

Richmond May 14³th 1785

D^r [Short](#)

Ere this I hope you are convinced, that your mortification at not receiving letters from your friends, does not at all proceed from my neglect— This / is the fourth that I have written, and all of them were put into such channels, as almost to ensure safety of conveyance. In one of them I have given you a very particular acct of the numerous marriages, wch has taken place here this winter, which notwithstanding sore throats, peripneumonias, and pains in the eye, will prevent our population at least from decreasing. I am extremely anxious to hear ^{^receive} the acknowledgement of some of them, as every moment passes tediously, whilst my friend suspects me of want of attention to him,— and that too in his absence.— In your letter to [BR](#) you seem willing to attribute it to miscarriage, &, unless by this time you have heard from me, your conjecture on the subject is perfectly right.

The source to which you attribute the preference of travellers for foreign-countries, is in many instances the just one,— tho' their ignorance of the advantages of their own country, is no doubt another cause of it— The advantages of America ~~are~~ or at least of Virginia,— are such as do not strike the senses forcibly,— they can be known only to the contemplative mind.— Those who are sent abroad for their education leave their native country so early that they are insensible of the distinctions of Government— Perfect equality and liberty ~~cannot~~ ^{^scarcely} be understood by a child— but the pomp and ostentation of a monarchy and improvements in the arts of luxury cannot pass unnoticed by him. Besides, the fact is that we did enjoy few or no political advantages before the revolution:— and nothing was ~~thought worth~~ ^{^being speaking or thanking of} ^{^valued} by a dutiful and loyal subject, but what came from home and the mother country.— One who had been flog'd only halfway thro' Eton or Westminster would arrogate the character of ~~←...→~~ ^{^superior} wisdom, ~~H←...→~~ and be more than respected, than any man of real genius and observation, who had passed his life remote from the infectious company of lords and nobles in the serious acquisition of solid knowledge. I should be ashamed of the long sentimental digression made on this subject, if I were not writing to you ~~and did not know that~~.

Perhaps your attachment to this country may be accounted for on similar ~~terms~~ ^{grounds}— You have left it since the revolution, and were sensible of it's advantages, before you went—

I have seen the condemnation of the [Mesmerian](#) doctrine, and admire the method of the report and the fairness of the experiments.— Surely nothing can be more conclusive.— Is it not astonishing that men of so little credulity in other affairs should be so captivated,— particularly ~~on~~ ^{^by} what ought to depend on experiment, as some who have patronized this fanciful theory?—

I will avail myself of the first private opportunity to send the newspapers.— I spoke to [BH](#) about the bill for ~~your~~ ^{the} copying press, as well as your private affairs, & he promised to do every thing requisite— I will repeat the hint.—

As to myself,— my plan of life is changed. [M^r. Dandridge](#) died lately, and [Mr Tazewell](#) succeeds him— He has offered me his docket, and in a few days I shall resign my seat in council— In my situation, I think nothing need be said in justification of this plan. Indeed my friends here had settled the scheme for me in their own minds before I left W^{ms}burg, and on my arrival they mentioned it to me, before I ~~h←...→ted←...→~~ had even seen M^r. Tazewell.— This circumstance occasions so considerable a vacancy in the lower part of the country, that my permanent residence will be in W^{ms}bg.

Early in Jan^y I wrote to you by [Mr L'atil](#), who had been here in some business of [Beaumarchais](#)— This Gentleman, not going to France so soon as he intended, sent it to the care of M^r. Beaumarchais in Feby— so that you [^]must have certainly recd it before this, unless some great ~~uncommon~~ accident has happened— In this letter I gave you a particular acct of the transactions of the legislature— such as the assise-law, — [^]a new one on the subject of militias, that for opening the navigation of James & Potowmack-river, [^] and the publishing a bill for a genl assessment, which will certainly, if proposed, be rejected, in the ~~October~~ [^]new assembly which is to sit in October. The episcopal clergy are incorporated, and next wednesday there is to be a convention of a minister & lay-member from every parish— Whether a liberal system of religion by a coalition,— or a general confusion, will be the consequence is ~~unc~~ ^{at} present uncertain,— tho' I think the latter highly probable, if they enter into the labyrinth of ecclesiastical history about the Arian & Athanarian doctrines— I hope they will be wise enough to avoid this—.

I saw your brother [Peyton](#), and [Major Edmunds](#) a few days ago— The latter informed me that his family was well—

Present me with great respect to [Genl Chastellux](#) & [M^r. Jefferson](#)— You know

I am yr fr^d—,

[WmNelsonjr.](#)

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