

28. *The Anti-Republican Heretic*

To Margaret B. Smith

Montpellier, 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.