

**Thomas Jefferson to John Wayles Eppes, July 12, 1807,
The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes.
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Ford.**

TO JOHN W. EPPES J. MSS.

Washington, July 12, '07.

Dear Sir, —Yours of the 3d is received. At that time I presume you have [had] not got mine of June 19 asking the favor of you to procure me a horse. I have lost three since you left this place. However I can get along with the three I have remaining so as to give time for looking for a fourth suitable in as many points as can be obtained. My happiness at Monticello (if I am able to go there) will be lessened by not having yourself & Francis there. But the circumstance which prevents it is among the most painful that have happened to me in life. Thus comfort after comfort drops off from us, till nothing is left but what is proper food for the grave. I trust however we shall have yourself & Francis the ensuing winter & the one following that, and we must let the aftertime provide for itself. He will ever be to me one of the dearest objects in life.

The affair of the *Chesapeake* seems to have come in as an interlude during the suspension of Burr's trial. I suspect it will turn out that the order Barclay received from his government was in equivocal terms, implying force or not, as should suit them to say, and & the construction would be governed by Bonaparte's successes or misfortunes. I know that Barclay's order to the ships under him was of that character. However their orders are to be nothing in our eye. The fact is what they have to settle with us. Reason & the usage of civilized nations require that we should give them an opportunity of disavowal & reparation. Our own interest too, the very means of making war, requires that we

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should give time to our merchants to gather in their vessels & property & our seamen now afloat. And our duty requires that we do no act which shall commit Congress in their choice between war, non-intercourse & other measures. You will be called as early as the circumstances of health, & of an answer from England will recommend. Probably some time in October.

Should that country have the good sense to do us ample justice, it will be a war saved. But I do not expect it, and every preparation therefore is going on & will continue, which is within our power. A war need cost us very little; and we can take from them what would be an indemnification for a great deal. For this everything shall be in readiness at the moment it is declared. I have not yet heard how Commodore Douglass has taken the proclamation. That he will obey it I doubt. Should he not, the moment our 16 gunboats in that quarter are ready, they will be able to take off all his small vessels, & to oblige his large ones to keep together. I count on their being all ready before the end of this month; & by that time we shall have 32 in New York, and a good provision of batteries along the shores of the city; for to waste labor in defending the approaches to it would be idle. The only practicable object is to prevent ships coming to before it. We have nothing interesting to us from either London, Paris or Madrid, except that Yrujo leaves us, and a successor is to come. In the mean time we have received Foronda as charge des affaires, a most able and amiable man. In consequence of this Bowdoin will probably go on to Madrid. We shall thus avoid the mischief which the dissensions between him & Armstrong were likely to produce. Present my warm affections to Mr. & Mrs. Eppes & to the family, & accept the same for yourself.