



THE LIFE
OF
THOMAS JEFFERSON.

BY
HENRY S. RANDALL, LL. D.

“THOMAS JEFFERSON STILL SURVIVES!”

The Last Words of John Adams.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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P R E F A C E .

MANY of the explanations usually given in a preface will be found in the body of the following work.

This Biography has swelled far beyond our original contemplation. Mr. Jefferson was more than half a century conspicuously before the American people. His official positions were numerous, furnishing not only a large mass of facts which cannot be passed over in a history of his life aiming at any degree of fullness; but his discharge of these trusts caused him to do acts or express opinions which have the force of precedents throughout nearly the whole range of topics in our nationo-federative system.

During the seventeen years he survived after his retirement from public life, he remained a close observer, and continued to express his opinions, in his correspondence, on all the leading political questions which engaged public attention. We have, therefore, a complete record of his views for more than sixty years—from a period preceding our national independence to one which found our peculiar institutions tested, determined in their nature, and fixed in their prescribed channels.

When it is taken into consideration that Mr. Jefferson is the conceded founder of that party which soon obtained undisputed control in our General Government, and which consequently affixed its own interpretations to our federal Constitution ; when it is remembered that his example and opinions are still quoted as authoritative by a decided majority of the American people, the importance of having that example and those opinions clearly understood, must become obvious to all reflecting persons.

His correspondence also discloses his views on a great variety of important extra-political topics. Like his political ones, they betray vigorous thought. They are often, too, clothed in that felicitous diction which is apt to enlist the sympathy of the ear as well as that of the understanding ; nay, which *may* captivate the first at the expense of the free exercise of the last. It would be unusual to converse half an hour on great political or social problems with an intelligent American—and particularly among the rural classes, who talk around their firesides of the Revolution, and of the august fathers of the Republic—without hearing some lofty thought or ringing phrase quoted from Jefferson. There was a sympathy between his heart and the great popular heart, which nothing ever did, ever can, shake. His mission was leadership. Without an effort on his part, expressions from his lips, that from other men's would scarcely have attracted notice, became thenceforth axioms, creeds, and gathering-cries to great masses of his countrymen. Thus far, at least, his ideas have been transmitted to succeeding generations without any apparent

diminution of their influence. We are presented with the remarkable spectacle of a reputation more assailed by class and hereditary hate than any other, and all others, belonging to our early history—scarcely defended by a page where volumes have been written to traduce it—yet steadily and resistlessly spreading, until all parties seek to appropriate it—until not an American man between the Atlantic and the Pacific dare place himself before a popular constituency with revilings of Jefferson on his lips. Two great names are embalmed before all others in the hearts of the people. One belonged to the SWORD, and the other to the PEN of our country!

And there was another field, hitherto nearly a blank, which we have felt bound to improve admirable opportunities for exploring before it should be too late, and where we were not willing to throw away the results of our exploration for fear of making too voluminous a work.

Mr. Jefferson has a number of surviving grandchildren, who lived from ten to thirty years under the same roof with him. They had ample opportunities for observing him in nearly every relation of private life—as the father, the master, the neighbor, the friend, the companion under all circumstances, the farmer, the business man, etc. From the lips of their parents—Mr. Jefferson's two daughters—they constantly heard him described as the son and the husband. Their recollections were generally rendered precise and minute by the intense interest with which, from infancy, they regarded everything connected with one revered as few men were ever revered in their families. And these recollections, whether derived from their parents, or their own, were

supported by contemporaneous memoranda made by Mr. Jefferson or themselves, by contemporaneous correspondence, and by various other family records.

None of Mr. Jefferson's descendants have ever chosen to write his biography. They preferred to leave that duty to those who could not have, nor be supposed to have, consanguineal attachments or hereditary hostilities to influence their pens.

In a few years death would quench personal recollections but in small part recorded, and scatter the manuscripts we have referred to among a multitude of inheritors. Some of these manuscripts would, in all probability, become destroyed in the ordinary train of casualties, and others would be hopelessly lost trace of, because no biographer would know of their existence, and consequently where to institute a particular search for them. Every writer of experience knows that any other search is seldom rewarded. And at best the manuscripts, books, papers, etc., far too extensive for transcription, and scattered over a continent, would be the subject of too many wills, to stand any probability of being all delivered up for the scrutiny and collation of one person.

The materials we have collected from these sources comprise, we should say, not far from one-third of these volumes.

We have preferred in all cases to give Mr. Jefferson's words at least once on every important question—and oftener if he materially changed his views—instead of attempting to convey the substance in any briefer synopsis of our own.

We have pursued the same course towards his con-

spicuous adversaries, where we have given their opinions ; or we have distinctly cited the work and the page where those opinions are to be found.

We have desired in no case to take refuge from responsibility under loose generalities, and have sacrificed severely in ease and flowingness of style to make our important statements—especially those conveying censure—so definite in respect to time, place, and matter, that they will present a tangible issue to inquirers who would investigate, or to opponents who would refute our views. The leering, sneering, dodging way of making charges by implication, and insulting by innuendo—which has been so extensively practised by early and late calumniators of Mr. Jefferson—is not to our taste. A fair, straight-forward blow against an adversary is legitimate, and becomes sometimes an unfortunate necessity to convey the genuine lessons, and vindicate the truth of history. But he who strikes should manfully stand up, like Friar Tuck, and abide the counter buffet, whether the hand that deals it be gauntleted or not.

It is a pity, in our judgment, that the world would not agree to consider that witness—as he really is in four cases out of five—a conscious liar, who will not

“Aye free aff han’ his story tell,”

so that every important adverse assertion he makes or insinuates can be specifically met, and specifically corroborated or refuted.

And he who brings forward old anonymous personal

charges or imputations made in partisan newspapers or pamphlets during periods of violent controversy, never proven, and scarcely credited by reasonable men of any side when made—gives them countenance by repeating them—presents them as quasi-historical allegations, without distinctly exposing the flimsiness of the authority on which they rest—adds the spirit of a slanderer to that of a falsifier.

In quoting, whether for praise or censure, we have not in all cases been able to give the entire context. Sometimes it would lead but to repetition or amplification, and sometimes to irrelevant matter to the particular point under investigation. It has been our anxious wish to avoid garbling either in the letter or spirit. But in common-placing extracts from a multitude of books, perhaps a sound judgment has not always been exercised, on the brief consideration allowed, as to what should be retained or what omitted. We have attempted to indicate chasms, or the bringing together of disconnected clauses, by marks which all readers understand. We have aimed to take no liberties with quotations besides occasionally changing the person of a noun, or the tense of a verb, for grammatical convenience, or by introducing italicization. The latter is to be always considered our own unless it is otherwise stated.

Yet we cannot but sincerely hope the context of our quotations will be examined, as often as is practicable, by every reader. There may be errors. The weary hand and eye are not always true to their office. Typographical mistakes sometimes elude detection, and independently of this, there may be facts, or shreds of facts,

which though not sufficiently relevant, or separately important for quotation, would, on a general view, tend to somewhat modify conclusions. It is never to be forgotten that the accuser acts *ex-parte*, and that, however fair his intentions, he may be unconsciously warped by prejudice both in the selection and the conclusion. The reader owes it to the accused, and the intelligent reader owes it to himself, to thoroughly test the good faith and general accuracy of this important kind of evidence.

It may be unnecessary to say that we have diligently sought accuracy in all particulars, as a matter of policy, if nothing else. But on so broad a canvas, spread over with so much that is minute and specific, we can scarcely hope to have avoided errors. We expect to be held responsible for them in all cases. And if they intrinsically, or in the light of the spirit which pervades the work, fairly convey the impression that they were intentional, we take it for granted that our accountability will be made that to which the false witness everywhere deserves to be held.

Our deepest and warmest acknowledgments are due to the family of Mr. Jefferson,¹ for their countenance and aid, in preparing this work. They welcomed our undertaking with a prompt and graceful expression of cordial approbation. They laid before us their stores of private manuscripts, never before opened, without reserve—transferring to us a large and important collection of newly discovered ones,² without preliminary perusal. They furnished us their full recollections and opinions

¹ His decendants and their wives and husbands.

² See vol. 1, p. 16, note.

on every class of topics. They labored for us assiduously in collecting materials from Mr. Jefferson's surviving friends in Virginia ; and they asked his friends in other States to in like manner contribute their assistance. They permitted us to select purely at our own discretion from the materials of every kind they were able to furnish—and to use their statements, either in the words or in the substance, and quote the family, or our particular informant, as our authority. Even the younger generation, those not born until after Mr. Jefferson's death, have made themselves busy collectors, copiers, etc. where they could thus render us any assistance.

We cannot undertake to specify all the other personal sources from which we have received valuable aid in the communication of manuscripts, facts, opinions, explanations, or authorities not otherwise easy of access. Indeed, we do not even know who have been the indirect contributors of many valuable documents, and ancient printed records from Virginia, nor can we delay this volume to make the requisite inquiries of those through whom they have been received.

Special acknowledgments are due to the late Hon. Joseph C. Cabell, the Hon. Hugh Blair Grigsby, and Professor John B. Minor, of Virginia ; to Dr. Robley Dunglison, Hon. Edward Coles, Professor George Tucker, Hon. Henry D. Gilpin, Hon. George W. Woodward, and George M. Conârroe, Esq. of Pennsylvania ; to the late Henry Clay, of Kentucky ; to Colonel Hayne, of South Carolina ; to Richard Randolph, Esq. of the district of Columbia ; to Hon. Jared Sparks, Hon. Edward Everett, and J. C. Gray, Esq. of Massachusetts ;

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No diplomatic measures of importance between the French and United States governments marked the opening of 1787. The latter had attained everything, by the order of Bernis, that

could be immediately expected ; and the former was beginning to be absorbed painfully in its own affairs.

Mr. Jefferson having described, in his Memoir, the state of public opinion in France down to this point—the numbers, influence, and just aims of the Patriotic party—added :

“Happily for the nation, it happened, at the same moment, that the dissipations of the Queen and court, the abuses of the pension-list, and dilapidations in the administration of every branch of the finances, had exhausted the treasures and credit of the nation, insomuch, that its most necessary functions were paralyzed. To reform these abuses would have overset the Minister ; to impose new taxes by the authority of the King, was known to be impossible, from the determined opposition of the Parliament to their enregistry. No resource remained, then, but to appeal to the nation. He advised, therefore, the call of an Assembly of the most distinguished characters of the nation, in the hope, that, by promises of various and valuable improvements in the organization and regimen of the government, they would be induced to authorize new taxes, to control the opposition of the Parliament, and to raise the annual revenue to the level of expenditures.”

For the first time, therefore, in more than a century and a half, an Assembly of Notables was called to meet on the 22d of February. It was the Count de Vergennes’s peculiar felicity to die at his post (February 13th), before he could have any beyond dim anticipations of what was in store for France. Louis XVI. afterwards vainly believed that the Revolution would not have taken place, had this able minister continued at the helm of affairs.

On the 16th of January, Mr. Jefferson wrote Colonel Edward Carrington, of Virginia, a letter on the text of “Shay’s insurrection,” which deserves a careful perusal from all who desire a clear and striking exposition of the writer’s theories of government.

“The tumults in America, I expected would have produced in Europe an unfavorable opinion of our political state. But it has not. On the contrary, the small effect of these tumults, seems to have given more confidence in the firmness of our governments. The interposition of the people themselves on the side of government, has had a great effect on the opinion here. I am persuaded myself, that the good sense of the people will always be found to be the best army. They may be led astray for a moment, but will soon correct themselves. The people are the only censors of their governors ; and even their errors will tend to keep these to the true principles of their institution. To punish these errors too severely, would be to suppress the only safeguard of the public liberty. The way to prevent these 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. I am convinced that those societies (as the Indians) which live without government, enjoy in their general mass an infinitely greater degree of happiness, than those who live under the European governments. Among the former, public opinion is in the place of law, and restrains morals as powerfully as laws ever did anywhere. Among the latter, under pretence of governing, they have divided their nations into two classes, wolves and sheep. I do not exaggerate. This is a true picture of Europe. Cherish, therefore, the spirit of our people, and keep alive their attention. Do not be too severe upon their errors, but reclaim them by enlightening them. If once they become inattentive to the public affairs, you, and I, and Congress, and Assemblies, Judges and Governors, shall all become wolves. It seems to be the law of our general nature, in spite of individual exceptions: and experience declares that man is the only animal which devours his own kind; for I can apply no milder term to the governments of Europe, and to the general prey of the rich on the poor."

Some new turns of the same thoughts and an extension of them, occur in a letter to a more confidential correspondent, Mr. Madison, January 30th.

The letter contains some plainer sketches of personal character than it is common to find in Mr. Jefferson's writings, and we give three or four of them, preceded by his reasons for speaking so freely:

"As you have now returned into Congress, it will become of importance that you should form a just estimate of certain public characters: on which, therefore, I will give you such notes as my knowledge of them has furnished me with. You will compare them with the materials you are otherwise possessed of, and decide on a view of the whole.

"You know the opinion I formerly entertained of my friend Mr. Adams * * * and the Governor were the first who shook that opinion. I afterwards 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.

* * * * *

"The Marquis de Lafayette is a most valuable auxiliary to me. His zeal is unbounded, and his weight with those in power, great. His education having been merely military, commerce was an unknown field to him. But his good sense enabling him to comprehend perfectly whatever is explained to him, his agency has

been very efficacious. He has a great deal of sound genius, is well remarked by the King, and rising in popularity. He has nothing against him, but the suspicion of republican principles. I think he will one day be of the ministry. His foible is, a canine¹ appetite for popularity and fame; but he will get above this.

* * * * *

"The Count de Vergennes is ill. The possibility of his recovery renders it dangerous for us to express a doubt of it; but he is in danger. He is a great minister in European affairs, but has very imperfect ideas of our *institutions*, and no confidence in them. His devotion to the principles of pure despotism, renders him unaffectionate to our governments. But his fear of England makes him value us as a make-weight. He is cool, reserved in political conversations, but free and familiar on other subjects, and a very attentive, agreeable person to do business with. It is impossible to have a clearer, better organized head; but age has chilled his heart.

* * * * *

"I learn that Mr. Adams desires to be recalled, and that Smith² should be appointed Chargé des Affaires there. It is not for me to decide whether any diplomatic character should be kept at a court, which keeps none with us. You can judge of Smith's abilities by his letters. They are not of the first order, but they are good. For his honesty, he is like our friend Monroe; turn his soul wrong side outwards, and there is not a speck on it. He has one foible, an excessive inflammability of temper, but he feels it when it comes on, and has resolution enough to suppress it, and to remain silent till it passes over."

Mr. Jefferson mentioned in this letter, that he could not make the least use of his fractured wrist except for writing; that he had great anxieties lest he never should recover any considerable use of it; that he should, by the advice of his surgeons, set out in a fortnight for the waters of Aix in Provence; and as in a previous letter to Monroe, he said he should seize the occasion to examine the canal of Languedoc, and "acquire knowledge of that species of navigation which may be useful hereafter," and, more especially, "to make a tour of the ports concerned in commerce with us; to examine, on the spot, the defects of the late regulations respecting our commerce; to learn the further improvements which may be made in it; and, on his return, to get this business finished." He mentioned that he should be absent between two and three months, but should always be where he could be recalled to the capital in ten days, should it become necessary.

Before the close of the preceding year, the American agent dispatched to Morocco had succeeded in forming a treaty with that power, and active negotiations were thenceforth entered upon by Mr. Adams and Mr. Jefferson to procure the liberation

¹ See ante, p. 454.

² Colonel W. S. Smith, Mr. Adams's son-in-law.

of the American captives in Algiers. Jefferson's correspondence, at this period, is full of this subject; and after resorting to various other unsuccessful steps, the aid of the Mathurins, a body of French priests organized for such benevolent projects, was invoked to aid in the undertaking. But no important results followed.

Jefferson was present at the opening of the Assembly of Notables on the 22d of February, and on the 27th, had an audience from M. de Montmorin, the successor of De Vergennes in the Foreign Bureau, whose modesty, simplicity of manners, and good dispositions towards the United States, made a most favorable impression on his mind.

He set out on the 28th, on his journey to the south of France, but before going, addressed this noticeable letter to Lafayette who was a member of the Notables:

"I wish you success in your meeting. I should form better hopes of it, if it were divided into two Houses instead of seven. Keeping the good model of your neighboring country before your eyes, you may get on, step by step, towards a good constitution. Though that model is not perfect, yet, as it would unite more suffrages than any new one which could be proposed, it is better to make that the object. If every advance is to be purchased by filling the royal coffers with gold, it will be gold well employed. The King, who means so well, should be encouraged to repeat these Assemblies. You see how we republicans are apt to preach, when we get on politics. Adieu, my dear friend."

He kept a journal of his progress, which is published in both editions of his works;¹ and the pocket account-book, as usual, supplies many minor details. His route lay up the Seine through Champagne and Burgundy, and thence down the Saône and the Rhone through the Beaujolais, Dauphiné, Orange, and Languedoc to Aix. He travelled in his own carriage and with post horses. Reluctant to withdraw Martha so long from her school, he did not take her with him. The first day, he passed through Méhun and reached Fontainebleau. He paused here a day to have changes made in his carriage; and he inspected that famous palace from whose voluptuous retreats Montespan and Du Barry had lavished those countless treasures, wrung pitilessly from the toiling millions, the want of which was now, in the process of a just retribution, hurrying the ancient monarchy of France to its bloody doom. He reached

¹ Randolph's edition, vol. ii. p. 115; Congress edition, vol. ix. p. 313.

Sens on the 2d of March, and on his route from thence to Ver-
manton, the entries in his journal are commenced.

This cannot be republished here. Like his journal in Eng-
land, it is chiefly occupied with practical descriptions; but in
this case, agriculture and wine-making, instead of gardening,
receive the principal share of his attention. In regard to these,
his information is extensive, and oftentimes almost exact enough
for the directions of those about to engage, without previous
practice, in the culture of vineyards and the production of the
different varieties of wine. Spirited sketches of scenery occur
in the journal, but they are brief, and are only intended to show
what kind of a country, topographically speaking, is adapted to
this or that kind of culture.

He arrived at Lyons on the 11th of March, and remained
until the 15th; and his journal dispatches the city in four lines.
Nismes was reached on the 19th, and four days were spent here
in examining the remains of Roman grandeur—the Maison
Quarrée (the plan of which he had previously obtained and sent
to Virginia as a model for its capitol), the huge Doric circus, the
temple and fountain of Diana, and the various other remains of
ancient art. None of these things are mentioned in the journal,
but a letter from this place to Madame la Comtesse de Tesse
(aunt of Madame Lafayette), shows that not only here, but on
the whole route from Paris, he had studied works of art quite as
closely as those matters which occupied his journal; but in the
latter he was, as usual, recording useful facts to carry home to
his countrymen. The letter to the Countess is written playfully,
and in the tone of high-flown gallantry of that day. The
familiar eye skips along this badinage for the point of the letter,
and by and by it comes! “His journey has given him leisure
to reflect on the *Assemblée des Notables*.” The result of these
reflections are thus given:

“Under a good and a young King, as the present, I think good may be made
of it. I would have the deputies then, by all means, so conduct themselves as to
encourage him to repeat the calls of this Assembly. Their first step should be, to
get themselves divided into two chambers instead of seven; the Noblesse and the
Commons separately. The second, to persuade the King, instead of choosing the
deputies of the Commons himself, to summon those chosen by the people for the
Provincial administrations. The third, as the Noblesse is too numerous to be all of
the *Assemblée*, to obtain permission for that body to choose its own deputies. Two
Houses so elected would contain a mass of wisdom which would make the people

happy, and the King great; would place him in history where no other act can possibly place him. They would thus put themselves in the track of the best guide they can follow; they would soon overtake it, become its guide in turn, and lead to the wholesome modifications wanting in that model, and necessary to constitute a rational government. Should they then attempt more than the established habits of the people of the ripe for, they may lose all, and retard indefinitely the ultimate object of their aim. These, madam, are my opinions; but I wish to know yours, which I am sure will be better."

The accomplished Countess was an active politician, and a staunch liberal. Gouverneur Morris more than once, in his diary kept in France, speaks of her reproaching *him* for his want of republicanism. Mr. Jefferson had a zealous friend and admirer in her. Within twenty-four hours of her receipt of the above letter, we dare say, its contents were known to most of the patriotic chiefs in the Assembly of Notables.

Before leaving Nismes, he fulfilled an appointment with an unknown correspondent, who had announced that he had a communication of importance to make. He proved to be a Brazilian anxious to engage the United States in an attempt to revolutionize that country. Mr. Jefferson declined committing himself to him. Those anxious to see the particulars of their interview, will find them in a dispatch to Mr. Jay, dated May 4th.

He reached Aix on the 25th of March. The following letter, written from thence to his oldest daughter, in Paris, contains a good deal of his philosophy of life :

TO MARTHA JEFFERSON.

AIX EN PROVENCE, *March 28, 1787.*

I was happy, my dear Patsy, to receive, on my arrival here, your letter, informing me of your good health and occupations. I have not written you sooner because I have been almost constantly on the road. My journey hitherto has been a very pleasing one. It was undertaken with the hope that the mineral waters of this place might restore strength to my wrist. Other considerations also concurred—instruction, amusement, and abstraction from business, of which I had too much at Paris. I am glad to learn that you are employed in things new and good, in your music and drawing. You know what have been my fears for some time past—that you do not employ yourself so closely as I could wish. You have promised me a more assiduous attention, and I have great confidence in what you promise. It is your future happiness which interests me, and nothing can contribute more to it (moral rectitude always excepted) than the contracting a habit of industry and activity. Of all the cankers of human happiness, none corrodes with so silent, yet so baneful a tooth, as indolence. Body and mind both unemployed, our being becomes a burthen, and every object about us loathsome, even the dearest. Idle-

ness begets ennui, ennui the hypochondria, and that a diseased body. No laborious person was ever yet hysterical. Exercise and application produce order in our affairs, health of body, cheerfulness of mind, and these make us precious to our friends. It is while we are young that the habit of industry is formed. If not then, it never is afterwards. The fortune of our lives, therefore, depends on employing well the short period of youth. If at any moment, my dear, you catch yourself in idleness, start from it as you would from the precipice of a gulf. You are not, however, to consider yourself as unemployed while taking exercise. That is necessary for your health, and health is the first of all objects. For this reason, if you leave your dancing-master for the summer, you must increase your other exercise.

I do not like your saying that you are unable to read the ancient print of your Livy, but with the aid of your master. We are always equal to what we undertake with resolution. A little degree of this will enable you to decipher your Livy. If you always lean on your master, you will never be able to proceed without him. It is a part of the American character to consider nothing as desperate—to surmount every difficulty by resolution and contrivance. In Europe there are shops for every want: its inhabitants therefore have no idea that their wants can be furnished otherwise. Remote from all other aid, we are obliged to invent and to execute; to find means within ourselves, and not to lean on others. Consider, therefore, the conquering your Livy as an exercise in the habit of surmounting difficulties; a habit which will be necessary to you in the country where you are to live, and without which you will be thought a very helpless animal, and less esteemed. Music, drawing, books, invention, and exercise, will be so many resources to you against ennui. But there are others which, to this object, add that of utility. These are the needle and domestic economy. The latter you cannot learn here, but the former you may. In the country life of America there are many moments when a woman can have recourse to nothing but her needle for employment. In a dull company and in dull weather, for instance, it is ill manners to read; it is ill manners to leave them; no card-playing there among genteel people—that is abandoned to blackguards. The needle is then a valuable resource. Besides, without knowing how to use it herself, how can the mistress of a family direct the works of her servants?

You ask me to write you long letters. I will do it, my dear, on condition you will read them from time to time, and practice what they will inculcate. Their precepts will be dictated by experience, by a perfect knowledge of the situation in which you will be placed, and by the fondest love for you. This it is which makes me wish to see you more qualified than common. My expectations from you are high—yet not higher than you may attain. Industry and resolution are all that are wanting. Nobody in this world can make me so happy, or so miserable, as you. Retirement from public life will ere long become necessary for me. To your sister and yourself I look to render the evening of my life serene and contented. Its morning has been clouded by loss after loss, till I have nothing left but you. I do not doubt either your affection or dispositions. But great exertions are necessary, and you have little time left to make them. Be industrious, then, my dear child. Think nothing unsurmountable by resolution and application, and you will be all that I wish you to be.

You ask me if it is my desire that you should dine at the Abbess's table? It is. Propose it as such to Madame de Frauleinheim, with my respectful compli-

ments and thanks for her care of you. Continue to love me with all the warmth with which you are beloved by, my dear Patsy,

Yours affectionately,

TH. JEFFERSON.

This is, certainly, line upon line, and precept upon precept, on the subject of industry, to a girl of fifteen, advanced enough to be reading Livy, and occupied in a number of other studies. But Martha had a joyous, serene, contented disposition—taking the world easily; and it was rather this easiness of temper than any actual symptoms of indolence, which alarmed a parent so easily alarmed, and so exacting on *that* head. He undoubtedly made an effort to produce a deep and a lasting impression on her mind in regard to a virtue ranked so highly by him—and he fully succeeded. In this she became a complete reflection of himself.¹

Mr. Jefferson soon became satisfied that the waters of Aix were of no benefit to him, and he accordingly abridged his stay there. He remained several days at Marseilles, prosecuting commercial and several other inquiries, but failing to ascertain satisfactorily whether the difference in American and Piedmont rice consisted in the species or the method of cleaning, he determined to visit the rice fields of the latter to settle the question. He reached Toulon on the 6th of April, and the next day again wrote his daughter:

TO MARTHA JEFFERSON.

TOULON, April 7, 1787.

MY DEAR PATSY:

I received yesterday at Marseilles your letter of March 25th; and I received it with pleasure, because it announced to me that you were well. Experience

¹ The person who furnished us the above letter—nearly related to the parties, and entirely familiar with them personally—subjoined the following note, which the writer must excuse us for copying:

“The constant solicitude, the sleepless vigilance, and indefatigable assiduity manifested by him on this point, were crowned with their just reward. In this feature of character, as in many others, hers became but a beautiful reflection of his own—a daguerreotype of the finest stamp. In thinking of him under this aspect, the conviction has often arisen, that never, in any single instance, under any circumstances however fortuitous (since early manhood at least), can he have willingly ‘wasted his time,’ *even to the extent of one minute*. I feel sure that this never can have happened; that, when in health, he never can have been for an instant ‘listless,’ never in the mood of ‘whiling away time.’

“Such is my conviction as to him; and the same conviction exists as to her. She was always employed when her time was at her own disposal. Had her day been 240 hours long instead of 24, not a minute of it would have ‘hung heavy’ on her hands. She would have had *occupation* for them all—a part of this occupation (in conformity with his scheme of life) consisting in the exercise of the affections, domestic and social; in *recreations* of the refining and purifying kind, and in bodily exercise.”

learns us to be always anxious about the health of those whom we love. I have not been able to write to you so often as I expected, because I am generally on the road; and when I stop anywhere, I am occupied in seeing what is to be seen. It will be some time now, perhaps three weeks, before I shall be able to write you again. But this need not slacken your writing to me, because you have leisure, and your letters come regularly to me. I have received letters which inform me that our dear Polly¹ will certainly come to us this summer. By the time I return, it will be time to expect her. When she arrives, she will become a precious charge on your hands. The difference of your age, and your common loss of a mother, will put that office on you. Teach her, above all things, to be good—because without that, we can neither be valued by others, nor set any value on ourselves. Teach her to be always true; no vice is so mean as the want of truth, and at the same time so useless. Teach her never to be angry: anger only serves to torment ourselves, to divert others, and alienate their esteem. And teach her industry and application to useful pursuits. I will venture to assure you, that if you inculcate this in her mind, you will make her a happy being in herself, a most inestimable friend to you, and precious to all the world. In teaching her these dispositions of mind, you will be more fixed in them yourself, and render yourself dear to all your acquaintances. Practice them, then, my dear, without ceasing. If ever you find yourself in difficulty, and doubt how to extricate yourself, do what is right, and you will find it the easiest way of getting out of the difficulty. Do it for the additional incitement of increasing the happiness of him who loves you infinitely, and who is, my dear Patsy,

Yours affectionately,

TH. JEFFERSON.

He arrived at Nice on the 9th of April. From this place (April 11th) he wrote General Lafayette:

"In the great cities I go to see, what travellers think alone worthy of being seen; but I make a job of it, and generally gulp it all down in a day. On the other hand, I am never satiated with rambling through the fields and farms, examining the culture and cultivators, with a degree of curiosity which makes some take me to be a fool, and others to be much wiser than I am."

After comparing (in the same letter) the agricultural condition of some of the provinces which he had passed, with each other and with England—complaining that the French laws did not allow leases long enough for the benefit of both the landlord and tenant, he uttered the following noble sentences:

"From the first olive fields of Pierrelatte, to the orangeries 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.

¹ Mary, Mr. Jefferson's youngest daughter.

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."

Leaving Nice on the 13th, he proceeded to Coni on mules, the snows on the mountains not yet permitting the passage of carriages. He had expected to reach the country furnishing the "Piedmont rice" of commerce, immediately after crossing the Alps, but found that it was cultivated no nearer than Vercelli and Novarra, a good portion of the way to Milan. He reached Turin on the 16th, and Vercelli on the 20th. He soon ascertained that the machines used here in cleaning rice were the same with the American ones—that the breaking of the Carolina rice was owing to its inferior quality. The Government of Turin, aware of the superiority of its variety, even over those of the rest of Italy, prohibited the exportation of rough rice, as Mr. Jefferson was informed, under pain of death. He seems to have regarded this a state of things where smuggling was justifiable, so he crammed his coat and surtout pockets with the precious product, and also, though very doubtful of ever seeing any return for his money, hired a muleteer to run a couple of sacks across the Apennines to Genoa—his object being, of course, to send the seed to the rice-producing regions of the United States.¹

He was at Milan on the 20th, Pavia on the 23d, Genoa on the 25th, and back again at Nice May 1st—so that he was a little over three weeks in Italy. His journal there contains the usual minute practical details, and little besides. He thus, a few months afterwards,² spoke of this trip to Mr. Wythe:

"My time allowed me to go no further than Turin, Milan, and Genoa: consequently, I scarcely got into classical ground. I took with me some of the writings, in which endeavors have been made to investigate the passage of Annibal over the Alps, and was just able to satisfy myself, from a view of the country, that the descriptions given of his march are not sufficiently particular, to enable us at this day, even to guess at his track across the Alps. In Architecture, painting, sculpture, I found much amusement: but more than all, in their agriculture, many

¹ Letter to Edward Rutledge, July 14, 1787.

² September 16th.

objects of which might be adopted with us to great advantage. I am persuaded, there are many parts of our lower country where the olive tree might be raised, which is assuredly the richest gift of heaven. I can scarcely except bread. I see this tree supporting thousands among the Alps, where there is not soil enough to make bread for a single family. The caper, too, might be cultivated with us. The fig we do raise."

And he added this very memorable opinion, as the result of his investigations, in regard to making the grape a staple of national industry :

"I do not speak of the vine, because it is the parent of misery. Those who cultivate it are always poor, and he who would employ himself with us, in the culture of corn, cotton, etc., can procure, in exchange for them, much more wine, and better, than he could raise by its direct culture."

In the principal Italian, as in the French towns, Mr. Jefferson was received with marked attention by the officials and prominent inhabitants. Here, too, he conferred with the leading merchants in regard to the best steps for increasing their commerce with the United States. He satisfied himself that this part of Italy might be supplied with American whale-oil; and he put matters in train to induce the Italian merchants to purchase their tobacco directly from the United States, instead, as hitherto, from England.

Some letters to Martha describe his further progress, and give other particulars :

TO MARTHA JEFFERSON.

MARSEILLES, *May 5, 1787.*

MY DEAR PATSY :

I got back to Aix the day before yesterday, and found there your letter of the 9th of April—from which I presume you to be well, though you do not say so. In order to exercise your geography, I will give you a detail of my journey. You must therefore take your map and trace out the following places: Dijon, Lyons, Pont St. Esprit, Nismes, Arles, St. Remis, Aix, Marseilles, Toulon, Hieres, Fréjus, Antibes, Nice, Col de Tende, Coni, Turin, Vercelli, Milan, Pavia, Tortona, Novi, Genoa, by sea to Albenga, by land to Monaco, Nice, Antibes, Fréjus, Brignolles, Aix and Marseilles. The day after to-morrow, I set out hence for Aix, Avignon, Pont du Gard, Nismes, Montpellier, Narbonne, along the canal of Languedoc to Toulouse, Bordeaux, Rochefort, Rochelle, Nantes, L'Orient, Nantes, Tours, Orléans, and Paris—where I shall arrive about the middle of June, after having travelled something upwards of a thousand leagues.

From Genoa to Aix was very fatiguing, the first two days having been at sea, and mortally sick—two more clambering the cliffs of the Apennines, sometimes on foot, sometimes on a mule, according as the path was more or less difficult—and two others travelling through the night as well as day without sleep. I am not yet

rested, and shall therefore shortly give you rest by closing my letter, after mentioning that I have received a letter from your sister, which, though a year old, gave me great pleasure. I inclose it for your perusal, as I think it will be pleasing to you also. But take care of it, and return it to me when I shall get back to Paris, for trifling as it seems, it is precious to me.

When I left Paris, I wrote to London to desire that your harpsichord might be sent during the months of April and May, so that I am in hopes it will arrive a little before I shall, and give me an opportunity of judging whether you have got the better of that want of industry which I began to fear would be the rock on which you would split. Determine never to be idle. No person will have occasion to complain of the want of time who never loses any. It is wonderful how much may be done if we are always doing. And that you may be always doing good, my dear, is the ardent prayer of

Yours affectionately,

TH. JEFFERSON.

TO MARTHA JEFFERSON.

May 21, 1787.

I write you, my dear Patsy, from the canal of Languedoc, on which I am at present sailing, as I have been for a week past—cloudless skies above, limpid waters below, and on each hand, a row of nightingales in full chorus. This delightful bird had given me a rich treat before, at the fountain of Vacluse. After visiting the tomb of Laura, at Avignon, I went to see this fountain—a noble one of itself, and rendered forever famous by the songs of Petrarch, who lived near it. I arrived there somewhat fatigued, and sat down by the fountain to repose myself. It gushes, of the size of a river, from a secluded valley of the mountain, the ruins of Petrarch's château being perched on a rock two hundred feet perpendicular above. To add to the enchantment of the scene, every tree and bush was filled with nightingales in full song. I think you told me that you had not yet noticed this bird. As you have trees in the garden of the Convent, there might be nightingales in them, and this is the season of their song. Endeavor, my dear, to make yourself acquainted with the music of this bird, that when you return to your own country you may be able to estimate its merit in comparison with that of the mocking-bird. The latter has the advantage of singing through a great part of the year, whereas the nightingale sings but about five or six weeks in the spring, and a still shorter term, and with a more feeble voice, in the fall.

I expect to be at Paris about the middle of next month. By that time we may begin to expect our dear Polly. It will be a circumstance of inexpressible comfort to me to have you both with me once more. The object most interesting to me for the residue of my life, will be to see you both developing daily those principles of virtue and goodness which will make you valuable to others and happy in yourselves, and acquiring those talents and that degree of science which will guard you at all times against ennui, the most dangerous poison of life. A mind always employed is always happy. This is the true secret, the grand recipe, for felicity. The idle are the only wretched. In a world which furnishes so many employments which are useful, and so many which are amusing, it is our own fault if we ever know what ennui is, or if we are ever driven to the miserable resource of gaming, which corrupts our dispositions, and teaches us a habit of hostility against all mankind.

We are now entering the port of Toulouse, where I quit my bark, and of course must conclude my letter. Be good and be industrious, and you will be what I shall most love in the world. Adieu, my dear child.

Yours affectionately,

TH. JEFFERSON.

The following is the conclusion of a hitherto unpublished letter to his brother-in-law, Mr. Eppes, dated Bordeaux, May 26, accompanying a present of wine:

* * * "Much hurried by my departure hence, I cannot enter into details of news, etc. I must beg you, however, to deliver my love to Jack,¹ to tell him that his letter which he wrote near a year ago, came to my hands but a few days ago at Marseilles, and that it shall be among the first I answer on my arrival at Paris, which will not be till the middle of next month. He will have more claims to every service of mine than I can possibly find opportunities of rendering them. Recall me to the affectionate remembrance of Mrs. Eppes and the family. I say nothing of my dear Poll, hoping she is on her passage, yet fearing to think of it. Adieu, my dear sir, and be assured of the warmest esteem of your affectionate friend and servant."

TO MARTHA JEFFERSON.

(Extract.)

NANTES, *June 1, 1787.*

* * * * *
I forgot, in my last letter, to desire you to learn all your old tunes over again perfectly, that I may hear them on your harpsichord, on its arrival. I have no news of it, however, since I left Paris, though I presume it will arrive immediately, as I have ordered. Learn some slow movements of simple melody, for the Celestini stop, as it suits such only. I am just setting out for L'Orient, and shall have the happiness of seeing you at Paris about the 12th or 15th of this month, and assuring you in person of the sincere love of

Yours affectionately,

TH. JEFFERSON.

The passage in the letter of May 5th, about returning to him the "precious" few words of child's scrawl, written by the little "Polly" (or Mary), calls to mind the drawer of mementos, "covered with fond words of endearment," found in Mr. Jefferson's cabinet after his death!

We are also reminded of a manuscript² letter, forgotten by us in passing from Mr. Jefferson to Mr. Eppes (with whom

¹ John W. Eppes, the future husband of Mary or Maria Jefferson, the "dear Poll" of this letter.

² We have not supposed it necessary to continue to repeat to the reader with each of Mr. Jefferson's letters to his daughters and family, that they are from manuscripts, not heretofore published, and placed in our possession by Mr. Jefferson's grandchildren. The remark applies to this entire class of letters.

“Polly” had been left) written the year before (July 22d, 1786), from which we will now clip but the following passage, to show the yearning of the father’s heart for his absent child. He said: “Your letters of April 11th, and Mr. Lewis’s of March 14th, came to hand the 29th of June. I perceive they were to have come by Colonel Le Maire, but I hear nothing of his arrival. I had fondly flattered myself to receive my dear Polly with him, an idea which I cannot relinquish whatever be the difficulties.”

We might as well here include another letter to Martha, exceedingly characteristic in its contents, written four days after his return to Paris:

TO MARTHA JEFFERSON.

PARIS, June 14, 1787.

I send you, my dear Patsy, the 15 livres you desired. You propose this to me as an anticipation of five weeks’ allowance; but do you not see, my dear, how imprudent it is to lay out in one moment what should accommodate you for five weeks?—that this is a departure from that rule which I wish to see you governed by, thro’ your whole life, of never buying anything which you have not money in your pocket to pay for? Be assured that it gives much more pain to the mind to be in debt, than to do without any article whatever which we may seem to want. The purchase you have made is one of those I am always ready to make for you, because it is my wish to see you dressed always cleanly and a little more than decently. But apply to me first for the money before you make a purchase, were it only to avoid breaking thro’ your rule. Learn yourself the habit of adhering rigorously to the rules you lay down for yourself. I will come for you about eleven o’clock on Saturday. Hurry the making your gown, and also your reding-cote. You will go with me some day next week to dine at the Marquis Fayette’s. Adieu my dear daughter.

Yours affectionately,

TH. JEFFERSON.

It may be scarcely necessary to say that the aim of this letter (like that of a former one) was to impress a *rule*. He knew the vigorous and sensible, but at the same time, ductile mind to which he was addressing himself. He knew the quiet, reasoning Martha would weigh well his words both for themselves, and because they were his. It was his practice, as we have just seen, to make a particular and earnest appeal to her where he feared her easy disposition, not prone to “borrow trouble,” might lead, or was leading her into careless habits. After that earnest appeal, and perhaps two or three subsequent finishing blows, the work was done, and forever. Herein Martha resembled her father when he was at the same age. The mind seemed as impressible as the heated wax, yet the

Paris June 14. 1807.

I send you, my dear Patsy, the 15 livres you desired. you propose this to me as an anticipation of five weeks allowance. but do you not see my dear how imprudent it is to lay out in one moment what should accomodate you for five weeks? that this is a departure from that rule which I wish to see you governed by, thro' your whole life, of never buying any thing which you have not money in your pocket to pay for? be assured that it gives much more pain to the mind to be in debt, than to do without any article whatever which we may seem to want. the purchase you have made is one of those I am always ready to make for you, because it is my wish to see you dressed always cleanly & a little more than decently. but apply to me first for the money before you make a purchase, were it only to avoid breaking thro' your rule. learn yourself the habit of adhering vigorously to the rules you lay down for yourself. I will come for you about eleven o'clock on Saturday. hurry the making your gown, and also your redingote. you will go with me some day next week to dine at the Marquis Fayette's. Adieu my dear daughter

your's affectionately

J. A. M.

understanding must be convinced to make any permanent impression. That done, the wax took the form of the seal, and held it sharp and clear ever after. Wax does not, however, furnish us a proper illustration; neither would rock nor iron. Wax is too easily re-molten and re-impressed—iron and granite too rough and rigid. Martha, like her father, had not a pharisaical feature. She did not carry her virtues catalogued on her front, nor was she given to smiting her breast in self-complacency, because other people lacked them. Hers was one of those sweet, gentle, and thoroughly womanly natures every day met with—seemingly too pliant and unselfish to entertain a feeling that would contravene another's—and actually ready to gratify others by yielding everything immaterial; yet when a principle, or an established maxim of conduct became involved, unobtrusively exhibiting *impressions* as clear as those marked on the wax, and more ineffaceable than those wrought in the granite or iron. Granite and iron may be shattered by overwhelming force. The calm resolve of a gentle, virtuous, and truly elevated mind, no force on earth can bend or shatter.

We turn to the never-failing pocket account-book, and we find the identical entry of the "fifteen livres," named in the letter of June 14th. Twelve days after comes the entry of the liberal sum paid for the "reding-cote." Running our eye backward and forward, there is scarcely a page which does not contain from two or three to a half a dozen records of sums paid for necessities or luxuries (some of the last elegant) "for Patsy." When little "Polly" arrived, these thicken. The first teachers in Paris attended them in certain branches, besides their regular attendance at vastly the most expensive boarding-school at Paris. Mr. Jefferson's liberality to his daughters, in money matters, would have been censurable in a man of narrow means. But none the less were they taught such lessons as those contained in the letter of June 14th:

Soon after Mr. Jefferson's return to the capital, he thus (in a dispatch to Mr. Jay, June 21st) mentions the political changes which had taken place in his absence:

"The new accessions to the ministry are valued here. Good is hoped from the Archbishop of Toulouse, who succeeds the Count de Vergennes as *Chef du Conseil de Finance*. Monsieur de Villedeuil, the Controller-General, has been approved by the public in the offices he has heretofore exercised. The Duke de

Nivernois, called to the Council, is reckoned a good and able man; and Monsieur de Malesherbes, called also to the Council, is unquestionably the first character in the kingdom, for integrity, patriotism, knowledge, and experience in business. There is a fear that the Maréchal de Castries is disposed to retire."

Some further sketches are furnished ¹ to a private correspondent, Mr. Madison:

"The late changes in the ministry here, excite considerable hopes. I think we gain in them all. I am particularly happy at the reëntury of Malesherbes into the Council. His knowledge and integrity render his value inappreciable, and the greater to me, because while he had no views of office, we had established together the most unreserved intimacy. So far, too, I am pleased with Montmorin. His honesty proceeds from the heart as well as the head, and therefore may be more surely counted on. The King loves business, economy, order, and justice, and wishes sincerely the good of his people; but he is irascible, rude, very limited in his understanding, and religious bordering on bigotry. He has no mistress, loves his queen, and is too much governed by her. She is capricious like her brother, and governed by him; devoted to pleasure and expense; and not remarkable for any other vices or virtues. Unhappily the King shows a propensity for the pleasures of the table. That for drink has increased lately, or, at least, it has become more known."

The American Minister immediately set himself to work, with the new cabinet, to produce the meliorations in or additions to the Order of Bernis, of which his recent journey had suggested the propriety. These included a considerable list of American imports which he claimed could be properly made free, or placed at lower rates of duty, and also regulations which would prevent future evasions on the part of the Farmers-General.²

Several interesting letters, answers to those of friends, that had accumulated during his absence, appear in his correspondence at this period. Most of them, however, must be passed, as usual, without notice. In one to Madison, commences his comments on the propositions before, and the proceedings of, the Convention of the American States, sitting in Philadelphia, to form a Federal Constitution. He thus speaks of the proposal to give the General Government a negative on State laws:

¹ June 20th.

² He asked an entire suppression of duties on pitch, tar and turpentine; that all other fish oils be placed on the same footing with whale oil, as had been intended in the Order of Bernis; that duties levied in contravention of that order at Rouen, be henceforth stopped; that the order itself be formed into an *Arrêt*, and dated back; and some other things. See (in Jefferson's Works) Observations addressed to Count de Montmorin, July 6, 1787. Letter to John Adams, July 1. He also renewed his attack on the contract with the Farmers-General—attempting to procure the unqualified withdrawal of tobacco from it. Letter to Jay, August 6th.

"*Prima facie*, I do not like it. It fails in an essential character; that the hole and the patch should be commensurate. But this proposes to mend a small hole by covering the whole garment. Not more than one out of one hundred State acts concerns the confederacy. This proposition, then, in order to give them one degree of power, which they ought to have, gives them ninety-nine more, which they ought not to have, upon a presumption that they will not exercise the ninety-nine."

He also complains that the sale of the Western lands of the United States is not commenced for the immediate extinction of their debts; and that on the subject of the navigation of the Mississippi, Congress had shown itself "capable of hesitating on a question which proposed a clear sacrifice of the Western to the maritime States."¹

Here is the favorite arithmetical argument, applied to a familiar topic, in a letter to David Hartley, of England; and the closing sentences are worth remembering, as giving the length and breadth of Jefferson's "democracy:"

"An insurrection in one of thirteen States in the course of eleven years that they have subsisted, amounts to one in any particular State, in one hundred and forty-three years, say a century and a half. This would not be near as many as have happened in every other government that has ever existed. So that we shall have the difference between a light and a heavy government, as clear gain. I have no fear, but that the result of our experiment will be, that men may be trusted to govern themselves without a master. Could the contrary of this be proved, I should conclude, either that there is no God, or that he is a malevolent being."

On the 6th of July, he replied to a letter from Thomas Mann Randolph, Jr., of Virginia, then at the University of Edinburgh; and three weeks later, to another, from John Wayles Eppes, of the same State, in the College of William and Mary, by both of whom he had been solicited to give his advice in regard to a proper pursuit and a proper line of studies, after the writers should have completed their collegiate education. It is probable that ten such applications were made to Mr. Jefferson by the eminent young men of the day, where one was made to any other of the public men of Virginia, if not of the United States. The letters to young Randolph and young Eppes possess the usual interest of all such communications written by the same author, and the additional one, in this case, of being letters of

¹ Jefferson to Madison, June 20.

advice to the future husbands of his daughters, though at the time such a thing was probably very little anticipated.

During this month (July), the long expected "Polly" (Mary, called Marie in France, and thenceforth through life, Maria) reached London. She had crossed the Atlantic with simply a servant girl, though doubtless they were both intrusted to the charge of some passenger friend, or some known and trusted ship commander, whom we do not find named. They were received by Mrs. Adams, and awaited an expected opportunity of crossing the Channel with a party of French friends of Mr. Jefferson. These continued to defer their return, and Mr. Jefferson became too impatient to await their movements. Accordingly his steward, the favorite and trusty Petit, was sent to London after Marie, and she reached her father's hotel in Paris on the 29th of July, just three days before her ninth birth-day.

Mrs. Adams thus described her little guest, immediately after her departure, in a letter to her sister, Mrs. Cranch, of Massachusetts :

"I have had with me for a fortnight a little daughter of Mr. Jefferson's, who arrived here with a young negro girl, her servant, from Virginia. Mr. Jefferson wrote me some months ago that he expected them, and desired me to receive them. I did so, and was amply repaid for my trouble. A finer child of her age I never saw. So mature an understanding, so womanly a behavior, and so much sensibility, united, are rarely to be met with. I grew so fond of her, and she was so attached to me, that, when Mr. Jefferson sent for her, they were obliged to force the little creature away. She is but eight years old. She would sit, sometimes, and describe to me the parting with her aunt, who brought her up,¹ the obligations she was under to her, and the love she had for her little cousins, till the tears would stream down her cheeks ; and how I had been her friend, and she loved me. Her papa would break her heart by making her go again. She clung round me so that I could not help shedding a tear at parting with her. She was the favorite of every one in the house. I regret that such fine spirits must be spent in the walls of a convent. She is a beautiful girl, too."²

Maria (for so we shall henceforth call her, unless when adopting her father's *sobriquet* of Polly) was soon placed with Martha in the school of the Abbaye de Panthemont.

Martha had now grown into a tall, graceful girl, with that calm, sweet face, stamped with thought and earnestness, which, with the traces of many more years on it, and the nobler dignity of the matron superadded, beams down from the speaking can-

¹ Mrs. Francis Eppes, of Eppington, Va. ² Mrs. Adams's Letters, vol. ii. p. 172.

vas of Sully. The most dutiful of daughters, the most attentive of learners, possessing a solid understanding, a judgment ripe beyond her years, a most gentle and genial temper, and an unassuming modesty of demeanor which neither the distinction of her position, nor the flatteries that afterwards surrounded her, ever wore off in the least degree, she was the idol of her father and family, and the delight of all who knew her.

The little Maria has been sufficiently described by Mrs. Adams. She remarks that she was "beautiful." Slighter in person than her sister, she already gave indications of a superior beauty. It was that exquisite beauty possessed by her mother—that beauty which the experienced learn to look upon with dread, because it betrays a physical organization too delicately fine to withstand the rough shocks of the world.

The relations which Mr. Jefferson bore to his daughters were not the usual ones of a father. We have mentioned the feminine softness and feminine general cast of his feelings in a few particulars—especially where his family was concerned. Then, the early death of his wife devolved maternal as well as paternal duties on him towards his orphaned children. Neither his inclinations nor his habits made the former irksome. He was naturally fond of children; he was cautious and painstaking; his eye and ear were quick to watch over them and note their little wants; he had the feminine dexterity and delicacy of manipulation; he had the feminine loving patience; he appreciated their feelings and decided instantly and correctly what was under all circumstances appropriate to them, with a feminine instinct. No child or grandchild of his (we make these assertions on full authority) ever received a harsh or angry word from him, on one solitary occasion. Nay, no member of his family ever saw him exhibit passion but barely twice, during his whole life. What those occasions were we shall not fail to relate. No child or grandchild ever complained, even momentarily, of an injustice, great or small, received at his hands. Often and often have those grandchildren heard their mother, Martha Jefferson (Mrs. Randolph), declare, that though her dear and excellent mother died when she was ten years old, she could remember trifling, unintentional errors on her part, but "never, never," she would emphatically add, "had she witnessed a *particle* of injustice in her father—never had she heard

him say a word, or seen him do an act, which she at the time, or afterwards, regretted." We have heard the same declaration in respect to him from several of his grandchildren who lived from ten to thirty years under the same roof.¹

We seriously doubt whether Mr. Jefferson, in any instance, allowed his most confidential servant—even Petit—to buy so much as a pair of shoestrings for his daughters while in Paris. To provide for all their wants was his own especial and favorite task, either alone or in their company. He chose thus to let them know his solicitude for their proper gratifications—and they, on the other hand, were not willing to purchase the most trifling thing until their father's supposed infallible taste was consulted. "They venerated him," Martha was wont to say, "as something wiser and better than other men; he seemed to them to know everything, even the thoughts in their minds, all their untold wishes; they wondered they did not fear him, yet they did not any more than they did companions of their own age." "To do anything that he thought was wrong, in the most trivial thing, they thought not only wrong, but ungrateful and unaffectionate. They desired that he might think differently from them, so they could have the chance of surrendering up their wishes to his. They longed to do something to serve him—to add, if but in the least degree, to his comfort and happiness." These feelings were entertained, as we shall have occasion to see, quite as strongly by the next generation of his descendants.

If Mr. Jefferson supplied the place of a mother to his two daughters, they treated him, in some particulars, more as daughters are wont to treat a mother, than as they often do a father. Neither had a serious feeling which they did not communicate to him. He was their confidant and counsellor in every girlish doubt—they ran to him with their joys, and fled to him to weep out their childish griefs on his bosom. And never, in after life, were these tender and beautiful relations for a moment broken in upon, or interrupted by a passing shadow.

On the 6th of August, Mr. Jefferson "received an intimation that it would be agreeable [to the French Government] not to press our commercial regulations at that moment, the Ministry being too much occupied with the difficulties surrounding

¹ *All of his grandchildren most emphatically concur in this declaration.*

them to spare a moment on any subject which would admit of delay."¹

Indications threatening to public tranquillity were now rife in several parts of Europe. In Holland, those fatal convulsions had commenced which destroyed popular freedom. In France, the low rumble of the earthquake was swelling into an angry roar, and the ground was beginning to heave and to rock under the foundations of society. The meeting of the Assembly of Notables had been the means of exposing the national bankruptcy to every eye. A few timely reforms, and promises of retrenchment, had lulled the public mind into a temporary hope of extrication. It soon became apparent, however, that no serious retrenchments were meditated. On the contrary, the King issued edicts for new taxes, and ordered the Parliament of Paris to enregister them. That body refused. Finally it was summoned to Versailles to hold a "bed of justice," and the King personally, and, in harsh terms, ordered them to enregister two edicts. They stood out, it being their object to compel a resort to a meeting of the States-General, which it was hoped would limit expenses and dictate a constitution. On their final refusal, the King (Aug. 15th) exiled them to Troyes.

Paris was now in commotion. Mobs gathered in the streets and caricatures and inflammatory placards, attacking or ridiculing the Government, were seen in every direction. Some regiments were ordered into the neighborhood of the city; arrests were made; the streets were patrolled by strong military parties; and the places of public amusement were shut up. This apparently restored order—but indications of seated and sullen discontent became daily more apparent. The unfortunate King, "long in the habit of drowning his cares in wine, plunged deeper and deeper. The Queen cried, but sinned on."² The reform party daily became stronger, and soon embraced nearly all the young and middle-aged men of France.³ Finally, the government yielded. The Parliament of Paris was recalled; the obnoxious taxes were given up; and others substituted which fell in proper proportion on the wealthy. The national feelings were again appeased for a time. But the worn-out monarchy had exhibited to the world a fatal indication of its weakness. Mr. Jefferson wrote Mr. Jay:

¹ Jefferson to Jay.

² Jefferson to Adams, August 30.

³ *Ib.*

"There can be no better proof of the revolution in the public opinion, as to the powers of the monarch, and of the force, too, of that opinion. Six weeks ago, we saw the King displaying the plenitude of his omnipotence, as hitherto conceived, to enforce these two acts.¹ At this day, he is forced to retract them by the public voice; for as to the opposition of the Parliament, that body is too little esteemed to produce this effect in any case, where the public do not throw themselves into the same scale."

During this lull, the American Minister again urgently pressed the claims of his country. The principal modifications recently solicited by him, in the duties, were made.² He then urged the exception of the United States from a recent general *Arrêt* in regard to whale oils, which would operate severely on Massachusetts—insisting that the commerce of a nation which brought nothing but raw materials in exchange, was entitled to privileges over those which brought manufactured products.³ He pressed his former proposition to reduce all temporary orders and regulations in regard to American commerce into a formal *Arrêt*. This was assented to, and the Comptroller-General and the American Minister worked several days together, aided by General Lafayette and M. Dupont, in settling and arranging its provisions. It was finally passed; and tobacco was, in a separate instrument, made the subject of favorable modifications.⁴ The *Arrêt* met with an unsuccessful opposition in the Council. Except in regard to tobacco, nearly every commercial advantage which the United States could, at this period, reasonably expect from France, was now attained.

The complications, and indications of a general war, growing out of the difficulties in Holland, and the interference of Prussia in them, drew from Mr. Jefferson the following reflections on the influence of such a war on the interests of the United States (in a letter to General Washington, August 14th):

"A war, wherein France, Holland, and England should be parties, seems, *prima facie*, to promise much advantage to us. But in the first place, no war can be safe

¹ The stamp tax and land tax.

² See Jefferson to Jay, September 22d.

³ Letter to Montmorin, October 23d.

⁴ Letters to Mr. Jay, November 3d and December 31. We have not the *Arrêt* before us, but the order of Bernis was the basis of its provisions as far as that went. Then the duties on tar, pitch and turpentine, asked by Jefferson on his return from his journey, were reduced to two and a half per cent. This was but a fourth to a sixth of the former duties on these articles, and was retained as the articles were produced in the South of France. A right of *entrepôt* was thenceforth given to American commerce in all the ports of France. American citizens were given the privileges and advantages of native subjects in all the French possessions in Asia and in the "scales leading thereto," i. e. the isles of France and Bourbon.

for us which threatens France with an unfavorable issue.¹ And in the next, it will probably embark us again into the ocean of speculation, engage us to over-trade ourselves, convert us into sea-rovers, under French and Dutch colors, divert us from agriculture, which is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals, and happiness. The wealth acquired by speculation and plunder is fugacious in its nature, and fills society with the spirit of gambling. The moderate and sure income of husbandry begets permanent improvement, quiet life, and orderly conduct both public and private. We have no occasion for more commerce than to take off our superfluous produce, and the people complain that some restrictions prevent this; yet the price of articles with us, in general, shows the contrary. Tobacco, indeed, is low, not because we cannot carry it where we please, but because we make more than the consumption requires. Upon the whole, I think peace advantageous to us, necessary for Europe, and desirable for humanity. A few days will decide, probably, whether all these considerations are to give way to the bad passions of kings, and those who would be kings."

His king-phobia increased! After commenting (in a letter to Colonel Humphreys, August 14th) on the unfortunate and threatening condition of Europe, he added:

"So much for the blessings of having kings, and magistrates who would be kings. From these events our young Republic may learn useful lessons, never to call on foreign powers to settle their differences, to guard against hereditary magistrates, to prevent their citizens from becoming so established in wealth and power, as to be thought worthy of alliance by marriage with the nieces, sisters, etc., of kings, and, in short, to besiege the throne of heaven with eternal prayers, to extirpate from creation this class of human lions, tigers, and mammoths called kings; from whom, let him perish who does not say, 'good Lord deliver us.'"

He wrote to Mr. Hawkins, August 4th:

"I look up with you to the federal Convention, for an amendment of our federal affairs. Yet I do not view them in so disadvantageous a light at present, as some do. And above all things, I am astonished at some people's considering a kingly government as a refuge. Advise such, to read the fable of the frogs who solicited Jupiter for a king. If that does not put them to rights, send them to Europe, to see something of the trappings of monarchy, and I will undertake, that every man shall go back thoroughly cured. If all the evils which can arise among us, from the republican form of our government, from this day to the day of judgment, could be put into a scale against what this country suffers from its monarchical form in a week, or England in a month, the latter would preponderate. Consider the contents of the Red Book in England, or the Almanach Royal in France, and say what a people gain by monarchy. No race of kings has ever presented above one man of common sense in twenty generations. The best they

¹ His belief was that nothing but the fear of France would prevent England from holding on permanently to the portion of our territory she yet forcibly held, and from extending her aggressions.

can do is, to leave things to their ministers; and what are their ministers but a committee, badly chosen? If the king ever meddles, it is to do harm."

To Joseph Jones, August 14th :

"I am anxious to hear what our federal Convention recommends, and what the States will do in consequence of their recommendation. * * * * With all the defects of our Constitution, whether general or particular, the comparison of our governments with those of Europe, is like a comparison of heaven and hell. England, like the earth, may be allowed to take the intermediate station. And yet, I hear there are people among you who think the experience of our governments has already proved that republican governments will not answer."

The view here expressed that the present American General Government (under the Articles of Confederation), combined with the action of the State Governments, was entirely preferable to any European plan or model, is repeated to many correspondents. To one, he utters the strong language "that it is without comparison the best existing, or that ever did exist."¹

To John Adams, he wrote, September 28th :

"What a crowd of lessons do the present miseries of Holland teach us! Never to have an hereditary officer of any sort: never to let a citizen ally himself with kings: never to call in foreign nations to settle domestic differences: never to suppose that any nation will expose itself to war for us, etc."

In regard to the proper attitude of the United States in the event of a general war, he thus wrote Mr. Adams, in the same letter :

"We, I hope, shall be left free to avail ourselves of the advantages of neutrality; and yet, much I fear the English, or rather their stupid King, will force us out of it. For thus I reason: By forcing us into the war against them, they will be engaged in an expensive land war, as well as a sea war; common sense dictates, therefore, that they should let us remain neuter: *ergo*, they will not let us remain neuter. I never yet found any other general rule for foretelling what they will do, but that of examining what they ought not to do."

These sentiments are repeated to various other correspondents.

Commenting on the shameless desertion of the patriots of Holland by France, contrary to the most solemn stipulations, he remarked to Mr. Jay :

"It conveys to us the important lesson, that no circumstances of morality, honor, interest, or engagement, are sufficient to authorize a secure reliance on any

¹ Letter to E. Carrington, August 4th.

nation, at all times, and in all positions. A moment of difficulty, or a moment of error, may render forever useless the most friendly dispositions in the King, in the major part of his ministers, and the whole of his nation."

The action of England, its arming to re-establish the Stadtholder, and the present acrimony of all classes of its inhabitants towards the United States, lead to the following suspicions:

"Yet it is possible, that having found that this court will not make war in this moment for any ally, new views may arise, and they may think the moment favorable for executing any purposes they may have, in our quarter. Add to this, that reason is of no aid in calculating their movements. We are, therefore, never safe till our magazines are filled with arms. The present season of truce or peace should, in my opinion, be improved without a moment's respite, to effect this essential object, and no means be omitted, by which money may be obtained for the purpose."

Mr. Jefferson's earlier impressions of the Federal Constitution, and of the expediency of its adoption by the States, has been made a point of some interest in his political history. He expressed great regret that the Convention sat with closed doors, but had a profound respect for the material of that body. He wrote Mr. Adams, August 30th:

"I am sorry they began their deliberations by so abominable a precedent as that of tying up the tongues of their members. Nothing can justify this example, but the innocence of their intentions, and ignorance of the value of public discussions. I have no doubt that all their other measures will be good and wise. It is really an assembly of demigods."

The Constitution, at first view, filled him with disappointment. He wrote Mr. Adams (November 13th), "that there were things in it which staggered all his dispositions to subscribe to what such an assembly had proposed;" to Colonel Smith (the same day), "that there were good articles in it and very bad, he did not know which preponderated." His first elaborate statement of the parts he approved and disapproved, accompanied by his reasons, is contained in a letter to Mr. Madison of December 20th. To give a very rapid synopsis of these: he liked a government which could go on without a recurrence to the State legislatures—the organization into departments—the power of Congress to levy taxes—the election of the greater house by the people directly—the "compromise of the opposite claims of the great and little States, of the latter to equal, and the former to proportional influence"—the substi-

tution of voting in Congress by persons instead of States—the negative given to the Executive conjointly with a third of either house¹—and “other good things of less moment,” provided for by the Constitution.

What he disliked was: first, “the omission of a bill of rights, providing clearly, and without the aid of sophism, for freedom of religion, freedom of the press, protection against standing armies, restriction of monopolies, the eternal and unremitting force of the habeas corpus laws and trials by jury in all matters of fact triable by the laws of the land, and not by the laws of nations.” He declared “that a bill of rights was what the people were entitled to against every government on earth, general or particular—and what no just government should refuse or rest on inference.” The second feature he disliked, and strongly disliked, was “the abandonment, in every instance, of the principle of rotation in office, and most particularly in the case of the President.”

These objections are supported with great force—particularly that against the perpetual reëligibility of the President. He suggested that after the Constitution had been duly weighed and canvassed by the people, and the parts they disliked and those they approved ascertained, the Convention should reassemble, and again act upon it. “At all events, he hoped” the people “would not be discouraged from making other trials if the present one should fail.”

He, however, soon abandoned this idea of having the Convention reassembled, and subscribed heartily to the course proposed by Massachusetts. To bring his views on this subject before the reader connectedly, we will anticipate in the presentation of some later declarations. He wrote Colonel Carrington, May 27th, 1788:

“I learn with great pleasure the progress of the new Constitution. Indeed I have presumed it would gain on the public mind, as I confess it has on my own. At first, though I saw that the great mass and groundwork was good, I disliked many appendages. Reflection and discussion have cleared off most of these. You have satisfied me as to the query I had put to you about the right of direct taxation. My first wish was that nine States would adopt it in order to ensure what was good in it, and that the others might, by holding off, produce the necessary amendments. But the plan of Massachusetts is far preferable, and will, I hope, be

¹ But he would have liked it better had the judiciary been associated for that purpose, or invested separately with a similar power.

followed by those who are yet to decide. There are two amendments only which I am anxious for: 1. A bill of rights, which it is so much the interest of all to have, that I conceive it must be yielded. The first amendment proposed by Massachusetts will in some degree answer this end, but not so well. It will do too much in some instances, and too little in others. It will cripple the Federal Government in some cases where it ought to be free, and not restrain in some others where restraint would be right. The 2d amendment which appears to me essential is the restoring the principle of necessary rotation, particularly to the Senate and Presidency: but most of all to the last. Reëligibility makes him an officer for life, and the disasters inseparable from an elective monarchy, render it preferable if we cannot tread back that step, that we should go forward and take refuge in an hereditary one. Of the correction of this article, however, I entertain no present hope, because I find it has scarcely excited an objection in America. And if it does not take place ere long, it assuredly never will. The natural progress of things is for liberty to yield and government to gain ground. As yet our spirits are free. Our jealousy is only put to sleep by the unlimited confidence we all repose in the person to whom we all look as our President. After him inferior characters may perhaps succeed, and awaken us to the danger which his merit has led us into. For the present, however, the general adoption is to be prayed for, and I wait, with great anxiety, for the news from Maryland and South Carolina, which have decided before this, and with that Virginia, now in session, may give the ninth vote of approbation. There could then be no doubt of North Carolina, New York, and New Hampshire. But what do you propose to do with Rhode Island? as long as there is hope we should give her time. I cannot conceive but that she will come to rights in the long run. Force, in whatever form, would be a dangerous precedent."

He wrote E. Rutledge, of South Carolina, July 18, 1788:

"I congratulate you on the accession of your State to the new federal Constitution. This is the last I have yet heard of, but I expect daily to hear that my own has followed the good example, and suppose it to be already established. Our government wanted bracing. Still we must take care not to run from one extreme to another; not to brace too high. I own, I join those in opinion, who think a bill of rights necessary. I apprehend, too, that the total abandonment of the principle of rotation in the offices of President and Senator, will end in abuse. But my confidence is, that there will, for a long time, be virtue and good sense enough in our countrymen to correct abuses. We can surely boast of having set the world a beautiful example of a government reformed by reason alone, without bloodshed. But the world is too far oppressed, to profit by the example. On this side of the Atlantic, the blood of the people is become an inheritance, and those who fatten on it, will not relinquish it easily."

The Constitution, with the amendments adopted in 1789-90, substantially, then, met all of Mr. Jefferson's views, with the single exception of the perpetual reëligibility of the President. And most fortunately (in our judgment) the examples of the first and third Presidents added the desired amendment, in practice, in that particular.

We find Mr. Jefferson, in 1787, as attentive as at previous periods to his miscellaneous correspondence, to those minor official duties which are not of sufficient importance for record, to executing private commissions for friends, and to looking out for everything new, and which promised advantage to his country in any branch of utility. On considering all his occupations, and how much he accomplished, we are inclined to ask ourselves where and when this machine-like industry could have ever paused for rest or sleep? But his secret, in this particular, has been told. "It is wonderful," as he wrote Martha, "how much may be done, if we are always doing."¹ He who turns amusement, relaxation, rest, every waking moment, into some channel of necessary endeavor, will, even though his pace be that of the tortoise, accomplish much in a life—nay, in a single year. And if this unremitting effort is accompanied by the swiftness of the hare, what broad fields of labor will not a single year find passed over—what towering Alps on Alps will not a life-time overcome!

Among a few of his most prominent miscellaneous correspondents of the year (that is, on topics neither diplomatic nor political), we may mention the Count de Buffon, Mr. Rittenhouse, Rev. James Madison, Mr. Vaughan (of England), and Charles Thompson, on scientific topics; Mr. Wythe, Mr. Hopkinson, Dr. Ramsay, and the Count del Vermi, on literary ones; General Washington, on internal improvements; Mr. Drayton and Mr. Rutledge, on the subject of introducing better varieties of rice, the culture of olives, and various other South-of-Europe products into the Southern States of America, etc., etc.

An amusing anecdote is preserved of the subject of his correspondence with the celebrated Buffon. The story used to be so well told by Daniel Webster—who probably heard it from the lips of the New Hampshire party to it—that we will give it in his words, as we find it recorded by an intelligent writer, and one evidently very familiar with Mr. Webster, in an article in Harper's Magazine, entitled *Social Hours of Daniel Webster*:

"Mr. Webster, in the course of his remarks, narrated a story of Jefferson's overcoming Buffon on a question of Natural History. It was a dispute in relation

¹ Letter to Martha, May 5th, 1787, ante, p. 474.

to the moose—the moose-deer, as it is called in New Hampshire—and in one of the circles of *beaux esprits* in Paris, Mr. Jefferson contended for certain characteristics in the formation of the animal, which Buffon stoutly denied. Whereupon Mr. Jefferson, without giving any one notice of his intention, wrote from Paris to General John Sullivan, then residing in Durham, New Hampshire, to procure and send him the whole frame of a moose. The General was no little astonished at a request he deemed so extraordinary; but well acquainted with Mr. Jefferson, he knew he must have sufficient motive for it; so he made a hunting party of his neighbors and took the field. They captured a moose of unusual proportions, stripped it to the bone, and sent the skeleton to Mr. Jefferson, at a cost of fifty pounds sterling. On its arrival, Mr. Jefferson invited Buffon and some other *savans* to a supper at his house, and exhibited his dear-bought specimen. Buffon immediately acknowledged his error, and expressed his great admiration for Mr. Jefferson's energetic determination to establish the truth. 'I should have consulted you, monsieur,' he said, with usual French civility, 'before publishing my book on Natural History, and then I should have been sure of my facts.'"¹

This has the advantage of most such anecdotes of eminent men, of being accurate nearly to the letter as far as it goes. The box of President Sullivan (he was the President of New Hampshire) containing the bones, horns, and skin of a moose, and horns of the caribou elk, deer, spiked-horned buck, etc., reached Mr. Jefferson on the 2d of October. They were the next day forwarded to Buffon—who, however, proved to be out of town.² On his return, he took advantage of a supper at Jefferson's, to make the handsome admissions mentioned by Mr. Webster.³

As a specimen of the old Federal (using the word in its partisan sense) *ideal* of Mr. Jefferson, we cannot forbear to give some other remarks attributed to Mr. Webster, in the same connection, by the same writer:

"Jefferson rather preferred scientific or literary discussions. He was addicted to French tastes, French manners, and French principles. Often unjustly attacked by them, the Federalists yet did him no injustice in charging upon him a preference for French opinions, whether in politics, morals, or religion.

"He used to dwell with pleasure upon his acquaintance with D'Alembert, Condorcet, and others of the Liberal Philosophy; and often spoke of the *conversazioni* of Madame Deffand, at which he was a frequent and not undistinguished guest. His 'Notes on Virginia' had been published, and were known and admired at Paris; while his conversational powers, no less than his diplomatic ability, confirmed the impression of his intellectual eminence."

¹ Harper's Magazine of July, 1856.

² See Jefferson to Monsieur le Comte de Buffon, October 3d; and to his Excellency President Sullivan, October 5th.

³ Since the above was written, the Private Correspondence of Daniel Webster, edited by Fletcher Webster (his son), has appeared, and in a memorandum of conversations held with Mr. Jefferson at Monticello, in December, 1824, Mr. Webster gives some additions to the preceding statements, but they are not material.

To show how extremely easy it is for distinguished conversationalists to slide into errors of fact, we may remark that death had closed the doors of Du Deffand's "conversazioni" some years before Jefferson arrived in France! And we think D'Alembert died in 1783.

How far Jefferson borrowed his political views from France we have been showing in this and the preceding chapter. We think we have shown how applicable also is the remark in respect to his "morals." But we will not press that head now, as evidence on it will continue to accumulate to the end of his life. On the declaration that Jefferson gave a preference to "French opinions" in "religion," we propose to bestow some notice.

An assertion of this kind, especially connected with the allusion to the "liberal philosophy," and coming from the lips of a New Englander, will be generally understood as implying the charge of atheism. D'Alembert, and most of the propagators of the "liberal philosophy," were, as we understand it, unqualified Atheists.¹ Those who stopped short of this miserable abyss, and who were what are technically called Deists, were usually scoffers and railers. There was a class of early English Deists, who, like Milton's evil angels, were stately enemies of the truth, and who, like them, hurled mountains in combat. Voltaire's private correspondence with D'Alembert gives us an inside picture of French infidelity (whether atheism or deism) towards the close of the last century; and the difference is enormous. It is Faust's Mephistopheles to Milton's Lucifer. It is Thersites against Agamemnon and Ulysses. It is a leering, sneering, petty devil, that scolds like a drab, and seeks to raise a laugh like a buffoon. There is a cold-blooded selfishness in Voltaire's letters that disgusts any large-hearted man, whatever his faith, or want of faith. For example, with what an icy contempt he repeatedly expresses his willingness that "cooks," "chamber-maids," and "butlers" should cling to a system which he affects to regard as not only wholly untruthful, but pernicious to all the best interests of society! The spirit of French infidelity, as exhibited by this its great champion, was malignant and cow-

¹ Priestley, in his sixth "Letter to the Philosophers of France," says that, "when I was in your country [in 1774] then, excepting Mr. Necker, who was a Protestant, every person of eminence to whom I had access, and, as I saw reason to think, every man of letters, almost without exception, was a professed Atheist, and an unbeliever in a future state on any principle whatever."

ardly. It snatched the last plank from the sinking wretch, and then offered him no shadow of a substitute. It dodged, and equivocated, and falsified, even on the death-bed, to escape temporal punishments, or disgraces inflicted after death.¹ There were better-hearted men doubtless than Voltaire—some noble-hearted men—who adopted his ideas in religion. But in giving his character, we have given what has generally been regarded in this country, and particularly in New England, as the personal type of French infidelity. We have shown what idea a New Englander, professing Calvinistic tenets, is generally understood to hold out, when he charges French opinions in religion. Nay, if Mr. Webster did not do so, thousands of others did charge Mr. Jefferson with atheism, and with a truly Voltairean bitterness and hate towards Christianity. Pulpit and press rung with these charges.

It is proper that we frankly apprise the reader how far we propose to discuss Mr. Jefferson's religious views. Let us say at once, that we do not propose, in any event, to make up an individual issue with Mr. Webster, on this topic. If he said what is imputed to him, he only repeated a common charge of Mr. Jefferson's foes. His remarks but incidentally attracted our attention to a topic to which we should otherwise have been immediately brought by a letter in Mr. Jefferson's correspondence in 1787.

Whether we have any right to inquire into and discuss another man's individual opinions in religion, depends, in our judgment, upon one circumstance. The simple holding of an opinion, deemed by others erroneous, ought not to entitle any one to denounce the holder of it for so doing. If he attempts to propagate his faith, then most clearly, those who consider it a pernicious one, have full right to attack it and expose its tendencies, whatever may be the influence of that exposure on the public estimation of the holder. It is a sickly and overstrained sentiment which would protect the individual who turns proselyter, at the

¹ "See, I pray you [Voltaire wrote D'Alembert], a *pious fraud*. I receive in my bed the viaticum, brought me by my curé, attended by the heads of my parish" (vol. ii. p. 236). "There are eleven Jesuits at Marseilles, and one who says mass for me" (vol. i. p. 313). D'Alembert wrote back: "You are in the right, my dear master, people of condition can only combat by *hiding themselves behind hedges*; but thence they may fire with effect on the wild beasts that infest the country." "You reproach us with indifference; but I think I told you that the fire of the fagots is very refreshing," etc. etc.

expense of society ; which would prevent the manly lover of the truth from assailing untruth, come when or from whom it may.

The only question, then, in respect to the propriety of examining into and pronouncing on Mr. Jefferson's religious opinions, is this. Did he, by publication or any other means, attempt to propagate those opinions? Strictly speaking, he did not, as we shall abundantly show at the proper time. But yet there are reasons which we believe ought still to deprive him of the immunity which that circumstance usually confers. Mr. Jefferson left all his papers to a grandson. He made him the owner of the papers without any restrictions or directions. He therefore confided them to the judgment of his descendant, and made himself answerable for the manner in which that judgment should be exercised. The grandson published the papers after Mr. Jefferson's death. They thus came legitimately before the world, and the world has an undeniable right to judge and speak of them according to its opinion of their merits.

We are attempting to give the history of the *mind* as well as of the public career of a statesman. If he has by himself, or by another, admitted the public to a knowledge of his religious views, it is far too important a subject to be passed in silence or slurred over in a few general or vague phrases. We esteem it our duty to give his opinions on this as on other important topics, so far as they are in our possession. We shall not do so yet, for his expressions concerning religion are, at the point of his life now reached, but commencing. The importance and delicacy of the topic, and its utter disconnection with any of the incidents of his public career, will induce us to depart from our usual course of giving or alluding to his declarations as they are from time to time made, and to reserve them for a connected view at the end of his Life.

We shall have occasion, however, to earlier examine a related, but nevertheless essentially different question. Mr. Jefferson did not become responsible to the world for the utterances of what we shall show to have been a few deeply confidential letters, until those letters were made public. But long before their publication, during the last twenty-five or thirty years of his life, his religious opinions were made a free topic of discussion. He was charged with being an active and aggressive foe of Christianity. Thousands are yet alive who

recollect the furious tempest which burst on his head, on this subject, from press and pulpit, pending both his elections to the Presidency. The Christian church of our country was declared to be in danger if he succeeded. It was popularly said at the time, that in parts of New England, timid females hid their Bibles in the clefts of rocks, and enthusiastic disciples girded up their loins to encounter terrible persecutions, when it was understood that he was elected.

What had he done to give rise to such impressions of his religious character? Had he published, or permitted the publication of anything which avowedly, or by fair implication, was intended as an attack on Christianity? All that was adduced to prove this was a sentence or two from the Notes on Virginia, declaratory of the fact that the religious beliefs of one man do not inflict on any other man that physical or other legal injury, which it is the province of law to punish; and by certain geological and ethnological speculations which do not, as we understand it, deny anything in the Scriptures, or require an interpretation of them different from that adopted by men whom Mr. Jefferson's assailants would be ready to concede of the most eminent ability and piety.¹

Was Mr. Jefferson in the habit of arguing against, or sneering at, Christianity in conversation? We remember only to have seen a single remark of such a tenor attributed to him (said to have been made to Mazzei—see Appendix 8), which was too manifestly ridiculous to call for a denial; yet Mr. Jefferson did, in his private correspondence, indignantly deny it. But whether one or twenty such stories got afloat, we feel perfectly authorized to say that they were false, and were not supported by any proof which really justified cool and rational men in giving them temporary credit.

We will give our reasons fully for so unhesitatingly declaring their falsity. We will attempt to show, by as satisfactory proof as the nature of the case admits of—as nearly as a negative can ever be shown—that Mr. Jefferson never, at any period of life, made himself an aggressive assailant of Christianity; that he

¹ The most distinguished *writer*, perhaps—certainly the most distinguished *ecclesiastical* writer who found intentional attacks on Christianity in the Notes on Virginia—was the Rev. John M. Mason, D.D., of New York, and his pamphlet on the subject is *republished* in his collected writings by his son. Those who are desirous to see what were the Rev. gentleman's positions, and what was the character of his strictures, will find them stated in APPENDIX 8.

never, in a solitary instance, sought directly or indirectly to proselyte a human being to unchristian views, or to shake his conviction in Christian ones. Looking at the naked facts now, it would seem a matter of astonishment that he could have been so misunderstood and misrepresented on this subject by a portion of his contemporaries, on the strength of evidence which, before a tribunal accustomed to pay any attention to sound and just rules of evidence, would fail to command serious notice. But if we look into the surrounding circumstances impartially—with that spirit of liberality towards his opponents which it must be confessed they never showed to him, we believe some excuses can be found for the conduct of the great portion, and particularly the religious portion of them. We do not propose to defer this question—the religious issue between the *living* Jefferson and his antagonists—like the preceding one, to the conclusion of his history. The facts will be required to furnish contemporaneous explanations of several important circumstances in his public and private career. We shall probably enter upon their examination while narrating the events of the year 1800—when he was first publicly assaulted on this subject on an extensive and imposing scale.