[1787, May 30]

Philadelphia 30th May 1787.

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Dear Sir,

It has so happened, that the letter which you did me the honor of writing to me the 14th of November last, did not come to my hands till the first of the present month; and at a time when I was about to set off for the Convention of the States, appointed to be holden in this City the 14th Inst. Consequently, it has not been in my power, at an earlier period, to reply to the important matters wch are the subjects thereof. — This, possibly, may be to be regretted if the house of de Coul

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teaux should, in the meantime, have directed its enquiries to Philadelphia, Baltimore or New York without having had the advantages which are to be derived from the extension of the inland navigations of the Rivers Potomack & James, delineated to them. — Silence on this head may be construed into inferiority, when the fact (in my judgment) is that Alexandria or Richmond, provided the communication with the latter can be conducted by the Greenbrier & Great Kanhawa (as some aver & others doubt) has infinite advantages over either of the Towns just mentioned. — With respect to James River, I am not able to speak with so much precision as of the former, with which (having had opportunities to be so) I am much better acquainted. — To this therefore I shall chiefly confine my observations

For the reason I have mentioned, I cannot think it expedient for me to go into an investigation of the writers deductions. — I shall accordingly confine myself with giving my own ideas of the part I have acted, posterior to the first formation of the association.

When I found that Lord Mary of the most respectable characters in the country would certainly acquiesce with the institution as altered and amended in the first general meeting of 1784, and that the objections against the obnoxious parts were wholly done away, I was prevailed upon to accept the Presidency. — Happy indeed (so far as I could learn by assiduous enquiries) that all the clamours and jealousies, which had been excited against the original association, had ceased; I judged it a proper time

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in the last Autumn, to withdraw
myself from any farther agen
cy in the business, and to make
my retirement compleat agree
ably to my original plan — I
wrote circular letters to all
the State Societies, announcing
my wishes, informing that I
did not propose to be at the
triennial meeting, and reques
ting not to be re-elected Presi
dent. — This was the last step
of a public nature I expected
ever to have taken. — But ha
ving since been appointed by
my native State to attend the
National Convention, & having
been pressed to a compliance
in a manner which it hardly
becomes me to describe; I have
in a measure, been obliged to
sacrifice my own sentiments,
and to be present in Philadelph.
at the very time of the General

Meeting

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meeting of the Cincinnati — after which I was not at liberty to decline the Presidency without placing myself in an extremely disagreeable situation with relation to that brave and faithful class of men, whose perseverance friendship I had experienced on so many trying occasions. —

The business of this Convention is as yet too much in embryo to form any opinion of the result. — Much is expected from it by some — but little by others — and nothing by a few — That something is necessary, all with agree, for the situation of the General Government (if it can be called a government) is shaken to its foundation — and liable to be overset by every blast. — In a word, it is at an end, and unless a remedy is

soon

Washington Genl.

soon applied, anarchy & confu
sion wil inevitably ensue.—
But having greatly exceeded
the bounds of a letter already
I wil only add assurances of
that esteem, regard, & respect
with which

I have the honor to be
Dear Sir
Yr. most Obedt. &
Very Hble. Sr.
G. Washington

His Excelly
Thos. Jefferson.

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