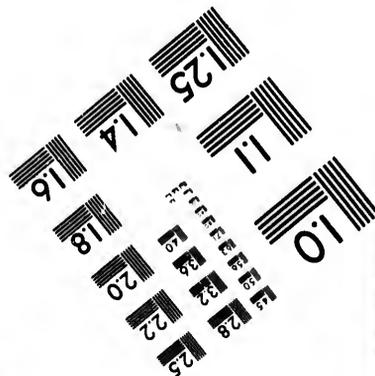
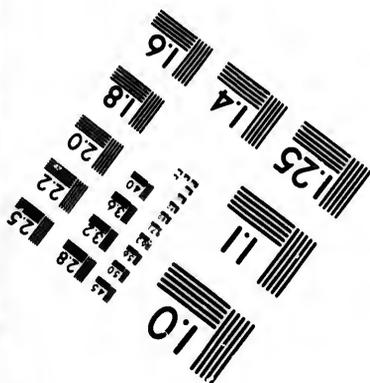
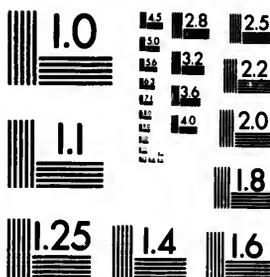


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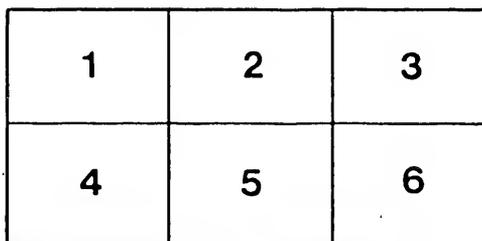
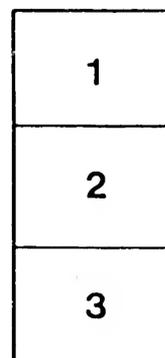
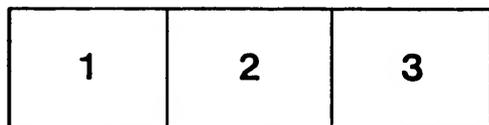
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A LETTER

From MAJOR DAVEZAC to MR. WADSWORTH

A MEMBER OF THE LOUISIANA STATE LEGISLATURE

*In answer to an invitation to partake of a banquet
offered by many of his fellow Democrats
on his return to New Orleans, after his
Missions to the Netherlands and
Naples.*

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WHEELING, December 1864

Dear Sir :

The letter, which you thought I should have received at New Orleans, followed me up the river, and only reached me at Louisville. This prevented me from sooner expressing to you the feelings of gratitude, of sorrow and regret, growing out of the invitation, which you have so flatteringly conveyed to me, in the name of many of our democratic friends, to meet them at a civic banquet intended to mark their approbation of my conduct, while representing our country, at the court of the Netherlands and at that of Naples. Of gratitude, at the thought that more than ten years' absence has not effaced me from their kind remembrance ; of sorrow, that the circumstance which compelled my immediate return to the north, should have brought with it, as an aggravation, the necessity of foregoing an opportunity so courteously offered me, of again meeting those friends, who had already individually welcomed me home, and of greeting with warm salutations many more, whom my short stay in New Orleans had not allowed me to take by the hand ; of regret, that instead of pouring out the full tide of my feelings on an occasion so meet to commune with my old political associates, my surviving brother soldiers, with unpremeditated and unreserved frankness, I should be driven to this more formal mode of expressing to them all, in a letter, sentiments, even, now gushing over me so

abundantly and with such a force of inspiration, that I must claim your indulgence should this communication, in spite of my endeavors to abridge, swell beyond the usual limits of a letter.

If to return to his country, after an absence of nearly eleven years, for every man, even for the inhabitant of countries so long settled as to have become stationary in their material aspect, be an event of no ordinary interest; what, on a like occasion must be the feelings of an American? It is true that during those ten long years, my eyes had been constantly fixed on the great republic itself, marking its majestic onward course towards the high destinies promised to it, not by mendacious oracles, as to nations tracing their origin to obscure and fictitious annals, but by the felicity of its geographical position, by the noble character impressed on its population, through the free institutions which their ancestors brought over with them, (the household gods of the British race,) such as they were regularly presented to my view in our newspapers, the daily, weekly, monthly and yearly historians of our people's material and moral life. Nor was my attention so absorbed by this contemplation of the increasing power, greatness and wealth of our country, viewed as a nation, but that I could observe the separate and distinct efforts of each individual State, for the share it had contributed to the attainment of this unrivalled national prosperity; watching, however, with more solicitous anxiety and pride—need I ask Louisianians to forgive this partiality?—the glorious exertions of our own State to preserve in peace, by industry and labor, that high rank, which valor and patriotism had marked for her in war among her associated States. One must have long lived abroad, and preserved his heart free from the contamination of foreign institutions, to conceive the morbid anxiety with which, a sojourner in a strange land, I watched every cloud that rose to obscure, even for a moment, the western horizon—the delight with which I saw each gathered storm pass on innocuous, leaving our stars to shine with wonted brightness:—sometimes disarmed of the thunders, which it portended, by the wisdom of the renowned warrior, whom you have invited to meet you once more on the 8th of January next;—sometimes made to burst harmless before it had collected the lightning, dire precursor of unprofitable wars, by the energy of a people ready to meet, if honor require it, all the perils of a third contest against a twice and successfully encountered power.

I was prepared to behold great changes in the aspect of the

country. I thought that I knew what must have been accomplished by a people living, in ten years of the life of nations, more than other people live, of the same existence, in a century: and yet my expectations had lagged far behind the reality that burst on me as soon as I felt my feet firmly set on American ground, in New York, the great American city. Objects of comparison, however, had not been wanting to lessen in me, the fervor of admiration, could comparison ever prove disparaging to our country.

I had lived in Holland; and here let me pay a just tribute of gratitude to that people, whose kindness and friendly hospitality, I so long enjoyed, to that old and steady ally of our political infancy, that unshaken friend of our national manhood—to that land, the cradle of modern freedom in continental Europe, whose annals record the high deeds of the Nassaus, the wisdom and talents of the Barnveldts, the de Witts, and of Grotius—Grotius the lawgiver of nations! the valor of Van Tromp and Ruyter, the science and discoveries of the Ruyssches and the Huygens, the unrivalled wit and learning of Erasmus, the adopted country of the erudite Salmasius, of Bayle, Saurin: where Boerhaave taught and Linnæus studied—to a people, who have preserved both in prosperity and in adversity, those lofty attainments and qualities that made their ancestors great; and who even now continue to maintain themselves, in the ranks of the powerful nations of the world, with a population numerically inferior to that of several of the third rate European States—I had seen Amsterdam with its hundred canals and thousand bridges—its stupendous quays—its princely palaces, the habitation of untitled citizens—its exchange where ten thousand merchants daily meet to sell gold and silver to kings and emperors—its *entrepots*, where the varied produce of Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Australasia, are contained without incumbering those immense warehouses. I had seen Liverpool dividing its capacious basins, its granite wharves, equally between British and American shipping. That noble port I had reached by traversing England on the magnificent railroad, the mighty artery that sends, in long and frequent pulsations, the heart's blood of the metropolis, to the extremity of the empire! I had witnessed all these wonders of modern civilization; and yet I could not but gaze, with untired admiration, at the spectacle of enterprise, of vigorous efforts, displayed by New York to sustain its prosperity against the most adverse circumstances: continuing to give gold and silver in exchange of all it receives from the whole world—repaying with the precious metals, the iron, the wool, the British manufactured American

cotton, brought from England ; the silks and wines of France ; and in return, sending to every region of the globe, the produce of American labor and industry. Even in the mode of travelling now over our country, I was continually reminded of the glorious triumphs of American genius. Was he not an American, he who, disdainng the tempest, as sluggish and slow of wing, grasped with a master's hand, fire itself, the till then indomitable element, commanding it, with giant arm, to drag on, prompter than the horse, fleetier than the storm, here the cumbrous ship, there the long train of connected cars ! Every State, as I advanced, presented, in quick succession, new subjects of wonder—new cause to rivet me in the opinion, that the greater the development of the democratic principle in our institutions, the greater will be, not only the sum of happiness enjoyed by each individual, but also the more signal, the more ennobling will ever be, the conquests obtained, both over matter and over mind.

I was prepared for all that I witnessed of improvements in what are called the free States. New Jersey, though crippled in its march by the anomalous sway obtained by a minority over the majority, did not disappoint the expectations I had entertained. I knew the industry, the persevering vigor of its population, and therefore saw without astonishment the prosperity, the wealth, they derive from a barren soil, made fertile by labor. Pennsylvania, though for a moment palsied by the torpor that follows artificial excitement, has within herself treasures, that cannot remain long dormant ; and such are her institutions, that no aristocracy can long control her destinies. Hence her successful efforts to bring herself into full contact with rivers, which nature has placed on her most distant border, and separated from her central population by barriers of stupendous mountains: we have seen her levelling them—sometimes, to receive deep canals within their rich valleys—sometimes, ascending them with iron roads, insensibly rising to their summit, and again descending them in like manner ; thus connecting her rivers and her bays, by arteries and fibres, through which commerce circulates with equal facility, spreading alike over the mountains and the plains its vivifying influence,—making barrenness productive, and rendering fertility itself doubly fecundated. I have said that I was prepared, by my preconceived opinions, to meet improvements, wealth, activity, in the free States ; but I confess it, for I never have concealed even my erroneous opinions, that I was in dread of the painful contrast which, I had been told, would mark the difference between those states and the republics in which ser-

vitude exists. In these, I had read, (and what we continually read or hear in conversation, will often bias our mind in spite of every effort to keep it free from premature judgments,) that I should find every thing in the same situation in which I had left them. To them, it was added, the last ten years had been lost. Time had passed over them unheeded, unimproved. With such gloomy apprehensions weighing heavily on my thoughts, I arrived at Baltimore. That democratic city gave the first cheering contradiction to these anticipations. Baltimore! the young, the enterprising, the valiant!—point out to me, any where, a city having in its aspect more of that spirit of life, of high-keeping, the mark of a glorious and long hereafter! Show me which of her sisters of the Union has outstripped her in the race of prosperity or fame! From what port sail better manned vessels—masters of more consummate naval skill—sailors more experienced, adventurous, and daring? Point to me on the map the ocean on which her schooners do not spread almost to the very teeth of every adverse gale, their broad triangular sails, making the taunt mast to bend under their mighty efforts?—like the sea birds, their wings never tire, and like them they know of no resting place. Hemmed in, between two powerful states undepressed by their high rivalry; Maryland contends with Pennsylvania for the mastery of the Alleghanies, with the toil-enduring vigor of the east; and with Virginia she wrestles in senate and council, dividing commerce and agriculture with the one, and sharing the palm of eloquence, of wisdom, of genius, with the other. Even the sterile aspect, the deadly stillness, that once prevailed over the space that separates it from the capital of the Union, had changed during my stay from home. Culture had spread verdure over it: an air of comfort seemed to breathe out of the painted lattices of the white cottages, and the hideous hovels had almost entirely disappeared.

In entering Virginia, I speak it without disguise, the appearance of the country, though much bettered since I last visited that great state, did not, at once, contradict the opinion to which I have alluded. Virginia had reposed long on her well-earned laurels: and well she might be allowed to neglect matter, that republic, whose sons have so deeply impressed her mental character on our history. The very peristyle of the temple of our independence rests on columns which Jefferson wrought with such inimitable skill, that posterity view them already with that veneration which seems to appertain only to the monuments of antiquity. Her Washington, had he lived in Greece or in Rome, would have stood as pre-eminent and

unrivalled, by the side of Aristides and Fabricius, as he appeared matchless among the most high-gifted of his contemporaries. She amended the great federal charter, the work of the united wisdom of America, with such a superiority of foresight, that every one must now confess that while the provisions which she has introduced into the national compact would suffice of themselves, even isolated from all the other clauses, to secure our rights and freedom, it may yet be fairly questioned whether that instrument, in its original form, unimproved by the genius of Virginia's statesmen, could have preserved the Union, and secured the rights of the individual states. As if the proud destinies of that republic remained still unaccomplished, to her favorite son (for Washington had already descended to the tomb,) was reserved the glory, when the purity of our institutions had been sullied by unhallowed hands, when the privilege of speaking and writing freely, and without fear of consequences,—the birth-right of every American! had been violated, again to secure the triumph of democracy, the supremacy of the many over the few. And, lastly, when the people, made jealous for the future by the experience of the past, sought, as his successor, one to whom they might confide, in full security, the depositories of their freedom, so fruitful was that republican state of patriots and sages, that it was from among them that the nation selected those two chief magistrates, that carried them, one triumphant and victorious through the varied fortunes of a second war of independence: the other, safely through the perils, less appalling, because visible only to the sagacity of meditating minds, of that atony, the most dangerous of political maladies, which in states, as well as in individuals, ever succeeds to great exertions. From that repose, not the lethargy of the weak and debilitated, but the rest of the strong man that has toiled much, Virginia has just awakened. Her first steps, like those of the mammoth, so sublimely described by her statesman and philosopher, have shaken the ground, and troubled the waters.

North Carolina, too, a state ever dear to my remembrance, whose kind hospitality nurtured my youth, a child of her adoption,—forgive this egotism, and allow the matured man to repay, by this poor tribute of grateful recollection, the debt incurred by the friendless boy towards its generous inhabitants—that state had felt the great impulse; not made drunk and mad by the blandishments of the paper-robed prostitute, it set itself seriously to work, not with the wealth of others, but with the fruits of its own honest earnings, the savings of its wise eco-

nomy. Its barren pine forests now hear the measured strokes of the piston, as the cars roll rapidly along her boundless plains. The line of railroads already constructed there exceeds in length the far-famed one from London to Liverpool. Nor has she stopped fatigued and exhausted. She has planned (and whatever she designs she executes) mightier works. Her mountains, also, will bend down before the efforts of perseverance and art. Bordering on Tennessee, she intends to meet the commerce of that state at the very frontier: and to convey her own produce, at the same time, to the ocean, in rivalry of the communications that now divert them, from her own ports, to our mighty river. A noble rivalry, this—the only one that should exist between sister republics!

This, I am aware, is a letter, and not a statistical view; and yet I find myself communing as desultorily as if I were sitting at the same table with you, sipping your matchless claret, talking about all things, and, as the Latin poet says, *de quibusdam aliis*.

Taking it for granted that this will serve as a sufficient apology for previous and, I fear, subsequent garrulity, I will pursue my narrative. And how could I journey through South Carolina, the high-minded, the talented State—chivalrous and noble, even when she errs—never wandering from democracy even while aberrating from some of its tenets—without speaking of the enterprize that has marked its policy during the last year? Like her neighbor of the north, she has seen that the immense healthy plains that extend between her mountains and the sea, ought to be redeemed from the sterility to which the want of communication had hitherto doomed them, that embracing within them, large tracts of fertile land, they required but roads and canals to become populous and opulent; that their pine forests, for all the purposes of steam navigation and travelling, and for all manufactures worked by machinery, offered sources of wealth as inexhaustible as the mines of fossil coal possessed by the western and middle states. Though but a few years have elapsed since South Carolina turned her attention to internal improvements, the works executed in that state exceed already, in extent and importance, what has been accomplished in works of the same nature, by France, in spite of her boasted centralization, during the last fifteen years. Who can doubt of her perseverance in the career she has entered into with such energy and success? It is not in the character of her population to stop short when they tread in the right path!

In Georgia, towns, rivalling in the splendor of their architecture the most beautiful of the eastern cities, have sprung up

and attained a high degree of commercial prosperity during a number of years, which, comparing the age of cities to the age of man, are but as seconds in the day. She, also, has entered the field open to the emulation of southern states, an ardent competitor for pre-eminence; and if she have not obtained it, at least, she nobly contends for the prize.

Our near neighbor, the sister next to us in political age, Alabama, not bowed down by adversity,—retarded, but never for a moment made to stand still,—will not remain far behind in this list open to state ambition. I entered Mobile with a heart saddened by a remembrance of its awful and repeated calamities. I expected to behold nothing but smoking ruins, and a desponding people. I saw splendid structures, streets crowded by a population still *pushing on*, as if conscious that nothing can arrest the onward march of Americans, when inhabiting a fertile soil, irrigated by mighty rivers leading to deep seawater.

If it were true that what we most deeply feel we most vividly describe, I would paint to you, in colors true to nature, the varied and strong emotions that possessed me when borne from Mobile, over the lakes, by one of your great steamers, I stepped once more on the soil of our beloved Louisiana. *Italam! Italam!* But I feel, while endeavoring to recall my sensations of that moment, in order to describe them to you, that this is not true: that sensations, various and changing at every instant, by the diversity of objects that elicit them all to the same degree, are, of their nature, indescribable in their minuter associations. All was new that I beheld. The very place where I landed, art had conquered from the water—the wharves, a village flourishing, and bearing all the marks of being the centre of an active intercourse between two great commercial cities,—the railway on which I travelled to New Orleans—all these you had created within a few years. I had expected much before I proceeded to examine all the changes that had taken place since I had left Louisiana, for I knew that our country, blessed with a climate equally removed from that cold that benumbs, and that fervent heat that enervates man, traversed by the greatest of the rivers that fertilize the earth—a river which, as wise monarchs sometimes do, who give charters to their subjects, had raised its banks, as a rampart, to guard the land itself had made, against its own waywardness, when, swollen in the full pride of tributary waters, it rolls its mighty waves a rival of, not a vassal to the ocean;—that this land was inhabited by a race, formed out of the happy blending of the blood of the three nations, that have marked

with their fame the noblest pages of history; who, when they stood opposed to each other, have, like the warring giants, rocked the earth to its centre, and disturbed the seas to the utmost verge of the globe; who have acted, on mind and matter, with the most beneficial influence in contests of the intellect, when struggling for the supremacy of genius and science; and who, now made friends and brothers in freedom, exercise, for the preservation of peace and good will among mankind, those indomitable energies, which, while unbridled by ambition, have ravaged the earth, and covered it with ruins! But these high expectations, these glad forebodings, of what I should witness of the works of your enterprize and industry, have exceeded the creations of a fancy not subject to lag far behind art, or even nature. Your wide streets paved with stones, all brought from distant regions, and lined with granite structures, many of them rivalling the princely palaces of Naples and Paris; that Rotunda—an edifice that seems as if transported by some magic spell from Greece, the tomb of past greatness, to adorn Louisiana, the cradle of future empire: so simple the design, so pure the lines of its architecture, so deeply imposing its aspect; the Hotel St. Louis, less striking in its style of architecture, in visiting which, I trod on carpets, such as in Europe are only to be seen in the abodes of kings; surpassing, in the elegance of its ornaments, the beauty of its furniture, all establishments of this kind in any of the countries that I have seen; the Verandah—a reduced transcript of the Palais Royal, without the squalid appearance of its outside, without the sad associations connected with the very name of that far-famed palace. Your old city you had rebuilt; so entirely changing it that, were some of the patriot soldiers, who now repose on Laronde's plains, to be re-animated and to visit it, they would not recognize that very city, in whose defence they laid down their lives. And, at the same time that you were doing this, you have built two immense fauburges, or rather two entire new cities, not yielding, in beauty, in all that marks modern improvement, in comfort and elegance, to Philadelphia itself; one descending with the river, as if to accompany with due honor, its downward course—the other, meeting, and ushering it, as it were, into the first-born of the cities, which it traverses on its long journeyings to the ocean. Stately quays, like so many promontories, advancing towards countless ships from every ocean, bearing, some (and these more numerous than all the rest together,) the colors of the Union; others displaying, in beauteous variety, the flags of all the commercial nations of the earth. Gallant steamers

bringing the varied tribute, not only of our own Mississippi, but also those of its most distant or mighty vassal-streams—the sugar produced in our most southern settlements—the cotton gathered, where the Washita slowly meanders its silver waters, and that grown on the banks of the Red river—a stream of the second grade only among the tributaries, and yet watering a space of fertile land of greater extent than the distance that separates the Gulf of St. Lawrence from the mouth of the Thames; the mineral wealth, the lead and copper of Missouri—the grain, the cattle, the full blooded horse and sturdy mule, bred by Kentucky—the fossil coal, the fruit, the manufactured and agricultural produce of Ohio—the machinery wrought at Pittsburgh and at Wheeling—the iron and flour of Pennsylvania—the cotton, the other yields of toilsome and warlike Tennessee—and all the produce, the early tribute of the precocious opulence of young Arkansas! Nor has this impulse, stopped short, expending its energies in the capital: it went strong and vivifying from the centre to the extremities. Commerce, favored by canals, has extended its enterprise where it had never before shown a sail or sent a steamer.—Railroads have opened new facilities for the ready transportation of produce; and our lakes, which once severed us from the plains of Attakapas—the rich prairies of Opelousas—the cotton growing settlements of St. Tammany, of Feliciana, serve now to bring us nearer to them, for all the purposes of trade and social intercourse. This is not all; you have nobly sustained the renown you obtained in the memorable campaign of Orleans. Bear with me a while longer, as I relate to you how this was told me. On my way from South Carolina to Georgia, I met, in a steam-car, Col. Gadsden, an old friend, an aid of Jackson in the second Seminole war, and the Quarter Master General in the last expedition in Florida. He spoke to me of the trials, the difficulties of that war, against an enemy who ever recedes before him that advances, and as promptly closes on the adversary who stops or retreats: “Your State sent us,” I give you his own words, “a fine brigade, headed by General Smith; you must know him, a lawyer from Orleans; a daring and intelligent officer. I never saw finer men than those whom he commanded. Always ready, never tired; never expressing discontent, except that the “enemy would not give them a fair chance for a fight.” Need I say what were my feelings in hearing this tribute paid to the valor of my countrymen?

In listening to an orator, especially if he be animated by strong feelings, we are not conscious of time; we know not

when the source of inspiration may cease to flow; we have not laid before us, marked or limited, the ground over which he will eventually lead us. We go farther than we would have consented to walk, had he said to what point he would take us. There is something like surprise, if not stratagem, in his inducing us to accompany him. Not so, as regards him who writes. The reader has before him the written page; he counts, he measures. I am aware of this, and yet I cannot close this letter; for I have still much to say. I have only spoken of things material; and have not yet alluded to what has passed in the moral and political world, while I dwelt among strangers.

A new republic had sprung into existence on your very borders. Some of the statesmen of Europe affected to believe, I say affected, because I am aware, that in spite of their dislike of freedom, their abhorrence of our institutions, they nevertheless believe in the purity of our public men, that the revolution, which had separated that province from its parent state, had been brought about by the United States for the furtherance of purposes of aggrandisement. But our government refused the proposed increase of our territory, lest the world should suspect that the influence of our vicinage had been exerted in order to its annexation to the Union. This national abnegation was a triumph for your representatives abroad. It justified the opinion, which they have ever sought to establish in Europe, that our government, in its international relations, is ruled by those maxims of eternal justice which sway honest men in the private affairs of life. This has added more to our influence and respectability abroad, than the possession of Texas would have done, coupled with the belief that it had not been fairly obtained. Then came the civil war in Canada; and again were the same sinister predictions renewed, with the same insane expectation of their realization, among the unbelievers in national faith and virtue. It must be acknowledged there were grounds on the part of our Government, for mature deliberation. The American character had been traduced by the Governor of one of the Canadas, in a manner to wound the just susceptibility of a proud people—nay, acts of hostility had occurred that might well have justified reprisals. The representatives of America, with a unanimity that astonished Europe, hastened to place, in the hands of the Chief Magistrate, “the sword and the purse”—a phrase which I almost loathe to use, since it has been made the cant-word of political hypocrisy—happily England was governed by ministers, honest and enlight-

ened; and our Chief Magistrate was met by them in a spirit of conciliation, in all the measures so wisely combining prudence and firmness, by which the calamity of war was averted from two kindred nations.

Accustomed as I had been to hear all our friends in Europe bear witness to the wisdom of our Government; and aware of their firm belief, that our institutions, founded on principles of justice, philosophy and humanity, must continue, for years, to work as beneficially for mankind as they have hitherto done, what was my astonishment to learn, that some desponding spirits had stopped short, tired of the long onward journey, or-influenced by some other motive, had joined our adversaries, on the idle pretence of fears entertained by them for the future. I have heard vague allegations of some grave calamities threatening the country—of the people having been invited to contend for an equal division of property—nay, some have dreamed of modern Gracchi, stalking the land and parcelling the estates of the wealthy among what they term *proletarians*, in execution of, I know not what, intended agrarian laws; that the nation had been advised to divide itself into separate and antagonistical classes. Here I stop, lest I should seem to have conjured up absurd allegations, in order to accomplish the easy task of proving their falsehood. What? in a country where the people are the sovereign, the undisputed ruler: holding the dominion of more than three hundred millions of acres, of fertile and unappropriated land, talk of an agrarian law! Speak of separate classes! as if the high-minded American yeomanry, the cultivator of the soil, the yearly producer of incalculable wealth, the sagacious mechanic, the hardy navigator, ever admitted that there existed, in our country, a class distinct, different, and apart from themselves; as if they had even noticed, except by their contempt for their folly, an imperceptible faction, calling themselves the distinguished members of society: interchanging among themselves fulsome praises, claiming talent, genius, nay, virtue, as their exclusive and peculiar inheritance, forgetting, infatuated men!—that Franklin was not one of them; that Washington had spurned their proffered alliance; that Jefferson had repudiated them long before they added to all his well-earned honors the praise of being the object of their deadly hatred—that Fulton had never been received into their sumptuous abodes, before the friendless watchmaker marked his place among the master-spirits of the age—that Rittenhouse laid no claim to their patronage, either by birth or associations—that

Cooper,* the most popular of all living writers, is an uncompromising democrat—that Poinsett marches in front of the republican phalanx—that the long sojourning of Irving among their brethren of Europe has but confirmed his earlier republican predilections—that Paulding, who has so vividly painted the follies of our aristocracy, has never expressed a sentiment of his own, not in full sympathy with the soundest tenets of democracy—that the vigorous terseness of Bryant's prose has not oftener made the Whigs wince, than his enthusiastic and inspired verse has cheered republicans in their noble struggle—that Bancroft, who traces with so firm a hand the annals of our country, is not a more talented, than he is a sincere, supporter of our cause—that the institute of France sought not among them, but in the ranks of democracy, Franklin, Jefferson, Livingston, and Duponceau, the only four Americans it has associated to its fellowship of learning and renown—that, in war, our armies have been led to their most glorious fields of victory by democratic chieftains—that Louisiana, a greater empire than that which Alexander conquered in his career of rapine and blood, was a trophy of democratic foresight and wisdom—that, out of thirteen presidential terms, since the birth of our federal republic, eleven have been deferred by the people themselves—not once by Congress—the fit reward of undeviating principles, to the most deserving from among the American democrats. Away then with these idle fancies! Even American school boys laugh in derision of the evoked shades of your Gracchi. Walk quietly in your groves—tread undisturbed your silken carpets—quaff your choice wines—nay, rear up in pride of architecture on the banks of the Delaware, marble palaces to mock the humble cottage to which your paper delusions have carried wretchedness and despair—the people forgive and forget you!

Since my return from abroad I have sometimes been asked, if a long residence in Europe had not lessened the fervor of my democratic faith?—if I still, as formerly, believed that every alteration, either in our federal or state institutions, rendering the action of the people in the government of their own affairs more direct and frequent, ever proved beneficial to our society? To these inquirers I have said, that the very fact of that long residence in countries where principles adverse to those that they had alluded to, have the ascendancy, had

* I know of as many as five Dutch translations of Cooper's works; and a friend tells me that he has read the "Bravo" in modern Greek.

served but to confirm my belief in the capacity of the people for their direct, immediate, as far as practicable, self-government; that this opinion, which I had early imbibed among the patriots of '98, had been the faith of my youth, the creed of my manhood, and was now the consoling conviction of approaching age. Let us, I have added, take as objects of comparison, as to the workings of the two systems, first, New York, as an example of what can be effected by the people administering, themselves, their own concerns; and next, any one of the European Governments, as a sample of an opposite system; and then I would ask if that government, possessing boundless resources, both as regards wealth and population, has executed works of general utility, on such a scale of magnificence and grandeur, as those which New York, while democratically administered, has accomplished during the last thirty years? The northern lakes have been brought in full communication with the waters of the Hudson—cities have sprung into existence in the very wilderness—rail roads have furrowed the land in every direction; and while she was executing all these stupendous works, the wealth and prosperity of that republic were so far from being exhausted, that she increased her tonnage so as to surpass that of any one of the maritime nations of Europe—England excepted! Not satisfied with this, a system of education has been adopted, the most extensive in its design, the most successful in its application, diffusing knowledge through the land with such bountiful prodigality that now, to the eternal honor of democracy! out of every four individuals in that state, one attends the public schools, not barely to learn how to read and write, but to be taught all that can impress on a freeman the high sense of his noble origin; on a citizen, all that can indelibly stamp on his mind, the full knowledge of his privileges and rights. Has England, blessed as she has been for ages, in the possession of free institutions, with her lofty views, her far-reaching councils, her hundred and fifty millions of human beings, obeying the mandate of her king and parliament; has she surpassed, has she rivalled these doings of democratic New York? Has France, under the guidance of the potent genius that wielded her resources, her science, her activity, the enterprise of her thirty-three millions of intelligent and hardy sons, has she equalled these successful efforts of a republic? Has Russia done as much, during the same period, with her sixty millions of inhabitants, and the undefined powers of her talented princes? This is not spoken in disparagement of those three nations—governed like them, the same remarks would equally

have applied to America. How could the stupendous works I have enumerated, have been carried on, had New York been burthened with what Bentham, in his quaint language, terms "The costly equipment of kingship?" A royal palace costs more than all the locks of the Erie Canal! The civil list of the least prodigally endowed of the reigning kings, is a larger sum than that spent by that young state in educating her entire population; and the expense of purchasing diamonds, to adorn an imperial bride, would exceed that esteemed requisite to enlarge her great canal to its intended dimensions!

I have adverted only to works of public utility, for I well remember what had been effected by the whims of despots, for the gratification of vanity, of idle phantasies. A whole nation may be converted into makers of brick and hewers of granite: and pyramids, intended to incase a mummy in a marble mountain, rise in sullen majesty, to admonish nations of the madness of unlimited power! I had seen Versailles—wandered through its solitary halls. I had listened, filled with grave meditations, to the echoes of my own steps, repeated along its lofty galleries; and I felt my heart gladdened by its gloom. "Stand ever thus!" I inwardly exclaimed, "the splendid testimony of that monarch's heartlessness who built thee with cement, kneaded with the blood and tears of a noble people."

I cannot bring this letter to a close without conveying to you a thought that has long weighed on my mind. Those among you who were the companions in arms of Jackson, the witnesses of the events of the wonderful campaign of '14 and '15, cannot have forgotten the spectacle that saddened the pride of triumph, and filled with sorrow every grateful heart, when the chief, whose skill, prudence, and salutary energies, averted from our city the calamity of lying conquered and prostrate at the feet of ruthless invaders, was summoned, by a vindictive judge, to appear as a criminal before a tribunal, that, but for his valor would have had no jurisdiction over which that judge could have exercised his abuse of power, and sentenced, unheard, (since his counsel were not allowed to take the ground they deemed necessary to occupy, in order to his full defence) to pay a fine of \$1,000, with costs. Nearly twenty-five years have elapsed since that iniquitous judgment has been recorded and executed; and, as yet, not one voice has been heard, calling on Congress to redress this unprecedented violation of the most sacred of the rights secured to every American by the constitution, that of being heard in his defence, under every accusation, by himself, or counsel.

It matters not whether the growing infirmities of his glorious old age will allow General Jackson an interval of health and strength sufficient to enable him to join you in the solemnities of that memorable anniversary, or, on the contrary, to compel him to participate with you in its celebration only in the lofty and ennobling associations, which each return of that day must ever bring up to his remembrance; for, in either case, no fitter occasion could be selected, by Louisianians, to meet and petition Congress to pass a law, ordering that the fine of \$1,000 and cost, with the interest from the day of paying it, be refunded to General Jackson. It were doing an injustice to the representatives of the people in Congress, to suppose, on their part, an unwillingness to act in conformity with your wishes, when so much in accordance with the dictates of equity and right. But, if the expression of them, by Louisianians alone, were deemed an insufficient manifestation of national opinion, as regards that iniquitous judgment: who can doubt that the example set them by the gratitude of Louisiana, will be followed, with kindred feelings, by all the democracy of the Union? Petitions will be laid before Congress, coming from every state and territory. Every city, town, village, and hamlet of the land, will echo the voice of grateful Louisiana, in accents so loud and deep, that they must be heard and attended to. Perhaps the spirit of party, and that deadly envy, that ever fastens on heroes: only giving them up to the worm of the grave, may postpone for a season this solemn and tardy act of popular justice, this lustration of our national annals, prayed to be performed by our representatives. But justice, ever slow, and often lame, like the prayers personified by the prince of poets, will arrive at last! Remember the untiring perseverance of Benton in a like purpose! Remember his often rejected, but still renewed motion to *expunge*—till at last, when the people had regenerated the Senate, patriotism effaced from the records of that Assembly, the unmerited censure inscribed on them by hatred.

And now, my friend, with my renewed apologies for the length of this letter, receive, for yourself, and be so kind to express to all our friends, in whose name you have addressed me, my grateful acknowledgments and high sense of the honor they had intended me, and the assurances of the respect with which I have the honor to be, yours, &c.

A. DAVEZAC.

