

# THOMAS JEFFERSON WRITES ON POLITICS AND THE CONSTITUTION

Below is a excerpt from a letter written by Thomas Jefferson to his son-in-law John Wayles Eppes. Mr. Eppes married Jefferson's daughter Mary (Maria) Jefferson. The letter was provided to the Toledo Public Library in 1878, by Maria Jefferson Eppes Shine, the granddaughter of John Wayles Eppes and Mary Jefferson Eppes.



Maria Jefferson Eppes Shine\*



John Wayles Eppes



Mary (Maria) Jefferson Eppes

Philadelphia Mar. 8. 1800. 9

Dear Sir

My last was to Maria of the 12<sup>th</sup> of Feb. I have been discouraged from writing under the apprehension that my letters did not get to you. I therefore ordered that to Mr. Jefferson. Since this I have received yours of Feb. 7. 10. 16. & 20. by which I have had acknowledgements of the receipt of all mine except of Dec. 21. I may rest of Feb. 12. this I shall hear of in due time. The former was sent by some people of Mr. Randolph's going to Virginia. I thank you much for the regular information you have communicated of Maria's state. tho it has been a painful one to me, yet it is less so than a state of uncertainty & fear. A letter from Mr. Randolph from Richmond of Feb. 27. informs me that a favorable change had taken place within a few days. I hope your next will confirm this information. The continuance of her indisposition is far beyond any case of the same kind I have ever known before. I inclose you a letter for her from her friend Kitty Church which has been in my hands upwards of a month, waiting to be sent, having got displaced among my papers.

I had not heard that the smith employed by Richardson had left Monticello but that had made no change in my mind with respect to Powell, whom I should still have preferred. I shall be glad to engage him to come in the beginning of July so as to be ready to commence work about the middle of that month when our harvest finishes. I should be afraid that ~~some~~ years he to go before I go home, some difficulties might occur ~~with~~ & deter him from continuing.

We are still entirely without news from Europe. I have the lower house is occupied with Jonathan Robbins; and the upper with the Editor of the Aurora, for some publications concerning the Senate in his paper of Feb. 19. I am sorry to hear that Congress have no privileges but those given by the constitution, which is only to their own persons & to proceedings within their own doors. This authorizes them to do whatever they think necessary for their protecting themselves undisturbed in the exercise of their functions. There is little doubt which sentiment will be strongest within doors, & which without. — by stopping enlistments, & suspending for one year the building of the 74. they reduce the deficit to 3 1/2 millions, which is to be borrowed at any interest the President shall approve. — our envoys having landed at Lisbon may very possibly add somewhat to the length of our session. — present me affectionately to Mr. Eppes & the family. — my beloved Maria express the tender anxiety I feel for her in my power to go to her. accept assurances to return as soon as possible.

Th. Jefferson

Some among us insist that Congress have no privileges but those given by the constitution, which go only to their own persons & to proceedings within their own doors: while others insist there is an inherent right of self-preservation in every body of men, which authorizes them to do whatever they think necessary for protecting themselves undisturbed in the exercise of their functions. There is little doubt which sentiment will be strongest within doors and which without. — by stopping enlistments, & suspending for one year the building of the 74. they reduce the deficit to 3 1/2 millions,

NOTE: Spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors are on the part of the author.

Your's affectionately  
Th. Jefferson

\*Maria Jefferson Eppes Shine was the founder of the Maria Jefferson Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in St. Augustine, Fla., in 1896.