COMMENTARY

THOMAS JEFFERSON RECOMMENDS A
COURSE OF LAW STUDY

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On September 18, 1970, Morris Wolf, Esq., a distinguished senior member of the Philadelphia bar, presented to the University of Pennsylvania Law School an important manuscript letter by Thomas Jefferson which outlined a proposed course of legal education. The full text of the manuscript, given in honor of the Law School's new Dean, Bernard Wolfman, is set forth following this introductory note.

The letter was written by Jefferson at Monticello on August 30, 1814, and was addressed to General John Minor.¹ The date and place of writing are set out at the top of the first page, General Minor's name appears at the foot of that page, and the letter is signed by Jefferson at the end of the text on the last page. The manuscript consists of six sides on three leaves, written clearly and legibly in Jefferson's own hand. It incorporates a course of law study and readings which Jefferson had prepared "near fifty years ago for the use of a young friend" and which was contained in an earlier letter to Colonel Bernard Moore.² In fact only the first and last paragraphs of the 1814 letter are specifically directed to its recipient, John Minor.

Both Minor and Moore were Virginia friends of Jefferson and both letters were apparently intended for the guidance of their respective sons. Colonel Moore had, among other children, a son Bernard who apparently did study law and was undoubtedly the intended beneficiary of Jefferson's earlier letter. John Minor's eldest son, also named John, was born in 1797 and would have been about 17 years of age in 1814. He in fact studied law, practiced for a short time, and lived until 1862. The younger John Minor seems to be the object of the suggestions in this letter.

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I would like to acknowledge the kind help and advice of Dr. Julian P. Boyd, distinguished editor of *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, and, as always, the assistance of my colleagues at the Biddle Law Library.

¹ Minor was born in Caroline County, Virginia, in 1761, served in the Revolution, and later studied law under George Wythe as had Jefferson. He practiced law in Virginia for many years and died in 1821.

² Moore was born about 1720, was a Colonel of Militia, a Justice of King William County, and a member of the House of Burgesses.

The letter itself outlines a program of reading and study in a variety of subjects, which constituted a well-rounded education for a gentleman of the period. In addition to standard works in law, it includes readings in fields designated by Jefferson as follows: mathematics, astronomy, natural philosophy, agriculture, chemistry, anatomy, zoology, botany, ethics and natural religion, sectarian religion, politics, political economy, history (divided into ancient, modern, English, and American), belles lettres, criticism, rhetoric, and oratory. After a general discussion of recommended legal writers, he makes specific suggestions, separately listed, for readings in the common law and chancery.

A large part of the letter is devoted to an allocation of the hours of the day to various areas of study, with readings for each time segment. The following periods are mentioned: *until* eight in the morning for "Physical studies, Ethics, Religion natural and sectarian, and Natural law;" eight to twelve noon for law; twelve noon to one for politics; the afternoon for history; and "From Dark to Bed-time" for belles lettres, criticism, rhetoric and oratory.

In 1814, Jefferson was leading a rather quiet life at Monticello, although still somewhat involved in public affairs. His second term as President of the United States had ended in 1809, five years before. In addition to his private business and the improvement of Monticello, he was already involved in the planning of the new University of Virginia, which was later to be established at Charlottesville in 1819. He consulted frequently with his immediate successors to the Presidency, James Madison and James Monroe, who were also friends and neighbors. He served as President of the American Philosophical Society, entertained extensively, maintained a wide correspondence, and pursued his varied scientific interests. He was also involved in negotiating the sale of his large book collection to the Library of Congress, which was completed in 1815.

The extent of Jefferson's correspondence throughout his life is noteworthy.³ He wrote letters almost every day, both to friends and to strangers who made inquiry of him. In addition to the original manuscripts, many of which have survived, Jefferson also made copies

³ For a general discussion of Jefferson's correspondence, see 1 THE PAPERS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON xi-xiii, xxv-xxix (J.P. Boyd ed. 1950) [hereinafter cited as PAPERS]. This definitive edition of Jefferson's papers is still being published. Citations to material appearing in the already published volumes of the PAPERS will be given *only* to that collection. The other editions are fully described in the leading biography, 1 D. MALONE, JEFFERSON AND HIS TIME, JEFFERSON THE VIRGINIAN 459-61 (1948) [hereinafter cited as MALONE]. Other references will be made to THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON (P.L. Ford ed. 1892-99) (10 vols.) [hereinafter cited as FORD]; and THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON (A.A. Lipscomb & A.E. Bergh eds. 1903-04) (20 vols.) [hereinafter cited as LIPSCOMB & BERGH].

for his own file, first by a copy press, and later by the polygraph copying machine of that time.⁴ Most of Jefferson's retained copies are in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.

He frequently complained to his friend and long time correspondent, John Adams, about the pressures of that correspondence. The following excerpts from three different letters to Adams are interesting in that regard:

Instead of writing 10. or 12. letters a day, which I have been in the habit of doing as a thing of course, I put off answering my letters now, farmer-like, till a rainy day, & then find it sometimes postponed by other necessary occupations.⁵

From sunrise to one or two o'clock, and often from dinner to dark, I am drudging at the writing table. And all this to answer letters into which neither interest nor inclination on my part enters; and often from persons whose names I have never before heard. Yet, writing civilly, it is hard to refuse them civil answers. This is the burden of my life, a very grievous one indeed, and one which I must get rid of.⁶

I do not know how far you may suffer, as I do, under the persecution of letters, of which every mail brings a fresh load. They are letters of inquiry, for the most part, always of good will, sometimes from friends whom I esteem, but much oftener from persons whose names are unknown to me I happened to turn to my letter-list some time ago, and a curiosity was excited to count those received in a single year. It was the year before the last. I found the number to be one thousand and sixty-seven, many of them requiring answers of elaborate research, and all to be answered with due attention and consideration. Take an average of this number for a week or a day, and I will repeat the question Is this life? At best it is but the life of a mill-horse, who sees no end to his circle but in death. To such a life, that of a cabbage is paradise.⁷

⁴ The polygraph was a device having one or more additional pens connected to a writer's pen to produce extra copies by simultaneously tracing the same course as the primary pen. In an 1805 letter to C.F. Volney, Jefferson describes it as follows: "A Mr. Hawkins of Frankford, near Philadelphia, has invented a machine which he calls a polygraph, and which carries two, three, or four pens. That of two pens, with which I am now writing, is best; and is so perfect that I have laid aside the copying-press, for a twelvemonth past, and write always with the polygraph." XI LIPSCOMB & BERGH 62, at 67-68. Then in 1806, in a letter to James Bowdoin, he noted further, "It is for copying with one pen while you write with the other, and without the least additional embarrassment or exertion to the writer. I think it the finest invention of the present age" XI LIPSCOMB & BERGH 118. Jefferson himself made several improvements in his own version of the polygraph.

⁵ Apr. 25, 1794, in VI FORD 505.

⁶ Jan. 11, 1817, in X FORD 72.

⁷ June 27, 1822, in X FORD 218.

In this correspondence, Jefferson frequently wrote to young men with advice about their education and reading. Typical of these letters is one written to Thomas Mann Randolph, Jr., on July 6, 1787, recommending a general course of study leading to a career in politics.⁸ In this letter, Jefferson suggested a year's study in Williamsburg with his friend and preceptor, George Wythe, and proposed the study of law for Randolph, noting:

Every political measure will for ever have an intimate connection with the laws of the land; and he who knows nothing of these will always be perplexed and often foiled by adversaries having the advantage of that knolege over him.⁹

Jefferson's letter to Robert Skipwith, dated August 3, 1771,¹⁰ is more bibliographic. In it, he responds to Skipwith's request for a catalogue of books (presumably to be purchased for the latter's library) amounting in value to about thirty pounds sterling. After a delightful literary discussion, Jefferson provides a long list of titles, arranged by subject, including three law titles.¹¹ Having initially indicated his dissatisfaction with the thirty pound limit, Jefferson concludes by calculating the total cost of the collection at £107/10.

Jefferson's two letters (August 19, 1785,¹² and August 10, 1787¹³) to Peter Carr, the son of his beloved friend and brother-in-law, Dabney Carr, are among the best statements of his thinking about general education. In the 1785 letter, he recommends a series of readings in the classics and then offers a strong plea for physical activity to relieve the pressure of study:

In order to assure a certain progress in this reading, consider what hours you have free from the school and the exercises of the school. Give about two of them every day to exercise; for health must not be sacrificed to learning. A strong body makes the mind strong. As to the species of exercise, I advise the gun. While this gives a moderate exercise to the body, it gives boldness, enterprize, and independance to the mind. Games played with the ball and others of that nature, are too violent for the body and stamp no character on the mind. Let your gun therefore be the constant companion of

⁸ 11 PAPERS 556.

⁹ *Id.* 557-58.

¹⁰ 1 PAPERS 76.

¹¹ Ld. Kaim's Principles of equity. fol. £1.1
Blackstone's Commentaries. 4 v. 4to. £4.4
Cunningham's Law dictionary. 2 v. fol. £3

Id. 80.

¹² 8 PAPERS 405.

¹³ 12 PAPERS 14.

your walks. Never think of taking a book with you. The object of walking is to relax the mind. You should therefore not permit yourself even to think while you walk. But divert your attention by the objects surrounding you. Walking is the best possible exercise. Habituate yourself to walk very far.¹⁴

Young Carr went on to study law under Jefferson's guidance, although there are no specific recommendations for law readings in these two letters. The letter of August 10, 1787, does refer to the fact that Carr was already studying with Jefferson's mentor, George Wythe, and in a letter to John Garland Jefferson, dated June 11, 1790, Jefferson makes mention of Carr's law study and of having lent Carr his own books for that purpose.¹⁵

Perhaps most relevant for comparison with the John Minor letter, however, are those letters which Jefferson wrote to prospective law students, specifically on law study—particularly that noted above to John Garland Jefferson, and another to Dabney Terrell.¹⁶ Both of these are considerably shorter than the Minor letter, but include many of the same recommended readings.

The letter to John Garland Jefferson again evidences Jefferson's concern with a well-rounded education and recommends readings in history, politics, economics, grammar, rhetoric, literature, and style—in addition to over thirty *legal* titles. Although he outlined a division of the day into study segments similar to (but less rigorous than) that in the Minor letter, as in the Carr letter Jefferson emphasized physical activity—a concern which was not apparent in the letter to John Minor. He urges John Garland Jefferson to leave open “all the afternoon for exercise and recreation, which are as necessary as reading; I will rather say more necessary, because health is worth more than learning.”¹⁷

In contrast to Thomas Jefferson's own good experience in studying law in the office of George Wythe of Williamsburg from 1762 to 1767,¹⁸ this letter reveals a general skepticism about study in a lawyer's office. He wrote to John Garland Jefferson in that regard as follows:

It is a general practice to study the law in the office of some lawyer. This indeed gives to the student the advantage of his instruction. But I have ever seen that the services expected in return have been more than the instructions have

¹⁴ 8 PAPERS 407.

¹⁵ 16 PAPERS 480, at 481.

¹⁶ Letter from Thomas Jefferson to Dabney Terrell, Feb. 26, 1821, in XV LIPSCOMB & BERGH 318.

¹⁷ June 11, 1790, in 16 PAPERS 480, at 481.

¹⁸ For a good discussion of Jefferson's own legal education, see 1 MALONE 65-74.

been worth. All that is necessary for a student is access to a library, and directions in what order the books are to be read.¹⁹

Although heartening to law librarians, that attitude is surprising in view of Jefferson's warm feeling toward Chancellor Wythe, with whom he studied. In his *Autobiography*, Jefferson refers to Wythe as follows:

Mr. Wythe continued to be my faithful and beloved mentor in youth, and my most affectionate friend through life. In 1767, he led me into the practice of the law at the bar of the General court, at which I continued until the Revolution shut up the courts of justice.²⁰

Charles Warren, in *A History of the American Bar* (1913),²¹ offers a number of varied accounts of the experience of famous lawyers in reading law in the office of a practitioner. These include Patrick Henry, William Livingston, John Quincy Adams, John Adams, Joseph Story, Daniel Webster, James Kent, and Roger Taney, as students; and George Wythe, James Wilson, James Alexander, Theophilus Parsons, Joshua Atherton, and Christopher Gore, as lawyer-teachers. There is considerable overlapping between the various reading lists described by Warren and most include titles recommended by Jefferson in his letter to Minor.

Jefferson's letter to Dabney Terrell of February 26, 1821,²² contains a good discussion of the major legal commentators and offers a reading course similar to that in the Minor letter. Although part of the Terrell letter seems to be missing from both the published versions and from the copy at the Library of Congress,²³ it does suggest a full program in general education, in addition to a typical Jeffersonian law course. The former is recommended in these words:

Besides these six hours of law reading, light and heavy, and those necessary for the repasts of the day, for exercise and sleep, which suppose to be ten or twelve, there will still be six or eight hours for reading history, politics, ethics, physics, oratory, poetry, criticism, etc., as necessary as law to form an accomplished lawyer.²⁴

¹⁹ June 11, 1790, in 16 PAPERS 480.

²⁰ I LIPSCOMB & BERGH 4. See also Jefferson's letter to John Saunderson, Aug. 31, 1820 (with an attached biographical note on Wythe), in I LIPSCOMB & BERGH 165.

²¹ See ch. VIII (entitled *A Colonial Lawyer's Education*).

²² XV LIPSCOMB & BERGH 318.

²³ Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, folio 39219.

²⁴ XV LIPSCOMB & BERGH 318, at 322.

In addition, Jefferson enclosed with his letter to Terrell a copy of a letter which he had written to Thomas Cooper several years before, on January 16, 1814.²⁵ That letter contained a long review of English legal history and of the early law writers. Although a Professor of Chemistry at Carlisle, Cooper was a legal scholar of considerable stature, having prepared an important edition of the Justinian Institutes.²⁶ Jefferson's comments on the law to Cooper would have been quite useful to a beginning student like Terrell.

Although the present letter begins, "I have at length found the paper of which you requested a copy," there is no record of a *written* request from Minor to Jefferson for it. Presumably it was requested in person, perhaps after hearing Jefferson describe the Moore letter, or through an intermediary who might have heard of it from Jefferson. There is no request letter from Minor in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, nor in the files of the Princeton project on the Papers of Thomas Jefferson. There is also no reference to such a letter in Jefferson's copious register of his correspondence.

We do have, on the other hand, the text of John Minor's acknowledgement of having received Jefferson's letter of August 30, 1814. The Princeton project has a copy of a note from Minor to Jefferson, dated September 8, 1814, about a week after Jefferson's letter, and bearing Jefferson's endorsement that he had received it on September 9. Minor began that letter from Fredricksburg as follows: "Accept, Dear Sir, my thanks for your kind Letter. I shall give it to my Son as the most valuable present I can make him." Minor then goes on to discuss the military and political situation in the vicinity. Although that may seem a weak response to Jefferson's long letter, the rest of Minor's letter indicates a preoccupation and deep anger with the British military inroads into Virginia. The War of 1812 was in full progress and British troops had burned the public buildings in Washington, a short distance away, only two weeks earlier.

There is an almost identical copy of Jefferson's letter of August 30, 1814, to John Minor in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.²⁷ The only difference is that one additional reading suggestion, that of "Geography. Pinkerton,"²⁸ was inserted by Jefferson

²⁵ XIV LIPSCOMB & BERGH 54.

²⁶ See Letter from Thomas Jefferson to Dabney Terrell, Feb. 26, 1821, in XV LIPSCOMB & BERGH 318, at 321; 4 DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY 414-16 (A. Johnson & D. Malone eds. 1930).

²⁷ Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, vol. 202, folios 35940-35942.

²⁸ This is undoubtedly John Pinkerton's MODERN GEOGRAPHY (1804), which is listed and described in IV CATALOGUE OF THE LIBRARY OF THOMAS JEFFERSON, No. 3827, at 90 (E.M. Sowerby ed. 1955). It is interesting to note that many of the other books cited by Jefferson in the Minor letter were also in his own library and are listed in the published catalogue.

near the bottom of the first page of the Library of Congress copy, presumably after the letters were executed. Since both the original and the copy were apparently made simultaneously by similar pens with the same ink and on the same quality paper, a polygraph must have been used, and it is difficult to determine from the letters themselves which was the product of Jefferson's own pen and which was made by the attached pen of the polygraph. The Library of Congress copy having been in Jefferson's retained files, it seems certain that the Biddle Law Library manuscript was the one sent to General Minor. Neither, however, bears any endorsement by Minor, nor does either bear an address cover or delivery direction. Both letters can be considered holographs, signed by Jefferson.

There is considerable uncertainty about the dating of the letter to Bernard Moore on which the Minor letter is based. There is, unfortunately, no available independent text of Jefferson's original letter to Moore. The Library of Congress does not have one, the Jefferson publication project at Princeton has not been able to locate one, and the only published versions are based on the text incorporated in the later letter to Minor. Jefferson's dating of the Moore letter in his letter to John Minor as "near fifty years ago" is indefinite and there is consequent disagreement as to the actual date.

The Library of Congress dates it as circa 1784.²⁹ That seems most improbable. It would be *thirty* rather than fifty years earlier, in a busy year when Jefferson completed his service in Congress (May 7) and then left for France (July 5) to serve with Benjamin Franklin and John Adams in negotiating commercial treaties with various European states.³⁰ Since 1784 would also be more than forty years after Moore's marriage, it is unlikely that he would have had a student son at so late a date. To choose Jefferson's own estimate—"near fifty years ago," i.e. 1764, would be equally unsatisfactory, since at that time Jefferson was himself still studying law with George Wythe in Williamsburg and was three years away from the start of his own law practice. Although in the last paragraph of our letter Jefferson refers to the "juvenile date" of the Moore letter, his sophisticated comments on legal literature and law study seem to evidence a somewhat older man and a later date. Based in part on Bernard Moore's purchase of the books in the estate of Dabney Carr, who died in 1773,³¹ a date in the early 1770's would seem to be a more likely estimate. Jefferson would have been thirty

²⁹ See L.C. Manuscript Division Card Catalog entry for letter from Thomas Jefferson to General John Minor, August 30, 1814.

³⁰ 1 MALONE ch. XXVIII.

³¹ See Letter from Thomas Jefferson to Martha Jefferson Carr, July 25, 1787 (in regard to the sale), in 11 PAPERS 623.

years old, married, in practice for several years, a member of the Burgesses, and a significant figure both in the legal profession and in public life. In addition, the purchase of the Carr library would seem to be a likely consequence of the reading program outlined by Jefferson.

Since Jefferson did not date the Moore letter separately and left no copy, we can only guess as to the basis of his recall of its contents. The use of rough notes, a partial copy, or even a complete, undated copy, which may have been subsequently discarded or lost, are all possibilities. In any case, it is clear that he must have made several changes from the original Moore text, particularly to update the recommended readings. Jefferson indicated this to Minor in the opening paragraph of our letter:

I shall give it to you without change, except as to the books recommended to be read; later publications enabling me in some of the departments of science to substitute better, for the less perfect publications which we then possessed. in this the modern student has great advantage.

As a result, there are several references in the Minor letter which would be anachronistic for the original Moore version. *The Federalist*, first published in a collected form in 1787,³² is included, and Tracy's work on political economy is cited as "now about to be printed. (1814.)"³³ In addition, among the law books, the following editions are cited, all of which post-date the latest possible date of the Moore letter: Tucker's edition of Blackstone, published in Philadelphia in 1803;³⁴ Fonblanque's edition of Ballow's *Treatise of Equity*, whose first edition was published during 1793 and 1794;³⁵ and the third edition of Lord Kames' (Kaims') *Principles of Equity*, published in Edinburgh and London in 1778.³⁶

As to the nature of the legal education proposed by Jefferson to Minor, we can say that it was similar to the best programs described by other American law students and teachers of the time.³⁷ It was liberal, well-rounded in both its legal and general aspects, and supported

³² See VI J. SABIN, A DICTIONARY OF BOOKS RELATING TO AMERICA, No. 23979, at 376 (1868) (first collected edition of *Federalist* published in two volumes, on Sept. 17, 1787).

³³ D. TRACY, A TREATISE ON POLITICAL ECONOMY (J. Milligan transl. & ed. 1817). XXV J. SABIN, *supra* note 32, No. 96415, at 352-53, indicates 1818 as the date of publication of Tracy's work and notes that Jefferson had revised the translation.

³⁴ W. BLACKSTONE, COMMENTARIES (St. G. Tucker ed. 1803) (5 vols.).

³⁵ H. BALLOW, A TREATISE OF EQUITY (J. Fonblanque ed. 1793-95) (2 vols.).

³⁶ H.H. KAMES, PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY (3d ed. 1778).

³⁷ See, e.g., II A CHROUST, THE RISE OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION IN AMERICA ch. IV (entitled *Training for the Practice of Law*); P. HAMLIN, LEGAL EDUCATION IN COLONIAL NEW YORK (1934); C. WARREN, A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN BAR (1913).

by well-chosen readings from the available literature of the time. Despite the rather strenuous daily regimen set out, the suggested study methods are sensible and some are still considered good practice for today's law student. The breadth of learning and quality of readings in the program describe a more cosmopolitan and sophisticated level of education than a modern lawyer undertakes. However, the plan reflects a far simpler and more easily circumscribed legal system and legal literature. The absence of any serious concern with behavioral sciences related to the law bespeaks, at least in that respect, the less enlightened quality of a good lawyer's education in Jefferson's day. But perhaps that also reflects a simpler society in which the study of man could be subsumed in the writers of "Ethics, Religion, natural and and sectarian, and Natural law"

This introduction has been slow in reaching its real goal—Jefferson's letter of August 20, 1814, to John Minor. The complete text of that manuscript is now set forth in full,³⁸ with the hope that it has been placed in a context helpful to the reader.

³⁸ A copy of the handwritten manuscript is provided first. Following that is a printed copy, set forth to aid the reader in deciphering parts of the letter which may be difficult to read. Jefferson's spelling, capitalization, and punctuation have been retained.

Dear Sir

Monticello Aug. 30. 14.

I have at length found the paper of which you requested a copy. it was written near 50. years ago for the use of a young friend whose course of reading was confided to me; and it formed a basis for the studies of others subsequently placed under my direction, but curtailed for each in proportion to his previous acquirements and future views. I shall give it to you without change, except as to the books recommended to be read; later publications enabling me in some of the departments of science to substitute better, for the less perfect publications which we then professed. in this the modern student has great advantage. I proceed to the copy.

'The Jefferson to Bernard Moore.

Before you enter on the study of the law a sufficient ground-work must be laid. for this purpose an acquaintance with the Latin and French languages is absolutely necessary. the former you have; the latter must now be acquired. Mathematics and Natural philosophy are so useful in the most familiar occurrences of life, and are so peculiarly engaging & delightful as would induce every person to wish an acquaintance with them. besides this, the faculties of the mind, like the members of the body, are strengthened & improved by exercise. Mathematical reasoning & deductions are therefore a fine preparation for investigating the abstruse speculations of the law. in these and the analogous branches of science the following elementary books are recommended.

Mathematics. Bezout, Cours de Mathématiques. the best for a student ever published.

Montuclé or Bossu, histoire des Mathématiques.

Astronomy. Ferguson, and Le Monnier, or de la Lande.

Nat. Philosophy. Joyce's Scientific dialogues. Martin's Philosophia Britannica.

Musenbroeck's Cours de Physique.

This foundation being laid, you may enter regularly on the study of the Law, taking with it such of it's kindred sciences as will contribute to eminence in it's attainment. the principal of these are Physics, Ethics, Religion, Natural law, Belles lettres, Criticism, General Minor.

Rhetoric and Oratory. The carrying on several studies at a time is attended with advantage. variety relieves the mind, as well as the eye, palled with too long attention to a single object. but, with both, transitions from one object to another may be so frequent, ^{and transitions} as to leave no impression. the mean is therefore to be steered, and a competent space of time allotted to each branch of study. again, a great inequality is observable in the vigor of the mind at different periods of the day. it's powers at these periods should therefore be attended to in marshalling the business of the day. for these reasons I should recommend the following distribution of your time.

Till VIII. a'clock in the morning employ yourself in Physical studies, Ethics, Religion, natural and sectarian, and Natural law, reading the following books.

Agriculture. Dickson's husbandry of the ancients. Tull's horse-hoeing husbandry.

L^d. Kaim's Gentlemanfarmers Young's Rural economy.

Hale's body of husbandry. De-Serres Theatre d'Agriculture.

Chemistry Lavoisier Conversations in Chemistry.

Anatomy. John and James Bell's Anatomy.

Zoology. Abrégé du Systeme de Linnée par Cuvier.

Manuel d'histoire Naturel par Blumenbach.

Buffon, including Montbeillard & La Cépède.

Wilson's American Ornithology.

Botany. Barton's elements of Botany. Turton's Linnaeus. Persoon Synopsis plantarum.

Ethics, & Nat^l. Religion. Locke's Essay. Locke's Conduct of the mind in the search after truth.

Stewart's Philosophy of the human mind. Enfield's history of Philosophy.

Condorcet, Progrès de l'esprit humain.

Cicero de Officiis. Tusculana. de seneca de. somnium Scipionis. Seneca Philosophia.

Hutchinson's Introduction to moral Philosophy. L^d. Kaim's Natural religion.

Traité élémentaire de Morale et Bonheur. La Sagacité de Charron.

Religion, sectarian. Bible. New Testament. Commentaries on them by Middleton in his works, and by Priestley in his Corruptions of Christianity, & Early opinions of Christ. Volney's Ruins. the Sermons of Sterne, Massillon & Bourdaloue.

Natural law. Vattel *Droit des Gens*. Raynaud, *Institutions du droit de la Nature des Gens*.

From VIII. to XII. read Law. the general course of this reading may be formed on the following grounds. L.^d Coke has given us the first view of the whole body of law worthy now of being studied; for so much of the admirable work of Bracton is now obsolete that the student should turn to it occasionally only, then tracing the history of particular portions of the law. Coke's Institutes are a perfect Digest of the law as it stood in his day. after this, new laws were added by the legislature, and new developments of the old laws by the Judges, until they had become so voluminous as to require a new Digest. this was ably executed by Matthew Bacon, altho' unfortunately under an alphabetical, instead of analytical arrangement of matter. the same process of new laws & new decisions on the old laws going on, called at length for the same operation again, and produced the inimitable Commentaries of Blackstone.

In the department of the Chancery, a similar progress has taken place. L.^d Kaims has given us the first digest of the principles of that branch of our jurisprudence, more valuable for the arrangement of matter, than for it's exact conformity with the English decisions. the Reporters from the early times of that branch to that of the same Matthew Bacon are well digested, but alphabetically also in the Abridgment of the Cases in Equity, the 2.^d volume of which is said to have been done by him. this was followed by a number of able reporters, of which Fonblanque has given us a summary digest by commentaries on the text of the earlier work ascribed to Ballou, entitled "a Treatise of equity." the course of reading recommended then in these two branches of Law is the following.

Common law. Coke's institutes.

select cases from the subsequent reporters to the time of Matthew Bacon.
Bacon's abridgment.

1 select cases from the subsequent reporters to the present day.

select Tracts on Law, among which those of Baron Gilbert are all of ^{the} first merit.
the Virginia laws. Reports on them.

Chancery. L.^d Kaim's Principles of Equity. 3^d edition

select cases from the Chancery reporters to the times of Matthew Bacon.

The Abridgment of Cases in Equity.

select cases from the subsequent reporters to the present day.

Tomblaque's Treatise of Equity.

Blackstone's Commentaries (Tucker's edition) as the last perfect Digest of both branches of law.

In reading the Reporters, enter in a Common-place book every case of value, condensed into the narrowest compass possible which will admit of presenting distinctly the principles of the case. This operation is doubly useful, inasmuch as it obliges the student to seek out the pith of the case, and habituates him to a condensation of thought, and to an acquisition of the most valuable of all talents, that of never using two words where one will do. it fixes the case too more indelibly in the mind.

From XII. to I. read Politics.

Politics for first Locke on government. Sidney on Government.

Priestley's First principles of Government. Review of Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws. anon.

De Lolme sur la constitution d'Angleterre. De Burgh's Political disquisitions.

Hatsell's Precedents of the H. of Commons. select Parliam.^t debates of England & Ireland.

Chapman's Sketches of the principles of government. The Federalist.

Political Economy. Say's Economie Politique. Malthus on the principles of population.

Tracy's work on Political Economy. now about to be printed. (1814)

In the Afternoon. read History.

History. Antient. the Greek and Latin originals.

select histories from the Universal history. Gibbon's decline of the Rom. emper.

Histoire ancienne de Millot.

Modern. Histoire moderne de Millot. Russel's History of modern Europe.

Robertson's Charles V.

English. the original historians. to wit. the Hist. of E. II. by E. F. Habington's E. IV.

More's R. III. L.^d Bacon's H. VII. L.^d Herbert's H. VIII. Goodwin's H. VIII. E. VI. Mary.

Casselden's Eliz. & James. Ludlow. M^r Caulley. Fox. Belsham.

Baxter's History of England. (Hume republicanised & abridged) Robertson's Hist. of Scotland.

American. Robertson's History of America.

Gordon's History of the Independence of the U.S. Ramsay's Hist. of the Amer. revolution

Burke's Hist. of Virginia. Continuation of it by Jones & Girardin. nearly ready for the press.

From Dark to Bed-time. Belles lettres. Criticism. Rhetoric. Oratory. to wit.

Belles lettres. read the best of the Poets, epic, didactic, dramatic, pastoral, lyric &c but among these Shakespear must be singled out by one who wishes to learn the full powers of the English language. of him we must advise, as Horace did of the Grecian models, 'vos exemplaria Græca Nocturnâ versate manu, di-
~~sternite~~ ^{sternite} versate diurnâ.'

Criticism. L'Haim's Elements of criticism. Tooke's Diversions of Purley.

of Bibliographical criticism the Edinb^g Review furnishes the finest models extant.

Rhetoric. Blair's lectures on Rhetoric.

Sheridan on Elocution. Mason on Poetic and Prosaic numbers.

Oratory. This portion of time (borrowing some of the afternoon when the days are long and the nights short, is to be applied also to acquiring the art of writing & speaking correctly by the following exercises. Criticise the style of any books whatever, committing your criticisms to writing. — translate into the different styles, to wit, the elevated, the midling, and the familiar. Orators and Poets will furnish subjects of the first, historians of the second, & epistolary and Comic writers of the third. — undertake, at first, short compositions, as themes, letters &c. paying great attention to the correctness and elegance of your language. — read the Oration of Demosthenes & Cicero. analyse these orations, and examine the correctness of the disposition, language, figures, states of the cases, arguments &c. — ~~exercise yourself afterwards~~ read good samples also of English eloquence. some of these may be found in Small's American speaker, and some in Carrey's Criminal Recorder, in which last the defence of Eugene Aram is distinguishable as a model of logic, condensation of matter, & classical purity of style. — exercise yourself afterwards in preparing orations on feigned cases. in this observe rigorously the disposition of Blair into Introduction, Narration &c. adapt your language & figures to the several parts of

the oration, and suit your arguments to the audience before whom it is supposed to be spoken. This is your last and most important exercise. no trouble should therefore be spared. if you have any person in your neighborhood engaged in the same study, take each of you different sides of the same cause, and prepare pleadings according to the custom of the bar, where the pl. opens, the def. answers, and the pl. replies. — it would farther be of great service to pronounce your orations (having before you only short notes to assist the memory) in the presence of some person who may be considered as your judge.

Note, under each of the preceding heads, the books are to be read in the order in which they are named. these by no means constitute the whole of what might be usefully read in each of these branches of science. the mass of excellent works going more into detail is great indeed. but those here noted will enable the student to select for himself such others of detail as may suit his particular views and dispositions. they will give him a respectable, an useful, & satisfactory degree of knowledge in these branches, and will themselves form a valuable and sufficient library for a lawyer, who is at the same time a lover of science.³

So far the papers; which I send you, not for it's merit, for it betrays sufficiently it's juvenile date; but because you have asked it. your own experience in the more modern practice of the law will enable you to give it more conformity with the present course; and I know you will receive it kindly with all it's imperfections, as an evidence of my great respect for your wishes, and of the sentiments of esteem and friendships of which I tender you sincere assurances.

Th: Jefferson

Dear Sir

Monticello Aug. 30, 14.

I have at length found the paper of which you requested a copy. it was written near 50. years ago for the use of a young friend whose course of reading was confided to me; and it formed a basis for the studies of others subsequently placed under my direction, but curtailed for each in proportion to his previous acquirements and future views. I shall give it to you without change, except as to the books recommended to be read; later publications enabling me in some of the departments of science to substitute better, for the less perfect publications which we then possessed. in this the modern student has great advantage. I proceed to the copy.

'Th. Jefferson to Bernard Moore.

Before you enter on the study of the law a sufficient ground-work must be laid. for this purpose an acquaintance with the Latin and French languages is absolutely necessary. the former you have; the latter must now be acquired. Mathematics and Natural philosophy are so useful in the most familiar occurrences of life, and are so peculiarly engaging & delightful as would induce every person to wish an acquaintance with them. besides this, the faculties of the mind, like the members of the body, are strengthened & improved by exercise. Mathematical reasonings & deductions are therefore a fine preparation for investigating the abstruse speculations of the law. in these and the analogous branches of science the following elementary books are recommended.

Mathematics. Berout, *Cours de Mathematiques*.

the best for a student ever published.

Montucla or Bossu', *histoire des Mathematiques*.

Astronomy. Ferguson, and Le Monnier, or de la Lande.

Nat. Philosophy. Joyce's *Scientific dialogues*.

Martin's *Philosophia Britannica*.

Mussenbroek's *Cours de Physique*.

This foundation being laid, you may enter regularly on the study of the Law, taking with it such of it's kindred sciences as will contribute to eminence in it's attainment. the principal of these are Physics, Ethics, Religion, Natural law, Belles lettres, Criticism, Rhetoric and Oratory. the carrying on several studies at a time is attended with advantage. variety relieves the mind, as well as the eye, palled with too long attention to a single object. but with both, transitions from one object to another may be so frequent and transitory as to leave no

impression. the mean is therefore to be steered, and a competent space of time allotted to each branch of study. again, a great inequality is observable in the vigor of the mind at different periods of the day. it's powers at these periods should therefore be attended to in marshalling the business of the day. for these reasons I should recommend the following distribution of your time.

Till VIII. aclock in the morning employ yourself in Physical studies, Ethics, Religion natural and sectarian, and Natural law, reading the following books.

Agriculture. Dickson's husbandry of the antients.

Tull's horse-hoeing husbandry.

Ld. Kaim's Gentleman farmer. Young's Rural economy.

Hale's body of husbandry.

De-Serres Theatre d'Agriculture.

Chemistry. Lavoisier Conversations in Chemistry.

Anatomy. John and James Bell's Anatomy.

Zoology. Abregé du Systeme de Linnée par Gilibert.

Manuel d'histoire Naturel par Blumenbach.

Buffon, including Montbeillard & La Cedepe.

Wilson's American Ornithology.

Botany. Barton's elements of Botany. Turton's Linnaeus. Persoon Synopsis Plantarum.

Ethics. & Natl. Religion. Locke's Essay. Locke's Conduct of the mind in the search after truth. Stewart's Philosophy of the human mind. Enfield's history of Philosophy. Condorcet, Progrès de l'esprit humain. Cicero de officiis. Tusculana. de Senectute. somnium Scipionis. Senecae Philosophica. Hutchinson's Introduction to moral Philosophy. Ld. Kaim's Natural religion. Traité elementaire de Morale et Bonheur. La Sagesse de Charron.

Religion, sectarian. Bible. New Testament. Commentaries on them by Middleton in his works, and by Priestley in his Corruptions of Christianity, & Early opinions of Christ. Volney's Ruins. the Sermons of Sterne, Massillon & Bourdaloue.

Natural law. Vattel Droit des Gens. Reyneval, Institutions du droit de la Nature et des Gens.

From VIII. to XII. read Law. the general course of this reading may be formed on the following grounds. Ld. Coke has given us the first view of the whole body of law worthy now of being studied: for so much of the admirable work of Bracton is now obsolete that the

student should turn to it occasionally only, when tracing the history of particular portions of the law. Coke's Institutes are a perfect Digest of the law as it stood in his day. after this, new laws were added by the legislature, and new developments of the old laws by the Judges, until they had become so voluminous as to require a new Digest. this was ably executed by Matthew Bacon, altho' unfortunately under an Alphabetical, instead of Analytical arrangement of matter. the same process of new laws & new decisions on the old laws going on, called at length for the same operation again, and produced the inimitable Commentaries of Blackstone. In the department of the Chancery, a similar progress has taken place. Ld. Kaimes has given us the first digest of the principles of that branch of our jurisprudence, more valuable for the arrangement of matter, than for it's exact conformity with the English decisions. the Reporters from the early times of that branch to that of the same Matthew Bacon are well digested, but alphabetically also in the Abridgment of the Cases in Equity, the 2d. volume of which is said to have been done by him. this was followed by a number of able reporters, of which Fonblanque has given us a summary digest by commentaries on the text of the earlier work ascribed to Ballow, entitled 'a Treatise of equity.' the course of reading recommended then in these two branches of Law is the following.

Common law. Coke's institutes.

select cases from the subsequent reporters. to the time of Matthew Bacon.

Bacon's abridgment.

select cases from the subsequent reporters to the present day.

select tracts on Law, among which those of Baron Gilbert are all of the first merit.

the Virginia laws. Reports on them.

Chancery. Ld. Kaim's Principles of Equity. 3d edition.

select cases from the Chancery reporters to the time of Matthew Bacon.

The Abridgment of Cases in Equity.

select cases from the subsequent reporters to the present day.

Fonblanque's Treatise of Equity.

Blackstone's Commentaries (Tucker's edition) as the last perfect Digest of both branches of law.

In reading the Reporters, enter in a Common-place book every case of value, condensed into the narrowest compass possible which will admit of presenting distinctly the principles of the case. this operation is doubly useful, inasmuch as it obliges the student to seek out the pith of the case, and habituates him to a condensation of thought, and to an acquisition of the most valuable of all talents, that of never using two words where one will do. it fixes the case too more indelibly in the mind.

From XII. to I. read Politics.

Politics general. Locke on government. Sidney on Government. Priestley's First principles of Government. Review of Montesquieu's Spirit of laws. Anon.

De Lolme sur la constitution d'Angleterre. De Burgh's Political disquisitions.

Hatsell's Precedents of the H. of Commons. select Parliam'y debates of England & Ireland.

Chipman's Sketches of the principles of government.
the Federalist.

Political Economy. Say's Economie Politique. Malthus on the principles of population.

Tracy's work on Political Economy. now about to be printed. (1814.)

In the *Afternoon*. read History.

History. Antient. the Greek and Latin originals.
select histories from the Universal history. Gibbon's decline of the Rom. empire.
Histoire Ancienne de Millot.

Modern. Histoire moderne de Millot. Russel's History of Modern Europe.
Robertson's Charles V.

English. the original historians. to wit. the Hist. of E.II. by E.F.—Habington's E.IV. More's R.III. Ld. Bacon's H.VII. Ld. Herbert's H.VIII. Goodwin's H.VIII. E.VI. Mary. Cambden's Eliz. & James. Ludlow. Mc.Caulay. Fox. Belsham. Baxter's History of England. (Hume republicanised & abridged.) Robertson's Hist. of Scotland.

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TH. JEFFERSON