The Works of
Thomas Jefferson

Collected and Edited
by
Paul Leicester Ford

Volume VIII

G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press
1904
the late presentment of our representative by the grand jury: the idea it brings forward is still confined to my own breast. It has never been mentioned to any mortal, because I first wish your opinion on the expediency of the measure. If you approve it, I shall propose to P. Carr or some other, to father it, and to present it to the counties at their general muster. This will be in time for our Assembly. The presentment going in the public papers just at the moment when Congress was together, produced a great effect both on it’s friends & foes in that body, very much to the disheartening & mortification of the latter. I wish this petition, if approved, to arrive there under the same circumstance, to produce the counter-effect so wanting for their gratification. I could have wished to receive it from you again at our court on Monday, because P. Carr & Wilson Nicholas will be there, and might also be consulted, and commence measures for putting it into motion. If you can return it then, with your opinion and corrections, it will be of importance. Present me affectionately to mrs. Madison, & convey to her my entreaties to interpose her good offices & persuasives with you to bring her here, and before we uncover our house, which will yet be some weeks.

Salutations & Adieu.

TO ST. GEORGE TUCKER

MONTICELLO, Aug 28, 97.

DEAR SIR,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your two favors of the 2d & 22d inst. and to thank you for
the pamphlet covered by the former. You know my subscription to it's doctrines; and to the mode of emancipation, I am satisfied that that must be a matter of compromise between the passions, the prejudices, & the real difficulties which will each have their weight in that operation. Perhaps the first chapter of this history, which has begun in St. Domingo, & the next succeeding ones, which will recount how all the whites were driven from all the other islands, may prepare our minds for a peaceable accommodation between justice, policy & necessity; & furnish an answer to the difficult question, whither shall the colored emigrants go? and the sooner we put some plan underway, the greater hope there is that it may be permitted to proceed peaceably to it's ultimate effect. But if something is not done, & soon done, we shall be the murderers of our own children. The 'murmura venturos nautis prodentia ventos' has already reached us; the revolutionary storm, now sweeping the globe, will be upon us, and happy if we make timely provision to give it an easy passage over our land. From the present state of things in Europe & America, the day which begins our combustion must be near at hand; and only a single spark is wanting to make that day to-morrow. If we had begun sooner, we might probably have been allowed a lengthier operation to clear ourselves, but every day's delay lessens the time we may take for emancipation. Some people derive hope from the aid of the confederated States. But this is a delusion. There is but one state in the Union which will aid

* Dissertatio n on Slavery.*
us sincerely, if an insurrection begins, and that one may, perhaps, have it's own fire to quench at the same time. The facts stated in yours of the 22d, were not identically known to me, but others like them were. From the general government no interference need be expected. Even the merchant and navigator, the immediate sufferers, are prevented by various motives from wishing to be redressed. I see nothing but a State procedure which can vindicate us from the insult. It is in the power of any single magistrate, or of the Attorney for the Commonwealth, to lay hold of the commanding officer, whenever he comes ashore, for the breach of the peace, and to proceed against him by indictment. This is so plain an operation, that no power can prevent it's being carried through with effect, but the want of will in the officers of the State. I think that the matter of finances, which has set the people of Europe to thinking, is now advanced to that point with us, that the next step, & it is an unavoidable one, a land tax, will awaken our constituents, and call for inspection into past proceedings. I am, with great esteem, dear Sir, your friend and servant.

TO COLONEL ARTHUR CAMPBELL

MONTICELLO, Sept 1, 97.

DEAR SIR,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of July 4. and to recognize in it the sentiments you have ever held, & worthy of the day on which it is dated. It is true that a party has risen up