

TO GEORGE THOMSON.

JUNE 30, 1825.

I have received, my dear sir, your very friendly letter of the 3d instant. It has afforded me much pleasure, both as an expression of your continued regard for your old friends in your native State, and as a proof of the blessings you enjoy in your adopted one. You are particularly happy in combining with the ample gifts of fortune, what is so rare, a grateful acquiescence in their sufficiency; and in having in an estimable son, with a fine family, a prospect so precious to the evening of your life. A trip to Virginia would have found in your old friends a full reciprocity of the feelings with which you would meet them; and I express, I am sure, their, as well as my regret, that time has put an end to the chance of such a gratification.

You give a sad picture of the condition of Kentucky. It might be rash, at such a distance, and without a more thorough knowledge of circumstances, to arraign the policy which seems to have had the sanction of names heretofore so much respected; and I ought, perhaps, to feel some additional restraint from the consideration, that having been myself injuriously affected by it, my judgment might be thought not unbiassed in the case. I cannot carry my scruples so far, however, as to hesitate in saying that no doctrine can be sound that releases a Legislature from the controul of a Constitution. The latter is as much a law to the former as the acts of the former are to individuals; and although always liable to be altered by the people who formed it, is not alterable by any other authority; certainly not by those chosen by the people to carry it into effect. This is so vital a principle, and has been so justly the pride of our popular Governments, that a denial of it cannot possibly last long, or spread far. If there be any, therefore, of the Republican faith who have been surprised into such an error, time and reflection can not fail to rescue them from it. I can express myself thus frankly to you, without being willing to be brought before the public on the occasion.

Virginia, like Kentucky, fell into the snares spread by numerous Banks giving diffusive credits. The people have been greatly distressed by debts, and the incident difficulties, aggravated, as these have been, by short crops and low prices.

Time and patience, with occasional sacrifices, are, however, bringing relief, without the irregularities to which Kentucky has resorted.

I can readily imagine the joy with which you met your old acquaintance, La Fayette, under circumstances so gratifying to all who admire his extraordinary worth and witness the unexampled manner in which it is rewarded. The spectacle is as honorable to the U. States as it is just to him; and will be among the powerful impulses to the progress of political truths and national reforms every where. We are very glad to learn from you, as from other sources, that Judge Todd is recovering from his tedious illness. It is impossible to know his character without esteeming it; or to know him personally without loving him. Your old friend, Mr. Jefferson, still lives, and will close his illustrious career by bequeathing to his Country a magnificent Institute for **the advancement and diffusion of knowledge;** which is **the only Guardian of true liberty,** the great cause to which his life has been devoted. [emphasis added]

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