

16. "Rational Society"

To James Madison

Annapolis, Feb. 20, 1784

. . . I hope you have found access to my library. I beg you to make free use of it. Key, the steward is living there now and of course will be always in the way. Monroe is buying land almost adjoining me. Short will do the same. What would I not give you could fall into the circle. With such a society I could once more venture home and lay myself up for the residue of life, quitting all it's contentions which grow daily more and more insupportable. Think of it. To render it practicable only requires you to think it so. Life is of no value but as it brings us gratifications. Among the most valuable of these is rational society. It informs the mind, sweetens the temper, cheers our spirits, and promotes health. There is a little farm of 140 as. adjoining me, and within two miles, all of good land, tho' old, with a small indifferent house on it, the whole worth not more than £250. Such a one might be a farm of experiment and support a little table and household. It is on the road to Orange and so much nearer than I am. It is convenient enough for supplementary supplies from thence. Once more think of it, and Adieu.