

Dickinson College Archives & Special Collections

<http://archives.dickinson.edu/>

Documents Online

Title: Letter from Charles Nisbet to William Young

Date: August 21, 1800

Location: I-McIntoshM-1965-5

Contact:

Archives & Special Collections
Waidner-Spahr Library
Dickinson College
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-1399

archives@dickinson.edu

Carlisle. August 21st 1800

Dear Sir,

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 ambassadors 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 Sans Culotte 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 Ieghorn, 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^{cul'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 answers 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 had 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 cannot be long. Please ask the Governor what has become of the Spanish Ambassador. Have we any remaining with us except the Ambassador of the Batavian Republic? How does Mr. Potts's United Irish Congregation go on? Does Mr. Duane regularly attend it? Mr. Marshal 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. And with that I may be deceived in my opinion of the letters from Ieghorn. Is Mr. Tatrobe'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 expenses 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 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 wagon 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. Barch 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 Plack. On which the King told him that it would have been better to have had a Plack purse with a mark in it. Now I reckon that your University's Jacobin teachers, when they are stationed in that stately building, will greatly resemble a Mark purse with a Plack 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 Poissardes 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 & Figure 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' Barmes's memoirs of Jacobinism, than the great supineness & negligence of the powers of Europe with respect to the Illuminati & German Union. It seems they are appointed for destruction & under a Judicial intatuation. 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; nor become one & indivisible in the person of his most Mussulman Majesty, King-Citizen-General Alexander Buonaparte. When the French conquered Corsica, it is not probable that they suspected that a Corsican would conquer France;

but this is the age of revolutions. Perhaps Napper Tandy, if he gets his neck slipped out of the halter, as he has once already, may expect that he will conquer Great Britain as easily as Buonaparte conquered France. And indeed it might be equally easy, if Dr. Priestley's British Republic were erected, according to his wishes. The examples of Geneva, Holland, Venice & Switzerland afford ample proofs, that there is nothing that is so easily kicked to pieces as a Republic. And what would become of our own, were it not for citizens Duane, Mc Kean, Dallas, Logan & a few other Republican Characters, who bear up the Pillars of it, if they themselves may not be reckoned its chief Pillars. Perhaps some of your Philadelphia Federalists may rather call them Caterpillars, but they must be acknowledged Pillars, whether you read the one way or the other. I hear that the cause of Liberty prospers exceedingly among you, as no fewer than twenty two criminals have effected their escape from your Jail. So great an advantage is it for a state, to have a Governor who is a friend to liberty! While Mr. Cooper remains in Jail he will no doubt be preaching liberty to his fellow prisoners, & may write essays for their instruction, in Nicholson's Supporter, so that you may expect to hear of more escapes in a short time. There seems likewise to be a laudable zeal for liberty in the New Jail of New York, which produced some rigorous exertions not long ago. Had they a Cooper to preach to them, a great deal might perhaps be done for recovering their liberty. — But to speak seriously, this country & all others seem at present to be in a most perilous situation, & if the wolves of France are not hunted down by a coalition of all the Christian powers, they will soon be masters of all Europe and America, & the dominions thereto belonging. And how ~~in~~ ^{is} this to be done appears to be as impossible at present, as it would be to conceive or describe the miseries to which the world would be exposed, if the French shall be permitted to prevail in their project of Universal Dominion. I am afraid that there are very few prayers made among us, unless it is for their success; but many & earnest prayers ought to be made for their disappointment & downfall, which seems to be necessary for the preservation of the rest of the world. Great Britain must be in danger from insurrection especially if the emperor should make another treaty with France, & Britain be left alone to continue the war; & any treaty that the French would propose at present, would be on the terms of unconditional submission, which would put an end to the government of America as well as to that of Great Britain. There are sundry cases of Fever in this neighbourhood, chiefly of the intermittent kind. The hooping cough prevails among the children, & several children have died of it. I have reason to be thankful that I & my family still enjoy a tolerable state of health. A disease which they call the Stagers prevails in Little York. Those who are seized with it, suddenly become giddy & delirious, & die in a very short time. I have not heard that any person who has had it, has ever recovered. I remain with unforgotten esteem,

Dear Sir,

Your very humble servant.

Chas. Kitchin.

Mr William Young Bookseller
No 52 South Second Street corner of
Chestnut Street

Forwarded by
Mr Thompson

Philadelphia

Carlisle, August 21st 1800

Dear Sir,

I was favoured with your of July 14th by Mr. Addison, but by the want of opportunity, & the deep impression of my private afflictions, & of the gloomy aspect of public affairs on my spirits, I am scarcely fir 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 ambassadors in France may probably get a skin of Parchment if the United Staes will gibe a few millions of dollars for it, but our vessels will not be more safe than heretofore, from the depredations of Sans Cullotic 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 Abbel Barcul's memoirs of Jacobism? 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 hped that Maryland will furnish a few Federal Electors. I never heard of the arrival of the Hannah at Greenock, & have received no answers 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 had 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 cannot be long. Please ask the Governor what ahs become of the Spanish Ambassador. Have we any remaining with us except the Ambassador of th Batarian Republic? How does Mr. Pott's United Irish Congregation go on? Does Mr. Duane regularly attend it? Mr. Marshal thinks it probably 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. And with that I may be deceived in my opinion of the letters from Leghorn. Is Mr. Latrobe'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 expenses 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 wagon 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 this place. Mr. Bureh 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 Breckinridge has not yet come out. I suppose that the Aurora has many readers with you. It is the rule of Faith in the 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 a mind of a story I have heard at 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 not a great sum at that time; but on being asked how much money he had in it, he answered, a Plack. On which the king told him that it would have been better to have had a Plack purse with a mark in it. Nor I reckon that your University & its Jacobin teachers, when they are stationed in that stately building will greatly resemble a Mark purse with a Plack 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 Poissardes of your marker? 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 you letter what is become of the French actresses & Figure dangers, 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 Barmel's memoirs of Jacobism, than the great supineness & negligence of the powers of Europe with Respect to the Illuminati & German Union. It seems 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. Priestly & 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 Mussulman Majesty, King-Citizen-General Alexander Buonaparte. When the French conquered Corsica, it is not probable that they suspected that a Corsican would conquer France;

but this is the age of Revolutions. Perhaps Napper Tandy, if he gets his neck slipped out of the halter, as he has once already, may expect that he will conquer great Britain as easily as Buonaparte conquered France. And indeed it might be equally easy, if Dr. Priestly's British Republic were erected, according to his wishes. The examples of Geneva, Holland, Venice & Switzerland afford ample proofs, that there is nothing that is so easily kicked to pieces as a Republic. And what would become of our own, were it not for citizens Duane, McKean, Dallas, Logan & a few other Republican Characters, who bear up the Pillars of it, if they themselves may not be reckoned its chief Pillars. Perhaps some of your Philadelphia Federalists may rather call them Caterpillars, but they must be acknowledged Pillars, whether you read the one way or the other. I hear that the

cause of Liberty prospers exceedingly among you, as no fewer than twenty two criminals have effected their escape from your jail. So great an advantage it is for a state, to have a Governor who is a friend to liberty! While Mr. Cooper remains in jail he will no doubt be preaching liberty to his fellow prisoners, & may write essays for their instruction, in Nicholson's Supporter, so that you may expect to hear of more escapes in a short time. There seems likewise to be a laudable zeal for liberty in the new jail of New York, which produced some rigorous exertions not long ago. Had they a Cooper to preach to them, a great deal might perhaps done for recovering their liberty.—But to speak seriously, this country & all others seem at present to be in a most perilous situation, & if the wolves of France are not hunted down by a coalition of all the Christian powers, they will soon be masters of all Europe and America, & the dominions thereto belonging. And how this is to be done appears to be as impossible at present, as it would be to conceive or describe the miseries to which the world would be exposed, if the French shall be permitted to prevail in their project of Universal Dominion. I am afraid that there are very few prayers made among us, unless it is for their success; but many & earnest prayers ought to be made for their disappointment & downfall, which seems to be necessary for the preservation of the rest of the world. Great Britain must be in danger from insurrection especially if the emperor should make another treaty with France & Britain be left alone to continue the war; & any treaty that the French would propose at present, would be on the terms of unconditional submission, which would put an end to the government of America as well as to that of Great Britain. There are sundry cases of fever in this neighbourhood, chiefly of the intermittent kind. The hooping cough prevails among the children, & several children have died of it. I have reason to be thankful that I & my family still enjoy a tolerable state of health. A disease which they call the staggers prevails in Little York. Those who are seized with it, suddenly become giddy & delirious, & die in a very short time. I have not heard that any person who has had it, has ever recovered. I remain with unfeigned esteem,

Dear Sir,
Your Very Humble Servant,
Chas. Nisbet