New-york, June 22 1801.


I do myself the honor to submit herewith the chronological & historical table, which you were so good as to send me last autumn. It contains a large portion of important matter & I beg you to accept of my grateful acknowledgments for the communication of it.

You suggest the idea of sending this collection of facts, after it shall have been read to you, to the historical society of Massachusetts. I am persuaded that society would receive it with pleasure & gratitude. There was not long since a time when these feelings on receiving such a communication might not have been the most pleasant: but New England people, see the worth of Americans. They will, probably, hereafter, be polite enough —

In attempting to exhibit something of the progress of science, arts & literature, during the Eighteenth Century, it is my wish to publish a brief but distinct view of the gradual advancement of learning in the United States — It is also my wish in this view, to
give the names of those individuals in our country, who have distinguished themselves as promoters of useful knowledge; or to whom any considerable portion of our progress in any particular department of science or literature may be attributed. With respect to these objects of inquiry, so far as they concern the middle state, I have some knowledge, and with reference to the southern states, I have some prospect of obtaining information. Concerning the southern part of our country, I am altogether at a loss, being wholly unacquainted with the names of those persons who at the beginning or during the first 70 years of the century, were conspicuous for their acquirements, or for the promotion of knowledge in the state of Virginia, particularly in the cities of Richmond and Alexandria.

If I do not mistake during the former half of the eighteenth century, it was customary throughout a great part of our southern country, to send young gentlemen to Europe for education. How far this circumstance might have
tendency to keep up a taste for classic literature in the Southern States, which began very early to decline in New England, which is now very low there. I am ignorant. It is my particular wish to be able to form some comparative estimate of this kind, if with facts to give as far as possible, their causes.

In the state of Pennsylvania there was a degree of acquaintance with the ancient Latin and Greek authors, which, some years ago, his late Professor, Mr. W. J. Allison, an instructor in the College of Philadelphia for a number of years, probably a similar remark might be made on many of the other States.

I am sensible of the asking information from you, on the topics of enquiring hints at all, would be a presumption, it very improper intrusion on your numerous & much more important official engagements. But if you could take the trouble to favor me.

I write to express my admiration to whom these remarks might be, with propriety, applicable in my case. I should consider it a high privilege and honor to be in your service. With the greatest respect,

Your humble servant,

[Signature]

Sam'l Miller