to its being known that I had drawn them. I pointedly enjoined that it should not. Whether he had unguardedly intimated it before to any one, I know not; but I afterwards observed in the papers repeated imputations of them to me; on which, as has been my practice on all occasions of imputation, I have observed entire silence. The question, indeed, has never before been put to me, nor should I answer it to any other than yourself; see-



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ing no good end to be proposed by it, and the desire of tranquillity inducing with me a wish to be withdrawn from public notice. Your father's zeal and talents were too well known, to derive any additional distinction from the penning these resolutions. That circumstance, surely, was of far less merit than the proposing and carrying them through the legislature of his State. The only fact in this statement, on which my memory is not distinct, is the time and occasion of the consultation with your father and Colonel Nicholas. It took place here, I know; but whether any other person was present, or communicated with, is my doubt. I think Mr. Madison was either with us, or consulted, but my memory is uncertain as to minute details.

### *On the Annexation of Cuba*

*To the President of the United States*

*(James Monroe)*

MONTICELLO, June 23, 1823.

*Dear Sir:* I have been lately visited by a Mr. Miralla, . . . resident in Cuba for the last seven or eight years; a person of intelligence, of much information, and frankly communicative. I believe, indeed, he is known to you. I availed myself of the opportunity of learning what was the state of public sentiment in Cuba as to their future course. He says they would be satisfied to remain as they are; but all are sensible that that cannot be; that whenever circumstances shall render a separation from Spain necessary, a perfect independence would be their choice, provided they could see a certainty of protection; but that, without that prospect, they would be divided in opinion between an incorporation with Mexico, and with the United

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States—Colombia being too remote for prompt support. The considerations in favor of Mexico are that then Havana would be the emporium for all the produce of that immense and wealthy country, and, of course, the medium of all its commerce; that having no ports on its eastern coast, Cuba would become the depot of its naval stores and strength, and, in effect, would, in a great measure, have the sinews of the government in its hands. That in favor of the United States is the fact that three-fourths of the exportations from Havana come to the United States, that they are a settled government, the power which can most promptly succor them, rising to an eminence promising future security; and of which they would make a member of the sovereignty, while as to England, they would be only a colony, subordinated to her interest, and that there is not a man in the island who would not resist her to the bitterest extremity. Of this last sentiment I had not the least idea at the date of my late letters to you. I had supposed an English interest there quite as strong as that of the United States, and therefore, that, to avoid war, and keep the island open to our own commerce, it would be best to join that power in mutually guaranteeing its independence. But if there is no danger of its falling into the possession of England, I must retract an opinion founded on an error of fact. We are surely under no obligation to give her, gratis, an interest which she has not; and the whole inhabitants being averse to her, and the climate mortal to strangers, its continued military occupation by her would be impracticable. It is better then to lie still in readiness to receive that interesting incorporation when solicited by herself. For, certainly, her addition to our confederacy is exactly what is wanting to round our power as a nation to the point of its utmost interest.

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## *On Religion*

*To John Adams*

MONTICELLO, April 11, 1823.

*Dear Sir:* The wishes expressed in your last favor, that I may continue in life and health until I become a Calvinist, at least in his exclamation of "*Mon Dieu! jusqu'à quand!*" would make me immortal. I can never join Calvin in addressing *his God*. He was indeed an atheist, which I can never be; or rather his religion was daemonism. If ever man worshipped a false God he did. The Being described in his five points, is not the God whom you and I acknowledge and adore, the Creator and benevolent Governor of the world; but a daemon of malignant spirit. It would be more pardonable to believe in no God at all, than to blaspheme Him by the atrocious attributes of Calvin. Indeed, I think that every Christian sect gives a great handle to atheism by their general dogma, that, without a revelation, there would not be sufficient proof of the being of a God. . . . The truth is, that the greatest enemies to the doctrines of Jesus are those, calling themselves the expositors of them, who have perverted them for the structure of a system of fancy absolutely incomprehensible, and without any foundation in His genuine words. And the day will come, when the mystical generation of Jesus, by the Supreme Being as His Father, in the womb of a virgin, will be classed with the fable of the generation of Minerva, in the brain of Jupiter. But we may hope that the dawn of reason, and freedom of thought in these United States, will do away all this artificial scaffolding, and restore to us the primitive and genuine doctrines of this the most venerated Reformer of human errors.

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So much for your quotation of Calvin's "*Mon Dieu! jusqu'à quand!*" in which, when addressed to the God of Jesus, and our God, I join you cordially, and await His time and will with more readiness than reluctance. May we meet there again, in Congress, with our ancient colleagues, and receive with them the seal of approbation, "Well done, good and faithful servants."

### *On Home and Foreign Missions*

*To Michael Megear*

MONTICELLO, May 29, 1823.

I thank you, Sir, for the copy of the letters of Paul and Amicus, which you have been so kind as to send me, and shall learn from them with satisfaction the peculiar tenets of the Friends, and particularly their opinions on the incomprehensibilities (otherwise called the mysteries) of the Trinity. I think with them on many points, and especially on missionary and Bible societies. While we have so many around us, within the same social pale, who need instruction and assistance, why carry to a distance, and to strangers what our own neighbors need? It is a duty certainly to give our sparings to those who want; but to see also that they are faithfully distributed, and duly apportioned to the respective wants of those receivers. And why give through agents whom we know not, to persons whom we know not, and in countries from which we get no account, when we can do it at short hand, to objects under our eye, through agents we know, and to supply wants we see? I do not know that it is a duty to disturb by missionaries the religion and peace of other countries, who may think themselves bound to extinguish by fire and fagot

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the heresies to which we give the name of conversions, and quote our own example for it. Were the Pope, or his holy allies, to send in mission to us some thousands of Jesuit priests to convert us to their orthodoxy, I suspect that we should deem and treat it as a national aggression on our peace and faith. I salute you in the spirit of peace and good will.

### *On the Monroe Doctrine*

*To the President of the United States*

*(James Monroe)*

MONTICELLO, October 24, 1823.

*Dear Sir:* The question presented by the letters you have sent me, is the most momentous which has ever been offered to my contemplation since that of Independence. That made us a nation, this sets our compass and points the course which we are to steer through the ocean of time opening on us. And never could we embark on it under circumstances more auspicious. Our first and fundamental maxim should be, never to entangle ourselves in the broils of Europe. Our second, never to suffer Europe to intermeddle with cis-atlantic affairs. America, North and South, has a set of interests distinct from those of Europe, and peculiarly her own. She should therefore have a system of her own, separate and apart from that of Europe. While the last is laboring to become the domicile of despotism, our endeavor should surely be, to make our hemisphere that of freedom. One nation, most of all, could disturb us in this pursuit; she now offers to lead, aid, and accompany us in it. By acceding to her proposition, we detach her from the bands, bring her mighty weight into the scale

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of free government, and emancipate a continent at one stroke, which might otherwise linger long in doubt and difficulty. Great Britain is the nation which can do us the most harm of any one, or all on earth; and with her on our side we need not fear the whole world. With her then, we should most sedulously cherish a cordial friendship; and nothing would tend more to knit our affections than to be fighting once more, side by side, in the same cause. Not that I would purchase even her amity at the price of taking part in her wars. But the war in which the present proposition might engage us, should that be its consequence, is not her war, but ours. Its object is to introduce and establish the American system, of keeping out of our land all foreign powers, of never permitting those of Europe to intermeddle with the affairs of our nations. It is to maintain our own principle, not to depart from it. And if, to facilitate this, we can effect a division in the body of the European powers, and draw over to our side its most powerful member, surely we should do it. But I am clearly of Mr. Canning's opinion, that it will prevent instead of provoking war. With Great Britain withdrawn from their scale and shifted into that of our two continents, all Europe combined would not undertake such a war. For how would they propose to get at either enemy without superior fleets? Nor is the occasion to be slighted which this proposition offers, of declaring our protest against the atrocious violations of the rights of nations, by the interference of any one in the internal affairs of another, so flagitiously begun by Bonaparte, and now continued by the equally lawless Alliance, calling itself Holy.

But we have first to ask ourselves a question. Do we wish to acquire to our own confederacy any one or more of the Spanish provinces? I candidly confess, that I have ever looked on Cuba as the most interesting addition which

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could ever be made to our system of States. The control which, with Florida Point, this island would give us over the Gulf of Mexico, and the countries and isthmus bordering on it, as well as all those whose waters flow into it, would fill up the measure of our political well-being. Yet, as I am sensible that this can never be obtained, even with her own consent, but by war; and its independence, which is our second interest (and especially its independence of England), can be secured without it, I have no hesitation in abandoning my first wish to future chances, and accepting its independence, with peace and the friendship of England, rather than its association, at the expense of war and her enmity.

I could honestly, therefore, join in the declaration proposed, that we aim not at the acquisition of any of those possessions, that we will not stand in the way of any amicable arrangement between them and the Mother country; but that we will oppose, with all our means, the forcible interposition of any other power, as auxiliary, stipendiary, or under any other form or pretext, and most especially, their transfer to any power by conquest, cession, or acquisition in any other way. I should think it, therefore, advisable, that the Executive should encourage the British government to a continuance in the dispositions expressed in these letters, by an assurance of his concurrence with them as far as his authority goes; and that as it may lead to war, the declaration of which requires an act of Congress, the case shall be laid before them for consideration at their first meeting, and under the reasonable aspect in which it is seen by himself.

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## *On Amendments to the Constitution*

*To Robert J. Garnett*

MONTICELLO, February 14, 1824.

*Dear Sir:* I have to thank you for the copy of Colonel Taylor's "New Views of the Constitution," and shall read them with the satisfaction and edification which I have ever derived from whatever he has written. But I fear it is the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Those who formerly usurped the *name* of federalists, which, *in fact*, they never were, have now openly abandoned it, and are as openly marching by the road of construction, in a direct line to that consolidation which was always their real object. They, almost to a man, are in possession of one branch of the government, and appear to be very strong in yours. The three great questions of amendment now before you, will give the measure of their strength. I mean, 1st, the limitation of the term of Presidential service; 2d, the placing the choice of President effectually in the hands of the people; 3d, the giving to Congress the power of internal improvement, on condition that each State's federal proportion of the moneys so expended, shall be employed within the State. The friends of consolidation would rather take these powers by construction than accept them by direct investiture from the States. Yet, as to internal improvement particularly, there is probably not a State in the Union which would not grant the power on the condition proposed, or which would grant it without that.

The best general key for the solution of questions of power between our governments is the fact that "every foreign and federal power is given to the federal govern-



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ment, and to the States every power purely domestic." I recollect but one instance of control vested in the federal, over the State authorities, in a matter purely domestic, which is that of metallic tenders. The federal is, in truth, our foreign government, which department alone is taken from the sovereignty of the separate States.

The real friends of the Constitution in its federal form, if they wish it to be immortal, should be attentive, by amendments, to make it keep pace with the advance of the age in science and experience. Instead of this, the European governments have resisted reformation, until the people, seeing no other resource, undertake it themselves by force, their only weapon, and work it out through blood, desolation and long-continued anarchy. Here it will be by large fragments breaking off, and refusing re-union but on condition of amendment, or perhaps permanently. If I can see these three great amendments prevail, I shall consider it as a renewed extension of the term of our lease, shall live in more confidence, and die in more hope. And I do trust that the republican mass, which Colonel Taylor justly says is the real federal one, is still strong enough to carry these truly federo-republican amendments. With my prayers for the issue, accept my friendly and respectful salutations.

### *Concerning Party Names and Purposes*

*To William Short*

MONTICELLO, January 8, 1825.

He [Harper] takes great pains to prove, for instance, that Hamilton was no monarchist, by exaggerating his own intimacy with him, and the impossibility, if he was so, that

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he should not, at some time, have betrayed it to him. This may pass with uninformed readers, but not with those who have had it from Hamilton's own mouth. I am one of those, and but one of many. At my own table, in presence of Mr. Adams, Knox, Randolph, and myself, in a dispute between Mr. Adams and himself, he avowed his preference of monarchy over every other government, and his opinion that the English was the most perfect model of government ever devised by the wit of man, Mr. Adams agreeing "if its corruptions were done away." While Hamilton insisted that "with these corruptions it was perfect and without them it would be an impracticable government." Can any one read Mr. Adams's defence of the American Constitutions without seeing that he was a monarchist? And J. Q. Adams, the son, was more explicit than the father, in his answer to Paine's "Rights of Man." So much for leaders. Their followers were divided. Some went the same lengths; others, and I believe the greater part, only wished a stronger Executive.

When I arrived at New York in 1790, to take a part in the administration, being fresh from the French Revolution, while in its first and pure stage, and consequently somewhat whetted up in my own republican principles, I found a state of things, in the general society of the place, which I could not have supposed possible. Being a stranger there, I was feasted from table to table, at large set dinners, the parties generally from twenty to thirty. The revolution I had left, and that we had just gone through in the recent change of our own government, being the common topics of conversation, I was astonished to find the general prevalence of monarchical sentiments, insomuch that in maintaining those of republicanism, I had always the whole company on my hands, never scarcely finding among them a single co-advocate in that argument,

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unless some old member of Congress happened to be present. The furthest that any one would go, in support of the republican features of our new government, would be to say, "the present Constitution is well as a beginning, and may be allowed a fair trial; but it is, in fact, only a stepping-stone to something better." Among their writers, Denny, the editor of the *Portfolio*, who was a kind of oracle with them, and styled the Addison of America, openly avowed his preference of monarchy over all other forms of government, prided himself on the avowal, and maintained it by argument freely and without reserve, in his publications. I do not, myself, know that the Essex junto of Boston were monarchists, but I have always heard it so said, and never doubted.

These, my dear Sir, are but detached items from a great mass of proofs then fully before the public. They are unknown to you, because you were absent in Europe, and they are now disavowed by the party. But, had it not been for the firm and determined stand then made by a counter-party, no man can say what our government would have been at this day. Monarchy, to be sure, is now defeated, and they wish it should be forgotten that it was ever advocated. They see that it is desperate, and treat its imputation to them as a calumny; and I verily believe that none of them have it now in direct aim. Yet the spirit is not done away. The same party takes now what they deem the next best ground, the consolidation of the government; the giving to the federal member of the government, by unlimited constructions of the Constitution, a control over all the functions of the States, and the concentration of all power ultimately at Washington.

The true history of that conflict of parties will never be in possession of the public until, by the death of the actors in it, the hoards of their letters shall be broken up

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and given to the world. I should not fear to appeal to those of Harper himself, if he has kept copies of them, for abundant proof that he was himself a monarchist. I shall not live to see these unrevealed proofs, nor probably you; for time will be requisite. But time will, in the end, produce the truth. And, after all, it is but a truth which exists in every country, where not suppressed by the rod of despotism. Men, according to their constitutions, and the circumstances in which they are placed, differ honestly in opinion. Some are Whigs, Liberals, Democrats, call them what you please. Others are Tories, Serviles, Aristocrats, etc. The latter fear the people, and wish to transfer all power to the higher classes of society; the former consider the people as the safest depository of power in the last resort; they cherish them, therefore, and wish to leave in them all the powers to the exercise of which they are competent. This is the division of sentiment now existing in the United States. It is the common division of Whig and Tory, or according to our denominations of republican and federal; and is the most salutary of all divisions, and ought, therefore, to be fostered, instead of being amalgamated. For, take away this, and some more dangerous principle of division will take its place.

### *Rules of Conduct*

*To Thomas Jefferson Smith*

MONTICELLO, February 21, 1825.

This letter will, to you, be as one from the dead. The writer will be in the grave before you can weigh its counsels. Your affectionate and excellent father has re-

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requested that I would address to you something which might possibly have a favorable influence on the course of life you have to run, and I too, as a namesake, feel an interest in that course. Few words will be necessary, with good dispositions on your part. Adore God. Reverence and cherish your parents. Love your neighbor as yourself, and your country more than yourself. Be just. Be true. Murmur not at the ways of Providence. So shall the life into which you have entered be the portal to one of eternal and ineffable bliss. And if to the dead it is permitted to care for the things of this world, every action of your life will be under my regard. Farewell.

### *The Portrait of a Good Man by the most Sublime of Poets, for your Imitation*

Lord, who's the happy man that may to Thy blest courts repair,  
Not stranger-like to visit them, but to inhabit there?  
'Tis he whose every thought and deed by rules of virtue moves,  
Whose generous tongue disdains to speak the thing his heart dis-  
proves.  
Who never did a slander forge, his neighbor's fame to wound,  
Nor hearken to a false report, by malice whispered round.  
Who vice, in all its pomp and power, can treat with just neglect;  
And piety, though clothed in rags, religiously respect.  
Who to his plighted vows and trust has ever firmly stood,  
And though he promise to his loss, he makes his promise good.  
Whose soul in usury disdains his treasure to employ,  
Whom no rewards can ever bribe the guiltless to destroy.  
The man who, by this steady course, has happiness insur'd,  
When earth's foundations shake, shall stand, by Providence secur'd.

### *A Decalogue of Canons for Observation in Practical Life*

1. Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day.
2. Never trouble another for what you can do yourself.
3. Never spend your money before you have it.

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4. Never buy what you do not want, because it is cheap; it will be dear to you.

5. Pride costs us more than hunger, thirst, and cold.

6. We never repent of having eaten too little.

7. Nothing is troublesome that we do willingly.

8. How much pain have cost us the evils which have never happened.

9. Take things always by their smooth handle.

10. When angry, count ten, before you speak; if very angry, an hundred.

### *On Slavery*

*To Miss Frances Wright*

MONTICELLO, August 7, 1825.

My health is very low, not having been able to leave the house for three months, and suffering much at times. In this state of body and mind, your letter could not have found a more inefficient counsellor, one scarcely able to think or to write. At the age of eighty-two, with one foot in the grave, and the other uplifted to follow it, I do not permit myself to take part in any new enterprises, even for bettering the condition of man, not even in the great one which is the subject of your letter, and which has been through life that of my greatest anxieties. The march of events has not been such as to render its completion practicable within the limits of time allotted to me; and I leave its accomplishment as the work of another generation. And I am cheered when I see that on which it is devolved, taking it up with so much good-will, and such minds engaged in its encouragement. The abolition of the evil is not impossible; it ought never therefore to be

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despaired of. Every plan should be adopted, every experiment tried, which may do something toward the ultimate object. That which you propose is well worthy of trial. It has succeeded with certain portions of our white brethren, under the care of a Rapp and an Owen; and why may it not succeed with the man of color? An opinion is hazarded by some, but proved by none, that moral urgencies are not sufficient to induce him to labor; that nothing can do this but physical coercion. But this is a problem which the present age alone is prepared to solve by experiment. It would be a solecism to suppose a race of animals created, without sufficient foresight and energy to preserve their own existence. It is disproved, too, by the fact that they exist, and have existed through all the ages of history. We are not sufficiently acquainted with all the nations of Africa, to say that there may not be some in which habits of industry are established, and the arts practised which are necessary to render life comfortable. The experiment now in progress in St. Domingo, those of Sierra Leone and Cape Mesurado, are but beginning. Your proposition has its aspects of promise also; and should it not answer fully to calculations in figures, it may yet, in its developments, lead to happy results. These, however, I must leave to another generation. The enterprise of a different, but yet important character, in which I have embarked too late in life, I find more than sufficient to occupy the enfeebled energies remaining to me, and that to divert them to other objects, would be a desertion of these. You are young, dear Madam, and have powers of mind which may do much in exciting others in this arduous task. I am confident they will be so exerted, and I pray to Heaven for their success, and that you may be rewarded with the blessings which such efforts merit.

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## *On State Rights*

*To William B. Giles*

MONTICELLO, December 26, 1825.

*Dear Sir:* I wrote you a letter yesterday, of which you will be free to make what use you please. This will contain matters not intended for the public eye. I see, as you do, and with the deepest affliction, the rapid strides with which the federal branch of our Government is advancing toward the usurpation of all the rights reserved to the States, and the consolidation in itself of all powers, foreign and domestic; and that too, by constructions which, if legitimate, leave no limits to their power. Take together the decisions of the federal court, the doctrines of the President, and the misconstructions of the constitutional compact acted on by the legislature of the federal branch, and it is but too evident, that the three ruling branches of that department are in combination to strip their colleagues, the State authorities, of the powers reserved by them, and to exercise themselves all functions foreign and domestic. Under the power to regulate commerce, they assume indefinitely that also over agriculture and manufactures, and call it regulation to take the earnings of one of these branches of industry, and that, too, the most depressed, and put them into the pockets of the other, the most flourishing of all. Under the authority to establish post roads, they claim that of cutting down mountains for the construction of roads, of digging canals, and aided by a little sophistry on the words "general welfare," a right to do, not only the acts to effect that, which are specifically enumerated and permitted, but whatsoever they shall think, or pretend will be for the general welfare.



## LETTERS AND ADDRESSES

And what is our resource for the preservation of the Constitution? Reason and argument? You might as well reason and argue with the marble columns encircling them. The representatives chosen by ourselves? They are joined in the combination, some from incorrect views of government, some from corrupt ones, sufficient voting together to outnumber the sound parts; and with majorities only of one, two, or three, bold enough to go forward in defiance. Are we then *to stand to our arms*, with the hot-headed Georgian? No. That must be the last resource, not to be thought of until much longer and greater sufferings. If every infraction of a compact of so many parties is to be resisted at once, as a dissolution of it, none can ever be formed which would last one year. We must have patience and longer endurance than with our brethren while under delusion; give them time for reflection and experience of consequences; keep ourselves in a situation to profit by the chapter of accidents; and separate from our companions only when the sole alternatives left, are the dissolution of our Union, with them or submission to a government without limitation of powers. Between these two evils, when we must make a choice, there can be no hesitation. But in the meanwhile, the States should be watchful to note every material usurpation on their rights; to denounce them as they occur in the most peremptory terms; to protest against them as wrongs to which our present submission shall be considered, not as acknowledgments or precedents of right, but as a temporary yielding to the lesser evil, until their accumulation shall outweigh that of separation. I would go still further, and give to the federal member, by a regular amendment of the Constitution, a right to make roads and canals of intercommunication between the States, providing sufficiently against corrupt practices in Congress, (log-rolling, etc.) by declaring

## OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

that the federal proportion of each State of the moneys so employed, shall be in works within the State, or elsewhere with its consent, and with a due *salvo* of jurisdiction. This is the course which I think safest and best as yet.

### *On Slavery*

*To the Honorable Edward Everett*

MONTICELLO, April 8, 1826.

*Dear Sir:* I thank you for the very able and eloquent speech you have been so kind as to send me on the amendment of the Constitution, proposed by Mr. McDuffie. I have read it with pleasure and satisfaction, and concur with much of its contents. On the question of the lawfulness of slavery, that is of the right of one man to appropriate to himself the faculties of another without his consent, I certainly retain my early opinions. On that, however, of third persons to interfere between the parties, and the effect of conventional modifications of that pretension, we are probably nearer together. I think with you, also, that the Constitution of the United States is a compact of independent nations subject to the rules acknowledged in similar cases, as well that of amendment provided within itself, as, in case of abuse, the justly dreaded but unavoidable *ultimo ratio gentium*.

*Jefferson's Inscription for his Tombstone*

HERE WAS BURIED  
THOMAS JEFFERSON  
AUTHOR  
OF THE DECLARATION OF  
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE  
OF  
THE STATUTE OF VIRGINIA  
FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, AND  
FATHER OF THE UNIVERSITY  
OF VIRGINIA.  
BORN APRIL 2D,  
1743 O. S.  
DIED [JULY 4]  
[1826]

## LIFE OF JEFFERSON

Thomas Jefferson was born at Shadwell, Va., on the second of April, 1743. He came of a good family. The Jeffersons, like the Washingtons, were landed proprietors, men of standing and influence in the community, Thomas Jefferson the elder being Justice of the Peace and Vestryman in his county, and holding at the time of his death 1,900 acres of land and thirty slaves. Thomas was the third of ten children and, though only fourteen when his father died, had given promise of such unusual powers that strict provision was made in the will for his education. At fifteen he entered William and Mary College where he graduated four years later and entered upon the study of the law.

From the first he showed aptitude as well as ambition for public affairs. When he came of age he was elected Justice. At twenty-five he was chosen to the House of Burgesses and remained a member until the Assembly was closed by the Revolution. Then he was sent to Congress and in 1779 was elected Governor of Virginia. From that time until near the close of his life he was almost constantly engaged in the public service, acting successively as Member of Congress, Minister to France, Secretary of State, Vice-President, and President.

When he was fifty-seven he drew up a brief statement in the nature of an *apologia pro vita sua* which forms a modest account of his achievements up to that time.

"I have sometimes asked myself, whether my country is the better for my having lived at all? I do not know that it is. I have been the instrument of doing the following things; but they would have been done by others; some of them, perhaps, a little better:

## LIFE OF JEFFERSON

"The Rivanna had never been used for navigation; scarcely an empty canoe had ever passed down it. Soon after I came of age, I examined its obstructions, set on foot a subscription for removing them, got an Act of Assembly passed, and the thing effected, so as to be used completely and fully for carrying down all our produce.

"The Declaration of Independence.

"I proposed the demolition of the church establishment and the freedom of religion. It could only be done by degrees; to wit, the Act of 1776, c. 2, exempted dissenters from contributions to the Church, and left the Church clergy to be supported by voluntary contributions of their own sect, was continued from year to year, and made perpetual 1779, c. 36. I prepared the act for religious freedom in 1777, as part of the revisal, which was not reported to the Assembly till 1779, and that particular law not passed till 1785, and then by the efforts of Mr. Madison.

"The act of putting an end to entails.

"The act prohibiting the importation of slaves.

"The act concerning citizens, and establishing the natural right of man to expatriate himself at will.

"The act changing the course of descents, and giving the inheritance to all the children, etc., equally, I drew as part of the revisal.

"The act for apportioning crimes and punishments, part of the same work, I drew. . . .

"In 1789 and 1790, I had a great number of olive plants, of the best kind, sent from Marseilles to Charleston, for South Carolina and Georgia. They were planted, and are flourishing; and, though not yet multiplied, they will be the germ of that cultivation in those States.

"In 1790, I got a cask of heavy upland rice, from the river Denbigh, in Africa, about lat. 9° 30' north, which I sent to Charleston, in hopes it might supersede the culture of the

## LIFE OF JEFFERSON

wet rice, which renders South Carolina and Georgia so pestilential through the summer. It was divided, and a part sent to Georgia. I know not whether it has been attended to in South Carolina, but it has spread in the upper parts of Georgia, so as to have become almost general, and is highly prized. Perhaps it may answer in Tennessee and Kentucky. The greatest service which can be rendered any country is to add a useful plant to its culture, especially a bread grain; next in value to bread is oil."

This list of achievements necessarily omits the Purchase of Louisiana—historically of only less importance than the Declaration—since that was not accomplished until two years later.

The true importance of Jefferson does not depend, however, upon these specific acts, but rather, as Lincoln pointed out in a letter written in 1859, upon his general influence:

"All honor to Jefferson—to the man, who in the concrete pressure of a struggle for national independence by a single people, had the coolness, forecast, and sagacity to introduce into a merely revolutionary document an abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times, and so embalm it there that to-day and in all coming days it shall be a rebuke and a stumbling-block to the very harbingers of reappearing tyranny and oppression."

## THE STORY OF THE BOOK

Thomas Jefferson was a statesman not an author. In fact, few public men have had so little desire to appear in print. Writing in 1809 to a Mr. Campbell, he said:

"In answer to your proposition for publishing a complete edition of my different writings, I must observe that no writings of mine, other than those merely official, have been published, except the 'Notes on Virginia' and a small pamphlet under the title of 'A Summary View of the Rights of British America.'

"I do not mention the 'Parliamentary Manual,' published for the use of the Senate of the United States, because it was a mere compilation, into which nothing entered of my own but the arrangement and a few observations necessary to explain that and some of the cases.

"I do not know whether your view extends to official papers of mine which have been published. Many of these would be like old newspapers, materials for future historians, but no longer interesting to the readers of the day. They would consist of reports, correspondences, messages, answers to addresses; a few of my reports while Secretary of State, might, perhaps, be read by some as essays on abstract subjects. Such as the report on measures, weights, and coins, on the mint, on the fisheries, on commerce, on the use of distilled sea-water, etc. The correspondences with the British and French ministers, Hammond and Genet, were published by Congress. The messages to Congress, which might have been interesting at the moment, would scarcely be read a second time, and answers to addresses are hardly read a first time.

"So that on a review of these various materials, I see nothing encouraging a printer to a republication of them.

## THE STORY OF THE BOOK

They would probably be bought by those only who are in the habit of preserving state papers, and who are not many."

In spite of his indifference to fame of this sort, his "Notes on Virginia," first published in 1784, ran through sixteen editions during his life time and has been reprinted a number of times since.

The first collected edition of Jefferson's works was that published in 1854 by order of Congress. A more complete and carefully edited edition was prepared by Paul Leicester Ford in 1892-99, and in 1904 was published the very full and elaborate edition of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Society of America, upon which this volume has principally been based.

Jefferson has always been the prophet of American Democracy, and the interest in his writings is unlikely ever to cease, were it only for the political theory they contain. But a glance over the contents of this selection from his letters and papers will disclose a nature rich and many-sided, profoundly interested in science, in commerce, in education, no less than in government—in fact, a nature so opulent in resources that it may be taken as an epitome of his age.



## NOTES ON THE TEXT

8 *A Youthful Attachment.* The "picture and watch-paper" was that of Rebecca Burwell, who is referred to also in the letter which follows this on page 10. She was married in 1764 to Jacqueline Ambler.

16 *Declaration of Independence.* The action of the Continental Congress on the Declaration of Independence was as follows. On June 7, 1776, Richard Henry Lee, acting on instructions from the Virginia Assembly, introduced a resolution that "these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, Free and Independent States." On June 11 Congress appointed to draft a Declaration a Committee consisting of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert A. Livingston. Jefferson drafted the Declaration, which, after slight alteration by Adams and Franklin, was accepted by the Committee. On July 2, Congress adopted Lee's original resolution, and on July 4, Jefferson's Declaration with some omissions and changes, the most important of which were the omission of the denunciation of the British people (page 21) and of the slave-trade (pages 19-20). The Declaration was not signed by the Congress until August 2.

23 *On Retiring from Public Life.* This letter seems to refer to Jefferson's refusal of a reappointment to Congress in December, 1781. At that time he was being very severely criticised for his conduct as Governor of Virginia during the invasion of Cornwallis.

24 "*Notes on Virginia.*" This, the most extensive of the separate works of Jefferson, was compiled in response to the inquiries of Marbois, the French agent, as to the resources of the states. Written during Jefferson's retire-

## NOTES ON THE TEXT

ment (1781-2), the "Notes" are of a remarkable frankness and freedom of expression, which make them invaluable as a revelation of character. They were published in French at Paris in 1784, translated, and repeatedly republished. They gave to Jefferson a place in the scientific world of Europe second only to Franklin, and are to-day the best account of Revolutionary Virginia.

24 *The American Genius.* The instrument proper to them is the Banjar, which they brought hither from Africa, and which is the original of the guitar, its chords being precisely the four lower chords of the guitar.

24 *On Slavery.* Throughout his life Jefferson was outspoken in his condemnation of slavery, for its ill effects on the whites (page 26) as well as on the blacks. Like Washington and the other opponents of slavery in the South, Jefferson saw that the fundamental difficulty was to find a place for the negro in society. Slavery was one solution, but, he believed, wasteful, injurious to the whites, and unjust to the blacks. He advocated gradual emancipation (with compensation) and the colonization of the free negroes. He heartily supported the later project of transporting the free negroes to Sierra Leone. For further information as to his attitude, compare the selections on pages 26, 34, 63, 146, 258, 285, 289.

30 *Martha Jefferson.* Born Oct. 19, 1748, daughter of John Wayles. Married Jefferson in 1772, being at that time a widow, her first husband, Bathurst Skelton, having died several years previously. She died at Monticello in 1782.

34 *Peter Carr.* A nephew of Jefferson, and one of the six children of Dabney Carr. They were brought up by Jefferson after the premature death of their father.

38 *Inferiority of Commerce and Manufactures to Agriculture.* In letters of 1805 (page 167) Jefferson explained

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that he condemned manufactures and commerce because of the wretched conditions of city life in Europe, but that, as these conditions did not exist in a new country like America, the condemnation did not as yet apply there. (Compare page 191.)

41 *Superiority of the United States to France.* It should be noted that Jefferson's belief in the absolute dependence of a people's happiness on its political freedom inevitably darkened his pictures of European life. Compare selections on pages 43, 242.

45 *On New States.* The organization of the western territory into states and their admission into the Union were subjects of the deepest interest to Jefferson. In 1784, when Virginia had completed the cession of her western claims to the Confederacy, Jefferson introduced an Ordinance into Congress which (1) forbade slavery in the territory after 1800; (2) divided it into small states with geographical names—Pelisipia, Metropotamia, etc.; (3) provided for a temporary territorial government and speedy admission to the Union. The third section alone was adopted, but it became the foundation of the territorial policy of the United States. The prohibition of slavery reappears in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.

47 *Force in the Barbary States.* Not until Jefferson was President, in the Barbary wars 1802-6, were these pirates and blackmailers compelled by force to respect the United States.

48 *The Society of the Cincinnati.* The native and foreign officers of the Revolutionary Army organized this society on May 13, 1783 to "perpetuate the remembrance of this vast event [the Revolution] and . . . mutual friendship." The membership was restricted to the officers and their male heirs in direct line. The exclusive character of the membership and the hereditary element suggested to

## NOTES ON THE TEXT

the supersensitive public opinion of the time an hereditary aristocracy and aroused widespread fear and dislike. The society still exists, with the thirteen original chapters.

53 *The Navigation of the Mississippi.* The claim of Spain to the control of the Mississippi furnished one of the most difficult problems of the Confederacy. The river was the only outlet for the products of the settlers in the Ohio valley, and the indifference of the Northern and Eastern States very nearly drove these to open revolt. Jefferson fully appreciated the importance of the free navigation of the Mississippi and as Minister to France and as Secretary of State (see pages 81, 92) used his utmost endeavors to secure it.

61 *Congress of the Confederation.* The weakness of Congress was due to the lack of a separate executive, and to its very limited power. It could not take any important action without the agreement of nine States; it could not impose a tax of any sort, or enforce its laws except through the State authorities.

62 *Shay's Rebellion.* After the Revolution the States passed through a time of profound economic depression. The circulating medium was in hopeless confusion, paper money nearly worthless, specie withdrawn from circulation. The markets were glutted with English goods, the taxes high, and the laws against debtors very severe. Popular risings occurred in Pennsylvania, New York, New Hampshire, and especially in Western Massachusetts under Daniel Shay in 1786-7. The object of this rebellion was to close the courts, to stop the collection of debts and taxes, and to secure favorable legislation. The State militia put down the rising without bloodshed.

65 *Adoption of the Constitution.* Jefferson later (see page 227) enthusiastically adopted a modification of the absolute rejection of the Constitution by the four latest

## NOTES ON THE TEXT

conventions, by which the States adopted the Constitution, but recommended amendments equivalent to a Declaration of Rights. These were later adopted as the first ten Amendments. Jefferson at first (see page 231) advocated a Presidential term of seven years, without reelection, and later a term of four years, with two terms as the maximum. (See also pages 67, 279.)

72 *The French Revolution.* Jefferson's political theories were profoundly modified by his contact with the French Revolution in its earlier and better stages. (See page 74.)

80 *Hamilton's Finance—Post-Roads.* This first extract in which the opposition of Hamilton and Jefferson appears, should be read, like many of those which follow, in the light of that opposition. Jefferson was not a great financier, and his criticism, though perfectly sincere, is of minor value from a financial point of view. The apprehensions of Jefferson as to the abuse of public improvements have proved only too well founded; his attitude toward their constitutionality plainly foreshadows the strict constructionist policy. But compare pages 170, 259, 279.

85 *On the Constitutionality of a National Bank.* The divergence in political theory between Hamilton and Jefferson came to a head on this question. Washington asked his Cabinet to express their opinions in writing, and Jefferson's is given in the selection. It was the first definite statement of the strict constructionist view of the Constitution and served as a party platform. The practical dangers of a strong National Bank are well stated on pages 160-161.

95 *Party Politics.* This letter, which purports to be a petition to Washington to serve a second term, was really an attack on the Federalist policy of Hamilton. It is of great importance as outlining the specific issue between

## NOTES ON THE TEXT

Hamilton and Jefferson in 1792, when the political parties were just crystallizing. Jefferson's belief that a National Debt was a tremendously dangerous means of corruption appears repeatedly in his writings (e.g. page 126); the injustice of such debt to posterity is forcibly presented on page 219. Gallatin, Jefferson's Secretary of the Treasury, reduced the debt to a minimum, but the commercial difficulties leading to the war of 1812 prevented its extinction.

103 *Twenty-four Years of Public Service.* 1769-1775, Virginia House of Burgesses; 1775, Virginia Convention; 1775-1776, Continental Congress; 1776-1778, Virginia Assembly; 1779-1781, Governor of Virginia; 1782-1784, Congress of the Confederation; 1784-1789, Minister to France; 1790-1793, Secretary of State.

104 *Report on Trade and the Tariff.* Interesting as indorsing a tariff that was to be incidentally protective in character. Protection did not become a political issue until after the war of 1812.

110 *Jay Treaty.* This treaty with Great Britain was intrinsically very unsatisfactory, but probably the most favorable that could be procured at the time, and as such the Senate ratified it. The House, however, very nearly succeeded in defeating it by withholding the appropriations to carry it out. Jefferson's theory of the participation of the House in the treaty-making power has not found favor with constitutional writers nor been established in practice.

111 *Mazzei Letter.* This extract, the end of a long letter of a personal nature, was published in the Federalist newspapers, and served as a text for some of the most violent denunciations of his career. He was charged with referring to Washington, Adams, and others as "apostates" and supporters of monarchy.

## NOTES ON THE TEXT

112 "*P instead of A.*" The reference is an intrigue of Hamilton to withhold votes from Adams and thus secure the election of Thomas Pinckney, the Federalist candidate for Vice-President.

115 *Relations with Great Britain.* In 1797 relations both with Great Britain and France were very strained because of depredations on American commerce, and in the case of England, the imprisonment of American sailors. The Federalists clamored for war with France, while the Republicans regarded England as the chief offender. (See page 118.)

122 *Newspaper Libels.* The license of the press, from which Washington himself was not exempt, was almost unlimited in the early years of the Republic. The private characters of the leading men were blackened by the most barefaced libels. Porcupine and Fenno were the leading Federalist editors and pamphleteers, at whose attacks Jefferson suffered keenly despite his attempt at philosophic calm. (See also page 175.)

123 . . . "*unwise*" . . . This is the reading of the edition of 1829 and of the Congressional edition. But George Tucker, in the *Southern Literary Magazine* for May 1838 (vol. iv. p. 344) asserts that the correct reading was "*unusual*," and that the error was due to the fading of the letter. Jefferson's copy of the letter was destroyed before that date, so the emendation cannot be fully established.

123 *Sectional Politics.* For an explanation of the conditions to which this letter refers, see the note on "*Kentucky Resolutions*," page 127.

127 *Kentucky Resolutions.* The way in which Jefferson came to draft these resolutions for the Kentucky Legislature is clearly explained by Jefferson in the selection on page 270. The occasion for the resolutions was the legis-

## NOTES ON THE TEXT

lation referred to in the text; legislation unwise, unjust, and probably unconstitutional. These laws were directed primarily against the small but very active group of French and English refugees who were the main-stay of the Republicans in the newspaper world. Besides making naturalization very difficult, the laws empowered the President to transport aliens in time of peace, provided for the exile of aliens in time of war, and widened the definition of sedition to include newspaper attacks on the Executive or Congress. The resolutions were adopted in their entirety by Kentucky in 1799. With the more moderate Virginia Resolutions of Madison, they were the armory of the strict constructionist and State Rights party until the Civil War. It is not clear that Jefferson regarded secession as a peaceful and legal remedy; certainly he did not advocate secession in 1798; the doctrine of peaceful secession, however, could be and was logically deduced from them. In 1798, however, the Resolutions were intended as a formal protest (see page 123). Two copies of these resolutions are preserved among the manuscripts of the author, both in his own handwriting. One is a rough draft, and the other very neatly and carefully prepared. The probability is, that they are the original of the celebrated Kentucky Resolutions on the same subject.

135 *First Inaugural Address.* This was perhaps the most characteristic address of Jefferson, revealing at once the far-sighted statesman and the wonderful political tactician. The policy or ideal of government outlined on pages 138 and 139 would be enthusiastically subscribed to by Americans of all periods, while the graceful appeal to forget party differences, and the studious avoidance of the earlier doctrines of 1798 were well calculated to disarm his opponents.



## NOTES ON THE TEXT

140 *Letter to the Senate.* In communicating his first message to Congress, President Jefferson addressed this letter to the presiding officer of each branch of the national legislature.

153 *The Constitutionality of the Louisiana Purchase.* Jefferson always believed that the purchase of Louisiana was necessary, but unconstitutional, because beyond the delegated powers. On receiving the news of the successful negotiations he at once drafted an elaborate amendment to the Constitution; in August, 1803, another and briefer one. But his own Cabinet and leading supporters dissuaded him from appealing to Congress, and Monroe at Paris urged a speedy ratification. Jefferson reluctantly sacrificed his own beliefs to the good of the nation, and contented himself with the tacit consent of the people. The Purchase was the death blow of strict construction in the original, literal sense.

160 *The Danger of the National Bank to the Government.* The arguments here presented were practically identical with those on which Jackson later successfully attacked the second Bank. In both cases the arguments were sound although the hostility was the more bitter because the Bank was controlled by the enemies of the Administration. In his suggestion that the United States do its own banking, Jefferson anticipated the principle of the present Independent Treasury system.

162 *Death of daughter.* Jefferson's daughter Mary, born at Monticello, Aug. 1, 1778, was described by Mrs. John Quincy Adams as "one of the most beautiful and remarkable children she had ever seen." She married her cousin John Wayles Epps, but her health was delicate and she died at the age of 26, on Apl. 17, 1804. (Compare page 164.)

162 *Attempted reconciliation with Adams.* Mrs. Adams

## NOTES ON THE TEXT

proved implacable, and refused to respond to the advances of Jefferson. The circumstances of the quarrel are explained in the note on page 196.

168 *Second Inaugural Address*. It is interesting to note how four years of power had broadened Jefferson's conception of the legitimate activity of the Federal Government. National aid, through the states, was now advocated for public improvements, manufactures, and education. The letter of strict construction was preserved in the demand for a specific amendment to the Constitution, but the ideal of government differs little from that of Washington and Adams. See pages 259, 279.

178 *Proposed Alliance with Great Britain*. The dispute with Spain referred to arose over the indefinite boundaries of the Louisiana Purchase, the United States claiming West Florida, and desiring East Florida. As Spain's refusal to yield was backed up by Napoleon, Jefferson proposed that Great Britain fight our battles for us. The proposal came to nothing.

183 *Thomas Jefferson Randolph*. Grandson of Jefferson and editor of his "Memoirs, Correspondence and Miscellanies," 4 vols., published in Boston 1830.

196 *The Break with Adams*. This account of the unfortunate estrangement between Adams and Jefferson is supplemented by the selections on pages 54, 112, 113, 114, 162. Dr. Rush and other mutual friends finally succeeded in bringing these two old friends together (page 208) and they remained firm friends and constant correspondents. Their deaths on the same day, July 4, 1826, was a dramatic ending of the friendship.

204 *Federalists and Republicans*. This description of political parties in 1812 shows the progress of the fusion of parties so ardently desired by Jefferson in his first Inaugural. It shows also the fundamental political convic-

## NOTES ON THE TEXT

tions of Jefferson better than the Kentucky Resolutions (page 127).

208 *Reconciliation with Adams.* See note on page 196.

214 *English Common Law in America.* This was entirely consistent with Jefferson's views in 1776, that the Colonists had all the rights of men and of Englishmen, and that the Colonies were not dependent on King or Parliament, but coördinate parts of the British Empire.

217 *Practical Politics.* The improvability of the human mind and of institutions was the very foundation of Jeffersonian democracy. He himself believed that the progress of science and knowledge was the chief factor in such improvement.

219 *Finance, Debt, etc.* The national finances had fallen into hopeless confusion during the war of 1812, and under existing circumstances Jefferson's proposal of no loan without a specific tax and drastic reform of paper money were probably sound. His theory of the limitation of the liability for the National Debt to nineteen years must, of course, be taken as applying to the morality and justice of the obligation, not as a plea for repudiation.

226 *Political History.* Compare pages 217 and 280.

231 *Massachusetts Politics.* The war of 1812, although waged to protect American commerce, was exceedingly unpopular in the commercial states of New England. The action of Massachusetts referred to was her refusal to furnish militia for service outside of the state. The New England opposition culminated in the Hartford Convention, which dissolved amid general ridicule on the conclusion of peace in 1815.

233 *The Monroe Doctrine Foreshadowed.* In this letter, as in the farewell address of Washington, may be seen the principle of the specific declaration of Monroe—America for Americans, and no entanglements with

## NOTES ON THE TEXT

Europe. Jefferson heartily commended Monroe's message (page 276).

242 *Comparison of Great Britain and the United States.* Compare note on page 41.

246 "*Our Institution.*" The University of Virginia, to whose foundation and success Jefferson devoted the last years of his life.

247 *The Banking Mania.* In the financial confusion and depression during and following the war of 1812 the people sought relief in the multiplication of banks and paper money. These banks were chartered by the states without any restriction as to specie reserve or emission of bank notes, and collapsed by the hundred in the panic of 1819. After that sound banking principles were gradually established by the states by general legislation.

248 *Local Government.* The local government of Virginia was practically unaltered by the Revolution, and the parish and county governments were still in the hands of the leading families. Jefferson's last years were devoted to three objects closely related in his own mind: The University of Virginia (page 246); a comprehensive public school system, adopted in principle; and a system of local government directly controlled by the people. The last was not fully developed until reconstruction times.

250 *The South American Colonies.* During the Napoleonic régime the Spanish Colonies in America were practically independent, and after the restoration of the Bourbon king in Spain in 1815 revolted against his arbitrary rule. The younger statesmen of the United States, particularly Henry Clay, clamored for an immediate recognition of their independence, if not for open assistance to them, but recognition was wisely deferred until 1821.

259 The proposition under consideration at Washington was national aid to the National Colonization Society. In

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1819 Congress appropriated \$100,000 to carry back to Africa slaves captured on the high seas, and in 1821 founded the negro colony of Liberia.

259 *Public Improvements.* See note on the Second Inaugural Address (page 168).

263 *The Supreme Court.* Jefferson's criticism of the Supreme Court arose from three sources: He regarded the court as essentially anti-republican because the judges were not immediately dependent on the people (compare selection on page 254); he believed that power of the court to pass on the constitutionality of the acts of the Executive and the Legislature was contrary to the principle of the separation of the departments; he saw clearly that the court as it existed, dominated by John Marshall, was undermining the principle of strict construction.

264 *Possibility of Secession.* The reference, of course, was to the struggle over the admission of Missouri to the Union.

267 *Corruption of the Teachings of Jesus.* Jefferson himself winnowed out of the New Testament what he considered the genuine teachings of Jesus, and the compilation has been published as "Jefferson's Bible." His religious views exposed him to the charge of atheism in his own time, but to-day would not excite especial comment.

269 *The Spoils System.* The "mischievous law" was the law usually known as "Crawford's Act," passed in 1820, limiting the term of appointment of attorneys, collectors, etc., to four years. This is considered the beginning of the "Spoils System" in national politics, although the officials were ordinarily reappointed until the inauguration of Jackson.

279 *Proposed amendments to the Constitution.* These amendments were not even adopted by Congress.

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