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Thomas Jefferson to John Taylor of Caroline (a fellow Virginian)

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It was not unusual now to estimate the separate mass of Virginia and N. Carolina with a view to their separate existence. It is true that we are completely under the saddle of Massachusetts & Connecticut, and that they ride us very hard, cruelly insulting our feelings as well as exhausting our strength and substance. Their natural friends, the three other eastern States, join them from a sort of family pride, and they have the art to divide certain other parts of the Union so as to make use of them to govern the whole. This is not new. It is the old practice of despots to use a part of the people to keep the rest in order, and those who have once got an ascendancy and possessed themselves of all the resources of the nation, their revenues and offices, have immense means for retaining their advantages.

But our present situation is not a natural one. The body of our countrymen is substantially republican through every part of the Union. It was the irresistible influence & popularity of Gen'l Washington, played off by the cunning of Hamilton, which turned the government over to anti-republican hands, or turned the republican members, chosen by the people, into anti-republicans... Time alone would bring round an order of things more correspondent to the sentiments of our constituents...

Be this as it may, in every free & deliberating society there must, from the nature of man, be opposite parties & violent dissensions & discords; and one of these, for the most part, must prevail over the other for a longer or shorter time. Perhaps this party division is necessary to induce each to watch & [report] to the people the proceedings of the other. But if on a temporary superiority of the one party, the other is to resort to a scission of the Union, no federal government can ever exist...

Seeing, therefore, that an association of men who will not quarrel with one another is a thing which never yet existed, from the greatest confederacy of nations down to a town meeting or a vestry, seeing that we must have somebody to quarrel with, I had rather keep our New England associates for that purpose than to see our bickerings transferred to others. They are circumscribed within such narrow limits, & their population so full, that their numbers will ever be the minority, and they are marked, like the Jews, with such a peculiarity of character as to constitute from that circumstance the natural division of our parties. **A little patience, and we shall see the reign of witches pass over, their spells dissolve, and the people, recovering their true sight, restore their government to its true principles.** It is true that in the mean time we are suffering deeply in spirit, and incurring the horrors of a war & long oppressions of enormous public debt. But who can say what would be the evils of a scission, and when & where they would end? Better keep together as we are... And if we feel their power just sufficiently to hoop us together, it will be the happiest situation in which we can exist. If the game runs sometimes against us at home we must have patience till luck turns, & then we shall have an opportunity of winning back the principles we have lost, for this is a game where principles are the stake. Better luck, therefore, to us all; and health, happiness, & friendly salutations to yourself. Adieu.

Thomas Jefferson

P. S. It is hardly necessary to caution you to let nothing of mine get before the public. A single sentence, got hold of by the Porcupines, will suffice to abuse & persecute me in their papers for months.