

**Thomas Jefferson to Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch
Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, July 14, 1807,
The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes.
Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester
Ford.**

TO THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE J. MSS.

Washington, July 14, 07.

My Dear Friend, —I received last night your letters of Feb. 20 & Apr. 29, and a vessel just sailing from Baltimore enables me hastily to acknowledge them; to assure you of the welcome with which I receive whatever comes from you, & the continuance of my affectionate esteem for yourself & family. I learn with much concern, indeed, the state of Mde. de La Fayette's health. I hope I have the pleasure yet to come of learning it's entire re-establishment. She is too young not to give great confidence to that hope.

Measuring happiness by the American scale, & sincerely wishing that of yourself & family, we had been anxious to see them established on this side of the great water. But I am not certain that any equivalent can be found for the loss of that species of society, to which our habits have been formed from infancy. Certainly, had you been, as I wished, at the head of the government of Orleans, Burr would never have given me one moment's uneasiness. His conspiracy has been one of the most flagitious of which history will ever furnish an example. He meant to separate the western States from us, to add Mexico to them, place himself at their head, establish what he would deem an energetic government, & thus provide an example & an instrument for the subversion of our freedom. The man who could expect to effect this, with American materials, must be a fit subject for Bedlam. The

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seriousness of the crime, however, demands more serious punishment. Yet, altho' there is not a man in the U. S. who doubts his guilt, such are the jealous provisions of our laws in favor of the accused against the accuser, that I question if he is convicted. Out of 48 jurors to be summoned, he is to select the 12 who are to try him, and if there be any who will not concur in finding him guilty, he is discharged of course. I am sorry to tell you that Bollman was Burr's right hand man in

all his guilty schemes. On being brought to prison here, he communicated to Mr. Madison & myself the whole of the plans, always, however, apologetically for Burr, as far as they would bear. But his subsequent tergiversations have proved him conspicuously base. I gave him a pardon, however, which covers him from everything but infamy. I was the more astonished at his engaging in this business, from the peculiar motives he should have felt for fidelity. When I came into the government, I sought him out on account of the services he had rendered you, cherished him, offered him two different appointments of value, which, after keeping them long under consideration, he declined for commercial views, and would have given him anything for which he was fit. Be assured he is unworthy of ever occupying again the care of any honest man. Nothing has ever so strongly proved the innate force of our form of government, as this conspiracy. Burr had probably engaged 1000 men to follow his fortunes, without letting them know his projects, otherwise than by assuring them the government approved of them. The moment a proclamation was issued, undeceiving them, he found himself left with about 30 desperadoes only. The people rose in mass wherever he was, or was suspected to be, and by their own energy the thing was crushed in one instant, without it's having been necessary to employ a man of the military but to take care of their respective stations. His first enterprise was to have been to seize N. Orleans, which he supposed would powerfully bridle the upper country, & place him at the door of Mexico. It is with pleasure I inform you that not a single native Creole, and but one American of those settled there before we received the place, took any part with him. His partisans were the new emi-

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grants from the U. S. and elsewhere, fugitives from justice or debt, and adventurers and speculators of all descriptions.

I enclose you a proclamation, which will show you the critical footing on which we stand at present with England. Never, since the battle of Lexington, have I seen this country in such a state of exasperation as at present. And even that did not produce such unanimity. The federalists themselves coalesce with us as to the object, altho' they will return to their old trade of condemning every step we take towards obtaining it. "Reparation for the past, and security for the future," is our motto. Whether these will be yielded freely, or will require resort to non-intercourse, or to war, is yet to be seen. We have actually near 2000 men in the field, covering the exposed parts of the coast, and cutting off supplies from the British vessels.

I am afraid I have been very unsuccessful in my endeavors to serve Mde. de Tessé in her taste for planting. A box of seeds, &c., which I sent her in the close of 1805, was carried with the vessel into England, and discharged so late that I fear she lost their benefit for that season. Another box, which I prepared in the autumn of 1806, has, I fear, been equally delayed from other accidents. However, I will persevere in my endeavors.

Present me respectfully to her, M. de Tessé, Mde. de La Fayette & your family, and accept my affectionate salutations, & assurances of constant esteem & respect.