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Title: Letters from Charles Nisbet to William Young, 1800-01

Date: 1800-1801

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Dear Sir,

Carlisle, August 21st, 1800.

I was favoured with yours of July 17th by Mr. Addison, but by the want of an Opportunity, & the deep Impression of my private Afflictions, & of the gloomy Aspect of public Affairs on my Spirits, I am scarcely fit for any thing. I am glad to hear that your City is still healthful, tho' it seems probable that the yellow fever is in Norfolk. The Crop in this Part of the Country has been very plentiful, but I fear that the greatest Part of it, I mean of what will be exported, will fall into the hands of the French Republic one & indivisible. Our Ambassador in France may probably get a Skin of Parchment, if the United States will give a few Millions of Dollars for it, but our Vessels will not be more safe than heretofore, from the Depredations of some Cuttle Privateers. But perhaps no Treaty will be made till Mr. Jefferson is President. The Successes of Buonaparte in Italy, are truly astonishing, but the News of his Defeat, brought from Leghorn, being quite general, do not seem to be worthy of Credit. The Emperor seems to be either out of his Senses, or to be betrayed by his own Servants. Have you read Abbe' Barmel's Memoirs of Jacobinism? Or do you read nothing but Thomas à Kempis? I was deeply convinced of the Vanity of the World, by hearing of the Death of Robert Campbell. I suppose that Matthew Cary will succeed to the Jacobin Part of his Business. What is the Opinion of your Politicians with Respect to the approaching Election of a President? Will there be any Possibility of disappointing Mr. Jefferson? I despair indeed of this State, but it is still hoped that Maryland will furnish a few federal Electors. I never heard of the Arrival of the Hannah at Greenock, & have received no Answer to the Letters I sent by her. What is the general Opinion with you, of the Probability of a War with Great Britain? It is certain that the Treaty is not executed, which must have bad Consequences sooner or later. It is said that your Friend the British Ambassador is still in Virginia, but as he has been recalled, his Stay there can not be long. Please ask the Governor what is become of the Spanish Ambassador. Have we any remaining with us, except the Ambassador from the Batavian Republic? How does Mr. Potts's United Irish Congregation go on? Does Mr. Duane regularly attend it? Mr. Marshall thinks it probable that he may be returned an Elder to the next General Assembly, by the Philadelphia Presbytery, which supposes at least his Attendance at that Meeting. You have been deceived in your Expectations respecting Massena. I wish that I may be deceived in my Opinion of the Letters from Leghorn. Is Mr. Salvope's Machine yet in Blast? He seems to be long in tuning his Pipes. I saw many of them laid in May last, but have never heard that they had begun to play. I suppose that Mr. Jefferson has got a few Millions of Assignats from Buonaparte to defray the Expences of his Election, & that the fund for redeeming the next Assignats that are issued, will be the Estates of the Aristocrats in this Country. I am afraid that the Expectations of those Speculators, who reckoned on the Importation of 60,000 Jacobins from Ireland into this Country will not be wholly disappointed, as great Shoals of that sort of Vermine, are daily poured in upon us. Seven Waggon Loads

of United Irishmen arrived here a fortnight ago, & small Detachments on foot, are arriving daily. I am sorry to hear that none of them intend to leave the Place. Mr. Burch has got over his Wife & Family, & is settled in a most Jacobin Congregation at Washington. The new Jacobin Paper, which is to be conducted by Judge Breckenridge, has not yet come out. I suppose that the Aurora has many Readers with you. It is the Rule of Faith in this Part of the Country. I hear that the Trustees of your University have purchased the House intended for the President of the United States, which puts me in Mind of a Story I have heard of our James the fifth. Having met a poor Highlandman coming out of a Market, with a fine new Purse (you know that a Highlandman's Purse makes a very conspicuous Part of his Dress) the King asked him how much it cost him; Donald replied, a Mark, which was a great Sum at that time, but on being asked how much Money he had in it, he answered, a Black. On which the King told him that it would have been better to have had a Black Purse & a Mark in it. Now I reckon that your University & its Jacobin Teachers, when they are stationed in that Statey Building, will greatly resemble a Mark Purse, with a Black in the Bottom of it. What is to be done with the Congress Hall, & the Senate Chamber, which was lately enlarged to make a roomy Gallery for the Poissards of your Market? But as Mr. Jefferson, on his Accession to the Office of Supreme Consul, will certainly think proper to augment the Number of Theatres in your City, as well as in other Places, after the Example of Paris, perhaps the Ambassadors may be ordered to bring over several sets of French Actors & Actresses for filling them. You did not mention in your Letter what is become of the French Actresses & Trigue-Dancers, that Buonaparte took with him to Egypt, nor whether the Egyptian Gazette continues to be published at Cairo, under the Patronage of General Kleber. Nothing struck me with more Wonder in reading Abbe' Barruel's Memoirs of Jacobinism, than the great Supine-ness & Negligence of the Powers of Europe with Respect to the Illuminati & German Union. It seems that they are appointed for Destruction, & under a Judicial Infatuation. Are you acquainted with Mr. Dobbs, who declared in the Irish House of Commons that Christ would appear in less than two Years. Perhaps by Christ he only meant the Sovereign People of France, as Robespierre did, who after solemnly declaring & preaching the Existence of a Supreme Being, swore by the Sovereign People, reckoning them to be the Supreme Being. I have been thinking what must be the Preamble of our projected Treaty with France. I am sure it will not be in the Name of the holy & undivided Trinity, because that would offend Dr Priestley & all the other Sans Culote Philosophers. It must therefore be in the Name of the Goddesses of Liberty & Equality, Reason & Philosophy, & in the Name of the terrible Republic of France, now become one & indivisible in the Person of his most Musselman Majesty, King-Citizen-General Alexander Buonaparte. When the French conquered Corsica

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Dear Sir,
Your very humble servant

Chas. Nisbet.

Carlisle, 10th Dec^r 1801.

Dear Sir,

I was favoured some time ago with yours by Mr. Bingle, & I was informed more lately by Mr. Turnbull that you had sold your Ship to good Account, & in good time, having had the Sagacity to foresee the Peace in Europe, which I confess I did not foresee, I am full of Apprehensions both for Great Britain & America on this Occasion, & fear that both of them have already seen their best Days, tho' his Excellency the Governor calls the present the most auspicious Time for America, attending probably to the great Number of our Ships that have been taken by the Spaniards, by the Command & Direction of Buonaparte. The French having now no other Use for their Fleet & Armies, may probably send over a Part of them to America, to assist Mr. Jefferson in purifying our Constitution, & perfecting our Republicanism, by the Introduction of a first Consul. It will likewise be necessary to accustom our People to pay Tributa to the great Nation, & to be subject to Requisitions, as well as the Batavian Republic, & all the other free Republics which the French have erected in Europe. This will inspire them with a Love of Liberty, & enable them as I think the Governor says, to improve their Republican Systems. The Return of the Armies to France, or the disbanding of them, would be equal-ly fatal to the Interests of Buonaparte, so that he must dispose of them elsewhere, for his own Safety, & part of them perhaps may be sent into Spain, for the Purpose of Revolutionising & republicanising that Country, which seems to be ripe for it, & a considerable Part of both their Fleet & Armies may be sent to the United States for promoting the Cause of Liberty. This Country will be as convenient a Retreat for them as Egypt, with this Addition, that they will need no Reinforcements or Supplies, as they will live at the Expence of the United States, together with occasional Requisitions. Our Governor has informed the Legislature, how diligent he has been in providing Arms for them, & hopes that the remaining half will ^{be} ready this Winter, from which I infer that they are expected early next Spring. The other Govern-ors will no doubt be equally active. I am shocked at the Reception of Buonaparte's Aid de Camp, by the Mob of London, & the scandalous Illuminations that took Place afterwards, which give Reason to suspect that the English Mob are compleatly sans-culotif'd, & hope that this Peace will be an Introduction to a Revolution. I dread to hear of the public Rejoicings at the Conclusion of the Peace, as the Sans-culotes may probably seize that Time of Security & Dissipation, for murdering the King & Royal Family, & making themselves Masters of the Tower & City of London. The most horrid & atrocious Actions may be justly dreaded from Men totally devoid of Principle. And as the French have disbanded none of their Forces, they might pour their Thousands & ten thousands into Great Britain in perfect Safety, to complete the Ruin & Subjection of that Kingdom, which may God in his great Mercy prevent. The putting up the Picture of Buonaparte, with the blasphemous Inscription of "Saviour of the Universe," indicates a great Corruption in the People of London. Our Friend Peter Porcupine has been very roughly handled, & even worse treated than he was by Dr. Ruff & his Party, but he will recover large

Damages from the City of London. The awful Storm of Thunder & Lightning, which accompanied this scandalous Illumination, appear to me to be a manifest Testimony of the Wrath of God against the British Nation, & a Denunciation of more terrible Calamities in future & I wonder how the Friends of the French Treaty could consider it as a Testimony of Approbation. But the Day will declare which Side was in the right. I fear that the Sun of Great Britain is set, to rise no more. And when we consider the great Prevalence of Infidelity, Profaneness & Impiety in that Country, we ought not to be surpris'd if it should be visited with terrible Judgements. And who can say that America is innocent, or any thing like it? I hear that the one half of the Citizens of Kentucky are profess'd Infidels, & how large a Proportion of these are to be found in the other States, none can say. I heard that Mr. Armstrong had preached once to a Congregation that consisted wholly of profess'd Infidels, a terrible Situation to a Minister of Christ! I suppose that your Papers have given you an Account of the strange Work in Kentucky, in a Letter from Col. Robert Paterson to Dr. John King, which was published in a Chambersburgh Paper, & republished here. The Paroxysm of Convulsion in some begins with the feet. Enthusiasm & Infidelity seem to keep Pace with each other, but true Religion seems to be declining every where. I hear nothing of the Effects of the Peace in your City, but every thing is said to have become cheaper in Baltimore, tho' no Article, except the Wheat has fallen in Price here. The Trustees of this College have done me the honour to take one Hundred & sixteen Pounds from my Salary & rescinded their former Contract by their own Authority as Sovereign People. Liberty, you see, is the Order of the Day among us, & when the French are come over, they will introduce Equality. The Massacres that are renewed in St. Domingo, will probably frighten away the Remainder of the Whites & fill this Country with Shoals of Frenchmen, which will increase the Corruption of Morals, as well as the Spirit of Sedition, already too high among us, as it has seized the Government & the chief Officers. The Liberty of the Press seems to be pretty well established by the Actions against Wayne & other Federal Writers, & by the time that the French come over, we may expect to hear of the scaling up all the Aristocratical Presses in the United States. The same Business seems to be going on in Georgia. The New England Palladium will probably be the last Paper that will be suppressed. I wish that it may be lawful to print Bibles. Perhaps the French may permit this, in order to have Copies to burn at the Annual Feast of the Asp, which will perhaps be introduced into this Country, & enjoined by Authority. This you will say is improbable, tho' certainly not more improbable than some things that have happened already, for Instance the Burning of the Bible in the Town of Dundee, during the late

Commodions in Scotland. The Members of the Legislature of Rhode Island have made a noble Stand for Liberty, by resisting the Motion for appointing a Day of Thanksgiving, for which they will be admired by all our Democrats, & perhaps distinguished by some favour from Buonaparte. I was surpris'd that in the Capitulation of Cairo & Alexandria, no Mention was made of the great Numbers of Georgian & Circasian Women, that the French seiz'd when they plundered the Harems of the Mamelukes. They were declared to belong to the Great Nation, & I expected to see an Article stipulating that they should be sent to France, & deliver'd to the Sovereign People, to be divided among them as they should think proper. I suppose that the Opera Daners, tho' originally belonging to the French Republic, have already become private Property, & are comprehended in that Article. Have you heard of any Publications in England that are worth Notice? Nothing seems to be minded except Politics, & these of the very worst kind. Peter Porcupine must now be contented to be an Antiministerial Writer, & may possibly bring himself to some trouble on that Account. The World is subject to strange Changes. But I fear that Mr. Duane will not soon be an Opposer of Administration, as he has got the Monopoly of Stamp'd Paper. I believe it will no longer be in my Power, in my reduced Situation, to visit you at Philadelphia, but as you are now at your Ease, I would be glad to see you, when you make a Visit to Mr. Jefferson at the Federal City. It would not be much out of your Way to return by Carlisle. You have not yet seen Citizen Pichon, who is all that we have for a French Ambassador at present. The French Treaty will soon be laid before Congress, & the Appropriations that will be necessary for carrying it into Execution, will probably be pretty high, as besides the Repair of the Corvette Borgouin, the Detention of the Semillante Frigate at Norfolk, & the Wages of Messrs. Dawson & Appleton for carrying the Treaty, the French may charge a considerable Sum for the Trouble they have taken in seizing so many of our Ships, & the Expence incurred by carrying them into the Ports of the Great Nation. Mr. Gallatin will no doubt be of Opinion that we ought to comply with all these Demands, because it may cost us more to fight them. My Daughter will I hope be in Philadelphia, before you receive this, as she set out Yesterday by the Way of Harrisburgh. I beg you would get the inclosed delivered by a safe hand. I am, with Esteem,

Dear Sir,

Your very humble Servant
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Damages from the City of London. The awful Storm of Thunder & Lightning, which accompanied this scandalous Illumination, appears to me to be a manifest Testimony of the Wrath of God against the British Nation, & a Denunciation of more terrible Calamities in future

& I wonder how the Friends of the French Treaty would consider it as a Testimony of Approbation. But the Day will declare which Side was in the right. I fear that the Sun of Great Britain is set, to rise no more. And when we consider the great Prevalence of Infidelity, Profaneness & Impiety in that Country, we ought not to be surprised if it should be visited with terrible Judgements. And who can say that America is innocent, or any thing like it? I hear that the one half of the Citizens of Kentucky are profess'd Infidels, & how large a Proportion of these are to be found in the other States, none can say. I heard that Mr. Armstrong had preached once to a Congregation that consisted wholly of profess'd Infidels, a terrible Situation to a Minister of Christ! I suppose that your Papers have given you an Account of the strange Work in Kentucky, in a Letter from Col. Robert Paterson to Dr. John King, which was published in a Chambersburgh Paper, & republished here. The Paroxysm of Conversion in some begins with the feet. Enthusiasm & Infidelity seem to keep Pace with each other, but true Religion seems to be declining every where. I hear nothing of the Effects of the Peace in your City, but every thing is said to have become cheaper in Baltimore, tho' no Article, except the Wheat has fallen in Price here. The Trustees of this College have done me the honour to take one Hundred & Sixteen Pounds from my Salary & rescinded their former Contract by their own Authority as Sovereign People. Liberty, you see, is the Order of the Day among us, & when the French are come over, they will introduce Equality. The Massacres that are renewed in St. Domingo, will probably frighten away the Remainder of the Whites & fill this Country with Shoals of Frenchmen, which will increase the Corruption of Morals, as well as the Spirit of Sedition, already too high among us, as it has seized the Government & the chief Offices. The Liberty of the Press seems to be pretty well established by the Actions against Wayne & other federal Printers, & by the time that the French come over, we may expect to hear of the Sealing up all the Aristocratic Presses in the United States. The same Business seems to be going on in Georgia. The New England Palladium will probably be the last Paper that will be suppressed. I wish that it may be lawful to print Bibles. Perhaps the French may permit this, in order to have Copies to burn at the Annual Feast of the Ass, which will perhaps be introduced into this Country, & enjoined by Authority. This you will say is improbable, tho' certainly not more improbable than some things that have happened already, for Instance the Burning of the Bible in the Town of Dundee, during the late

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Commotions in Scotland. The Members of the Legislature of Rhode Island have made a noble Stand for Liberty, by resisting the Motion for appointing a Day of Thanksgiving, for which they will be admired by all our Democrates, & perhaps distinguished by some favour from Buonaparte. I was surprised that in the Capitulation of Cairo & Alexandria, no Mention was made of the great Numbers of Georgian & Circassian Women, that the French seized when they plundered the Harems of the Mamalukes. They were declared to belong to the Great Nation, & I expected to see an Article stipulating that they should be sent to France, & delivered to the Sovereign People, to be divided among them as they should think proper. I suppose that the Opera Dancers, tho' originally belonging to the French Republic, have already become private Property, & are comprehended in that Article. Have you heard of any Publications in England that are worth Notice? Nothing seems to be minded except Politics, & these of the very worst kind. Peter Porcupine must now be contented to be an Antiministerial Writer, & may possibly bring himself to some trouble on that Account. The World is subject to strange Changes. But I fear that Mr. Duane will not soon be an Opposer of Administration, as he has got the Monopoly

of Stamp'd Paper. I believe it will no longer be in my Power, in my reduced Situation, to visit you at Philadelphia, but as you are now at your Ease, I would be glad to see you, when you make a Visit to Mr. Jefferson at the Federal City. It would not be much out of your way to return by Carlisle. You have not yet seen Citizen Pichon, who is all that we have for a French Ambassador at present. The French Treaty will soon be laid before Congress, & the Appropriations that will be necessary for carrying it into Execution, will probably be pretty high, as besides the Repairs of the Corvette Borgeau, the Detention of the Semittante Frigate at Norfolk, & the Wages of Messrs. Dawson & Appleton for carrying the Treaty, the French may charge a considerable Sum for the Trouble they have taken in seizing so many of our Ships, & the Expence incurred by carrying them into the Ports of the Great Nation. Mr. Gallatin will no doubt be of Opinion that we ought to comply with all these Demands, because it may cost us more to fight them. My Daughter will I hope be in Philadelphia, before you receive this, as she set out Yesterday by the Way of Harrisburgh. I beg you would get the inclosed delivered by a safe hand. I am, with Esteem,

Dear Sir,
Your very humble Servant

Chas. Nisbet.