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Title: Letter from William Bingham to Benjamin Rush

Date: January 1, 1784

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London Jan 4th 1784

You have been too sanguine, my good Friend, in your Expectations of Success, on the Subject of my procuring Contributions to the Support of Dickinson College

I refer you to a letter ^{addressed} to the Trustees for an Enumeration of the Causes, that occasion the Disappointment; — Doct^r Price, with whom I am on Terms of friendly Intercourse, writes you by this Opportunity, & I have no doubt will confirm to you the Propriety of withholding all Solicitations; — at least for the present

However, I console myself with the Reflection, that the Friends of this Institution in Pennsylvania, are daily increasing in Number, & that their Exertions will be sufficient to establish it, on a stable & permanent Footing

I am extremely flattered with the Accounts you give of the favorable Returns at the Election & contemplate with Rapture, the pleasing Prospects of a change of Constitution; — Nothing else is wanting to raise Pennsylvania to the most distinguished Rank, amongst her Sister States

The Abolition of Congress, is a severe Blow to the Interests of Philadelphia. It would be some Reparation for the Misfortune, if they would fix their Federal Town on the Banks of the

Delaware.

Delaware; - But I am confident that great Efforts will be made to retain them in Maryland, & without attention (are to prevent it, - probably with Success.

I hope this Presump^{tion} will become a Serious Matter of legislative Consideration, as it much eventually very deeply affect the Welfare of Pennsylvania.

I wish you would inform me, when it is expected the Council of Seniors will call a Convention, & how long ~~these~~ Deliberations of the latter will last, previous to the Constitution of Form of Government, being fully determined on.

This Country is at present in great Confusion, & exhibits every Mark of approaching Troubles, similar to those, which took place in the Reign of Charles the first.

The House of Commons had a Resolu^{tion} into the Business of making a Radical Reformation in the Affairs of the East India Company, & pass'd a Bill for this Purpose by a Majority of 119. - By the personal Interference & Influence of the King, who became apprehensive of its creating a Power, to be exerted by the Ministers, which would render them above the Constraint of his Authority, it was rejected in the House of Lords; - The Seats were immediately taken from the Ministers of the respective Departments, & deliver'd into the Hands of those, who were the Secret Advisers of the King on this Occasion.

However, it is expected that the latter will not be able to retain their Seats, as the House of Commons have petitioned the King against a Dissolution of Parliament, & a large Majority of them are oppos'd to the new Administration.

Amidst this factious Struggle for Power, in the leading Character of the Country, in order to share

Shall the Emoluments of Office, the public Affairs are
suspended, its Credit suffering, & the whole Nation thrown
into a Convulsion; The Stocks have fallen
amazingly, & there is a general Apprehension of still
greater Distress.

Mr Pitt, a young Man of 27 Years of Age, is
raised to the Rank of first Lord of the Treasury & Chancellor
of the Exchequer; This perhaps will astonish
Some Gentlemen, who were of opinion that a Person
was incompetent to the Discharge of the Duties of public
Life in Pennsylvania, at the Age of Twenty.

Whether the Minds of Politicians are agitated
with the dreary Prospect of public Affairs, the Attention
of the literary World is entirely taken up with the Improve-
ment of the Aer Balloons.

You doubtless have already heard of the recent
Experiments of Mons Montgolfier & others, who by filling
their Balloon with inflammable Air, have rendered
them specifically so much lighter than the common
atmosphere, as to ascend any given Height.

By increasing their Size, they have been made
capable of supporting the Weight of several Persons,
who have been suspended thereto, & who have traversed
the Distance of Forty Miles in the Regions of the Air.

By carrying up apparatus proper for the
purpose of qualifying their common Air, so as to form a
continued Supply, they can increase their Stock when
they are undertaking long Journeys, & by suffering it
to escape, they can let themselves down whenever they
think proper.

Great Expectations are formed of the
Improvements that will be made of this Discovery,
& of the useful Purposes to which they may be
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converted.

By the Assistance of Small Air Balloons, attached to different parts of the human Body, that will be exactly sufficient to keep a ~~human~~ it suspended in Air, in equilibrium, & with the help of a Pair of Wings, what can prevent its making a Progress thro' the Air with great Facility? — Will not this be a cheap & easy Method of Travelling?

Various Conjectures are formed of the future Advantages & Disadvantages of these Improvements, with regard to the Peace & Happiness of Society —

I enclose you a Pamphlet which I committed to the Press in a Hurry, in order to counteract the Influence of certain Opinions, that were very prevalent here, operating to the Disadvantage of our Commercial Interests; — It has been attended with much greater Effect, than I expected from such a hasty Performance; & has contributed to impress on the People of this Country a proper Sense of the Value of the American Commerce.

I am happy to find that our Friend Genl. Morris will be sent to Congress — It would grieve me if his Name should be again held up to public Notice, by his Party, as it was last Year, for this Appointment, & on the Day of Election, be shamefully deserted; & that chosen by intriguing Interests, who were never supposed to stand on the best of Candidates; — Such ~~conduct~~ ^{Reproach} must wound the Feelings of a Man of the least Sensibility. — for the Conduct of Character in public Life, should bear as severe a Scrutiny, as in their

This is the only Circumstance of the kind which I shall mention by Paper. Yours affectionately
 Wm. Livingston
 P.S. Enclosure of Mr. Campbell's Pamphlet
 651 4921.14 ml

London Jany 1 1784

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I hope this Business will become a Serious Matter of legislative Consideration , as it must eventually very deeply affect the Welfare of Pennsylvania

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The House of Commons had entered into the Business of making a Radical Reformation in the Affairs of the East India Company, & passes a Rule for this Purpose, by a Majority of 119. By this personal Interference & Influence of the King, who became apprehensive of its creating a Power, to be exerted by the Ministers, which would render them above the Constraint of his Authority, it was rejected in the House of Lords;

The Seats were immediately taken from the Ministers of the respective Departments, & delivered into the Hands of those, who were the Secret Admirers of the King, on this occasion-

However, it is expected that the latter will not be able to retain their Seats as the House of Commons have predetermined the Kings against a Dissolution of Parliament, & a large Majority of them are opposed to the new Administration

Amidst this factious Struggle for Power, in the leading Characters of the Country, in order to Share

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Share the Emoluments of Office, the public Affairs are suspended, its Credit Suffering, & the whole Nation thrown into a Convulsion; The Stocks have fallen amazingly, & there is a general apprehension of Still greater Distress-

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I am with truth & Sincerity
Yours affectionately

Wm Bingham

P.S. I enclose one of the Pamphlets for the President

Jan 1. 1784