

Dear Sir .

Richmond, Dec. 6th 1817.

I received, two days ago, your
favours of the 2^d, enclosing your message to
Congress. I am much gratified by the com-
munication. I have read, with great pleasure,
the interesting portrait you have drawn, of
the prosperous condition of our Country. It
is not more flattering than true. — In addition
to eminent advantages heretofore possessed,
the issue of the late war has given us a
national character, and, with it, national
safety. We shall, no longer, be kicked and
cuffed by the European Nations. Our free
government has been found strong enough
to stand the tug of war, when our people were
divided into parties, and many of them
almost in a state of rebellion. Under the
circumstances that may we not achieve?
; especially by getting ready for war, in
time of peace. I have no fears that
our government will be inadequate to
preserve the rights & peace of our people,
or to give us our just rank among the
powers of the Earth. The only fear is,
— that, carried away by the vortex of power,
— feeling power and forgetting right, — the
safeguards provided for our liberties, by the
virtue of our fathers, will be demolished.
It is to be feared, that, going in quest of
power

1817
Judge Roane

power and splendor, the just rights & persons
of the states, may be swept-away. — Against
this tendency of human nature, the only check
is found in the golden principle of a frequent
recurrence to fundamental principles, and
reducing the servants of the people, at short
periods, to the condition from which they were
taken. This is a principle which the founders
of our Constitution have deemed all-important
to preserve our liberties. — I rejoice that,
in, almost, the first act of your admini:
:tration, you have promptly acted upon this
principle: that you, also, have disclaimed
power, and paid a voluntary homage
to that great principle. You have
recurred, at once, to the principles which
the nation had sanctioned, after a great
struggle, and which brought the Repub:
:licans into power. — on this act,
so grateful to all with whom I com:
:mune in politics, I cordially conga:
:tulate you.

With the greatest respect &
Esteem, I am, Dear Sir,
your friend & ob. servant.

Spencer, Roane

My Son is with me, & well.
He desires his best respects
to you.