28. The Anti-Republican Heretic

To Margaret B. Smith

Montpelier, September, 1830

... I recollect an incident... which... is characteristic of Mr. Jefferson...

The new Constitution of the U. States having just been put into operation, forms of Government were the uppermost topics every where, more especially at a convivial board, and the question being started as to the best mode of providing the Executive chief, it was among other opinions, boldly advanced that a hereditary designation was preferable to any elective process that could be devised. At the close of an eloquent effusion against the agitations and animosities of a popular choice and in behalf of birth, as on the whole, affording even a better chance for a suitable head of the Government, Mr. Jefferson, with a smile remarked that he had heard of a university somewhere in which the Professorship of Mathematics was hereditary. The reply, received with acclamation, was a coup de grace to the Anti-Republican Heretic.