

men, as long as they continue to deserve it. More they have no right to expect. The Firm of the House is Fenwick Mason & Compy Merchants in Bourdeaux; and I think I can venture to assert that such Gentlemen as are pleased to make a Trial of the House, will find from them the strictest Integrity, as well as Diligence, & Attention to their Interest. It is in this Confidence, that I beg leave to solicit Your Interest in their Favour, by recommending them to Your Friends. From the late Encouragements given in France to the American Trade, I shou'd imagine some of the Exports from the Eastern States, particularly Spermacaeti, Whale-bone, Oyl, & Lumber, will find a better Market there than in any other Part of Europe.

I shou'd not have taken the Liberty to have given you this Trouble, had not your personal Acquaintance with my Son John afforded you an Opportunity of judging whether he deserves Confidence; and in the Hope, that a Correspondence with the Gentlemen of Your State will prove mutually advantageous. I sincerely wish You Health, and every Felicity; and am very respectfully, Dr Sir, Your most obdt Servt.

G MASON

RC (Gratz Collection, PHi). Addressed with the forwarding note: "Recommended to the Care of Nathl. Gorham Esqr, in Charles Town." Endorsed.

Gilman's PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE WITH MY SON JOHN must have stemmed from an association during the Federal Convention. John Mason was in Philadelphia during the convention and presumably also stayed at the Indian Queen, a favorite hostelry for many delegates. Whether merchant Gilman was inclined to favor GM's son in business matters is conjectural. In political affairs, however, there is no doubt that Gilman bore a personal grudge against GM over the ratification struggle. In a pessimistic mood, Gilman had confided in the early spring of 1788 that had "the preserver of Man, in the Super abundance of his tender mercies . . . removed P[atrick Henr]y with M[ason] to the regions of darkness, I am induced to think the new System of government would have been adopted" (Gilman to John Sullivan, 23 Mar. 1788, Burnett, ed., *Letters of Cont. Cong.*, VIII, 709).

To Thomas Jefferson

Virginia Fairfax County, Gunston Hall July 21st. 1788.

DEAR SIR

I wrote you on the 26th. of May last, by my Son John, via Bourdeaux; to which I beg Leave to refer.

I intended to have given you the fullest Information in my Power upon the present gloomy State of American Politics, but the Ship,

this Letter goes by, sails to-morrow; and I have had so severe an Attack of the Gout in my Stomach, for two or three Days past, that I have not been able to sit up, & now write in so much Pain, that I must defer it, to another Opportunity. I enclose you however the last two or three Days proceedings of the Virginia Convention; which will shew you by how small a Majority, the new plan of Government has been ratified here.

I have desired Capt. James Fenwick (the Partner of the House in Bourdeaux, who transacts their Business here) to send over some Patterns of coarse Goods (as per List on the other side) to his Brother & my Son; to see if such can't be manufactured in France, as cheap as in Great Britain. The Consumption of these Articles in the Middle & Southern States is immense; and nothing wou'd contribute more to encrease the commercial Intercourse between America & France, more than her being able to furnish them upon equal Terms with Great Britain. In this Light, perhaps it may be an Object worthy the Attention & Patronage of the French Ministry. If you think it so, and will write to my Son at Bourdeaux on the Subject, he will wait upon you at Paris, with the Patterns. You will observe that the coarse Woolens are what we buy for our Slaves; most of the coarse french Woolens I have seen are buttered with a great deal of Paste, or some such thing which shou'd be avoided; the nearer those Woolens, to which our Slaves have been accustomed, are imitated, the better; the Width too shou'd be minutely attended to, & must be full 3/4 th of an English Yard.

I am not able to sit up longer than to assure you, that I am with the greatest Esteem & Respect, dear Sir, Your most obdt. Servt.

G MASON

Patterns of the following Articles

White Welsh plains or Negroe's Cotton, nap'd & unnap'd
coarse half thicks—coarse Duffield or Bearskin
twill'd white Scotch plaiding—Dutch Blankets 6/4 wide—15 in a piece Scotch plaid Hose—coarse Yarn Hose for Negroes—coarse felt Hats for Do. Ozenbrig thread—strong coarse Shoe thread—weeding & hilling Hoes—Sweed's falling Axes—flat pointed Nails—3od-2od-1od-8d. & 6d.—Sharp pointed 4d. Nails. NB. the Axes must be well steel'd.

RC (Jefferson Papers, DLC). Endorsed.

Boyd (XIII, 393ⁿ) speculates that the enclosed PROCEEDINGS OF THE VIRGINIA CONVENTION were Augustine Davis's daily printed accounts of the final sessions at Richmond. They are not with the letter or with another of the same day sent to John Mason.