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Title: Letters from Charles Nisbet to David Erskine

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This Day, sacred to Religion, Gluttony & Drunkenness, I dedicate to the Remembrance of valuable absent Friends. I am ashamed to observe that your Lordship's last Letter is dated 19th September 1786, but the last Year was to me an Year of Confusion, from Multiplicity of Business & hard Study. I have written more than two hundred & fifty Sheets of Paper before the first Draught of my Lectures was finished. I read your Lordship's Poem with a melancholy Pleasure, and a sincere Wish, that all your favourable Auguries concerning this Country were in the Way of being accomplished. Perhaps they are so, but present Appearances are extremely discouraging. The People of this Country seem to have gained nothing by their Independance, except Impunity of Crimes, & the Prevalence of every human Vice except Superstition & Hypocrisy. Public Spirit appears to be extinct, and public & private Credit entirely at an End. No Man is ashamed even of the most shameful Conduct, & the Authority of Laws & Magistrates is entirely disregarded. The Magistrates, being chosen by the People, dare not act, for fear of losing their Offices, and a Competition & Reciprocation of Cheating & Knavery seems to pervade this Country from the one End to the other. No Debts are paid, no Engagements are kept, and the only Way a Man has to live, seems to be, to cheat as much as his Neighbours. A few good Characters exist, but like Stars in a dark Night, they are scarcely discerned, & have no sensible Effect on the public Morals. I subsist, as it were by Miracle, waiting & praying for better Times. Dr. Rush deserted my Interest in about three Months after my Arrival, and has been ever since a cold Friend & secret Enemy. Most of the Trustees never mind their Oaths, & Engagements, and several have lately resigned, I am afraid, by his Influence. Notwithstanding of this, I would have been supported by the Increase & Character of this Seminary, were it not for the general Distress & Want of Money, real or affected, that prevails over all this Country, which hinders Parents from thinking of giving their Children Education. Yet every Body lives in Luxury, & there is no Want of Money for Law suits, Drunkenness, & the Purchase of foreign Goods. Only Debts & Taxes remain unpaid. The Clergy, to be sure, have the worst of it in such a Situation of things, as no Laws protect their Rights, it having pleased the Majesty of the People that Clergymen & Negroes should be entirely at Discretion. Some have much Expectation from the New Federal Constitution, which has been adopted lately by this State, on a Division 46 against 23. & by the State of Delaware ^{New York} without a dissenting Voice. It is hoped that Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, & Jersey will adopt it in a few Weeks, if some of them have not done it already. Maryland & North Carolina may adopt it with some Difficulty. South Carolina & Georgia, or also Virginia are doubtful, being almost equally divided. Rhode Island is despaired of, & must be subdued by Arms, if the States desire to prevent it from becoming a foreign Garrison. Imperfect & Impious as this Constitution is, it is much preferable to a State of Nature, which prevails at present. All honest People are for it, but those who are in Debt to England or at home, are uniformly against it. Those who have property, if they are desirous to preserve it, or win their Lives, must unite to introduce a regular & efficient Government, as the Opposer of the Con-

Resolution flatter the People with a Continuance of Goods, & a general Release of Debt
in case they will take Arms to oppose it. In the late Convention of this State, there
were only three Speaking Members against it, and these ignorant & illiterate Men,
who had their Speeches made for them by two or three ostensible Characters without
Doors. They will all be printed, & sent abroad, being already taken down in that hand,
I need the Prayers & Pity of good Christians, as the hottest Opposition is in these
Western Counties. Mobbish Meetings were held here last Night, to draw up Letters of
Thanks to the Minority of the Convention, & in these Meetings the Speakers exhorted
the People to take up Arms in Defence of their Rights. I hope however that this will
be only a Threat. What is worst is, that Congress have Arms for many thousands of Men
and a considerable Quantity of Gun-powder in their Stores here, which they, like wise
Men, have ordered to be sold in a few Weeks hence, as if on purpose to supply the En-
emies of their Country. As this Town is the nearest to the Center of the United States,
& most commodious for Security, Intelligence & Communication, the old Congress
made Choice of it for their general Magazine, & if the new Congress are wise, they
will make it the federal Capital. If they do not, they will lose all the Country to
the Westward of the Allegany Mountains, which is only in a Nominal Subjection
to the State at present, and is daily filling up with Multitudes of People, almost to
a Man disaffected to federal Government, or more properly, to all Government what-
soever. If the Capital is placed here, these People will be easily kept in Order, but
at a greater Distance, no Government will be able to secure Respect, & prove efficient.
Your Lordship can not conceive how little Knowledge is in this Country. The Pro-
gress of it requires Men of Property, Learning, Virtue & Leisure. We have almost
none of these here. Curiosity is at a Stand, and every Subject of Conversation gives
Way to dirty, senseless & grovelling Politics. No Man of Sense has any Influence,
Authority or Respect. The meanest & most wicked of the People bear Rule, & every
Man does that which is right in his own Eyes, without fear or Shame. Those Poets
& Romantic Politicians who have sung the Charms of Liberty, ought to travel to
this Country for Information, & they would soon find that the Person of her Lady-
ship is extremely deformed & disagreeable when she is seen naked, & not dressed in
the Rules of Justice, Law, & good Order. God Almighty has raised up all Nations
from Tribes of barbarous & wandering Banditti, but the Mob, a conquering ar-
my, the usual Seminary of Nations, is much easier reduced into Order by the
Sense of Subordination & the Sense of Honour arising from their condition, than
a Mob of Bankrupts, Fugitives from Justice, transported Convicts & indented Ser-
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for the far greatest Part. A love of Order & Obedience to laws may be grafted on a
Sense of Honour & a love of Distinction, but almost no such Principles exist here,
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Virtues, and able to raise their Possessors to Seats in Assembly, Congress or Conven-
tion. Yet we have three worthy & honourable Members of Congress from this County
of Cumberland, and all the most decent People here are on the Side of the federal
Government. God grant that it may be established without Bloodshed. As an In-
stance of the Want of Patriotism among us, when some Persons in England had
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23 of worthy Citizens of Philadelphia raised a Ours by Subscription, & purchased those
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begun in the same Place for encouraging Domestic Manufactures, but the same Sort
of People, having got into the Management of it, the Scheme is already starved
& at an End. If one did not believe that there is a God, & a Providence, one would
consider our Condition as quite desperate, & say with Plautus *Ipsa Salus, si velit,*
non potest servare hanc familiam. But the Ways of Providence are wonderful. Even
wicked & selfish Men, who mind only themselves, may be used as Instruments to
provide for the public Safety, without which they themselves can not be long safe.
By the Indolence & Ignorance of the People, this Country is quite unexplored, &
in a great Measure uncultivated. In Shearman's Valley, about thirteen Miles from
this Place, when visiting a Sulphurous Spring, I observed several
Fragments of Volcanic Lava, & on near Examination found that
the Ground was strewed with them in sundry Parts, especially op-
posite to two acuminate Tops in the Ridge, which must have been
Volcanos in former Ages. A Gentleman who accompanied me, made
me then take Notice of a Number of Stones dispersed among the
Lava, which were visibly composed of Sea Shells fused by the force
of fire. On the outside of these Stones we could discern many Cockles,
Periwinkles & Clams unmelted, and on breaking the Stones, their
internal Consistency appeared to be the same as on the outside. These
Stones were to be found only opposite to the sharp Tops which we
conceived to be Volcanos. Perhaps there is Probability in the Sup-
position that all Mountains are formed by Volcanos. The Descrip-
tions of the Pike of Teneriff, & of the lesser Mountains on the Sum-
mit & Sides of Olma & Vesuvius described by Mr. Brydone, give Counten-
ance to the same Hypothesis. No Natural Production is sought for here at present,
except Gin Seng, with which our People have glutted the Markets of China, and
reduced its Price. A Miner & Chymist is come from Germany to explore our Moun-
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of a Creek in this Neighbourhood, many fragments of Chryстал are discovered
and the Pearl Mussel is found in the Creek. I have seen no Pearl however
as only Boys are attentive to these things here. I am informed that there are
several Mountains in New England whose the Crater on the Summit is still
discernible & of a considerable Depth. I have enjoyed good Health since the
Winter of 1785. In other Respects my Situation is disagreeable. We endeavour to
persuade ourselves that things will mend, as they seem at present to be at the
worst. If the Seminary were encouraged, & the Trustees faithful & active, I
should have nothing to complain of. Truth & Sense may make their Way,
though slowly, into the Minds of Men. I am sorry for the State of Europe which
seems to threaten War. We can scarcely be wiser here, except with Respect to our
lives. May God order all things for the best. I beg leave to present my respect-
ful Compliments to Lady Buchan, & pray that you may enjoy many Olym-
pic Years of Happiness, being most unfeignedly,

My dear, your Lordship's most obedient humble Servant,

Chas. Nisbet.

Carlisle, 25th Decr 1787

My Lord,

This Day, sacred to Religion, Gluttony & Drunkenness, I dedicate to the Remembrance of valuable absent Friends. I am ashamed to observe that your Lordship's last Letter is dated 19th September 1786, but the last Year was to me an Year of Confusion, from Multiplicity of Business & hard Study, I have written more than two hundred & fifty sheets of Paper before the first Draught of my Lectures was finished. I read your Lordship's Poem with a melancholy Pleasure, and a Sincere Wish, that all your favourable Auguries concerning this Country were in the Way of being accomplished. Perhaps they are so, but present Appearances are extremely discouraging. The People of this Country seem to have gained nothing by their Independence, except Impunity of Crimes, & the Prevalence of every human Vice except Superstition & Hypocrisy. Public Spirit appears to be extinct, and public & private Credit entirely at an End. No Man is ashamed even of the most Shameful Conduct & the Authority of Laws & Magistrates is entirely disregarded. The Magistrates, being chosen by the People, dare not act, for fear of losing their offices, and a Competition & Reciprocation of Cheating & Knavery seems to pervade this Country from the one End to the other. No Debts are paid, no Engagements are kept, and the only Way a Man has to live, seems to be, to cheat as much as his Neighbour. A few good Characters exist, but like Stars in a dark Night, they are scarcely discerned, & have no sensible Effect on the public Morals. I subsist as it were, by Miracle, waiting & praying for better Times, Dr. Rush deserted my Interest in about three months after my Arrival, and has been ever since a cold Friend and secret Enemy. Most of the Trustees never mind their Oath & Engagements and severals have lately resigned, I am afraid, by his Influence. Notwithstanding of this, I would have been supported by the Increase & Character of this Seminary, were it not for the general Distress & Want of Money, real or affected, that prevails over all this Country, which hinders Parents from thinking of giving their Children Education. Yet every Body lives in Luxury, & there is no Want of Money for Lawsuits, Drunkenness, & the Purchase of foreign Goods. Only Debts & Taxes remain unpaid. The Clergy, to be sure, have the worst of it in such a situation of things, as no Laws protect their Rights, it having pleased the Majesty of the People that Clergymen & Negroes would be entirely at Discretion. Some have much Expectation from the New Federal Constitution, which has been adopted lately by this State, on a Division 40 against 23, & by the State of Delaware without a dissenting Voice. It is hoped that Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire New York & Jersey will adopt it in a few Weeks, if some of them have not done it already. Maryland & North Carolina may adopt it with some Difficulty. South Carolina & Georgia, or also Virginia are doubtful, being almost equally divided. Rhode Island is despaired of, & must be subdued by Arms, if the States desire to prevent it from becoming a foreign Garrison. Imperfect & Impious as this Constitution is, it is much preferable to a State of Nature, which prevails at present. All honest People are for it, but those who are in Debt to England or at home, are uniformly against it. Those who have property, if they are desirous to preserve it or even their lives, must unite to introduce a regular & efficient Government, as the Opposers of the Con

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My Lord,
Your Lordship's most obedient humble servant,

Cha.s Nisbet

My Lord,

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Carlisle, 16th September, 1788.

From a Country of so little Curiosity, & so barren of Events as this is, little Information can be expected, but as it is now in a singular & interesting Situation, & the Accounts in the public Papers may be defective or partial, I imagined that a brief Account of its present State might not be unacceptable to your Lordship, as a Citizen of the World, & a lover of Mankind. Last Year a Convention of the Representatives of the thirteen States drew up a Constitution or Plan of Government for this Country, which was submitted to the Conventions of the several States, & agreed to be carried into Execution, if adopted by Nine States. This Constitution, tho' imperfect, defective, & in some Respects impious, was judged however to be the best Form of Government that could be adopted by a People in our Situation, & is still thought to be so, by all that love Order, Justice & the Happiness of Society. Eleven States have now adopted this Constitution, tho' those of Virginia & New York appear to be least sincere in this Business. Rhode Island has not called a Convention to consider it, & North Carolina appears to be disposed only to accept it conditionally. Your Lordship may easily imagine how few good things can be expected to be agreed to by three Millions of ignorant Peasants, under factious Leaders, & loaded with Debts at home & abroad, habituated likewise, as they have been since the Peace, to the uniform Practice of Injustice to their Creditors & to one another. Wicked Men in this Situation, must be Enemies to an efficient Government, which would oblige them to pay their Debts and Taxes, & put it out of their Power to make Laws against the Practice of Justice, which is all that the State Governments have done hitherto. Accordingly the Opposers of the New Constitution consist almost wholly of Men of this Description, & considering how much they abound here, it is surprising that the Opposition has not been greater. I hope that no Violence will be attempted, but the Malcontents in every State are setting up Committees of Correspondence in Hopes of ruining the Constitution by Amendments, which they could not hinder by force or Numbers. What they principally point at is to deprive Congress of the Power of imposing general Taxes, & to prevent their keeping a standing Army in time of Peace. Many likewise contend for a Bill of Rights, & that the Congress should not have Power to appoint the Time & Place of the Election of their own Members, but that it should be left to the Discretion of the State Assemblies. If they should prevail on the Legislatures of Nine States to agree to these pretended Amendments, or even any of the two first, they would effectually defeat the Intention of the New Constitution, & prolong our present Anarchy. All the Operations of the State Assemblies since the Peace have been only to make Laws for preventing the Payment of British Debts, & to cheat one another with Paper Money, & if no New Government is introduced they will go on as they have begun. The Opportunity of imposing on one another, by a Currency they will go on as they have begun. The Opportunity of imposing on one another, by a Currency depreciable at Pleasure, is considered by the most of the People of this Country, as one of the most sacred & unalienable Rights of Mankind; & tho' Numbers have been ruined by it, yet as others have been great Gainers, they are still fond of it, & all the States except Maryland have entered deep into this Species of Villany. The People are first stimulated by their Leaders to clamour for a Paper Currency. The Assembly grant it, & assign the Redemption of it upon some Tax that is never to be collected, as there is not the most remote Intention of Payment. The Moneyed Men receive this base Currency at the Treasury at thirty per Cent. Discount. They lay it out in Circulation at the nominal Value, & as soon as all the Bills are out of the Treasury, they begin to depreciate, & the Moneyed Men refuse to take them without ten, twenty or thirty per Cent. Discount, as they can agree, even tho' they gained thirty per Cent. at the Emission. The Treasury receive the Bills indeed at the nominal Value, for the few Taxes that are paid, but to indemnify themselves, they oblige their Creditors & their Officers to take them at the Nominal Value. Some few are burnt now & then to satisfy the People, but new ones are issued on various Pretences. In this Circle of Imposition have the Affairs of

twelve States run on constantly since the Peace, tho' successively under the Direction of Men profess-
ing different Principles & Maxims of Government. Maryland, tho' it kept free from the Imposition
of Paper Money, has however suffered as much as the rest, by the Operation of a villainous Bankrupt
Law, made by Debtors for their own Purposes, which has been lately repealed. Tho' not till the
State was brought to the Brink of Ruin. The Bankrupt Laws in the other States appear from
their Effects to be no less favourable to Fraud & Injustice. An Oath indeed is required in all,
but that has no Weight with People who boast of believing whatever they please, & who for the
most Part never think of a Supreme Being. In this State any one may get free of all their Debts
by going to Gaol for a little time, & petitioning the Assembly for their liberation, which is no
Disgrace here, & is granted as a Thing of Course. A Stranger would imagine the Gaol of Phila-
delphia to be the Seal of Government, from the great Multitudes of well-dress'd People which
he sees constantly coming in & going out of it. The Licentiousness of Jurics & the little Regard
paid to Oaths & Promises, is one of the great Grievances of this Country. I have been assured
that in Virginia, where they pretend to give the Agents of British Merchants Access to their
Courts for the Recovery of their Debts, that a Jury will sometimes appropriate upon Oath, a
Heap of Limestones on the Lands of the Debtor, & solemnly adjudge that to the British Mer-
chant as an Equivalent for his Debt. Matters are not much better in this State, where the
Court of Enquiry conveys the half of the Lands of the Debtor to the Creditor for seven Years,
& this is all the Payment he can expect. If the Court of Enquiry is of Opinion that the Debt-
or, by the utmost Economy, may discharge his Debt in seven Years, they give no Sentence
against his Lands, but the Creditor must wait his desire for that Period. My greatest Fear
with regard to the New Government is the Want of Men of Honour & Public Spirit to manage
Public Concerns, & the little Probability that such will be chosen by the People. Our present Con-
gress, tho' on its last Legs, is agitated by all the Fury of Party Spirit & local Prejudice. They
have little now in their Power except the Appointment of the temporary Residence of the
New Congress, till the federal Capital is fix'd, & the Appointment of the Election of the Mem-
bers of the New Government. They have delayed this Election till the Month of December,
instead of conjoining it with the general Elections held Annually in October, which will
be both hurtful to the Industry of the Country, & give an Opportunity to the Enemies of the
New Constitution to strengthen themselves by Alliances in the mean time. The federal Capital
ought to be fix'd at this Place, as being near the middle of the Territory, secure from In-
sult by Sea, & within Reach of the Western Country, which will soon be the most populous
& important Part of the States. The Votes are equal at present, Six for New York, & Six for
Philadelphia as the temporary Seat of the future Congress. Both Parties however pretend
that they mean only a temporary Appointment, as their Powers extend no farther. But if
they carry this, they wish to continue the Seat of Government as near as possible to themselves
the Southern States voting for Philadelphia, & the Eastern for New York. There is a Report
that they intend to admit the paltry District of Vermont into the Union, to cast the Bal-
ance in favour of New York, as Rhode Island has forbidden their Representatives to give
any Vote in this Question. If the Capital is not fixed at this Place, & the Allegiance of
the Western Country secured by good Garrison, they will either become independent, or fall
off to the English & Spaniards, in any of which Cases the States would lose a large and
fertile Country, & have an Enemy much more terrible than the Indians, to encounter.
But public Utility weighs so little, & private Gain so much, with the People of this Coun-
try, that the Seat of Government may probably be fix'd at a Seaport, which must
both expose it to Insult, & lose the greatest Part of the Territory perhaps in one Year.
The Inhabitants of Kentucky are said at present to be about offering their Allegiance to
the Court of Spain, on condition of being allowed the free Navigation of the Mississippi.

If this should take Place, as the Congress have hitherto declined to admit themselves into the Union as a separate State, it will produce such Consequences as must soon involve this Infant Country in War, which would be almost mortal to it in its present State. Some Species of Industry have begun to be introduced into this Country, but the People are so unsteady in their Purposes, & so dishonest in all their Dealings, that no Undertaking can be of any Continuance. The Manufactory of Nails has succeeded by coming into private hands, but till the Farmers increase their Breed of Sheep, there can be no Woollen Manufactories. The Land is possess'd mostly by Men without Knowledge, Sense or public Spirit, & incapable of Union with each other, loaded with Debts, occupied only about Politics, of which they know nothing, & ready to fly to the West as soon as any German will buy their lands, which must be much neglected by Men that do not mean to settle on them. Taxes are merely nominal to People of this Sort, & there are many that have held Lands twenty Years who never paid a Farthing of Taxes, either to the former or present Government. No public Officers or Collectors are accountable, & all of them are of the Mind of Pericles, tho' they never heard of him, choosing rather to make Interest with the People that they may never be called to any Account, & there is not one that interpose in Behalf of the Public. If the Taxes & Debts already due by this Country were exacted, the whole Property beheld to pass into other hands, so that the New Government will have a difficult Game to play, in compounding Mercy with Justice, & obliging Men by the Terror of Law to be frugal & industrious, but without an Army they can neither execute any Law, nor collect any Tax whatever. I hear that two Men of Letters from France are arrived at New York. They will be greatly disappointed in finding so little Knowledge in this Country. The French Fleet is arrived at Boston, & if Rhode Island continues separate from the rest, that Place may soon become a French Garrison, & be retained on account of the Debt owing them by Congress, unless the English Fleet now at Jamaica, take the Start of them, & seize it for the Debt due to their Merchants, which are of a much greater Amount. In either Case, the Congress could neither complain nor resist. I have seen some Specimens of a yellow Flint of which the Indians made heads to their Spears. They are about ten Inches long, & sharp pointed, & extremely hard. They were found, to the Number of eighty or ninety, in a Marsh in Virginia, twenty feet under Ground. Those designed for Arrows were of a Green Stone, & pointed like the others. The Inhabitants of Sunbury on the Susquehanna, in cutting a Road along the Banks of that River, discovered a Number of Petrifications, such as Field Mice entire, Beaks, Legs & Claws of Birds, all of a hard grey Stone. A German searching for Lead Mines at Huntington in this State, discovered Shells, Scoria, & other Vestiges of a Mine formerly wrought in that Place, which occasions much Speculation, as the Country has been but a short time out of the Possession of the Indians, & we never heard that any Spaniards had strayed so far to the North. This Seminary will languish, & the Trustees do nothing for its Support. Any hopes we have, are from the neighbouring States to the South, or if the federal Capital should be established here. Knowledge is despised, & People chuse rather to send their Sons to the Westward, with any little Money they can give them, than give them an Education that can procure them no Advantage. Another Age, I am afraid, must pass, before Knowledge, Industry or Virtue can have any footing in this Country. I have upwards of five Hundred Pounds Sterling due to me in this Country, but as the Payment of it depends on the faith of Men who have shown that they have none, it can not be reckoned for any thing. I am, with unfeigned Respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's very humble Servant

Cha. Nisbet.

Carlisle, 16th September, 1788

My Lord,

From a Country of so little Curiosity, & so barren of Events as this is, little Information can be expected, but as it is now in a Singular & interesting Situation, & the Accounts in the public Papers may be defective or partial, I imagined that a brief Account of its present State might not be unacceptable to your Lordship, as a Citizen of the World, & a lover of Mankind. Last Year a Convention of the Representatives of the thirteen States drew up a Constitution or Plan of Government for this Country, which was submitted to the Conventions of the Several States, & agreed to be carried into Execution, if adopted by Nine States. This Constitution, tho' imperfect, defective, & in some Respects impious, was judged however to be the best Form of Government that could be adopted by a People in our Situation, & is Still thought to be so, by all that love Order, Justice & the Happiness of Society. Eleven States have now adopted this Constitution, tho' those of Virginia & New York appear to be least Sincere in this Business. Rhode Island has not called a Convention to consider it, & North Carolina appears to be disposed only to accept it conditionally. Your Lordship may easily imagine how few good things can be expected to be agreed to by three Millions of ignorant Peasants, under factious Leaders, & loaded with Debts at home & abroad, habituated likewise, as they have been since the Peace, to the uniform Practice of Injustice to their Creditors & to one another. Wicked Men in this situation, must be Enemies to an Efficient Government, which would oblige them to pay their Debts and Taxes, & put it out of their Power to make Laws against the Practice of Justice, which is all that the State Governments have done hitherto. Accordingly, the Opposers of the New Constitution consist almost wholly of Men of this Description, & considering how much they abound here, it is surprising that the Opposition has not been greater. I hope that no Violence will be attempted, but the Malcontents in every State are Setting up Committees of Correspondence in Hopes of ruining the Constitution by Amendments, which they could not hinder by force or Numbers. What they principally point at is to deprive Congress of the Power of imposing general Taxes, & to prevent their keeping a Standing Army in time of Peace. Many likewise contend for a Bill of Rights, & that the Congress should not have Power to appoint the Time & Place of the Election of their own Members, but that it should be left to the Direction of the State Assemblies. If they should prevail on the Legislatures of Nine States to agree to these pretended Amendments, or even any of the two first, they would effectually defeat the Intention of the New Constitution, & prolong our present Anarchy. All the Operations of the State Assemblies since the Peace have been only to make laws for preventing the Payment of British Debts, & to cheat one another with Paper Money, & if no New Government is introduced they will go on as they have begun. The Opportunity of imposing on one another, by a Currency depretable at Pleasure, is considered by the most of the People of this Country, as one of the most Sacred & unalienable Rights of Mankind; & tho' Numbers have been ruined by it, yet as others have been great Gainers, they are still fond of it, & all the States except Maryland have entered deep into this Species of Villany. The People are first stimulated by their leaders to clamour for a Paper Currency. The Assembly grant it, & assign the Redemption of it upon some Tax that is never to be collected, as there is not the most remote Intention of Payment. The Monied Men Receive this base Currency at the Treasury at thirty per Cent Discount. They lay it out in Circulation at the nominal Value, & as soon as all the Bills are out of the Treasury, they begin to depreiate, & the Monied Men refuse to take them without ten, twenty or thirty per Cent.

Discount, as they can agree, even tho' they gained thirty per Cent. at the Emission. The Treasury receive the Bills indeed at the nominal Value, for the few Taxes that are paid, but to indemnify themselves, they oblige their Creditors & their officers to take them at the Nominal Value. Some few are burnt now & then to satisfy the People, but new ones are issued on various Pretences. In this Circle of Imposition have the Affairs of

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twelve States run on constantly Since the Peace, tho' successively under the Direction of Men professing different Principles & Maxims of Government. Maryland, tho' it kept free from the Imposition of Paper Money, has however suffered as much as the rest, by the Operation of a villanous Bankrupt Law, made by Debtors for their own Purposes, which has been lately repealed, tho' not till the State was brought to the Brink of Ruin. The Bankrupt Laws in the other States appear from their Effects to be no less favourable to Fraud & Injustice. An Oath indeed is required in all, but that has no Weight with People who boast of believing whatever they please, & who for the most Part never think of a Supreme Being. In this State anyone may get free of all their Debts by going to Gaol for a little time & petitioning the Assembly for their Liberation, which is no Disgrace here, & is granted as a Thing of Course. A Stranger would imagine the Gaol of Philadelphia to be the Seat of Government, from the great Multitudes of well-dress'd People which he sees constantly coming in & going out of it. The licentiousness of Juries & the little Regard paid to Oaths & Promises, is one of the great Grievances of this Country. I have been assured that in Virginia, where they pretend to give the Agents of British Merchants access to their Courts for the Recovery of their Debts, that a Jury will sometimes appreciate upon Oath, a Heap of Limestones on the lands of the Debtor, & solemnly adjudge that to the British Merchant as an Equivalent for his Debt. Matters are not much better in this State, where the Court of Enquiry conveys the half of the Lands of the Debtor to the Creditor for Seven Years & this is all the Payment he can expect. If the Court of Enquiry is of Opinion that the Debtor, by the utmost Oeconomy, may discharge his Debt in Seven Years, they give no Sentance against his Lands, but the Creditor must wait his Leisure for that Period. My greatest Fear with Regard to the New Government is the Want of Men of Honour & Public Spirit to manage Public Concerns, & the little Probability that such will be chosen by the People. Our present Congress, tho' on its last Legs, is agitated by all the Fury of Party Spirit & local Prejudice. They have little now in their Power except the Appointment of the temporary Residence of the New Congress, till the federal Capital is fix'd, & the Appointment of the Election of the Members of the New Government. They have delayed this Election till the Month of December, instead of conjoining it with the General Elections held annually in October, which will be both hurtful to the Industry of the Country, & give an Opportunity to the Enemies of the New Constitution to strengthen themselves by Alliances in the mean time. The federal Capital ought to be fix'd at this Place, as being near the middle of the Territory, secure from Insult by Sea, & within Reach of the Western Country, which will soon be the most populous & important Part of the States. The Votes are equal at present, Six for New York, & Six for Philadelphia as the temporary Seat of the future Congress. Both Parties however pretend that they mean only a temporary Appointment, as their Powers extend no farther. But if they carry this, they wish to continue the Seat of Government as near as possible to themselves the Southern States voting for Philadelphia, & the Eastern for New York. There is a Report that they intend to admit the paltry District of Vermont into the Union, to cast the Balance in favour of New York, as Rhode Island has forbidden their

Representatives to give any vote in this Question. If the Capital is not fixed at this Place, & the allegiance of the Western Country secured by good Garrisons, they will either become independent, or fall off to the English & Spaniards, in any of which Cases the States would lose a large and fertile Country, & have an Enemy much more terrible then the Indians, to encounter. But public Utility weighs so little, & private Gain so much., with the People of this Country,, that the Seat of Government may probably be fix'd at a Seaport, which must both expose it to Insult, & lose the greatest Part of the Territory perhaps in one Year. The Inhabitants of Kentucke are said at present to be about offering their Allegiance to the Court of Spain, on condition of being allowed the free Navigation of the Mississippi.

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If this should take Place, as the Congress have hitherto declined to admit Kentucke into the Union as a separate State, it will produce such Consequences as must soon involve this Infant Country in a War, which would be almost mortal to it in its present State. Some Species of Industry have begun to be introduced into this Country, but the People are so unsteady in their Purposes, & so dishonest in all their Dealings, that no undertaking can be of any Continuance. The Manufactory of nails has succeeded by coming into private hands, but till the Farmers increase their Breed of Sheep, there can be no Woollen Manufactories. The Land is possess'd mostly by Men without Knowledge, Sense or public Spirit, & incapable of Union with each other, loaded with Debts, occupied only about Politics, of which they know nothing, & ready to fly to the West as soon as any German will buy their Lands, which must be much neglected by Men that do not mean to settle on them. Taxes are merely nominal to People of this Sort, & there are many who have held Lands twenty Years who never paid a Farthing of Taxes, either to the former or present Government. No public officers or Collectors are accountable, & all of them are of the Mind of Pericles, tho' they never heard of him, chusing rather to make Interest with the People that they may never be called to any account., & there is not interpose in Behalf of the Public. If the Taxes & Debts already due by this Country were exacted, the whole Property behoved to pass into other hands, so that the New Government will have a difficult Game to play in compounding Mercy with Justice, & obliging Men by the Terror of Law to be frugal & industrious, but without an Army they can neither execute any Law, nor collect any Tax whatever. I hear that two Men of Letters from France are arrived at New York. They will be greatly disappointed in finding so little Knowledge in this Country. The French fleet is arrived at Boston., & if Rhode Island continues separate from the rest, that Place may soon become a French Garrison, & be retained on account of the Debt owing them by Congress, unless the English Fleet now at Jamaica, take the Start of them, & seize it for the Debts due to their Merchants, which are of a much greater amount. In either Case, the Congress could neither complain or resist. I have seen some specimens of a yellow Flint of which the Indians made heads to their Spears. They are about ten Inches long, & sharp pointed, & extremely hard. They were found, to the Number of eighty or ninety, in a Morass in Virginia, twenty feet under Ground. Those designed for Arrows were of a Green Stone, & pointed like the others. The Inhabitants of Sunbury on the Susquehanna, in cutting a Road along the Banks of that River, discovered a Number of Petrifications, such as Field Mice entire, Beaks, Legs, & Claws of Birds, all of a hard grey Stone. A German searching for Lead Mines at Huntingdon in this State, discovered Shafts, scoria, & other Vestiges of a Mine formerly wrought in that Place, which occasions much Speculation, as the Country has been but a short time out of the Possession of

the Indians, & we never heard that any Spaniards had strayed so far to the North. This Seminary still languishes, & the Trustees do nothing for its support. Any hopes we have, are from the neighbouring States to the South, or if the federal Capital should be established here. Knowledge is despised, & People chuse rather to send their Sons to the Westward, with any little Money they can give them, than give them an Education that can procure them no Advantage. Another Age, I am afraid, must pass, before Knowledge, Industry, or Virtue can have any footing in this Country. I have upwards of five Hundred Pounds, Sterling due to me in this Country, but as the Payment of it depends on the faith of Men who have shown that they have none, it can not be reckoned for any thing. I am, with unfeigned Respect,

My Lord,
Your Lordship's very humble Servant,

Chas Nisbet.

My Lord,

Carlisle, 20th March, 1790.

I am quite ashamed that I have not hitherto been able to answer your Lordship's friendly Letter of Decr 4th 1788, which I received in the Beginning of May last. The Difficulty & Uncertainty of all Conveyance in this Country is quite incredible to those who have not seen it. I was in hopes of procuring a Number of Petrifactions in less than a Month after receiving your Lordship's Letter, but have only received them within these few Weeks after many Letters & Messages. A Parcel of Books was sent me by Dr. Erskine by the Way of New York, which reached Philadelphia in August last. I saw it there in October, but it is not yet come to my hand, because of all the Variety of Faiths that we have in this Country, good Faith is by far the rarest to be found, tho' of what is called American Faith there is very great Abundance. - Your Lordship's Prophecies of an approaching Change in this Country to the better, gave me much Consolation for a time, & I used to read them over to myself, to dissipate the gloomy Auguries of my own Mind. But altho' it is so long a time since they were emitted, I confess I can see nothing that leads in the least to their fulfilment. The Establishment of a new Government, which now comprehends twelve of the States (Rhode Island still standing out) was supposed by many to be able to give a new Spring to the Minds of the People, & to excite them to improve their natural Advantages. But now that I have read the Account of all the Proceedings of the new Congress, I confess I see little hopes of any Reformation. They had great Debates on choosing a Place for the Seat of their Government, which they left undecided at their first Meeting, but what is most melancholy, it was discovered that their Division was not owing to Difference in Opinion so much as personal Interest, all of them - having speculated largely on Lands, on the Delaware, the Susquehanna, & Potomack, & they voted & debated for the Place that would contribute to raise the Value of their respective Purchases. Their present Business is the Payment of the Debts of the several States in which it is said that those who have got a Number of State Certificates in their hands are keen for paying the full Sum to the Holders of the Certificates, & others who are in a different Situation insist for a Discrimination of Persons, & that they should receive only what they paid for them, but the first are likely to carry it. It may be asked indeed how they are to pay them, as they have laid no internal Taxes, but it is apprehended that a vast Quantity of depreciating Paper will be emitted, which will revive all the frauds & Rogueries of former Years. There is no Talk of reviving the Credit of the Old Congress Money, I hear of no Improvements worth mentioning in any Part of this Country, but what we most want is Men of - Uprightness, Capacity & public Spirit, of which I do not hear that any Members of the present Congress are in the least suspected. They have got into the forms of Business pretty well, tho' not a little of the Sharpener, appears now & then. Men who are dishonest in

their Dealings in private Life, are but ill-qualified to act the Part of Patriots & Legisla-
tors. They have proposed a Plan for raising an Army from the Militia of the States, but it cannot
meet with much Encouragement if the People discover that they will be paid with depreciating Pa-
per, & that the Brokers & Money-jobbers will get all their Profits. This State has lately assembled a
Convention for amending their former Constitution, but the Plan they have published has still many
Defects, especially as they have left the Election of the Governor & sundry executive Officers to the
People at large, & continued the vile Custom of voting by Ballot, which is pernicious to the Mo-
rals of the People, & reduces Elections to a mere farce, as in this Manner the same Persons often
vote three, four or five times over under feigned Names, as I have been assured by many Electors,
& by some of the elected. The new Constitution is left open for Discussion till August next. The Peo-
ple are still flocking westward. Kentucky has received ten thousand Emigrants from the other
States last Year, & if any internal Tax is imposed by Congress, it would occasion still greater Emi-
grations. The Manner in which People live here does not leave it in their Power to pay any Taxes,
as every one spends all his Income, and the most Part are likewise in Debt. The dearth of Grain
in Europe last Year has brought a great Deal of Money into this Country, but it seems to do no
good, as they still complain of its Scarcity. The general Want of Virtue is the great Cause of their
Poverty & Misfortunes. There is no Truth or Honesty in mutual Dealings, & even those who per-
form their Engagements, often delay several Years. There can be but few Transactions in a Coun-
try where one Bargain requires the time that would be requisite for fulfilling twenty before it is
fulfilled. Indolence is the general Vice of the People, & the Mother of a Multitude of others.
Hence they will promise or swear any thing whatsoever, but never think of Performance, and
those who call themselves Gentlemen, & till the State Officers, are nothing better than the ordi-
nary sort of Rogues. I will not be surpris'd if your Lordship should think that this Account
is exaggerated, but to a Person living in the Country it is impossible to think otherwise. If we
had public Men who had a Sense of honour, & were desirous of establishing a Character to
themselves by upright Dealing, their Example might have some Effect on others. But as no
honour is to be got in this Country by the Practice of Virtue, very few have any Regard to it.
Their public Affairs are as full of Roguery as their private, as they have no proper Responsibility,
every Deficiency being uniformly excused. Judges are appointed for trying the Causes of For-
eigners, but from all that I can hear of their Characters, very little Justice is to be expected
from them. The President of the United States recommended to the Members of the Legislature
to be honest in their private Dealings, but I do not hear that it has had any Effect. Could any
in Great Britain believe that a Person pretending to be a Gentleman would break up pri-
vate Letters, & tell that he had done so, without being in the least ashamed? But I have not
only experienced this, but have heard Men who have sat in Congress, Assemblies & Conven-
tions, declare that they & others did so, & seemed to have no Notion that there was any
harm in it, and not only letters entrusted to private Persons, but those sent by Post, are
often opened in this Manner, from a mean & impertinent Curiosity, while our leading

Men are so mean, & the Post-masters lame enough to suffer it, what can be expected of the common People? I have never indeed found any of my Letters from Great Britain opened, as the Curiosity of the People is not set on things abroad, but on what is passing among themselves. An English Packet Boat has been in Philadelphia, for what Purpose I do not hear, but she is said to have carried off about 250 poor People to Ireland, giving them their Passage free, with a Design, I suppose, to check the Spirit of Emigration in that Kingdom. The Rage for Liberty seems to be spreading in Europe, but if they knew how little good it has done here, they would not be so sanguine in Pursuit. Mankind in the wild State are at best disagreeable, & sometimes terrible Animals, as many in France have lately felt to their Cost. There is no Prospect of introducing a Taste for Learning into this Country as the Seminaries are mostly in the Management of mere Goths & Vandals, & the Teachers very poor & superstitious Scholars, dependent & ill-paid, & some Trustees of Colleges are professed Enemies of Letters. Dr. Rush has become an Enemy to Learning on my Account, & endeavours to ruin this Seminary, to gratify his new friends of the Episcopal Church, who have very little Learning among them. The foolish Indulgence of the People here to their Children is another Cause of the great Want of Learning. Even those who bring their Children here two, three, or five hundred Miles, will sometimes tell them in my hearing that they may leave off their Learning whenever they please, and the People of this Town put away sundry young Men from their Studies by telling them that Learning is useless. Dr. Rush has published a long Dissertation in the American Museum, to dissuade young Men from the Study of the Languages, & to prove that no Man of any Profession ought to have more Learning than another Man. Yet he is a Trustee of two Colleges, & receives Subscriptions for both, wherever he can obtain them, but I will not affirm that he accounts faithfully for what he receives. It is a Trade here to receive Subscriptions, of which many are fond, for evident Reasons. My Affairs are still in a bad State & there is no Prospect of any Amendment of them. I struggle against the Stream, but with little Effect. I have been supported almost by Miracle, & do my Duty in the best Manner I can, tho' I know that other People receive my Wages. This is hard, but as God is pleased to give me Health, I must struggle with my bad Fortune as well as I can. It is in vain for me to complain, as my Case admits of no Remedy in a Country so void of Truth & Justice. —

I ever am with great Respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordships most obliged

humble Servant

Chas. Nisbet.

Carlisle, 20th March, 1790

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Goths & Vandals, & the Teachers very poor & superficial Scholars, dependent & ill-paid, & some Trustees of Colleges are profess'd Enemies of Letters. Dr. Rush has become an Enemy to Learning on my Account, & endeavors to ruin this Seminary, to gratify his new friends of the Episcopal Church, who have very little Learning among them. The foolish indulgence of the People here to their Children is another Cause of the great Want of learning. Even those who bring their Children here two, three, or five hundred Miles, will sometimes tell them in my hearing that they may leave off their learning whenever they please. And the People of this Town put away sundry young Men from their Studies by telling them that Learning is useless. Dr. Rush has published a long Dissertation in the American Museum, to dissuade young Men from the Study of Languages, & to prove that no Man of any Profession ought to have more learning than another Man. Yet he is a Trustee of two Colleges, & receives Subscriptions for both, wherever he can obtain them, but I will not affirm that he accounts faithfully for what he receives. It is a Trade here to receive Subscriptions, of which many are land, for evident Reasons. My Affairs are still in a bad State & there is no Prospect of any Amendment of them. I struggle against the stream, but with little Effect. I have been supported almost by Miracle, & do my Duty in the best Manner I can, tho' I know that other People receive my Wages. This is hard, but as God is pleased to give me Health, I must struggle with my bad fortune as well as I can. It is vain for me to complain, as my Case admits of no Remedy in a Country so void of Truth & Justice. I ever am with great Respect,

My Lord,
Your Lordships most obliged humble servant

Cha.s Nisbet

My Lord,

Carlisle, August 18th, 1790.

I am ashamed at having so long delayed the sending over those Fossils & Petrifications, which I promised to send last Year. I was put in hopes, from many Quarters, of obtaining a collection worthy of being sent to your Lordship, but the fallacy of American Faith, which prevails in the Higher & common, as well as in the most serious Transactions of Life here, has put it out of my Power. What I find at present can only prove my Inclination, & the slender Success of my Endeavour. As the Nature of my Business prevents me from travelling, I am obliged to trust to others: who generally fail me. Many false Reports prevail in this Country with respect to natural Curiosities, as well as other Things. I have heard of entire Eels being found petrified in the Susquehanna, but on tracing the Report, I find it to be false. A Sulphureous Spring has been lately discovered within fifteen Miles of this Place which is said to perform great Cures, & even to extirpate Cancers, which are become more frequent in this Country than heretofore. It has been chiefly serviceable in cutaneous Disorders, & was discovered by the Report of the Cattle to it from a great Distance. It appears that some other Mineral is mingled with the Sulphur, as tho' a sulphureous Smell is to be felt at the Distance of one hundred Yards from it, yet the Water does not tinge a Piece of Silver when put in it, as all simple sulphureous Waters do. The Petroleum or Rock Oil, which is gathered on the Surface of Frenchs Creek, begins to be celebrated for curing old Ulcers, & cutaneous Eruptions & is likewise said to be taken internally, with great Success, for Indigestions & Weakness of the Stomach. It is skimmed from the Water with a feather, & found in so great Quantities, that it is sold at Pittsburgh for Six Shillings Sterling per English Gallon. I expected to have seen Englishmen travelling thro' this Country from Curiosity, but have seen only one as yet, a Mr. Fielder, of London, who has been in this Country for fifteen Months. He has gone from Boston to Alexandria, along the Coast, & set out from thence in the Beginning of June last, on an extensive Tour to the Westward, from which he is now returning. He has walked more than Seven hundred Miles on this Tour, & has visited some of the Indian Tribes. He goes to the West Indies this Fall, & proposes to return to the Continent in the ensuing Winter. He has collected a Variety of Fossils & Petrifications, & examined every natural Curiosity that fell in his

Way, & keeps an accurate Journal of his Observations. It is probable that if several of this Denomination come frequently among us the Country may be more indebted to their Observations than to those of the Natives, who have in general too little Curiosity & Activity; tho' there are some Exceptions. A Son of General Roberdeau of Virginia, accompanied Mr. Fielder in his Tour, & carried a Rifle of twelve Pounds Swivels, a Shot Bag, Tomahawk & Scalping Knife all the Way & kept an accurate Journal as well as the other. A few hundreds of French Emigrants have come to Alexandria this Year, but they were disgusted on finding themselves cheated by those People who had sold them Lands, so that the chief of them returned to France with an Evil Report of the Country, tho' the greater Part of them have remained, being unable to pay for their Passage to Europe. It is pity that Duplicity & Knavery should be so inseparable from the Dealings of Americans, as they give so bad an Impression of the Country to foreigners, & prevent the Influx of useful People of whom we have so much Need. But as many of the Frenchmen who have come over are Mechanics, perhaps they may be useful by introducing sundry Species of Industry, by being dispersed over the Country. The present Misfortunes of France might have occasioned the Emigration of many thousands, to the great Emolument of themselves & of this Country, if the hostile Division of them had not been so vilely impeded on. The War which is likely to break out between Great Britain & Spain gives serious Alarm to the few that are capable of thinking among us. This Country may prosper in Peace, but a War would undoubtedly ruin it in a little time. And if the English should take New Orleans from the Spaniards, all the Country beyond the Allegany, would be obliged either to submit to England, or to lose the only Vent for their Produce. It is likewise taken as a bad Omen here, that General Arnold is come to Detroit, & is exercising the Militia once a Week, within the Territory ceded by Treaty to the United States. I hope Great Britain will never again think of conquering this Country, as it is too poor to afford Plunder, & too large to be kept in Subjection by force. The Congress have agreed to leave New York where they were come to be very much dissatisfied, & to settle at Philadelphia for ten Years, so as to remove at the commencement of next Century to the Potomack, on which however they have fixed on no particular Place. But as they have broke thro' every Rule & Form of Business which they themselves had established for conducting their Proceedings, succeeding Congresses will follow their Example

& take the same liberty to alter all that they have resolved. And some doubt whether they will ever live as a permanent Residence. They appear to be Men of a small Size of Understanding, & incapable of extending their Views beyond their private Interests, & the Prejudices of their particular States. Their Division on the Residence of Government was determined by their having Lands near the River on which proposed to fix it. & their Division on the Funding of the States, was precisely according as they had or had not an Interest in the Matter. When Men in public Office are so little able to conceal their private Attachments, it argues very poorly for the public Interest. The Play of Government has been very poorly acted among us hitherto, & I confess that when I consider the Electors & Elected, many of whom I have seen, tho' I never saw any of their public Meetings I can not help recollecting the Persons that used to be elected Robin Hood, Little John, Master of Misrule, & Abbot of Unreason, in the Staburmalia that used formerly to be held in Scotland, about the Christmas Weeks & the Beginning of May, which Custom is abolished by an Act of Queen Mary, in 1555. For indeed one would imagine that they had been elected for the sake of the Joke, rather than for any serious or public Purpose. It is probable that they will not dare to impose any Taxes for fear of losing their Seats, but they may issue a large Quantity of depreciable Bills of Credit, which will be a popular Measure, as it will give the Citizens the unexpressible Satisfaction of cheating one another, which they love above all things.

I have enclosed a few Specimens of Seeds, for an Experiment, as they might probably grow in Scotland. The Beans are of twelve different Species, & are amazingly prolific. ~~They are said to be of the creeping kind and supported by Sticks, I have like-~~wise added a few Seeds of the Cedar & Locust trees, & a Specimen of the Water-Melon, a few Crystals which are found in this Neighbourhood, & a pair of Moccasins which my Son had in a Present from the Chief of the Seneca Indians, a Specimen of the Nails that are cut out of the cold Iron, & of the Asbestos of this Country. But I am sorry that my Situation did not permit me to send something of more Curiosity, to testify with how much Sincerity I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient

humble Servant

Cha^s. Nisbet.

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My Lord,
Your Lordship's most obedient
humble Servant

Chas Nisbet.

My Lord, ~~Exaggerated~~ account of Carlisle, June 22^d, 1791.

Affairs.

73 I had the Honour of your Lordship's Letter of 21st Dec^r last by Dr. Estlin's Packet, on the 10th May last, at Philadelphia. & am sorry if my Observations on my Situation & the general State of this Country have given any Offence. I acknowledge that I am apt to complain, especially when separated so far from my friends, but all I ever meant by it was to lessen my Grievs by Communication, & not to give trouble to my friends. Your Lordship has said enough to make me silent with regard to my own Affairs, as in an Age so fertile in Revolutions, when the Earl of Buchan is retired to a Convent, & the King of France imprisoned in the Tuilleries, without being allowed to say with Trifram Shandy's Starling, "I can't get out, I can't get out;" it would be most assuming in me to make the smallest Complaint of my Situation. I have seen a Person who not long since was Secretary to the Arch-bishop of Paris, & Almoner to the Prince of Salm, employed as a Common Music Master in Philadelphia, & not being able to live there, obliged to retire to this Neighbourhood. The World is going to be turned upside down, without undergoing any Reformation, & tho' the Light of Scepticism & Atheism has made great Progress in France, it does not appear from Mr. Burke's Calculations, which are not questioned by any of his Answerers, that the Nation has gained any thing by it, but greatly the contrary. "The Ways of Heaven are dark & intricate." But if the Divine Providence has Blessings in Store for future Generations, I do not see how Mankind can be put in Possession of them, till they are delivered from their present pretended Reformers. Mr. Paine's Pamphlet seems intended for exciting a Revolution in England, rather than for defending that of France, & for investing the People at large with that "Divine Right of ruling Wrong", which gave so much of offence when it was claimed by Kings, & certainly does no less Mischief when exercised by the People, who respect the Rights of Property & life as little as the most arbitrary Princes. The French National Assembly seem to think that they are the Proprietors of the whole Kingdom, as not only the Clergy, who have been used to Pillage in all Ages, but the Princes of the Blood & the Nobility are daily stripp'd of their Property by those Miscreants. No Rights are saved in their Account, except the Claims of the public Creditors, most of which I suppose, they will take Care to invest in their own Body, in Imitation of our leading Men here. The Assignats are an excellent Trap for catching the Money of Simpletons, especially when supported by the Despotism of the National Assembly. Our Congress here were not so Despotic. They made Use of the plain Arts of Cheating & Lying only, for pulling off their Waste Paper, and completely gull'd the People, by giving them a Chance for coming in for a

Shame of the general Blunder, M. Mirabeau & Dr. Price have gone off too soon, to receive any thing considerable, but the National Assembly & the Army, who survive them, will no doubt have it in their Power to live in Clover for the future. Dr. Priestley does not disown the Design of abolishing the Clergy, & wishes that it may be adopted in England. This Country is engaged at present in an exterminating War with the Indians, tho' I wish that it may not end in a Quarrel with Great Britain, as it is said they intend to erect a Fort on the Great Miami, a few Miles distant from Detroit, which may produce Quarrels betwixt the Soldiers of the different Garrisons. Massachusetts, ^{Vermont} New Hampshire and Rhode Island, have not contributed their Quota of Men, nor do I hear that any of the Southern States are stirring in this Matter, except Virginia & Kentucky. The President is in Georgia, receiving the Compliments of the People, & caring for none of these things. The People of Pittsburgh have offered an hundred Dollars for every Scalp that shall be brought them with the two Ears, but as this Reward will not be paid, I hope that their Advertisement may do little Harm. Seven hundred and fifty Men have marched from Kentucky into the Indian Country, with a Resolution to spare neither Man, Woman nor Child. No Orders are needed for any thing, because no Body here is ever called to an Account. I am sorry to hear that General Sinclair who has the Command of this Expedition, is as great a Drunkard as Marmar, who was carried so scandalously in the Expedition of last Year, but has never been called to Account. I am sure that there is much Knavery & unfair Dealing in other Countries, but I will think that there is far more in this Country, where the Sense of Honour & Shame, as well as all regard to Religion & Morality, seem to be mostly extinguished. This Seminary is distressed to increase, if Accommodation could be procured for the Students that arrive, but but sundry go away for Want of Lodging. I left a Memorial on this Head, with Mr. Bingham, a Correspondent of your Lordship's, who is one of our Trustees, but tho' it was at his own Desire, I fear it may have little Success, as I have left the like Memorials with other Men in Power here, who never thought more of the Matter. The bad Reputation of most other Seminaries here has no doubt been of Advantage to this. It is inconceivable to what a low State Learning is now reduced in this Country, thro' prevailing Ignorance, Want of able Teachers, the Indolence of Youth, & the Indulgence of Parents for their Children. Young Men here are sent to Study with express Orders to return if they are in the least weary, so that we always lose sundry Students at every Vacation. But even those Parents who wish their Children to learn something, expect that they should become learned all at once, without Expence, Time or Application. The Exceptions are very few, & even Curiosity is very faint

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know not the Number of their Medical Students, but am informed that they
spend only one year before they practise. The Students of Law spend two or
three Years in an Attorney's Office, & the Episcopal Ministers who are or-
dained here, are generally Irish Schoolmasters who can not get Employment.
Your Lordship may easily judge what Sort of Divines they must be, who ne-
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I am, adventis iorum immerfabilis Undis, my Lord,
+ Principal of Carlisle College N. America your Lordship's very humble Servant,
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Your Lordship's very humble servant,

Cha.s Nisbet.

My Lord,

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Carlisle, 10th January, 1792.

Although I have duly answered all the Letters with which I have been honoured by your Lordship since my Removal to this Country, yet reflecting on some Words in your last, & finding that there is a Ship in the Delaware, bound to Newcastle, I take this Opportunity of accounting for the Silence of my former Letters. I was not surpris'd to find that your Lordship on observing the Difference betwixt my Accounts of this Country & those that are pompously related in the News Papers, should have suspected that I owed it a Pardon for what I had said, & that my Accounts were tinged with the Effects of Disappointment & Misanthropy, as I have been told the same Things by sundry who reside in this Country. I am conscious to myself of no Malice to America, nor to Mankind in general, & with Respect to Disappointment, I have less to complain of than formerly, having received six Years Salary, tho' I have not been seven Years in the Country. The Legislature of this State have granted a Sum equal to One thousand three hundred & fifty Pounds Sterling to this Seminary, & it rises daily in Reputation, chiefly on Account of the bad Character of sundry others. I & my family have been blest with good health since we came hither, after sixteen Months Affliction at the Beginning. I mention these Circumstances merely to convince your Lordship, that what I have now to say can not be attributed to a Temper soured by Disappointment. A general Want of Morality prevails in this Country, in Consequence of the loose & Sceptical Doctrines which prevail among us. A promise or even an Oath is little regarded, & a general looseness & Uncertainty prevails in all the Transactions of Mankind. I never imagin'd that I was worse treated than others, tho' a Prejudice against the Scots prevails in this State, most of the Inhabitants of which are Irish. I suffered only the Effects of the general Immorality in common with others, and notwithstanding the pompous Accounts of the Prosperity & Prospects of America, with which our Papers abound, & which no Doubt are transmitted to Great Britain, I am still of Opinion that this Country is in a very precarious State. We have, it is true, got a Government two Stories high, I mean a general & a State Government, but these two are apt to interfere with each other, & betray such a Spirit of Jealousy as threaten a Ruin. Congress have not been able to execute any one Act as yet, except that relating to the Impost & the Post Office. The Legislature of Virginia have negatived their Act with Respect to the public Securities, & the Grand Jury of Charleston have presented their Excise Act as a Nuisance. Sundry of their Excise Officers have been tarred & feathered in this State, in the greatest Part of which they dare not show their faces. When a Quota of Troops were ordered by Congress for the Defence of the Frontier, the several States of whom they were required, being Sovereigns, sent just what they pleas'd, the Consequence of which has been that we have received two scandalous Defeats from the Indians, one last Year, & a much greater on the 4th Nov. last, in which about Seventy Officers & seven hundred Men were killed or wounded, & seven Pieces of Cannon, with seven hundred Stand of Arms, & a considerable Value in Money Baggage, Tools & Ammunition was gained by the Indians, with little or no Loss on their Side. Our Frontiers are exposed & the People in the utmost Distress. The Command of the first Expedition was given to one Harmer, a notorious Drunkard, & that of the last to General S^t Clair our Country

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My Lord, Your Lordship's most obedient

humble Servant,
Chas. Nisbet.

Carlisle, 10th January, 1792

My Lord,

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