24. Jefferson’s Death

To Nicholas P. Trist

Montpelier, July 6, 1826

I have just received yours of the 4th. A few lines from Dr. Dunglison had prepared me for such a communication; and I never doubted that the last Scene of our illustrious friend would be worthy of the life which it closed. Long as this has been spared to his Country & to those who loved him, a few years more were to have been desired for the sake of both. But we are more than consoled for the loss, by the gain to him; and by the assurance that he lives and will live in the memory and gratitude of the wise & good, as a luminary of Science, as a votary of liberty, as a model of patriotism, and as a benefactor of human kind. In these characters, I have known him, and not less in the virtues & charms of social life, for a period of fifty years, during which there has not been an interruption or diminution of mutual confidence and cordial friendship, for a single moment in a single instance. What I feel therefore now, need not, I should say, cannot, be expressed. If there be any possible way, in which I can usefully give evidence of it, do not fail to afford me an opportunity. I indulge a hope that the unforeseen event will not be permitted to impair any of the beneficial measures which were in progress or in project. It cannot be unknown that the anxieties of the deceased were for others, not for himself. . . .