

Chapter 5.

A Virginian in Paris.

Soon after my leaving Congress in Sep. '76, to wit on the last day of that month, I had been appointed, with Dr Franklin, to go to France as a Commissioner to negotiate treaties of alliance and commerce with that government... but such was the state of my family that I could not leave it, nor could I expose it to the dangers of the sea, and of capture by the British ships, then covering the ocean.... on the 15th of June 1781 I had been appointed with mr Adams Dr Franklin, mr Jay, and mr Laurens a minister plenipotentiary for negotiating peace.... the same reasons obliged me still to decline; and the negotiation was in fact never entered on. but, in the autumn of the next year 1782. Congress recieving assurances that a general peace would be concluded in the winter and spring, they renewed my appointment on the 13th of Nov. of that year. I had two months before that lost the cherished companion of my life, in whose affections, unabated on both sides, I had lived the last ten years in unchequered happiness. with the public interests, the state of my mind concurred in recommending the change of scene proposed; and I accepted the appointment, and left Monticello on the 19th of Dec. 1782 for Philadelphia.... after waiting there nearly a month, we recieved information that a Provisional treaty of peace had been signed by our Commissioners on the 3d of Sep. 1782.... I therefore returned home, where I arrived on the 15th of May 1783.... On the 7th of May [1784] Congress resolved that a Minister Plenipotentiary should be appointed in addition to mr Adams & Doctr Franklin for negotiating treaties of commerce with foreign nations, and I was

elected to that duty. I accordingly left Annapolis on the 11th took with me my elder daughter then at Philadelphia (the two others being too young for the voyage) & proceeded to Boston in quest of a passage. while passing thro' the different states, I made a point of informing myself of the state of the commerce of each, went on to New Hampshire with the same view and returned to Boston. from thence I sailed on the 5th of July in the Ceres a merchant ship of mr Nathaniel Tracey, bound to Cowes. he was himself a passenger, and, after a pleasant voyage of 19. days from land to land, we arrived at Cowes on the 26th. (TJ, *Notes on Early Career* in *PTJ*: RS 17: 329-330, 337)

On Jefferson's own account, the road to Paris was long and tortuous, and the death of his wife, Martha Wayles Jefferson, in 1782 was a precipitating factor. He mentions that his oldest daughter Martha ('Patsy'), then almost 12, accompanied him. He does not mention the other member of his party: his 19-year-old slave James Hemings. Hemings, like his sister Sally, was the child of Jefferson's father-in-law John Wayles by Wayles' slave Elizabeth Hemings. As Patsy was Wayles's granddaughter, James and Sally Hemings were her uncle and aunt, and half-brother and half-sister to Martha Walyes Jefferson.

The party first landed at Cowes, on the English Isle of Wight, where there is no memorial to them. From Cowes they crossed to Portsmouth on the British mainland in order to get a boat to le Havre. Unlike the modern Portsmouth-le Havre crossing, this was slow and painful. From le Havre, the party went up the Seine through Rouen to Paris, with James being sent ahead on his own to make arrangements – Jefferson gave him 72 livres, of which he repaid 36 livres when Jefferson and Patsy caught up with him in Rouen (*Memorandum Books*, 1:556; fuller details in Gordon-Reed 2008: 156-161). They arrived in Paris a month after leaving Boston, on August 6 1784.

Europe was to make a huge impression on Jefferson, but his early complaints were mostly about the damp cloudy weather, a depressing revelation to him after a lifetime of the hard bright Virginian sun. In his first year, he tended to express nostalgia for Virginia to his French friends (e.g., TJ to Baron Geismar Sept. 6 1785; *PTJ* 8:499-500) and love of France to his American friends (e.g., TJ to Eliza House Trist, Aug. 18 1785; *PTJ* 8: 403-5). Both may have been entirely sincere. But his omnivorous devouring of French culture in all its aspects was remarkable – and at least partly anticipated. Part of the grand plan for James Hemings was to turn him into a French cook, a project which succeeded (Gordon-Reed 2008: 226 and plates between 256 and 257). Jefferson sent Patsy to a liberal convent school, the Abbaye de Panthémont. The Abbaye still exists in the 7th arrondissement of Paris, and is now the offices of the veterans' ministry.

As if back at Monticello, Jefferson took elaborate lodgings, which he then elaborately altered. For most of his time, he lived at the Hôtel de Langeac, on the edge of town on the north side of the Champs-Élysées. The building was destroyed in the 1840s, and the site is now occupied by office blocks and chain restaurants opposite a British-themed pub. But plans survive, as do Jefferson's Memorandum Books, from which we can trace his expensive fascination with the best architecture, decorations, musical instruments, and food. Much the best modern account, derived from these sources, is Gordon-Reed 2008, which covers numerous matters for which there is no space in this book.

For instance, Jefferson ordered a harpsichord from the leading London maker Jacob Kirkman, and then had it modified in Paris. A Kirkman harpsichord is on view at Monticello but alas it is not the instrument Jefferson brought back from Paris, which did not last long in the Virginia climate. The *Memorandum Book*, like the *Farm Book*, demonstrates Jefferson's ability to focus

obsessively on minute matters of detail while managing to hide (?from himself) that his aesthetic and farming tastes led him to spend far more than he earned.

Early in 1785, Jefferson suffered another severe blow. In a strikingly insensitive letter, his Virginia compatriot Dr James Currie chatted away about ballooning and a 'Silver Casd. M. Book' before going on

I am sincerely sorry my dear friend now to acquaint you of the demise of poor Miss L. Jefferson, who fell a Martyr to the complicated evils of teething, Worms and hooping cough.... (James Currie to TJ Nov. 20 1784; *PTJ* 7:539).

Jefferson did not receive this news until Lucy, whose birth had led to his wife's fatal illness, was long buried. His natural reaction was to ensure that his only surviving child left in Virginia, namely Maria ('Polly'), would join the family in Paris. After much negotiation in letters which took at least a month to cross the Atlantic, (and with Jefferson's Eppes in-laws resisting the move) Polly set sail with James Hemings' sister Sally – again niece and aunt - on May 1 1787. They went not to le Havre but to London, where John Adams' wife, the acute but acidulous Abigail Adams, reported:

The old Nurse whom you expected to have attended her, was sick and unable to come. She has a Girl about 15 or 16 with her, the sister of the Servant you have with you

- and, in her next letter:

The Girl who is with her is quite a child, and Captain Ramsey is of opinion will be so little Service that he had better carry her back with him. But of this you will be a judge. She seems

fond of the child and appears good natured (AA to TJ June 26 and 27 1787 in Cappon 1987: 178-9).

Captain Ramsey did not carry Sally back, and so she enters the story. Jefferson, oddly, sent his servant Adrien Petit rather than coming himself to collect the bemused and lonely Polly from London, accompanied by Sally. The ‘old nurse’ was an older slave who had had smallpox. As Patsy, Polly, and Sally had not, Jefferson had them all inoculated – a practice that carried high risk and high reward, although there is some possibility that Polly may have been harmed by the live vaccine (*Memorandum Book I*: 685; Gordon-Reed 2008: 209-23).

Before Polly and Sally’s arrival, Jefferson had had a tragi-comic affair featuring his most famous letter. Maria Cosway was part-Italian, part-English, and married to a gay portrait painter. Jefferson was deeply infatuated with her in fall 1786, but broke his right wrist while frolicking around, perhaps with her. (It never healed properly). With his left hand he then wrote his frequently anthologized Dialogue between my Head and my Heart, in which the Head tells the Heart to grow up and overcome its infatuation with Maria.

The Heart gets the last word, ending by acknowledging the Head’s admiration for “Condorcet, Rittenhouse, Madison, La Cretelle, or any other of those worthy sons of science whom you so justly prize” (TJ to Maria Cosway, Oct. 12 1786: *PTJ* 10: 452). David Rittenhouse was an American astronomer and instrument-maker whom Jefferson admired extravagantly. ‘Madison’ is probably not the politician but his cousin the Rev. James Madison, principal of William & Mary. Pierre-Louis de Lacretelle was a moderate republican politician, later a member of the Institut de France and the Académie française). Condorcet will loom large in the rest of this book.

Maria's reply exudes overwhelmed bemusement, both in English and in Italian: 'It is an excess which Must tear to peices a human Mind, when felt.... Why do you say so Many kind things?' (MC to TJ Oct 30.1786. *PTJ* 10:443-55 and 10:494-5.) Later, Jefferson's ardour cooled, and Maria was left feeling hurt as well as bemused.

Despite injury, depression, the loss of Lucy and other family worries, the reader's overall impression from the papers covering Jefferson's Paris years is of his boundless energy and enthusiasm for everything (and many people) he encountered: art (especially architecture), music, wine, agriculture, social conditions, and the salons of the French aristocracy. Jefferson's encounter with classical architecture could be a book on its own (and has been, see, e.g., Kimball 1916; Adams 1997; Howard 2003). He had eagerly collected books on classical architecture in Virginia. His "1783 catalog" (see Prologue) shows that he already owned books on the classical architects Vitruvius and Palladio before embarking for Cowes. Paris was therefore paradise. It possessed many classical buildings that caught Jefferson's eye: sometimes his commercial as well as his aesthetic eye. A prominent new development was the Palais-royal, north of the Louvre. It was laid out on the orders of Louis XVI's ambitious and unscrupulous cousin Philippe, Duc d'Orléans. He renamed himself Philippe-Égalité during the Revolution, which was fermented by the gossip and gatherings around his new shopping mall at the Palais-royal. Renaming himself did not save him from the guillotine in 1793. In 1785, before receiving the devastating letter just quoted, Jefferson wrote to James Currie in Richmond:

A particular building lately erected here which has greatly enriched the owner of the ground ... has suggested to us that a whole square of richmd. improved on some such plan ... would be very highly advantageous to the proprietors, convenient to the town and ornamental (TJ to James Currie, Jan. 14 1785, in *PTJ* 7: 604).

Jefferson thus deserves some credit for bringing shopping malls, as well as vines, rice, library catalogs, and classical architecture, to America.

For the finest classical architecture in Europe, Jefferson had to head south. His longest tour began in February 1787, ostensibly to seek a cure for his wrist. He went by way of the Burgundy and Beaujolais vineyards to Avignon, Nîmes and Aix-les-Bains, where the waters did his wrist no good (can the amateur scientist Jefferson have seriously expected them to?). Next, “I concluded to visit the rice country of Piedmont, to see if anything might be learned there to benefit the rivalry of our Carolina rice with that” (*PTJ: RS 17: 344-5*). From the Mediterranean he therefore turned north into modern Italy (then the kingdoms of Savoy and Lombardy). He visited Cuneo, Turin, Milan, Pavia, and Genoa before returning through southern France to the Bordeaux vineyards, and back by the Loire to reach Paris on June 10. The tour is well documented in the *Autobiography*, the *Memorandum Book* for the dates stated and in Jefferson’s ‘Hints to Americans Travelling in Europe’ at *PTJ 13: 264-76*.

Apart from medicine and rice, Jefferson’s interests were architecture, wine, and engineering. He was entranced by the Roman (and recently restored) *Maison Carrée* at Nîmes:

Here I am, Madam, gazing whole hours at the Maison quarrée, like a lover at his mistress... From Lyons to Nismes I have been nourished with the remains of Roman grandeur... At Vienne ...[t]he Praetorian palace ... defaced by the barbarians who have converted it to its present purpose, its beautiful fluted Corinthian columns cut out, in part, to make space for Gothic windows ... was enough, you must admit, to disturb my composure. (TJ to Mme de Tessé, Mar. 20, 1787. *TJW: 891*).

This explains why American public architecture from Jefferson to today has been classical and not Gothic (cf TJ to W. Buchanan and J. Hay, Jan. 26, 1786, proposing the Maison Carrée as model for the Capitol in Richmond: *PTJ* 9: 320-323). Jefferson's tastes in sculpture and painting were similar, and he was instrumental in securing classical sculptures of George Washington from Jean-Antoine Houdon: the origin of the countless images of Washington in a toga all over the USA. One such was erected in 1844 over the portico of Washington Hall (now Washington & Lee University), a small college in the Shenandoah Valley: an act which saved its classical building from destruction by Union troops in the Civil War.

Jefferson also got another American in Paris, John Trumbull, to paint *The Declaration of Independence*, now at Yale University, in which Jefferson, who sat for Trumbull, towers above the whole scene, and particularly above Adams and Franklin.

The Minister Plenipotentiary's choice of places to visit in France shows his excellent taste in wine. French wine had been hard or impossible to get in Jefferson's Virginia because of British mercantilism. In general, only British goods were allowed into the colonies. Jefferson helped to revolutionize American taste, although his attempts to naturalize European vines in America, like an earlier effort by his neighbor Filippo Mazzei, came to nothing in his time. However, the Jefferson Vineyard, on the site of Mazzei's Colle, now belongs to the Thomas Jefferson Foundation and produces a variety of red and white Virginian wines.

Jefferson made two other main tours, also linking politics and aesthetics. In March 1786, he went to England to be insulted by 'the ulcerations in the narrow mind' of George III ('it was impossible for anything to be more ungracious than their notice of Mr Adams & myself' –*PTJ* : *RS* 17: 339). John Adams was by this time the American Ambassador to the UK, and more

optimistic than Jefferson about the prospects of restoring harmony between the two nations. The Americans made up for their rebuff by touring English landscape gardens in an arc north and west from London: highlights being the classical buildings at Stowe (Bucks), Hagley Hall near Birmingham and Blenheim Palace near Oxford. Gothic Oxford itself did not detain the Americans beyond paying 5 shillings to college doorkeepers en route from Blenheim to High Wycombe. Given that they covered those 40 miles or so in a day, their 5 shillings can have bought them only the merest peek inside the doors of one or two of the 20-odd colleges (*Memorandum Book*, I, 616-21, April 8-10 1786). Whereas one object of the French tour was to see the engineering of the *Canal du Midi*, Jefferson has left us no reaction to his visit to Birmingham, then starting its rise to becoming the canal and workshop capital of Britain. Its Lunar Society was politically congenial to Jefferson; but William Small, who had gone there from Virginia, was dead, and Jefferson's acquaintance with Joseph Priestley came later.

In his third and last tour in March and April 1788, Jefferson went to The Hague, to take part in negotiations with Dutch bankers to restructure American debt ('junk bonds' in modern terminology). The main player was Adams, not Jefferson, but again Jefferson used the chance to return via the Rhine valley (including to the vineyards at Hochheim on the Main), Strasbourg and the Champagne country (*PTJ: RS* 17: 353-4; *Memorandum Book* I: 696-704).

Back in Paris, politics was becoming more exciting. In spring 1789 Jefferson asked leave for what he expected to be a temporary return to the USA. Long delays in getting a response from Congress meant that he spent much of his last months in Paris, boxes packed, ready to leave. Gouverneur Morris, a Framers of the US Constitution and later to be US minister in Paris himself, but politically opposed to Jefferson, attended one of his last dinners. Morris, who on this

occasion was in Paris to try to reinstate the US tobacco monopoly that Jefferson had tried to break, recorded in his diary:

Go to Mr Jefferson's where I find already the Marquis de Condorci. Shortly after the Duc de Rochefoucault comes in from the States General and at half past four La Fayette, when we sit down to Dinner.... I ask him if his Troops will obey him. He says they will not mount Guard when it rains but thinks they would readily follow him into Action.... The D de R thereupon tells us of someone who has written an excellent Book upon the Commerce of Grain. (Morris diary for Sep. 17, 1789 in Davenport ed. 1939 I: 220-1).

These characters from Jefferson's Paris circle recur in this chapter. The Book upon the Commerce of Grain, stressing the advantages of free trade, was by Condorcet, a fact Morris did not pick up.

As the Jefferson party was about to leave, the following happened, according to Sally Hemings' son Madison, talking in 1873 to an Ohio journalist:

Their stay (my mother's and Maria's) was about eighteen months. But during that time my mother became Mr. Jefferson's concubine, and when he was called back she was *enciente* with him. He desired to bring my mother back to Virginia but she demurred. She was just beginning to understand the French language well, and in France she was free, while if she returned to Virginia she would be re-enslaved. So she refused to return with him. To induce her to do so he promised her extraordinary privileges, and made a solemn pledge that her children should be freed at the age of twenty-one years. In consequence of his promise, on which she implicitly relied, she returned with him to Virginia. Soon after their arrival, she gave birth to a child, of whom Thomas Jefferson was the father. It lived

but a short time. (Madison Hemings Memoir, in Lewis and Onuf 1999: 255-8, quoted at p. 256; Wetmore 1873a).

The party left Paris on September 26 1789. They sailed from Le Havre, again via Cowes, where this time Jefferson showed polite interest in the sights of the Isle of Wight, including Carisbrooke Castle where king Charles I had been imprisoned during the War of Three Kingdoms. Their westward Atlantic crossing was as quick as the eastward (*Memorandum Book I*: 743-7; *PTJ* 15: 290-9, 560-1). On arrival in the USA, Jefferson found waiting for him Washington's request to succeed John Jay as Secretary of State in the first US Administration. Jefferson's acceptance ended his European adventure. He never returned.

In the next section I consider Jefferson as politician and as intellectual. His links with French liberal politicians and intellectuals (two strongly overlapping groups) were multifarious. I concentrate on one Marquis in each section: Lafayette (1757-1834), and Condorcet (1743-94).

Diplomat, consul, conspirator

Jefferson's jobs in Paris were, first, to negotiate commercial treaties and, later, to represent the United States at the court of Louis XVI. He did not take a prominent role in the first, being overshadowed especially by Benjamin Franklin. As ambassador, Jefferson tried, with meagre success, to secure free trade for American spermaceti (whale oil) in Europe; to suppress North African pirates who seized American ships in the Mediterranean; and to negotiate new loans for the bankrupt US treasury while fending off claims from unpaid French officers who had served with George Washington's army.

Jefferson's attitude to his job was remarkably independent. He undermined the governments of Louis XVI, to which he was accredited. As noted in previous chapters, Jefferson's anti-government temper was formed by his reading of 17th-century English history, his assimilation of Scottish Enlightenment values from William Small at William & Mary, and his encounter with the Ulster-Scots Presbyterians during the Virginia disestablishment campaign. He therefore arrived in Paris with a commitment to protect the rights of individuals against governments. He helped the Marquis de Lafayette to draft a declaration of rights which he hoped would be adopted in France. Jefferson chose Lafayette, not Condorcet, because the former was more influential and less radical, therefore his ideas were more likely to be adopted. Many of them were, in the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* adopted by the National Assembly in 1789 and still in the preamble to the French constitution (fuller details below, and in McLean 2004, 2009).

In 1776, the 19-year-old Lafayette, scion of one of the best-connected families of France, had volunteered for Washington's Continental Army. Washington made him a major-general. Jefferson met him first in 1781, when Lafayette commanded the force that delayed, but did not prevent, the British raid on Monticello that forced Jefferson to flee his state capital and his home, and cost him over 30 slaves freed by the British. Lafayette left the USA a hero (notably in his own eyes) and returned there for victory tours in 1784 and 1824. He was one of Jefferson's first French contacts on the latter's arrival, and also the last when he visited Jefferson in 1824. Jefferson presented him with a copy of the *Notes on Virginia* inscribed to one 'whose services to the American Union in general & to that member of it particularly which is the subject of these Notes ... entitle him to this offering' (quoted in Gottschalk 1965, p. 203).

Jefferson gave his candid view of Lafayette in letters to Madison:

I find the M de la Fayette so useful an auxiliary [in trade negotiations] that acknowledgements for his cooperation are always due (Dec.16 1786; *PTJ* 10: 602).

The *Marquis de La Fayette* is a most valuable *auxiliary to me*. His *zeal* is unbounded, & his *weight* with those in *power*, *great*. His *education* having been merely *military*, *commerce* was an unknown field to him. But his good sense enabling him to *comprehend* perfectly whatever is *explained to him*, his *agency* has been very *efficacious*. *He* has a great deal of *sound genius*, is well *remarked* by the King, & *rising in* popularity. He *has* nothing against *him*, but the *suspicion* of *republican principles*. I think he will one day *be of the ministry*. His foible is, *a canine appetite for popularity and fame*; but he will get *above* this. (TJ to JM Jan. 30 1787; *PTJ* 11: 92-7. Italicized passages sent in code.)

Lafayette was thus the ideal tool for Jefferson's interests as they broadened from American trade to French politics. During 1787, Jefferson kept up a correspondence with Madison and Washington about the US Constitution. Once Madison was released from the secrecy of the Philadelphia Convention, he outlined the draft constitution to Jefferson, who expressed two main objections.

I will now add what I do not like. First the omission of a bill of rights providing clearly and without the aid of sophisms for freedom of religion, freedom of the press, protection against standing armies, restriction against monopolies, the eternal & unremitting force of the habeas corpus laws, and trials by jury in all matters of fact.... The second feature I ... greatly dislike, is the abandonment in every instance of the necessity of rotation in office, and most particularly in the case of the President (TJ to JM Dec. 20 1787. *PTJ* 12: 440).

While thus trying to influence his own country's constitution, Jefferson was drawn more and more into reforming that of the country to which he was accredited. As the Assembly of Notables, the first step (as it turned out) on the road to revolution, prepared to meet, Jefferson briefed Lafayette, who was of course to be a member:

I wish you success in your meeting. I should form better hopes of it if it were divided into two houses instead of seven. Keeping the good model of your neighboring country [i.e., Britain] before your eyes you may get on step by step towards a good constitution.... The king, who means so well, should be encouraged to repeat these assemblies. You see how we republicans are apt to preach when we get on politics (TJ to Lafayette, Feb. 28 1787; *PTJ* 11: 186).

Jefferson's praise of Louis XVI was presumably designed to protect him if his letter was read by the government censor, as most of them were. Likewise, his surely hypocritical praise of the British constitution. But he became less and less cautious. So did Lafayette. In December 1788, with a second Assembly of Notables due to work out the arrangements for the forthcoming Estates-General, Jefferson wrote to Currie, 'All the world is occupied at present in framing, every one his own plan of a bill of rights' (TJ to James Currie, Dec. 20 1788, *PTJ* 14: 366). Elsewhere (McLean 2004) I have attempted a clause-by-clause analysis of four such declarations:

1. Jefferson's own, sent to Lafayette and to the Protestant pastor and politician Rabaut de S. Etienne on 3 June 1789 (*PTJ* 15: 165-8);

2. that of Condorcet (for the complex provenance of which see McLean and Hewitt 1994, pp. 55-63);
3. the second of Lafayette's three efforts, composed in June 1789 (*PTJ* 15: 230-3);
4. the *Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen* as finally approved by the National Convention (Finer 1979, 269-71).

In June 1789, according to Gouverneur Morris:

He [TJ] seems to be out of Hope of anything being done to Purpose by the States General. This comes from having too sanguine Expectations of a downright republican Form of Government (Morris diary June 03 1789 in Davenport 1939, i: 104)

Jefferson's draft for Rabaut and Lafayette addresses mostly issues that, for the USA, were in the original document reported from Philadelphia, rather than the Bill of Rights of whose absence he had complained to Madison. In June 1789 France did not yet have a constitution, still less a Bill of Rights. Nor did the USA: the Bill of Rights, comprising the first ten amendments to the Constitution, was ratified under Madison's leadership in 1791.

Matters moved fast, however. Condorcet's Bill of Rights goes much further than any other document in this set. It is probably a little earlier than Jefferson's, but more far-reaching. Condorcet had failed to gain election to the Estates-General, but his political views were moving rapidly to the left (not an anachronistic term: the words 'left' and 'right' gained their modern meaning from the positions of the factions in the French National Assembly). He was the only thinker of the Enlightenment to suggest that women should have equal rights with men, and he

also includes very modern-sounding environmental rights in his list. If he did not get Condorcet's list direct from him, Jefferson got it from his personal physician Richard Gem.

However, Condorcet was not only out of power, he was too radical for Jefferson's purpose.

Jefferson did not believe that France, only just abandoning feudalism, was ready for a declaration of rights as thoroughgoing as he was pressing on the US ratifying states. Comparing Lafayette's first draft with one of Gem's, the latter clearly influenced by Condorcet, Jefferson told Madison (*PTJ* 14: 436-9, Jan. 12 1789) that Lafayette's declaration was 'adapted to the existing abuses'.

By the end of June or the beginning of July 1789, Lafayette produced a second draft of his bill of rights. It contains some Jeffersonian phrases, such as the first part of clause 1 ('Nature has made men free and equal'), and clause 13:

As the progress of enlightenment, the introduction of abuses, and the rights of succeeding generations necessitate the revision of every human work, there must be provision for a constitutional convention.

This clause of Lafayette's was not adopted. It likely owes much to his discussions with Jefferson, who (as discussed below) tried to put his idea that 'the earth belongs to the living' on to a sound mathematical footing. Others are addressed to French conditions in unJeffersonian terms (such as the second part of clause 1, 'social distinctions may only be based on public utility'). Others again seem to owe more to Rousseau than to Jefferson, such as clause 6: 'The principle of all sovereignty resides imprescriptibly in the nation'.

Many hands worked on the *Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen*. Lafayette opened the agenda by presenting a draft, based on his June effort but with minor changes following his

further discussions with Jefferson. This attempt to capture the agenda was remarkably similar to that of Madison, who opened the US Constitutional Convention by having his colleague Edmund Randolph present the ‘Virginia Plan’, which set the agenda for the first two months. (For more on this agenda-setting see Riker 1993). Several Bureaux of the National Assembly produced drafts and the final text was a mélange of drafts from different bureaux. One member recorded that

After comparing the various plans of a Declaration of Rights with that of M de La Fayette, I observed that the latter is the text to which the others form merely a commentary (abbé Bounefoy, *Archives parlementaires*, Aug. 19 1789, quoted by Fauré 1990; my translation).

The most momentous difference is that the Declaration as adopted contains the Rousseauvian clause 6: ‘Statute law [Fr: *La Loi*] is the expression of the general will.’ This was interpreted throughout French history until 1971 to mean that *La Loi*, expressing as it does the general will, is superior to any constitutional text, even the sacred Declaration of 1789. The National Assembly decided not to make the Declaration itself part of the Constitution. This may have been a blessing in disguise, in that all French constitutions until the Third Republic were shortlived. However, the 1789 Declaration was incorporated into the preamble of the Constitutions of both the 4th Republic (1946) and 5th Republic (1958 and still current: for translated texts see Finer 1979).

In August 1789 Lafayette, by now also commanding officer of the National Guard in Paris (at least in fair weather), sent Jefferson this breathless note:

My dear friend, I Beg for liberty's sake you will Breack Every Engagement to Give us a dinner to Morrow Wenesday. We shall Be some Members of the National Assembly – eight of us whom I want to Coalize [form a coalition – IM] as Being the only Means to prevent a total dissolution and a civil war. The difficulty Between them is the King's veto. Some want it Absolute, others will Have no Veto, and the only way to Unite them is to find some Means for a suspensive Veto...Perhaps will they Be late but I shall Be precisely at three with you.

(Lafayette to TJ Aug. 25 1789. *PTJ* 15: 354)

Jefferson agreed to the meeting. It was one of his last ringside seats of the French Revolution. The argument lasted for six hours and ended with a proposal for a sovereign unicameral assembly, with the monarchy having only a 'suspensive veto on the laws'. Jefferson prudently reported on the conference the next day to the foreign minister Montmorin, who

told me he already knew everything which had passed, that, so far from taking umbrage at the use made of my house on that occasion, he earnestly wished I would habitually assist at such conferences, being sure I should be useful in moderating the warmer spirits, and promoting a wholesome and practicable reformation only (*PTJ: RS* 17: 371).

Time for a wholesome and practicable reformation had passed. The Revolution had already started its bloody course: Jefferson had had an eyewitness account of the lynching of the governor of the Bastille and his deputy on July 14 (*PTJ: RS* 17: 365:). Many of Jefferson's Paris acquaintances died horribly in the Terror. Montmorin was massacred in September 1792; la Rochefoucauld lynched in front of his mother in the same month; Rabaut and Brissot guillotined in the judicial murder of Girondins in 1793; Condorcet cheated the guillotine by dying unidentified in prison in 1794. Of Lafayette's party of eight, none rode the tiger. One was

guillotined, and three including Lafayette owed their survival only to being captured by the Austrians and imprisoned until after the end of the Terror in 1794.

Late in life, in his so-called *Autobiography*, Jefferson blamed the Terror on Marie-Antoinette. “I have ever believed that had there been no queen, there would have been no revolution” (*PTS:RS* 17: 367). By *revolution* Jefferson means the insurrectionary phase, not the constitutional phase that he conspired to bring about. At the time he could be astonishingly *blasé*. He bantered to Maria Cosway:

In the mean time we have been here in the midst of tumult and violence. The cutting off heads is become so much a la mode, that one is apt to feel of a morning whether their own is on their shoulders. (TJ to MC, July 25 1789: *PTJ* 15: 305-6).

More chillingly, in January 1793 Secretary of State Jefferson wrote to his protégé and successor in Paris, William Short, to say bluntly that the “tone” of Short’s letters “had for some time given me pain, on account of the extreme warmth with which they censured the proceedings of the Jacobins of France”. By this time none of Jefferson’s Paris friends were still in office; two had already been lynched. But, he went on,

In the struggle which was necessary, many guilty persons fell without the forms of trial, and with them some innocent. These I deplore as much as any body, & shall deplore some of them to the day of my death. But I deplore them as I should have done had they fallen in battle.... The liberty of the whole earth was depending on the issue of the contest, and was ever a prize won with so little innocent blood?

A rather obvious answer to Jefferson’s rhetorical question is *Yes: American independence*. But in his letter to his subordinate, he continued relentlessly:

My own affections have been deeply wounded by some of the martyrs to this cause, but rather than it should have failed, I would have seen half the earth desolated. Were there but an Adam and an Eve left in every country, and left free, it would be better than as it now is. I have expressed to you my sentiments, because they are really those of 99 in an hundred of our citizens. The universal feasts, and rejoicings which have lately been had on account of the successes of the French shewed the genuine effusions of their hearts. You have been wounded by the sufferings of your friends, and have by this circumstance been hurried into a temper of mind which would be extremely disrelished if known to your countrymen. (TJ to WS 3 Jan. 1793. *PTJ*: 25: 14-15).

A momentous encounter: Jefferson and Condorcet

Jefferson's insatiable intellectual curiosity was already evident from his writings before France, including the drafts of the *Notes on Virginia* written before he reached Paris in reply to questions from a French diplomat in Philadelphia, François de Marbois. In Paris, Jefferson circulated a few copies of the *Notes* to his intellectual and political friends. A bad French translation induced him to approve an authorized edition, which he had published in London in 1787. It has been suggested (Adams 1997: 124) that Marbois' queries were drafted by the French naturalist the Comte de Buffon. If so, they began a love-hate relationship between Buffon and Jefferson.

Jefferson enjoyed the salons of several hostesses. Two of them - Mme Helvétius (1722-1800) and Sophie de Condorcet (1764-1822) – helped Jefferson broaden links, initially offered by Benjamin Franklin who had preceded him in Paris, with the front rank of the Enlightenment.

Jefferson disliked Franklin's showmanship and his affair with Mme Helvétius, and was relieved when Franklin returned to Philadelphia. Nevertheless, as Jefferson knew, Franklin was an eminent scientist, made a member of the French Academy of Sciences for his work on lightning.

Mme Helvétius bridged generations. Widow of the utilitarian Enlightenment rationalist Claude-Adrien Helvétius and partner of Franklin, she had known Denis Diderot and the atheist baron d'Holbach, and presided over meetings of the next generation of intellectuals and liberal politicians. These included Sophie de Grouchy, Marquise de Condorcet. Though 20 years younger than the Marquis (1743-94), their marriage in 1786 was both a love and an intellectual match (Guillois 1897; E & R. Badinter 1988; Boissel 1988; McLean and Hewitt 1994). As fiery a republican as Jefferson, Sophie was (I suspect, on textual evidence) the real author of the *Lettre d'un jeune mécanicien* published in her husband's name in 1791 (Arago and O'Connor 1847, vol. 12, pp. 339-41). In this letter, the young engineer boasts of having invented a mechanical king so elaborate that he can do everything a human king can do, with automatic clockwork adjustments to cope with the varying dates of Easter. As Louis XVI was famously an amateur locksmith, this satire put the Condorcets beyond the pale of their moderate royalist allies. In 1800, Sophie pointedly moved into Mme Helvétius' old house in Auteuil, south-west of Paris, and resumed her salon. She was no more a fan of Napoleon (although her brother became one of his marshals) than of the politicians of the Terror who had killed her husband.

This was of course all in the future when Sophie opened her salon at the Hotel des Monnaies (now the Institut de France) on the Left Bank of the Seine opposite the Louvre. This was her husband's tied cottage (or rather, tied palace) by virtue of his job as *Inspecteur des Monnaies*. But she likely seemed to Jefferson as beautiful as, and brainier and more republican than, Maria Cosway. Through the salons, Jefferson. Lafayette, the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, who translated

the American state constitutions into French, and the Marquis de Condorcet met regularly in Paris and admired one another. While in Paris, Jefferson acquired a copy of Helvétius' *Oeuvres complètes* and two works by d'Holbach, as well as numerous works by Condorcet. He secured from his agent in The Hague four copies of Condorcet's *Vie de Turgot*, in which Condorcet not only eulogizes his hero the former French finance minister, but also sets out their shared rationale for free trade in grain. The other three were for Franklin, John Jay, and Robert Morris (C.W.F. Dumas to TJ, Sep. 12 1786 and reply Sep. 22. *PTJ* 10: 354-6 and 397-8); Albertone 1997: 188). He took his farewell of the Condorcets at a dinner in the Hotel des Monnaies in late September 1789. In his invitation, Condorcet hailed Jefferson as “ toujours celui des philosophes et des hommes libres de tous les pays (always among the *philosophes* and the freethinkers of every land: *PTJ*: 15: 419).

Condorcet and his circle were fascinated by American politics (Albertone 1997). He wrote about it copiously, and information on what was going on must have come from Jefferson or one of his associates, such as Filippo Mazzei and la Rochefoucauld. The latter had been Franklin's secretary in Paris, and is a likely source of the following, from Condorcet's *Eloge* [scientific obituary] *de Franklin*:

Franklin fut nommé, en 1776, un des représentants de la ville de Philadelphie à la convention de Pensylvanie, qui le choisit pour président. La constitution de cet Etat fut en partie son ouvrage. Elle se distingue de la plupart des autres par une égalité plus grande, et de toutes, en ce que le pouvoir législatif y est confié à une seule chambre de représentants; la voix de Franklin décida seule cette dernière disposition. (Arago and O'Connor 1847-9 III 372-423)

In 1776 Franklin was nominated as one of the representatives from the City of Philadelphia to the Pennsylvania [constitutional] convention, which chose him as its president. The PA constitution was in part his work. It is more egalitarian than most of the other state constitutions, and is unique in that the legislative power is conferred on a single elected chamber. Franklin's vote was decisive in securing this arrangement. [my translation]

That was not how it seemed to John Adams, who had been closer to the event. On the margin of a copy of a French translation of the Constitution of Pennsylvania, Adams wrote:

The following Constitution of Pa, was well known by such as were in the secret, to have been principally prepared by Timothy Matlock, Jas. Gannon, Thomas Paine and Thomas Young, all ingenious Men, but none of them deeply read in the Science of Legislation. The Bill of Rights is taken almost verbatim from that of Va.... The Form of Government, is the Worst that has been established in America, & will be found so in Experience. It has weakened that state, divided it, and by that Means embarrasses and obstructed the American Cause more than any other thing (JA annotation in Adams Library, Boston Public Library, 233.7.)

This unicameral constitution of Pennsylvania is the target of Madison's attacks in *Federalist* 10, 48, and 51. On this, Jefferson agreed with Madison and Adams. But Condorcet and La Rochefoucauld were attracted by the constitution of unicameral Pennsylvania, backed by the supposed authority of the great Docteur Franklin. Condorcet was wrong to attribute the PA constitution to Franklin, who was rarely there. La Rochefoucauld produced another translation of the US state constitutions in 1783.

Condorcet used his position as Perpetual Secretary of the Academy of Sciences to control European science policy. Jefferson was an enthusiastic amateur scientist and a soulmate. In one of the last documents Condorcet wrote in hiding before meeting his death in the Terror of 1794, he consigned his beloved daughter Eliza, should she escape to the USA, to the care of Jefferson, or of Franklin's grandson B. F. Bache. She did not reach the USA, but she and her mother Sophie survived the Terror. In his post-1812 correspondence with John Adams (Cappon 1959/1987), Jefferson never responded to Adams' fierce and frequent attacks on Condorcet and his fellow thinkers of the French Enlightenment. Adams thought that they were foolishly optimistic about human nature. (So, more quietly, did Madison). Jefferson shared Condorcet's optimism.

Jefferson admired Condorcet's mathematics (see below) much more than his politics.

Condorcet's political (as opposed to scientific) influence on Jefferson was limited, and on Madison, it was non-existent: in both cases, because Condorcet endorsed unicameralism.

Jefferson had made his feelings known in his *Notes on Virginia*. Jefferson denounces the '173 despots' who had replaced the solitary despot George III in Virginia. Although bicameral, 'the [VA] senate is, by its constitution, too homogeneous with the house of delegates. Being chosen by the same electors, at the same time, and out of the same subjects, the choice falls of course on men of the same description.... An elective despotism was not the government we fought for' (*Notes on Virginia*, Query XIII).

Another member of the Jefferson-Condorcet circle in Paris was Philip (Filippo) Mazzei, an Italian who wrote frequent begging letters to Madison and Jefferson. Jefferson commissioned Mazzei to write a four volume *Recherches Historiques ... sur les Etats-Unis* in order to counter anti-American propaganda in Paris (much the same motive as for publishing his own Notes on

Virginia). Mazzei (or Jefferson) inserted four chapters by Condorcet into this book, which Mazzei sent to Madison, unsuccessfully asking Madison to arrange a translation. Condorcet's four chapters were called *Lettres d'un bourgeois de New H[e]aven à un citoyen de Virginie*. '(New Heaven at the original publication; New Haven in the 1847 collected edition of Condorcet's work). Condorcet was one of ten distinguished Frenchmen made a Freeman of New Haven at a town meeting in 1785 (a fact checked for me by the late Robert A. Dahl). The citoyen de Virginie was Mazzei. These New Haven Letters argue for a unicameral national legislature, with representatives selected by a very complicated procedure.

Adams and Jefferson - the two Americans to whom French constitution-writers turned for advice - therefore had very mixed feelings about the American state constitutions. Condorcet's endorsement of unicameralism created a barrier between him and the American most likely to understand him. It also cost Condorcet his life.

Although never formally a member of the Girondin faction in the National Assembly, he was associated with them and especially with their leader J.-P Brissot de Warville through their common sponsorship of the *Société des Amis des Noirs*. The Girondins went from being regarded as the most radical to the most conservative faction in the National Convention as the Revolution spiraled out of control. The Jacobins split into two factions: Girondin and Montagnard. The leader of the latter, Maximilien Robespierre, uncertainly trying to ride the tiger of street violence in Paris, first argued in September 1792 that the Girondins should be killed. In that month, over 1000 prisoners were murdered by street mobs (Schama 1989: 629-639). The Girondins kept fragile control of the National Convention until spring 1793, during which Condorcet led the drafting of a new constitution – quite similar in its voting procedures to his earlier proposals in the New Haven Letters and elsewhere.

The 'Girondin Constitution' of February 1793 is truly Condorcetian. He chaired a committee of eight but his is the unmistakable voice. Continuing a theme from the New Haven letters, the preamble opens:

France is a nation one and indivisible. Founding her government on the Rights of Man, which she has recognised and declared, and on the principles of Liberty, Equality, and the Sovereignty of the People, she adopts the following constitution (Condorcet 1793a; my translation; cf McLean and Hewitt 1994: 26).

As France is one and indivisible (the phrase is still in the current French constitution), and is to have a unicameral assembly, Condorcet's constitution again proposes very elaborate methods of indirect election to the national assembly (part translated in McLean and Hewitt 1994: 228-234).

The Girondins fell from power precipitously. On 2 June 1793, representatives of the Paris Commune, supported by Robespierre, stormed the National Convention and demanded the heads of 22 Girondin deputies. They were expelled from the Convention, put on a show trial, and guillotined on October 31, a process which took more than half an hour (Schama 1989: 804-5).

Condorcet was not among the 22, but the Montagnards now controlling the Convention declared a Reign of Terror and declared Condorcet to be *hors la loi* (an outlaw). One of his offenses was to have attacked the succeeding Robespierre Constitution for its failure to understand social mathematics and Condorcet's election procedures (Condorcet 1793b, part translated in McLean and Hewitt 1994: 28). As his biographers put it, 'He joined the camp of the vanquished after their defeat' (Badinter and Badinter 1988: 577; my translation). He found refuge in the house of the extremely courageous Mme Vernet, in the *rue des Fossoyeurs* (Gravediggers' Street; now rue Servandoni, Paris 75006, where there is a plaque on the house). There he wrote his paean to

human perfectibility, the *Esquisse* (Condorcet 1795), before escaping in March 1794, to protect Mme Vernet. He turned up at the inn at Bourg-la-Reine (now a suburb of Paris, then a free-standing village that had been renamed 'Bourg-Egalité) pretending to be a peasant from the Condorcet estate at Ribemont-sur-Aisne. Unfortunately, the innkeeper was an informant to the Committee of Public Safety who did not believe the unlikely peasant 'Pierre Simon's story. He was thrown in jail, where he was found dead two days later (McLean and Hewitt 1994: 30-31).

Condorcet cheated the guillotine, and his identity was not proved for some weeks after his death. But another of Jefferson's closest associates, La Rochefoucauld, was lynched in front of his mother in the massacres of September 1792. J.-P Brissot and Rabaut de S.Etienne were guillotined in the mass murder of the Girondins (Schama 1989: 679, 804, 840). Their grisly deaths make Jefferson's 'Adam and Eve' letter to William Short all the more chilling.

The Rights of Man, the Citizen, James Hemings, and Sally Hemings

DNA (Y-chromosome) analysis has proved that Sally Hemings' last child Thomas Eston, born many years after Paris, carried the Jefferson genome (Foster et al. 1998). According to his brother Madison, Sally bore Jefferson's first child soon after Paris, but he died in infancy (Wetmore 1873a; Gordon-Reed 2008: 264). This chapter must consider the question, raised by Madison Hemings in his memoir, and by many others before and since: how could the author of the Declaration of Independence, who was also the secret author of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, remain so insensitive to the rights of his own slaves?

Those who wish to see Jefferson as a simple hypocrite have several documents on their side. The most damning is probably a letter he sent to a French-American who had asked him for consular advice: would he have to declare his import of a nine-year old slave boy to the French?

I have made inquiries on the subject of the negro boy you have brought, and find that the laws of France give him freedom if he claims it.... Nevertheless I have known an instance where a person bringing in a slave, and saying nothing about it, has not been disturbed in his possession. I think it will be easier in your case to pursue the same plan, as the boy is so young that it is not probable he will think of claiming freedom. (TJ to Paul Bentalou, Aug. 28 1786, in *PTJ* 10:296).

The editors of *PTJ* surmise, and I agree, that the instance Jefferson knew is his own: he had failed to declare James' arrival to the French authorities, as legally required even for ambassadors (Gordon-Reed 2008: 172-185; Noël 2006; Boule 2007). In 1873 Jefferson's former slave Israel (Gillette) Jefferson, who had been at Monticello during Lafayette's triumphal return there in 1824, reported the following overheard remarks to the same newspaperman who had taken down his friend Madison Hemings' memories:

Lafayette remarked that he thought that the slaves ought to be free; that no man could rightly hold ownership in his brother man; that he gave his best services to and spent his money in behalf of the Americans freely because he felt that they were fighting for a great and noble principle--the freedom of mankind) that instead of all being free a portion were held in bondage (which seemed to grieve his noble heart); that it would be mutually beneficial to masters and slaves if the latter were educated, and so on. Mr. Jefferson replied that he thought the time would come when the slaves would be free, but did not

indicate when or in what manner they would get their freedom. He seemed to think that the time had not then arrived. (Wetmore 1873b. At <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/jefferson/cron/1873israel.html> accessed Jan. 04 2024)

With this memoir, more than with Madison Hemings', the reader wonders how many of the words are Israel Jefferson's and how many the Republican journalist's. Nevertheless, the picture Jefferson paints is entirely consistent with other evidence of both Lafayette's and the older Jefferson's views.

Jefferson was obviously uncomfortable with the forceful anti-slavery views of his Paris intellectual coterie. Equally, the officers of the *Société des Amis des Noirs* (Condorcet and J.-P. Brissot) cannot have been happy at the anthropology of Black Americans in the *Notes in Virginia* which came out both in French and in English during Jefferson's Paris years. Nevertheless, Brissot invited Jefferson to become a patron of their society, or to send his deputy William Short:

Nous croirions Vous Manquer, Mr. Claviere et moi, et trahir la cause de L'humanité, si, formant ici une Société pour L'abolition de La traite des Nègres à L'Instar de celle de Londres, Nous ne Vous faisons pas part de cette entreprise, et si nous ne vous invitons pas à concourir à ce projet par Votre appui et Vos Lumières. Nous avons fixé à Mardi prochain La 1^{ère}. assemblée dont L'objet est d'organiser cette société, et d'arrêter Les objets dont elle s'occupera. Vous nous ferés un vrai plaisir de L'honorer de votre présence et de vos conseils. Si vos affaires ne Vous le permettoient pas, Nous espérons que M. Short, que nous Invitons à y venir, Vous remplaceroit. Je vous prie de vouloir bien me prévenir de ce que Vous ferés. L'assemblée se tiendra à 6. heures précises,

Maison de M. Claviere, au Coin des rues Grange aux belles et des marais, au bout de la rue Lancry, derrière L'opéra.

I am very sensible of the honour you propose to me of becoming a member of the society for the abolition of the slave trade. You know that nobody wishes more ardently to see an abolition not only of the trade but of the condition of slavery: and certainly nobody will be more willing to encounter every sacrifice for that object. But the influence and information of the friends to this proposition in France will be far above the need of my association. I am here as a public servant; and those whom I serve having never yet been able to give their voice against this practice, it is decent for me to avoid too public a demonstration of my wishes to see it abolished. Without serving the cause here, it might render me less able to serve it beyond the water. I trust you will be sensible of the prudence of those motives therefore which govern my conduct on this occasion, and be assured of my wishes for the success of your undertaking and the sentiments of esteem and respect with which I have the honour to be Sir your most obedt. humble servt

(Brissot to TJ Feb. 10 1788, and reply Feb. 11 1788, in *PTJ* 12: 577 – 8).

That Jefferson was at war with himself over slavery is very well known. In his so-called Autobiography he states that he brought up a bill for the abolition of slave import to Virginia but that it made no progress. In one of his most famous letters, written in 1820, he declares that

I can say with conscious truth that there is not a man on earth who would sacrifice more than I would, to relieve us from this heavy reproach, in any practicable way. the cession of that kind of property, for so it is misnamed, is a bagatelle which would not cost me a second thought, if, in that way, a general emancipation and expatriation could be

effected: and, gradually, and with due sacrifices, I think it might be. but, as it is, we have the wolf by the ear, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. justice is in one scale, and self-preservation in the other (TJ to John Holmes, Apr. 22 1820. *PTJ: RS* 15: 550-1. For fuller discussion see Riker 1982: 213-9; Miller 1977; Van Atta 2015).

A battle in Jefferson's war with himself concerned Benjamin Banneker, a free Black American from Maryland who presented Jefferson with an almanac he had calculated and written. In a forceful covering letter, Banneker wrote:

but Sir how pitiable is it to reflect, that altho you were so fully convinced [in 1776] of the benevolence of the Father of mankind, and of his equal and impartial distribution of those rights and privileges which he had conferred upon them, that you should at the Same time counteract his mercies, in detaining by fraud and violence so numerous a part of my brethren under groaning captivity and cruel oppression, that you should at the Same time be found guilty of that most criminal act, which you professedly detested in others, with respect to yourselves.

In his reply, Jefferson ignored this, but said:

No body wishes more than I do to see such proofs as you exhibit, that nature has given to our black brethren, talents equal to those of the other colours of men, and that the appearance of a want of them is owing merely to the degraded condition of their existence both in Africa and America

He also wrote to Condorcet, enclosing a copy of the almanac, and adding:

we have now in the United States a negro, the son of a black man born in Africa, and of a black woman born in the United States, who is a very respectable Mathematician. I procured him to be employed under one of our chief directors in laying out the new federal city on the Patowmac, and in the intervals of his leisure, while on that work, he made an Almanac for the next year, which he sent me in his own handwriting, and which I inclose to you. I have seen very elegant solutions of Geometrical problems by him. Add to this that he is a very worthy and respectable member of society. He is a free man. I shall be delighted to see these instances of moral eminence so multiplied as to prove that the want of talents observed in them is merely the effect of their degraded condition, and not proceeding from any difference in the structure of the parts on which intellect depends. (Banneker to TJ, Aug. 19 1791; TJ to BB, Aug. 30, 1791; TJ to Condorcet Aug. 30 1791. In *PTJ* 22: 51, 97-8. See further Miller 1977; Bedini 1999; Jordan 2012).

In October 1809, Jefferson wrote to his soulmate Joel Barlow (soon to take up Jefferson's old post of Minister in Paris):

we know he [Banneker] had spherical trigonometry enough to make almanacs, but not without the suspicion of aid from Ellicot, who was his neighbor & friend, & never missed an opportunity of puffing him. I have a long letter from Banneker which shews him to have had a mind of very common stature indeed (TJ to J Barlow, 8 Oct. 1809, in *PTJ: RS* 1: 588-9).

This is remarkably ungracious. Banneker's letter was a forceful but polite denunciation of the discrepancy between the author of the Declaration of Independence and the slave master of Monticello.

Was Jefferson *merely* a hypocrite? One fascinating conjecture due to Burstein (2005) links Jefferson the scientist with Jefferson the impregnator of Sally Hemings:

The most influential voice in matters of human sexuality was the Swiss physician Samuel Auguste David Tissot. Jefferson owned his collected works in French, and the English translation of “Tissot's Advice.” Tissot focused his particular attention on members of Jefferson's class, “sedentary and literary persons,” and recommended a regular course of exercise (such as horseback riding, which Jefferson committed himself to daily), a semi-vegetarian diet (another Jefferson trademark), and regular sexual intercourse with a healthy, attractive female. Middle age was a time of anxious prevention.... Sex was prescribed as a cure for melancholy.... If sex was a part of a regimen of self-control, it was necessary to understand it in order to enjoy a productive life. Semen was thought to support one's nervous constitution, whereas immoderate sexual activity weakened the nerves over time and led to a dangerous melancholy. (Burstein 2005, 4-5; for details of TJ's copies of Tissot see Sowerby 1952, I: 405-6, nos. 889 and 890).

I also think that his attitude to slavery during the Paris years reflects a very well-known feature of his personality, namely his ability to be a third-party commentator on life (his own and others'). This can be an admirable trait. Condorcet, very like Jefferson in this regard, gives almost no hint in his paean to the triumph of rationality over suspicion, the *Esquisse*, that he is writing under sentence of death without trial (see, e.g., Schandeler 1994; Williams 2004 *passim*).. Maybe, believers in the perfectibility of the human mind such as Condorcet and Jefferson need this protection from reality. The other side of the coin is the remarkable moral blindness that Jefferson seems to show in, at least, the 1786 letter to Bentalou, the 1793 letter to Short, and the 1809 letter to Barlow. Both sides are part of the authentic Jefferson.

This chapter has introduced Jefferson's Paris contacts. In the next chapter I take a deeper dive into two relationships: those with Buffon and Condorcet. Jefferson's dispute with the first and his fellow-feeling with the second both help to define Mr Jefferson's Enlightenment.