

WASHINGTON, December 10, 1807.

GENTLEMEN,

I RECEIVED, sometime ago, from the President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives, of Maryland, an address of that Legislature, to which, on public considerations, it was thought advisable that the answer should be deferred. I now ask permission to convey the answer to the Legislature through the same channel, and to tender you the assurances of my high consideration and respect.

TH. JEFFERSON.

*The Hon'ble The President of the Senate, and
The Speaker of the H. of Representatives, of Maryland.*

TO THE LEGISLATURE OF MARYLAND.

I RECEIVED, in due season, the address of the legislature of Maryland, bearing date the 3d day of January last, in which, with their approbation of the general course of my administration, they were so good as to express their desire that I would consent to be proposed again to the public voice on the expiration of my present term of office. Entertaining, as I do, for the legislature of Maryland, those sentiments of high respect which would have prompted an immediate answer, I was certain, nevertheless, they would approve a delay which had for its object to avoid a premature agitation of the public mind on a subject so interesting as the election of a chief magistrate.

That I should lay down my charge at a proper period is as much a duty as to have borne it faithfully. If some termination to the services of the chief magistrate be not fixed by the constitution, or supplied by practice, his office, nominally for years, will, in fact, become for life; and history shews how easily that degenerates into an inheritance. Believing that a representative government, responsible at short periods of election, is that which produces the greatest sum of happiness to mankind, I feel it a duty to do no act which shall essentially impair that principle; and I should unwillingly be the person who, disregarding the sound precedent set by an illustrious predecessor, should furnish the first example of prolongation beyond the second term of office.

Truth also requires me to add, that I am sensible of that decline which advancing years bring on; and, feeling their physical, I ought not to doubt their mental effect. Happy if I am the first to perceive, and to obey this admonition of nature, and to solicit a retreat from cares too great for the wearied faculties of age.

For the approbation which the legislature of Maryland has been pleased to express of the principles and measures pursued in the management of their affairs, I am sincerely thankful; and should I be so fortunate as to carry into retirement the equal approbation and good will of my fellow-citizens generally, it will be the comfort of my future days, and will close a service of forty years with the only reward it ever wished.

TH. JEFFERSON.

DECEMBER 10, 1807.

Which were read and sent to the house of delegates by the clerk.

The clerk of the house of delegates delivers a bill, entitled, An act authorising Robert Leatherbury, of Somerset county, to complete his collection, passed by that house December 16, 1807; a bill, entitled, An act to extend further the powers of the levy court of Allegany county, relative to roads in said county, and for other purposes, passed by that house December 17, 1807; which were severally read the first time and ordered to lie on the table.

The bill, entitled, An act to establish a public road in Prince-George's county from Lansdale's branch to intersect a road leading to the Oyster-shell Landing on Patuxent river, was sent to the house of delegates by the clerk.

On motion, the question was put, Will the senate reconsider the resolution in favour of John Barnes, clerk to Charles county court? Resolved in the affirmative.

The resolution being read, the question was put, Will the senate assent thereto? Determined in the negative.

The following message was read and agreed to.

By the S E N A T E, December 17, 1807.

Gentlemen of the House of Delegates,

WE have rejected your resolution proposing to levy on the inhabitants of Charles county a sum of money sufficient to pay for transcribing certain records therein mentioned, not because we are opposed to the object of the resolution, but because we deem the mode of effecting that object novel and inexpedient in legislation.

We are of opinion that resolutions ought to be employed only to express facts and principles, and the opinions and purposes of the legislature, but cannot for a moment conceive that the most valuable rights of our citizens were ever intended by the constitution to be affected by a mode of procedure, which might be hidden from their view, and never be heard of by those on whom it was to operate until they felt its effects.

Other weighty objections might be offered to levying taxes on the people by way of resolution, but we presume that they are unnecessary, and hope you will concur with us in opinion on this subject, and send us a bill embracing the object of the resolution.

By order,

T. ROGERS, clk.

The bill, entitled, An act for founding a medical college in the city or precincts of Baltimore for the instruction of students in the different branches of medicine, was read the second time and will pass with the proposed amendments.