George Washington Papers, Series 3, Subseries 3H, Varick Transcripts, Letterbook 1

To GEORGE WILLIAM FAIRFAX

Philadelphia, May 31, 1775.

Dear Sir: Since my last (dated about the first of April) I have received from Mr. Craven Peyton[13] the Sum of £193.6.10 (as you may see by the enclosed Account) with which, and the Balance of the former Money, I now remit you the following Bills; to wit, One drawn by Mr. Thomas Contee on Mr. Mollison, for £40 Sterling, and another drawn by Lyonel Bradstreet on Mr. William Tippell of London for the like Sum (indorsed by Mr. Contee; the strongest assurances being given me, that they are both good) Mr. Contee is Mr. Mollison's principal Factor, or Agent, in Maryland, and is besides a Man of property himself; but notwithstanding this, the times are so ticklish, that there is no such thing as answering for the payment of Bills. You must therefore, either take the chance of receiving bad ones, or suffer your Money to lay dead.

I have also, since my coming to this place, purchased a Bill from Messieurs Willing and Morris of £161.10 Sterling, which will, I believe, for I have not a state of our Account with me, about Balance it. With the Copy of Mr. Peyton's Account, you will receive a List of the Rents which he collected since last settlement; and these, as I have not been favoured with a Line from you, since your Letter of June, is all I recollect

13. Of Loudoun County, Va., a brother of Francis Peyton. Washington, as previously noted, had undertaken, hesitatingly, to oversee the management of George William Fairfax's estate in Virginia, and this letter was a report of his stewardship.

at present worth communicating relative to your business.

Before this Letter can reach you, you must, undoubtedly, have received an Account of the engagement in the Massachusetts Bay between the Ministerial Troops (for we do not, nor cannot yet prevail upon ourselves to call them the King's Troops) and the Provincials of that Government; But as you may not have heard how that affair began, I inclose you the several Affidavits that were taken after the Action.[14]

General Gage acknowledges, that the detachment under Lieutenant Colonel Smith[15] was sent out to destroy private property; or, in other Words, to destroy a Magazine which self preservation obliged the Inhabitants to establish. And he also confesses, in effect at least, that his Men made a very precipitate retreat from Concord, notwithstanding the reinforcement under Lord Piercy, the last of which may serve to convince Lord Sandwich (and others of the same sentiment) that the Americans will fight for their Liberties and property, however pusilanimous, in his Lordship's Eye, they may appear in other respects.

From the best Accounts I have been able to collect of that affair; indeed from every one, I believe the fact, stripped of all colouring, to be plainly this, that if the retreat had not been as precipitate as it was (and God knows it could not well have been more so) the Ministerial Troops must have surrendered, or been totally cut off: For they had not arrived in Charlestown (under cover of their Ships) half

14. These affidavits were sent to the Continental Congress and are printed in the *Journals of the Continental Congress*, May 11, 1775.

15. Lieut. Col. Francis Smith, of the Tenth Foot, British Army.

an hour, before a powerful body of Men from Marblehead and Salem were at their heels, and must, if they had happened to have been up one hour sooner, inevitably intercepted their retreat to Charlestown. Unhappy it is though to reflect, that a Brother's Sword has been sheathed in a

Brother's breast, and that, the once happy and peaceful plains of America are either to be drenched with Blood, or Inhabited by Slaves. Sad alternative! But can a virtuous Man hesitate in his choice?

I am, With sincere Regard and Affectionate compliments to Mrs. Fairfax, Dear Sir, etc.

To GEORGE WILLIAM FAIRFAX

Camp at Cambridge about 5 Miles from Boston, July 25, 1775.

Dear Sir: On the other side you will receive a Copy of my last, dated at Philadelphia the 31st of May, and to which I refer.

I shall say very little in this Letter, for two Reasons; first, because I have received no Letter from you since

the one dated in June 1774, and therefore (having wrote often) can have nothing to answer; but principally, because I do not know whether it may ever get to your hands: If it should, the principal, indeed only, design is to cover the seconds of those Bills forwarded in my last.

You will, I presume, before this Letter gets to hand, hear of my appointment to the command of the Continental Army. I arrived at this Camp the 2d Instant.

You must, no doubt, also have heard of the engagement on Bunker's Hill the 17th Ultimo; but as, I am persuaded, you will have a very erroneous account transmitted, of the loss sustained on the side of the Provincials, I do assure you, upon my Word, that our loss, as appears by the Returns made me since I came here, amounts to no more than 139, killed 36 missing and 278 Wounded; nor had we, if I can credit the most solemn assurances of the Officers that were in the Action, above 1,500 Men engaged on that day. The loss on the side of the Ministerial Troops, as I am informed from good Authority, consisted of 1,043 killed and wounded, whereof 92 were Officers.

Inclosed I send you a second Address from the Congress to the Inhabitants of Great Britain; as also a Declaration, setting forth the Causes and necessity of their taking up Arms. My affectionate & respectful compliments to Mrs. Fairfax concludes me, Dear Sir, Your etc.

To GEORGE WILLIAM FAIRFAX

Cambridge, July 26, 1775.

Dear Sir: In my hurry, yesterday, I forgot the principal thing I had in view, when I sat down to write to you, and that was, to inform you of the indispensable necessity you must now be under of appointing another Attorney. The nature of the business I am now engaged in (which alone is full sufficient to engross the time and attention of any one Man) and the distance I am removed from your business, as well as my own, puts it absolutely out of my power to be of any further service to you in Virginia: It is a duty incumbent on me, therefore, to inform you of this circumstance, that you may, without delay, appoint some other Attorney to manage your affairs; as it would be folly in the extreme, in me, to undertake to conduct your business at the distance of 600 Miles, when it is utterly out of my power (but by means of a third person) to order and direct my own.

When I left home, I put Syme's Protested Bill (with some business of my own) into the hands of Colonel Lewis, to negotiate; and since I came to this place, have been informed by him, that, unable to get the Money, he obtained a second draft from Colonel Nelson in discharge of the first, which, I dare say, will be paid. I have therefore wrote to Mr. Lund Washington to get this Bill and remit it to you. I am, with sincere Regard, &c.

To THOMAS EVERARD

Camp at Cambridge, September 17, 1775.

Dear Sir: As I believe it will be three Years next December, since some of my Ohio Lands (under the proclamation of 1754) were patented; and as they are not yet improved agreeable to the express Letter of the Law, it behoves me to have recourse, in time, to the common expedient of saving them

by means of a friendly Petition. My distance from Williamsburg, and my ignorance of the mode of doing this, lays me under the necessity of calling upon some friend for assistance. Will you then, my good Sir, aid me in this Work? I shall acknowledge it as a singular favour if you will, and unless you discourage me, I shall rely on it.

I have already been at as much expense in attempting to seat and improve these Lands, as would nearly, if not quite, have saved them agreeable to our Act of Assembly, had it been laid out thereon. In March 1774, I sent out twenty odd Servants and hirelings, with a great number of Tools, Nails, and necessaries for this purpose; but Hostilities commencing with the Indians, they got no further than the Redstone settlement, where the people dispersed, my goods got seized, lost, and the whole expedition (which I suppose stood me in at least £300) came to nothing. In March last

I again purchased a parcel of Servants, hired Men at considerable Wages, and sent out a second time; but what they have done I neither know nor have heard further than that, after buying Tools and Provisions at most exorbitant prices, and not being able (for Money) to procure a sufficiency of the latter, my Servants, for the most part, had runaway, and the Manager with a few Negroes and hirelings left in an almost starving condition. This, Sir, is my situation, and to avoid a total loss of the Land, (as I conceive there are some peculiar circumstances attending the matter, on account of other claims) or to prevent involving myself in any disagreeable controvercy in defence of my property, having already had a great deal of trouble about it, I am desirous of adopting, in time, the method of petitioning.

The Enemy and we are very near Neighbours. Our advanced Works are not more than five or 600 Yards from theirs, and the main body of the two Armies scarce a Mile. We see every thing that passes, and that is all we can do, as they keep close on the two Peninsulas of Boston and Charlestown, both of which are surrounded with Ships of War, Floating Batteries, &c. and the narrow necks of Land leading into them fortified in such a manner as not to be forced without a very considerable Slaughter, if practicable at all. I am, with Esteem, etc.

To ROBERT CARTER NICHOLAS

Camp at Cambridge, October 5, 1775.

Dear Sir: Your favour of the 8th Ultimo came to my hands on the 2d. Instant by Mr. Byrd&[25] I return you my sincere thanks for your kind congratulation on my appointment to the honourable and important Post I now hold, by the suffrages of this great Continent. My heart will ever bear testimony of my gratitude for the distinguished mark of honour which has been conferred on me by this Appointment; as it also will of my wishes, that so important a trust had been placed in the hands of a Person of greater experience and abilities than mine. I feel the weight of my charge too sensibly not to make this declaration; at the same time, I must add, that I do not want to withdraw any services, within the compass of my power, from the Cause we are Nobly engaged in.

Mr. Byrd shall not want for his pay whilst he is in this camp; although, as I have no Cash of my own here, and charge the public with my expenses only, I shall be a little at a loss to know in what manner to advance it with propriety. Bills of exchange would answer no end here, as we have not the means of negotiating them, but if you would place the Money in the hands of Messieurs Willing and Morris of Philadelphia (either in Specie, Continental, Maryland or

25. Probably Otway Byrd, who was appointed aide-de-camp to General Lee on the 25th.

Pennsylvania Paper) they could easily remit or draw for it: But, at any rate, make yourself easy, as Mr. Byrd shall not want to the amount of his pay.

By an intelligent person out of Boston, the day before Yesterday, we are informed that a small Fleet, consisting of a 64 Gun Ship, a 20 Gun, 2 Sloops of 18 Guns, and 2 Transports with about 600 Men, were to sail on Yesterday from that Harbour: They took on board 2 Mortars, 4 Howitzers and other Artillery; from which we suspect they intend to bombard some Town on the Coast: He also informs us, that General Gage is recalled, that General Howe commands in his place, that the Account of the Action on Bunker's Hill, as transmitted by the former, is returned and corresponds pretty much with ours as to killed and Wounded; and that the last Accounts from England, by a Ship just arrived, leave no room to believe there will be an accommodation soon.

The Enemy in Boston and on the heights of Charlestown (two Peninsulas surrounded in a manner by Ships of War and Floating Batteries) are so strongly fortified, as to render it almost impossible to force their Lines, which are thrown up at the Head of each Neck; without great Slaughter on our side, or cowardice on their, it is absolutely so. We, therefore, can do no more than keep them besieged, which they are, to all intents and purposes, as close as any Troops upon earth can be, that have an opening to the Sea. Our advanced Works and

theirs are within Musket shot. We daily undergo a cannonade, which has done no injury to our Works and very little hurt to our Men. Those insults we are obliged to submit to for want of Powder, being obliged (except now and then giving them a Shot) to reserve what we have for closer Work than Cannon distance.

My Respectful compliments to Mrs. Nicholas and the rest of your Fireside, and to any inquiring friends, conclude me, with grateful thanks for the Prayers and good wishes you have been pleased to offer on my account, Dear Sir, etc.

To LUND WASHINGTON[18]

November 26, 1775.

What follows is part of a Letter wrote to Mr. Lund Washington the 26th. day of November 1775. A Copy is taken to remind me of my engagements and the exact purport of them. These paragraphs follow an earnest request to employ good part of my force in cleaning up Swamps, H. Hole Ditching, Hedging, &c.

“I well know where the difficulty of accomplishing these things will lie. Overseers are already engaged (upon shares) to look after my business. Remote advantages to me, however manifest and beneficial, are nothing to them; and to engage

18. Lund Washington, superintendent of Mount Vernon and its farms from 1775 to 1785, was the son of Townsend and Elizabeth (Lund) Washington. He was born in 1737 and died in 1796.

His great-grandfather and George Washington's great-grandfather father were brothers. Lund married Elizabeth Foot. From the beginning to the end of the Revolution, Lund Washington wrote to the General several times a month, commonly every week, detailing minutely all the events that occurred on the plantations, his purchases, sales, and payments of money, the kinds and quantity of produce, occupations of the laborers, and whatever else could tend to explain the precise condition and progress of the business in his hands. The General's answers to these letters are said to have been destroyed, but a number of Lund Washington's letters were preserved, and copies of these are in the Library of Congress. (See Introductory Note, vol. I.)

standing Wages, when I do not know that anything I have, or can raise, will command Cash, is attended with hazard; for which reason I hardly know what more to say than to discover my wishes. The same reason, although it may in appearance have the same tendency in respect to you, shall not be the same in its operation. For I will engage for the Year coming, and the year following, that if these troubles, and my absence continues, that your Wages shall be standing and certain, at the highest amount that any one Year's Crop has produced to you yet. I do not offer this as any temptation to induce *you* to go on more chearfully in prosecuting *these* schemes of *mine* . I should do injustice to you, were I not to acknowledge that your conduct has ever appeared to me, above every thing sordid; but I offer it in consideration of the great charge you have upon your hands, and my entire dependance upon your fidelity and industry.”

“It is the greatest, indeed it is the only comfortable reflexion I enjoy on this score, to think that my business is in the hands of a person in whose integrity I have not a doubt, and on whose care I can rely. Was it not for this, I should feel very unhappy on Account of the situation of my affairs; but I am persuaded you will do for me as you would for yourself, and more than this I cannot expect.”

“Let the Hospitality of the House, with respect to the poor, be kept up; Let no one go hungry away. If any of these kind of People should be in want of Corn, supply

their necessities, provided it does not encourage them in idleness; and I have no objection to your giving my Money in Charity, to the Amount of forty or fifty Pounds a Year, when you think it well

bestowed stowed. What I mean, by having no objection, is, that it is my desire that it should be done. You are to consider that neither myself or Wife are now in the way to do these good Offices. In all other respects, I recommend it to you, and have no doubts, of your observing the greatest Oeconomy and frugality; as I suppose you know that I do not get a farthing for my services here more than my Expenses; It becomes necessary, therefore, for me to be saving at home."

The above is copied, not only to remind myself of my promises, and requests; but others also, if any mischance happens to G. Washington.

To PHILLIS WHEATLEY[13]

Cambridge, February 28, 1776.

Mrs. Phillis:[14] Your favour of the 26th of October did not reach my hands 'till the middle of December. Time enough, you will say, to have given an answer ere this. Granted. But a variety of important occurrences, continually interposing to distract the mind and withdraw the attention, I hope will apologize for

13. Phillis Wheatley was born in Africa and brought to Boston in a slave ship in the year 1761, then between 7 and 8 years of age. She was purchased by Mr. Wheatley, but she soon developed qualities so interesting and peculiar that she was treated more as an inmate of the family than as a slave. She made extraordinary progress in acquiring the English language, and, without any advantage from schools, learned reading and writing and manifested the greatest eagerness for gleaning knowledge. Her taste inclined to poetry; she read and relished the best authors, and soon began to compose verses. Meantime the attention of the community was turned to so singular a phenomenon, and she was visited arid noticed by people of the first character. Her correspondence was sought, and it extended to persons of distinction even in England, among whom may be named the Countess of Huntingdon, Whitefield, and the Earl of Dartmouth. In 1773, when she was 19 years of age, a volume of her poems was published in London, some of which had been written five or six years. This volume is dedicated to the Countess of Huntingdon, and in the preface are the

names of the Governor of Massachusetts and several other eminent gentlemen bearing testimony to their belief of her having been the genuine writer of the poems. In 1778 she married John Peters, a man of her own color, whom tradition reports to have been little qualified for conferring happiness on so gifted a companion. She died at Boston, Dec. 5, 1784, aged 31 years. Her poem to Washington was forwarded Oct. 26, 1775. A few lines are quoted to show the style:

“Celestial choir! enthron'd in realms of light, Columbia's scenes of glorious toils I write. While freedom's cause her anxious breast alarms, She flashes dreadful in refulgent arms.

* * * * *

Muse! bow propitious while my pen relates How pour her armies through a thousand gates; And when Eolus heaven's fair face deforms, Enwrapp'd in tempest and a night of storms; Astonish'd ocean feels the wild uproar, The refluent surges beat the sounding shore; Or thick as leaves in autumn's golden reign, Such, and so many, moves the warrior's train. In bright array they seek the work of war, Shall I to Washington their praise recite? Enough thou know'st them in the field of fight,

* * * * *

Fix'd are the eyes of nations on the scales, For in their hopes Columbia's arm prevails. Anon Britannia droops the pensive head, While round increase the rising hills of dead. Ah! cruel blindness to Columbia's state! Lament thy thirst of boundless power too late. Proceed, great chief, with virtue on thy side, Thy ev'ry action let the goddess guide. A crown, a mansion, and a throne that shine, With gold unfading, Washington be thine.”

— *Pennsylvania Magazine*, April, 1776.

14. The text from which this letter is taken was copied in 1781, by which date it was known that Phillis had married.

the delay, and plead my excuse for the seeming, but not real neglect.

I thank you most sincerely for your polite notice of me, in the elegant Lines you enclosed; and however undeserving I may be of such encomium and panegyrick, the style and manner exhibit a striking proof of your great poetical Talents. In honour of which, and as a tribute justly due to you, I would have published the Poem, had I not been apprehensive, that, while I only meant to give the World this new instance of your genius, I might have incurred the imputation of Vanity. This and nothing else, determined me not to give it place in the public Prints.

If you should ever come to Cambridge, or near Head Quarters, I shall be happy to see a person so favoured by the Muses, and to whom Nature has been so liberal and beneficent in her dispensations. I am, with great Respect, etc.

To LANDON CARTER

Cambridge, March 25, 1776.

Dear Sir: I have been honoured with your favour of the 20th. Ultimo, and although I might intrench myself

behind the parade of great business, with as much propriety as most Men, yet I shall neither avail myself of it, nor be debarred the pleasure of making this address in testimony of your kind remembrance, and the favourable sentiments you are pleased to express of me.

To give you a detail of my distresses, on acct. of Powder, Arms, and other Articles of almost equal importance in the Military arrangement, would afford little amusement to you; no profit to me. I shall therefore pass them over, and inform you, that having received a small supply of Powder (very inadequate to our wants) I resolved to take possession of Dorchester point, laying East of Boston, looking directly into it, and commanding absolutely the Enemy's Lines on the Neck. To effect this (which I knew would force the Enemy to an engagement or make the Town too hot for them) it was necessary, in the first instance, to possess two heights (those mentioned in General

Burgoyne's Letter to Lord Stanley in his account of the Battle on Bunker's Hill) which had the entire command of this point the Ground being froze upwards of two feet deep and as impenetrable as a Rock, nothing could be attempted with Earth. We were obliged therefore to provide an amazing quantity of Chandeliers, Fascines &c. for the Work, and on the Night of the 4th., after a severe, and heavy Cannonade and bombardment of the Town, the three preceding Nights, to divert the Enemy's attention from our real object, we carried them on under cover of darkness and

took full possession of those heights without the loss of a single Man. Upon their discovering of it next Morning, great preparations were made for attacking us; but not being ready before the afternoon, and the Weather getting very tempestuous much Blood was saved, and a very important blow (to one side or the other) prevented. That this remarkable interposition of Providence is for some wise purpose, I have no doubt; but as the principal design of the manœuvre was to draw the Enemy to an engagement under disadvantages; as a premeditated Plan was laid for this purpose, and seemed to be succeeding to my utmost wish, and as no Men seemed better disposed to make the appeal than ours did upon that occasion, I can scarce forbear lamenting the disappointment. However, the Enemy, thinking (as we have since learnt) that we had got too formidably posted before the second Morning to be much hurt by them, and apprehending great annoyance from our Works, resolved upon a precipitate Retreat, and accordingly embarked in as much hurry, and as much confusion as ever Troops did, the 17th. Instant, not having got their Transports half fitted, and leaving King's property in Boston, to the Amount, as is supposed, of Thirty, or £40,000 in Provisions, Stores, &c. &c. Many pieces of Cannon, some Mortars, and a number of Shot, Shells, &c. &c. are also left; Their Baggage Waggons, Artillery Carts, &c. which they have been eighteen Months and more preparing, were destroyed; thrown into the Docks, and found drifted on every Shore.

In short, Dunbar's destruction of Stores after General Braddock's Defeat, was but a faint resemblance of what we found here.

The Enemy now lie in Nantasket Road (about 5 Miles below Boston) where and in King's Road, they have been ever since their embarkation. How to account for their stay there, I know not; The

Inhabitants of Boston think it is to arrange the lading of the Transports which were thrown in, in such disorder as to render it unsafe to put to Sea 'till a new regulation should take place; others think they mean to pass over the Equinoctial Gales before they put to Sea. But it is a doubt with me whether they may not be waiting an opening (now they have got their whole force collected; no posts to Guard, and as I understand a reinforcement from the West Indies) to retrieve the honour of their Army which seems, in the general Opinion of People here, to have undergone some disgrace in this precipitate Retreat.

They have left all their Works standing on Bunker's Hill &c. and very formidable they are. Boston has shared a much better fate than could possibly be expected; the damage done to the Houses being nothing equal to report. We are now in full possession of the Town and are fortifying the Harbour to prevent a Return, if they should incline to it.

As New York is the most important object they can have in view, on account of its command of

Hudson's River leading into Canada, and separating the Northern and Southern Colonies, it appeared necessary for me to take measures to secure it, and, therefore, I detached Six Regiments instantly to that place; and, as soon as I see the Coast clear, shall follow immediately with the rest of the Army, leaving a few Regiments for the security of this Government and for executing such Works as are laid out for the defence of Boston and the Harbour. I am, &c.

To GEORGE MASON

New York, May 10, 1776.

Dear Sir: The uncertainty of my return, and the justice of surrendering to Mr. Custis, the Bonds which I have taken for the Monies raised from his Estate and lent out upon Interest. As also his Moiety of his deceased Sister's Fortune (consisting of altogether of Bonds &c.) obliges me to have recourse to a friend to see this matter done, and a proper Memorandum of the transaction made. I could think of no person in whose friendship, care and Abilities I could so much confide, to do Mr. Custis and me this favour as yourself; and, therefore, take the liberty of Soliciting your Aid.

In Order that you may be enabled to do this with ease and propriety, I have wrote to the Clerk of the Secretary's Office, for attested Copies of my last settled Accounts with the General Court in behalf of Mr. Custis and the Estate of his deceased Sister; with which and the Bonds, I have desired him and Mr. Washington to wait upon you for the purpose above mentioned.

The Amount of the Balance due, upon my last settled Accounts, to Mr. Custis, I would also have assigned him out of my Moiety of his Sister's Bonds; and, if there is no weight in what I have said, in my Letter to Mr. Lund Washington, concerning the rise of exchange, and which, to avoid repetition, as I am a good deal hurried, I have desired him to shew you, I desire it may meet with no Notice, as I want nothing but what is consistent with the strictest justice, honour, and even generosity; although I have never charged him or his Sister, from the day of my connexion with them to this Hour, one Farthing, for all the trouble I have had in managing their Estates, nor for any expense they have been to me, notwithstanding some hundreds of pounds would not reimburse the Monies I have actually paid in attending the public Meetings in Williamsburg to collect their debts, and transact these several matters appertaining to the respective Estates.

A variety of occurrences, and my

anxiety and hurry to put this place, as speedily as possible, into a posture of defence, will not, at this time, admit me to add more than that I am, etc.

To LUND WASHINGTON

New York, May 10, 1776.

Dear Lund: As I am not able to form any Idea of the time of my return, and as it is very reasonable and just that Mr. Custis should be possessed of his Estate, although it is not in my power (circumstanced as I am at present) to Liquidate the Accounts and make a final settlement with him, I have wrote to the Clerk of the Secretary's Office for Authentic Copies of the last Accounts which I exhibited against him and the Estate of his deceased Sister. With these (for I have directed them to be sent to you) and the bundle of Bonds which you will find among my Papers, I would

have Mr. Custis and you repair to Colonel Mason, and get him, as a common friend to us both, as a Gentleman well acquainted with business and very capable of drawing up a proper

Memorandum of the transaction, to deliver him his own Bonds, which, if my memory fails me not, and no changes have happened, are in one parcel and indorsed; and at the same time deliver him as many Bonds out of the other parcel, endorsed Miss Custis's Bonds, as will pay him his Moiety of her Fortune, and the Balance which will appear due to him from me, at my last settlement with General Court. How the Acct. will then stand between us, I cannot, with precision, say, but believe the Balance will be rather in my favour than his.

In my last settlement of the Estate of Miss Custis (which you will have sent to you, I expect, by Mr. Everard) every Bond, Mortgage, &c. were fully accounted for and will be the best Ground to found the dividend (between Mr. Custis and myself) upon, lest any of the Bonds or Mortgages should be misplaced, or in the Office.

Mr. Mercer's Bonds I have promised to take into my part, and as there are Wheat and other Accounts opened between that Estate and me, I should be glad to have them allotted accordingly. In like manner, I promised to take Mr. Robert Adams's debt upon myself and believe the last Mortgage from him was taken in my own Name. As to the others, I do not care how they are divided, nor was I anxious about these, further than that it served to comply with their desires, founded (I believe) on an Opinion, that I should not press them for the Money.

The Bank stock must, I presume, be equally divided between us. Long before I left Virginia, I directed it to be sold, writing to Messieurs Cary and Co., who had always received the dividends, to negotiate the matter: In consequence they sent me a power of Attorney,' and a great deal of formal stuff for Mrs. Washington and myself to execute before the Governor. This we did, literally as required, and transmitted, since which the Directors of the Bank have prescribed another Mode, and I have had forwarded to me another set of Papers to be executed also before the Governor, which has never been in my power to do, as they arrived but a little while before I set out for the Congress last Spring. Thus the matter stands, as far as I know, with respect to the Money in the Funds.[38]

There is another matter, which I think justice to myself requires a mention of, and that is with respect to the Sterling Balance which it will appear I was owing Mr. Custis upon last settlement. It was then, and ever since has been, my intention to assign him as many Bonds, carrying Interest, as would discharge this Balance, but my attendance upon Congress in the Fall 1774, and Spring 1775, put it out of my power to attend the General Courts at this Sessions; consequently no Order could be taken, or account rendered, of this matter; and now, by the rise of exchange, if I was to turn Current Money Bonds into

38. This bank-stock matter was not finally settled until after the Revolutionary War.

Sterling, I should be a considerable sufferer, when I had not, nor could have, any interest in delaying of it; and that it was so delayed, was owing to the Reasons abovementioned, it being a practice to let out his Money upon Interest, as soon as it came to my Hands.

The many matters, which hang heavy upon my hands at present, do not allow me time to add, but oblige me to request, as I have not wrote fully to Colonel Mason on this subject, that you will shew him, and, if necessary, let him have this Letter. I am etc.

To MRS. FREDERICK PHILIPSE

Head Quarters, at Mr. Valentine's, October 22, 1776.

Madam: The Misfortunes of War, and the unhappy circumstances frequently attendant thereon to Individuals, are more to be lamented than avoided; but it is the duty of every one, to alleviate these as much as possible. Far be it from me then, to add to the distresses of a Lady, who, I am but too sensible, must already have suffered

much uneasiness, if not inconvenience, on account of Colonel Philips's absence.

No special Order has gone forth from me, for removal of the stock of the Inhabitants; but, from the nature of the Case, and in consequence of some Resolutions of the Convention of this State,

the measure has been adopted: However, as I am satisfied it is not meant to deprive Families of their necessary support, I shall not withhold my consent to your retaining such parts of your Stock as may be essential to this purpose; relying on your assurances and promise that no more will be detained; With great Respect, I am, Madam, etc.

To COLONEL JOSEPH REED

Brunswick, November 30, 1776.

Dear Sir: The inclosed was put into my hands by an Express from the White Plains. Having no Idea of its being a Private Letter, much less suspecting the tendency of the correspondence, I opened it, as I had done all other Letters to you, from the same place and Peekskill, upon the business of your Office, as I conceived and found them

to be.

This, as it is the truth, must be my excuse for seeing the contents of a Letter, which neither inclination or intention would have prompted me to.

I thank you for the trouble and fatigue you have undergone in your Journey to Burlington, and sincerely wish that your labours may be crowned with the desired success. My best Respects to Mrs. Reed. I am, Dear Sir, etc.

P.S. The petition referred to I keep.[93]

To GOVERNOR PATRICK HENRY

Morristown in New Jersey, February 24, 1777.

Dear Sir: Mr. Walker has, I doubt not, informed you of the situation in which I have placed him, in Order that he may obtain the best information, and, at the same time, have his real design hid

from the World; thereby avoiding the evils which might otherwise result from such Appointments, if adopted by other States.

It will naturally occur to you, Sir,

93. See note to Washington's letter to Lee, Nov. 21, 1776, *ante*. Lee's letter of November 24, as printed in Reed's *Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed* (vol. 1, p, 257), contains no mention of a petition or any other inclosure.

that there are some Secrets, on the keeping of which so, depends, oftentimes, the salvation of an Army: Secrets which cannot, at least ought not to, be intrusted to paper; nay, which none but the Commander in Chief at the time, should be acquainted with.

If Mr. Walker's Commission,[70] therefore, from the Commonwealth of Virginia, should be known, it would, I am persuaded, be followed by others of the like Nature from other States, and be no better than so many marplots. To avoid the precedent, therefore, and from your Character of Mr. Walker and the high Opinion I myself entertain of his abilities, Honour, and prudence, I have taken him into my Family as an Extra Aid de Camp, and shall be happy, if in this Character, he can answer your expectations.

I sincerely thank you, Sir, for your kind congratulations on the late success of the Continental Arms: (Would to God it may continue), and for your polite mention of me.

Let me earnestly entreat that the Troops raised in Virginia for this Army be forwarded on by Companies, or otherwise, without delay, and as well equiped as possible, for the Field, or we shall be in no condition to open the Campaign. With every sentiment of Respect and Regard, I am, etc.[71]

70. John Walker had been sent to the headquarters of the Continental Army by the Virginia Legislature to keep it informed of events, the idea being that the Commander in Chief could not find the time necessary to write fully. Washington accepted this dangerous precedent with calmness

and full persuasion that no ulterior motive prompted the action, He appointed Walker an aid-de-camp.

71. This letter exists in the *Washington Papers* in the Varick Transcripts only.

To ROBERT MORRIS

Morristown, March 2, 1777.

Dear Sir: Your favour of the 27th. Ultimo came to my hands last Night. The freedom with which you have communicated your sentiments on several matters therein contained, is highly pleasing to me. For be assured, Sir, that nothing would add more to my satisfaction, than an unreserved Correspondence with a Gentleman of whose Abilities and attachment to the Cause we are contending for, I entertain so high an Opinion as I do of yours. Letters, however, being liable to various accidents, makes a communication of thoughts that way, rather unsafe: But, as this will be conveyed by a Gentleman on whom I can depend, I shall not scruple to disclose my Mind, and situation, more freely than I otherwise should do.[8]

The Reasons, my good Sir, which you assign for thinking General Howe cannot move forward with his Army are good, but not conclusive. It is a descriptive evidence of the difficulties he has to contend with, but no proof that they cannot be surmounted. It is a view of one side of the Picture, against which let me enumerate the advantages on the other, and then determine how we would act in his situation.

8. On February 27 Morris had written: “I do not like to be sanguine, and yet it is necessary in a Contest like this we are engaged in to view the best side of the picture frequently. Remember, good Sir, that few men can keep their feelings to themselves, and that it is necessary for example sake, that all leaders should feel and think boldly in order to inspirit those that look up to them, Heaven, (no doubt for the noblest purposes) has blessed you with a Firmness of mind, Steadiness of Countenance, and patience in sufferings, that give you infinite advantages over other men. This being the case, you are not to depend on other People's exertions being equal to your own, one

Mind feeds and thrives on misfortunes by finding resources to get the better of them; another sinks under their weight, thinking it impossible to resist; and as the latter description probably includes the majority of mankind, we must be cautious on alarming them.…

“I hate deception, and cannot wish any thing like it should ever escape you: but I really think if the brightest side of our affairs were sometimes to be painted by your pen, or Sanctifyed by your name, it wou'd draw forth the exertions of some good men sooner than distress does from others. I hope you will excuse me for this stile of writing. which almost amounts to the Confidential; and, was I sure of such being received in the same light in which I write it, I should lament to you the absence of many great, good, and valuable men from Congress; for if great care is not taken, that Body, so respectable from the nature of the appointment, the Importance of its objects and the respectable Characters of its heretofore individual Members, will lose great part of its Weight and Consequence in the Eyes of our own People. We have now to lament the absence from the Public Councils of America, of a Johnson, a Jay, R. R. Livington, Duane, Deane, W. Livington, Franklin, Dickenson, Harrison, Nelson, Hooper, Rutledge, and others not less Conspicuous, without any proper appointments to fill their places, and this at the very time they are most wanted, or would be so, if they had not very wisely supplied the deficiency by delegating to your Excellency Certain powers, that they durst not have entrusted to any other Man. But what is to become of America and its cause, if a constant fluctuation is to take place among its Counsellors, and at every change we find reason to view it with regret?”

Morris's letter is in the *Washington Papers* in the Library of Congress.

General Howe cannot, by the best intelligence I have been able to get, have less than 10,000 Men in the Jerseys and on board of Transports at Amboy: Ours does not exceed 4,000: His are well disciplined, well Officered, and well appointed: Ours raw Militia, badly Officered, and under no Government. His numbers cannot, in any short time, be augmented: Ours must very considerably, and by such Troops as we can have some reliance on, or the Game is at an End. His situation with respect to Horses and Forage is bad, very bad, I believe; but will it be better? No; on the contrary, worse, and therefore, an inducement, if no other, to shift Quarters. General Howe's informants

are too numerous, and too well acquainted with all these circumstances, to suffer him to remain in ignorance of them. With what propriety, then, can he miss so favourable an opportunity of striking a capital stroke against a City, from whence we derive so many advantages, the carrying of which would give such eclat to his Arms and strike such a damp upon ours? Nor is his difficulty of moving so great as is imagined. All the heavy Baggage of the Army; their Salt Provisions and Flour; their Stores, &ca. might go round by Water; whilst their superior numbers would enable them to make a sweep of the Horses for many Miles round about them (not already taken off by us).

In addition to all this, his coming himself to Brunswick, his bringing Troops which cannot be

Quartered, and keeping them on Ship board at Amboy, with some other corroborating circumstances did induce a firm belief in me that he would move, and towards Philadelphia. I candidly own, I expected it would have happened before the expiration of my proclamation; the longer it is delayed, the better for us, and, happy shall I be, if I am deceived.

My Opinions upon these several matters are only known to those who have a right to be informed: As much as possible, I have endeavoured to conceal them from every one else; and that no hasty remove of the public Stores should take place thereby communicating an Alarm; it was, that I early recommended this measure, and have since been urging it, well knowing, that a measure of this kind, set hastily about when the Enemy were advancing, would give unfavourable impressions, and be attended with bad consequences. To deceive Congress, or you, through whose hands my Letters to them are to pass, with false appearances and assurances, would, in my judgment, be criminal and make me responsible for consequences. I endeavour, in all those Letters, to state matters as they appear to my judgment, without adding to, or diminishing aught from the Picture: From others my sentiments are pretty much hid.

I wish, with all my heart, that Congress had gratified General Lee in his request. If not too late, I wish they would do it still. I can see no possible evil that

can result from it; some good I think might. The *request* to see a Gentleman or two, came from the *General* not from the *Commissioners* ; there could have been no harm, therefore, in hearing

what he had to say on any subject, especially as he had declared, that his own personal Interest was deeply concerned. The Resolve to put in close confinement Lieutenant Colonel Campbell and the Hessian Field Officers, in Order to retaliate General Lee's punishment upon them, is, in my Opinion, injurious in every point of view, and must have been entered into without due attention to the consequences. Does Congress know how much the Balance of Prisoners is against us? That the Enemy have, at least, 300 Officers of ours in their possession, and we not fifty of theirs; That Generals Thompson and Waterbury are subject to be recalled at any time? Do they imagine that these Officers will not share the Fate of Campbell &c.? Or possibly, by receiving very different treatment mixed with artful insinuations, have their resentments roused to Acts highly injurious to our Cause. It is much easier to raise a ferment of this kind than to allay it. Do they know that every Artifice is now practising to prepossess the Hessians, with an Idea of our maltreatment of their Country men (in our possession) that we are treating of them as Slaves; Nay, that we mean to Sell them? And will not the close confinement of their first Officers be adduced as strong evidence of this? Congress, therefore, should be cautious how they adopt measures,

which cannot be carried into execution without involving a train of evils that may be fatal in their consequences. In a Word, common prudence dictates the necessity of duly attending to the circumstances of both Armies, before the style of Conquerors is assumed by either; and sorry, I am to add, that this does not appear to be the case with us; Nor is it in my power to make Congress fully sensible of the real situation of our Affairs, and that it is with difficulty (if I may use the expression) that I can, by every means in my power, keep the Life and Soul of this Army together. In a word, when they are at a distance, they think it is but to say Presto begone, and every thing is done. They seem not to have any conception of the difficulty and perplexity attending those who are to execute. Indeed, Sir, your observations on the want of many capital Characters in that Senate, are but too just. However, our cause is good and I hope Providence will support it.

If the Resolve of Congress respecting General Lee, strikes you in the same point of view it has done me, I could wish you would signify as much to that Body, as I really think they are fraught with every evil. We know that the Meeting of a Committee of Congress and Lord Howe, stop'd the Mouths of many disaffected People. I believe the Meeting solicited by General Lee would have

the same effect.[9] But the other matter relative to the confinement of the Officers, is what I am particularly anxious about, as I think it will involve

9. Morris agreed with General Washington on this point. In a letter (March 6) he wrote: “I wish with you, Sir, that they had Complyed with General Lee's request, and when I sent forward those dispatches to Baltimore, I wrote my Sentiments to some of the Members.… Whether they will take up the Matter again or not I dont know … however I expect this matter as well as the Confinement of the Hessian Field officers will at least be referred to the Consideration of a Committee in Consequence of your letters on the Subject and if I can influence a Complyance with your wishes it will give me pleasure for my own Sentiments coincide with yours exactly in these two points. At the same time I must hint to you what I take to he one of the most forcive Arguments, that probably has been used in Congress against this measure. I have not heard that it was used, but it occurred to myself on reading Genl Lee's letters; I mean the effect it may have at the court of France, should they hear, as they undoubtedly wou'd, that Members of Congress visited Genl Lee by permission of the British Commissioners. The meeting with Lord Howe at Staten Island last Summer injured Mr. Deane's Negotiations much, and retarded supplies intended for us.” Morris's letter is in the *Washington Papers* in the Library of Congress.

much more than Congress has an idea of, and that they surely will repent adhering to their unalterable Resolution.

I have wrote you a much longer Letter than I expected to have done when I sat down; and yet, if time would permit, I could enlarge greatly on the subject of it; but, at present, shall beg pardon for taking up so much of your time, and only assure you that I am, etc.[10]

To MAJOR GENERAL THOMAS MIFFLIN

Morristown, March 18, 1777.

Dear Sir: I very sincerely congratulate you upon your late promotion. The purport of this Letter is private. Your design in restraining the Waggon Master, from buying and selling Horses, I highly approve, because I am well assured, that a contrary practice would be introductory of a great deal of fraud, and imposition upon the public. But as it is more than probable that, in the course of service, many Horses will be so worn down as to render it beneficial to the public to have them sold, I should be glad, in that case,

10. In the Varick Transcripts in the Library of Congress.

and no other, to come in as a common purchaser of a parcel of Mares, to the number of even fifty or an hundred.

I have many large Farms and am improving a great deal of Land into Meadow and Pasture, which cannot fail of being profited by a number of Brood Mares; the getting of which, may, perhaps, come easier and readier, in this way, than any other. I again repeat, that it is upon the presumption the good of the service requires such Sales, that I mean to become (as another person) a purchaser: But could wish, nevertheless, that it might be done without any mention of my name; well knowing that the most innocent and upright Actions are often misconstrued, construed, and that it would not be surprising, if it should be said, that I was defrauding the public of these Mares by some collusion or other.

I should not care how low in flesh, or even crippled, they are, provided I could get them home; but I should not like to have them Old, and would prefer Bays, though I shall not object to any Colour. If such Sales are found necessary, you can, I dare say, easily manage the matter so, in my behalf, as to keep my name out of the Question.

My best Respects to Mrs. Mifflin. With truth and sincerity, I am etc.

To ROBERT ALEXANDER[46]

Morristown, March 20, 1777.

Dear Sir: I have waited, as I think you must do me the justice to acknowledge, with a good deal of patience, to see if you were disposed to fulfil your agreement with me, respecting the Land I purchased of you in Maryland. As I hear nothing of your intentions of carrying this matter into execution, and see no greater prospect of its being done now, than when the bargain was first made, I cannot help considering the Affair in a point of view very unfavourable.

I think, any Gentleman, possessed of but a very moderate degree of influence with his Wife, might, in the course of five or six Years (for I think it is at least that time) have prevailed upon her to do an Act of justice, in fulfilling his Bargains and complying with his wishes, if he had been really in earnest in requesting the matter of her; especially, as the inducement which you thought would have a powerful operation on Mrs. Alexander, namely the birth of a Child, has been doubled, and tripled.

It is not a very favourable time I acknowledge, to purchase Lands upon the Water; but as this purchase still corresponds with the views I first set out upon, and I have waited your time for the completion of it, with a

46. Of Fairfax County, Va.

degree of patience which few others in my situation would have done, I hope you will give me no further cause to complain of your delays; for I cannot help repeating, and the World will believe, that the fault is not in Mrs. Alexander, but yourself, if matters are procrastinated any longer. I am etc.

To ANTHONY WALTON WHITE

Morristown, March 20, 1777.

Dear Sir: I have been honoured with your favour of the 15th. Instant. The Reasons for your being overlooked in the appointments of this State, you are, no doubt, as well or better acquainted with, than I am. Some I have heard assigned.

It was my wish to serve you: It is still my wish to do so; but I have been told, that your manner of leaving the Northern Army, was inconsistent with the Character of an Officer. This is not all. I am also told, that you have unfortunately indulged yourself in a loose, unguarded way of talking, which has often brought your own veracity in question, and trouble upon others. This, Sir, I should not have taken

the liberty of mentioning, were I not still disposed to serve you, and find that the latter, has but too much influence upon the Corps I wished to get you into. Motives of friendship, therefore, have induced me to hint this matter to you; and your own good sense will excuse the freedom, when I assure you that my intentions are good.

I have no design of raising any more Horse, 'till I see how those now on Foot can be equipped. But, possibly, it may be in my power to give you some other Appointment; especially, If I could be convinced, that such foibles as must forever stain a Character could be done away. For, believe me, Sir, it is considered as a very exceptionable part of yours, and what most people, with whom I have conversed, are afraid of, as hurtful to the good harmony of a Corps, and dangerous to the peace of Society.

This Letter is altogether private: No person, but yourself, is acquainted with the contents of it; and but for the inclination I have to serve you, you also would be uninformed of my sentiments, and wishes for a reformation. I am etc.

To DOCTOR JAMES CRAIK

Morristown, April 26, 1777.

Dear Doctor: I am going to address you on a subject which may lay some claim to *your* attention, as *I* do to your candor in the determination of the proposition. In the Hospital department for the Middle District (which District includes the States between the North or Hudson's River, and Patowmack) there are at present two places vacant, either of which I can obtain for you: The One is Senior Physician, and Surgeon of the Hospital, with the pay of four Dollars and six Rations pr Day, and Forage for one Horse: The other is Assistant Director General, with the pay of three Dollars and six Rations pr Day; and two Horses, and travelling expenses found, according to Doctor Shippen's Director General's Account, who also adds that he thinks this latter the most honourable and desirable of the two.[37] Had I expected that Congress would have proceeded to the Appointments in this department, at the time they did, I have no doubt, but that it might have been in my power to have got you any other place (except that of Director General) but that is now over; and the matter in which I claim your candor, is, that you will not let my introducing the present proposition to you, have any undue influence.

37. Doctor Craik accepted the position of assistant director general of hospitals, Middle Department.

You know the extent, and profit of your present practice; you know what prospects are before you. You know how far you may be benefitted, or injured, by such an Appointment; and you must know, whether it is advisable, or practicable, for you to quit your Family, and practice, at this time. All these matters I am ignorant of; and request, as a friend, that my proposing this matter to you may have no influence upon your acceptance of it. I have no other end in view than to serve you; consequently, if you are not benefitted by the Appointment, my end is not answered. I have only to add, therefore, a request, that you will let me know the result of your determination by the Return of the Post, or as soon as possible, as the places will be kept vacant 'till I hear from you.

My best Respects to Mrs. Craik and your Family; and believe me to be, etc.[38]

To JOHN LAURENS

City Tavern, August 5, 1777.

Sir: Your favour of Yesterday came to my hands late in the Afternoon.

38. The text is from the Varick Transcripts in the Library of Congress.

For reasons unnecessary to mention, I mean to delay the actual Appointment of my fourth Aide de Camp a while longer; but if you will do me the honour to become a Member of my Family, you will make me very happy, by your Company and assistance in that Line as an Extra Aid, and I shall be glad to receive you in that capacity whenever it is convenient to you.

For the polite expressions contained in your Letter respecting myself, you will be pleased to accept the sincere thanks of Sir, etc.[37]

To JOHN PARKE CUSTIS

Perkiomy in Philadelphia Cty, September 28, 1777.

Dear Sir: Your Letter of the 11th. Instant came to my hands Yesterday. It was always my intention, if agreeable to your Mother, to give you the offer of renting her Dower Estate in King William, during my interest therein, so soon as you came of Age to Act for yourself. On two Accounts I resolved to do this; first, because I was desirous of contracting my own business into as narrow a compass as possible; and secondly, because I thought an Estate, so capable of improvement as that

37. The draft is in the writing of Richard Kidder Meade.

is (in the hands of a person who had a permanent Interest in it and the means withall) ought not to be neglected, 'till such time as an unfortunate event and perhaps a distant one might put you in possession.

The little attention I have been able to pay to any part of my own private business, for three Years last past, is the cause, why this, among other matters, has escaped me; but since you have

mentioned it yourself, I have only to add that it will be quite agreeable to me that you should have the Land and every thing thereon, except breeding Mares, if any there be, and Fillies.

To regulate the Rent by the Rule you have mentioned, I could not consent to, because, if the Plantation had been under good management, it would have fixed it higher than you ought to give; if under bad management, which I believe to be the case, it would fix it too low, and might settle it at nothing. The only true Criterion, is to determine what so much Land, with so much Marsh, in such a part of the Country would Rent for; and next, the Annual Value of so many Slaves, estimating them at their present Worth, at the same time, having respect to the advantages and disadvantages of the Old and the Young, as the one is declining and the other improving.

As you are desirous of having the matter fixed, as speedily as possible; as the distance between us is too great,

The Season far advanced, and Letters too apt to Miscarry to negotiate a business of this kind, in that way, and as I wish for no more, than impartial Gentlemen, unconnected with both of us, shall say I ought to have, I am content to leave the valuation of the whole to General Nelson, Colonel Braxton, and George Webb Esquire. I mention these Gentlemen, because they are persons of Character, and because no time may be lost in the Appointment.

Whatever Rent they shall fix upon the Land, and whatever hire for the Negroes, I contentedly will take: The Stock of every kind (except Mares and Fillies) Plantation Utensils, and Working Tools may also be valued; at which you may take them: By this means, the whole business may be finished at once. That these Gentlemen (if you approve the method of ascertaining the Rent) may know it is with my approbation the request is made to them, you will shew them this Letter, and at the same time apologize, in my Name, for the trouble it will give them, if they are obliging enough to undertake it.

My extreme hurry, especially at this juncture, only allows me time to add my Love to Nelly, and to assure you that I am, with sincere Regard and Affection.

P.S. In the present fluctuating State of things, there is one thing which justice to myself and your Mother, requires me to condition for, and that is, that the Rent stipulated shall have some relative value, to secure an equivalent for the Land and Slaves: Otherwise, as the Lease will be an absolute conveyance of the Estate from your Mother and me; we may, at the end of a few Years, if paper Money continues to depreciate, get nothing for it. I do not mean by this to insinuate that I am unwilling to receive paper Money: On the contrary, I shall with chearfulness receive payment in any thing that has a Currency at the time of payment, but of equal value then to the intrinsic worth at the time of fixing the Rent. In a Word, that I may really and not Nominally get what was intended as a Rent.[91]

To RICHARD HENRY LEE

Matuchen Hill, Phila. Cty, October 17, 1777.

Dear Sir: Your favour of the 5th. Instant, as also that of the 11th. by Baron de Kalb, are both at hand. It is not in my power, at present, to answer your Query respecting the appointment of this Gentleman: But, Sir, if there is any truth in a report which has been handed to me; Vizt., that Congress hath

91. The text is from the Varick Transcripts in the Library of Congress.

appointed, or, as others say, are about to appoint, Brigadier Conway a Major General in this Army, it will be as unfortunate a measure as ever was adopted. I may add (and I think with truth) that it will give a fatal blow to the existence of the Army. Upon so interesting a subject, I must speak plain: The duty I owe my Country; the Ardent desire I have to promote its true Interests, and justice to Individuals requires this of me. General Conway's merit, then, as an Officer, and his importance in this Army, exists more in his own imagination, than in reality: For it is a maxim with him, to leave no service of his own untold, nor to want any thing which is to be obtained by importunity: But, as I do not mean to detract from him any merit he possesses, and only wish to have the matter taken up upon its true Ground, after allowing him every thing that his warmest Friends will contend

for, I would ask, why the Youngest Brigadier in the service (for I believe he is so) should be put over the heads of all the Eldest? and thereby take Rank, and Command Gentlemen, who but Yesterday, were his Seniors; Gentlemen, who, I will be bold to say (in behalf of some of them at least) of sound judgment and unquestionable Bravery? If there was a degree of conspicuous merit in General Conway, unpossessed by any of his Seniors, the confusion which might be occasioned by it would stand warranted upon the principles of sound policy; for I do readily agree that this is no time for trifling; But, at the same time,

I cannot subscribe to the fact, this truth I am very well assured of (though I have not directly, nor indirectly, exchanged a Word with any one of the Brigadiers on the subject; nor am I certain that any one of them has heard of the Appointment) that they will not serve under him. I leave you to guess, therefore, at the situation this Army would be in at so important a Crisis, if this event should take place. These Gentlemen have feelings as Officers, and though they do not dispute the Authority of Congress to make Appointments, they will judge of the propriety of acting under them. In a Word, the service is so difficult, and every necessary so expensive, that almost all our Officers are tired out: Do not, therefore, afford them good pretexts for retiring: No day passes over my head without application for leave to resign; within the last six days, I am certain, twenty Commissions, *at least* , have been tendered to me. I must, therefore, conjure you, to conjure Congress to consider this matter well, and not by a real Act of injustice, compel some good Officers to leave the service, and thereby incur a train of evils unforeseen and irremidiable.

To Sum up the whole, I have been a Slave to the service: I have undergone more than most Men are aware of, to harmonize so many discordant parts; but it will be impossible for me to be of any further service, if such insuperable difficulties are thrown in my way.

You may believe me, my good Sir, that

I have no Earthly views, but the public good, in what I have said. I have no prejudice against General Conway, nor desire to serve any other Brigadier, further than I think the cause will be

benefitted by it; to bring which to a speedy and happy conclusion, is the most fervent wish of my Soul.[71]

With respect to the wants of the Militia in the Articles of Clothing, you must be well convinced, that it is not in my power to supply them, in the smallest degree, when near one half of our own Men are rendered unfit for service for want of these Things. I can add no more at present, than that I am, etc.[72]

To BRIGADIER GENERAL THOMAS NELSON

Camp at White Marsh, 12 Miles from Philadelphia,

November 8, 1777.

Dear Sir: Your favour of the 26th. Ultimo, came to my hands Yesterday, and merits my warmest acknowledgements. The Idea you entertained of our force was unhappily but too well founded, and I now wish I had given more into your generous proposal; but the distance, and

71. Lee replied (October 20): "[I] was a good deal surprised to find you had been told Congress had appointed Gen. Conway a Major General. No such appointment has been made, nor do I believe it will, whilst it is likely to produce the evil consequences you suggest. It is very true, that both within and without doors, there have been Advocates for the measure, and it has been affirmed, that it would very agreeable to the army, whose favorite Mr. Conway was asserted to be. My judgment on this business was not formed until I received your letter. I am very sure Congress would not take any step that might injure the Army, or even have a tendency that way; and I verily believe they wish to lessen your difficulties by every means in their power, from an entire conviction that the purest motives of public good direct your actions.

"The business of a Board of War is so extensive, so important, and demanding such constant attention, that Congress see clearly the necessity of constituting a new Board, out of Congress, whose time shall be entirely devoted to that essential department. It is by some warmly proposed,

that this board shall be filled by the three following gentlemen, Colonel Read, Colonel Pickering, the present Adjutant General. and Colonel Harrison, your Secretary. And that Gen. Conway be appointed A. G. in the room of Colo. Pickering. It is my wish, and I am sure it is so of many others, to know your full and candid sentiments on the subject. For my own part, I cannot be satisfied with giving any opinion on the point, until I am favored with your sentiments, which I shall be much obliged to you for Sir as soon as your time will permit.

"It has been affirmed, that Gen. Conway would quit the service if he were not made a M. General. But I have been told in confidence, that he would leave it at the end of this Campaign if he *was* appointed, unless his word of honor were taken to continue for any fixed time. And it is a question with me, whether the Advocates for Gen. Conway will not miss their aim, if he should be appointed A. General, unless he has the rank of Maj. General also. My reason for thinking so is, that I have been informed Gen. Conway desires to retire to his family, provided he can carry from this Country home with him, a rank that will raise him in France. It is very certain that the public good demands a speedy erecting and the judicious filling of the new Board of War, and I sincerely wish it may be done in the most proper manner. I do not imagine Congress would appoint Colo. Harrison, without first knowing whether you could spare him, nor do I think that so important an office, as that of A. G. should be touched without the maturest consideration."

This letter is in the *Washington Papers* in the Library of Congress.

Lee's decided opinions were completely at variance with what he should have known was the temper of Congress. On a report of the Board of War, one member of which was Francis Lightfoot Lee, Congress elected (December 13) Thomas Conway as inspector general with the rank of major general. No record of the vote on this is given in the *Journals of the Continental Congress*, but the word "unanimously" was first written and afterwards crossed out.

72. The text is from the Varick Transcripts, but no draft of this letter is found in the *Washington Papers* in the Library of Congress.

uncertainty of keeping Militia in service any length of time were obstacles under the then appearance of things which seemed too great to be counterbalanced by the advantages of your coming which opened then to our view; but the glorious turn which our affairs to the Northward have since taken, makes a new plan, and Winter Campaign, if we can get our ragged and half naked Soldiers clothed, indispensably necessary, as I think General Howe may be forced out of Philadelphia, or greatly distressed in his Quarters there, if we could draw a large body of Troops round the City.

The mode by which Men have lately been recruited, is hurtful in the extreme; and, unless a more effectual and less pernicious one can be adopted, I do not know where the mischief will end; what may be the consequence. As the Assembly of Virginia is now sitting, I hope some vigorous and spirited exertions will be used to compleat the Regiments from that State; and shall I add my wishes, that it may contribute their Aid towards Clothing of them, being well persuaded, unless the respective States give their Assistance, we shall be in a very unhappy situation. If our Regiments were once compleated and tolerably well Armed and Clothed, the calls upon Militia afterwards would be rare; and 'till these measures are accomplished, our expenses will be enormous.

It is in vain to look back to our

disappointment on the 4th. Instant at Germantown. We must endeavour to deserve better of Providence, and, I am persuaded, she will smile upon us. The rebuff which the Enemy met with at Red Bank (in which Count Donop and about four or 500 Hessians were killed and wounded) and the loss of the Augusta of 64 and Merlin of 18 Guns, have, I dare say, been fully related to you, which renders it unnecessary for me to dwell on it. They are using every effort for the reduction of Fort Mifflin and we, under our present circumstances, to save it. The event is left to Heaven.

With compliments to Mrs. Nelson, Mr. Secretary,[40] &c. I am etc.[41]

To GOVERNOR PATRICK HENRY

White Marsh, 12 Miles from Phila., November 13, 1777.

Dear Sir: I shall beg leave to refer you to a Letter of mine which accompanies this, and of equal date, for a general account of our situation and wants. The design of this, is only to inform you, (and with great truth I can do it, strange as it may seem) that the Army which I have had under my

40. Thomas Nelson, son of Thomas, the emigrant. He had retired after having served as secretary of tile Virginia Council for 30 years.

41. From the Varick Transcripts in tile Library of Congress.

immediate command, has not, at any one time since General Howe's Landing at the Head of Elk, been equal in point of numbers to his. In ascertaining this, I do not confine myself to Continental Troops, but comprehend Militia.

The disaffected and Lukewarm in this State, of which unhappily it too much abounds, taking advantage of the distraction in the Government, prevented those vigorous exertions which an invaded State ought to have yielded; and the short term for which their Militia was drawn out, expiring before others could be got in, and before the Maryland Militia (which, by the bye, were few in number, and did not join 'till after the battle of Brandy Wine) came up, our numbers kept nearly at a stand, and I was left to fight two Battles, in Order, if possible, to save Philadelphia, with less numbers than composed the Army of my Antagonist, whilst the World has given us at least double. This, though mortifying in some points of view, I have been obliged to encourage; because, next to being strong, it is best to be thought so by the Enemy, and to this cause principally, I think, is to be attributed the slow movements of General Howe.

How different the case in the Northern department! There the States of New York and New England, resolving to crush Mr. Burgoyne, continued pouring in their Troops, 'till the surrender of that Army; at which time, not less than 14,000 Militia were actually (as I have been informed) in

General Gates's Camp,[71] and these composed, for the most part, of the best Yeomanry in the Country well armed, and, in many instances, supplied with provisions of their own carrying. Had the same spirit pervaded the People of this and the Neighbouring States, we might before this, have had General Howe nearly in the situation of General Burgoyne, with this difference, that the former would never have been out of reach of his Ships, whilst the latter encreased his danger every step he took, having but one retreat in case of a disaster, and that blocked up by a respectable force.

My own difficulties, in the course of this Campaign, have been not a little encreased, by the extra aid of Continental Troops which the gloomy prospect of our affairs in the North, immediately after the reduction of Ticonderoga, induced me to spare from this Army: But it is to be hoped, that all will yet end well. If the cause is advanced, indifferent is it to me, where, or in what Quarter it happens. The Winter Season, with the Aid of our Neighbours, may, possibly, bring some important event to pass. I am etc.[72]

71. Gates's return of Oct. 17, 1777, shows a force of 7,716 Continentals and 3,382 militia, a total of 11,098. Burgoyne's return, the same date, shows 2,901 British and 1,792 Hessians, a total of 4,693. Burgoyne in his *State of the Expedition* gives a Gates return of 18,624 and Winsor's *Narrative and Critical History,* vol. 6, p. 311, makes the total loss of the British in the entire campaign, counting Bennington and elsewhere, 9,583. Both the Gates and Burgoyne returns are in the *Gates Papers* in the New York Historical Society.

72. From the Varick Transcripts in the Library of Congress.

To RICHARD HENRY LEE

White Marsh, November 18, 1777.

Dear Sir: Your favour of the 7th. Instant should not have remained so long unanswered, but for the uncertainty of Colonel Pickering's acceptance of his new Appointment. He has now determined to do this, which leads me to say, that I am really at a loss to recommend a proper person as a

Successor to the Office of Adjutant General. The Gentleman I named to you some time ago will not, you say, answer. I knew but little of him myself, but understood he was well acquainted with the duty, having served much to the satisfaction of General Montgomery (a good judge) in Canada, during his long and severe Campaign in 1775.[9]

That I might know the sense of the General Officers upon this point of so much importance, that is, whether any of them were acquainted with a person qualified for the discharge of the important duties of this Office I asked them collectively; but they either were not acquainted with a proper person, or did not incline to recommend any one. Colonel Lee,[10] who was formerly recommended by Congress to fill this Office; Colonel Wilkinson,[11] Major Scull,[12] and Colonel Innes[13] were separately spoken of. The first is an Active, spirited Man, a good disciplinarian, and being, *as he was* , disappointed before, by

9. Possibly Lieut. Col. Edward Fleming, of the Third New York Regiment, and deputy adjutant general, New York Department.

10. Col. William Raymond Lee, of an Additional Continental regiment. He resigned in January, 1778.

11. Col. James Wilkinson, aide-de-camp to Gates.

12. Maj. Peter Scull, of Patton's Additional Continental regiment. He resigned in January, 1778; secretary of the Continental Board of War in January, 1779; lost at sea in November, 1779.

13. Lieut. Col. James Innes, of the Fifteenth Virginia Regiment. He retired in September, 1778; Judge Advocate of the Continental Army, July–September, 1782.

Colonel Pickering's unexpected acceptance of the Office, may possibly look for it now. He writes a good hand, but how correctly, or with what ease, I cannot undertake to say, having had no opportunity of judging. The next Gentleman, Wilkinson, I can say less of, because he has served for

the most part in the Northern department. General Gates, I understand, speaks highly of him. He is, I believe, a good Gramatical Scholar, but how diligent I know not. The next, Scull, is a Young Man, but an Old Officer and very highly spoken of, for his knowledge of service, strictness of discipline, diligence and correctness. He early was Brigade Major to General Thompson. The last, Innes, I know nothing more of, than his being a Man of spirit, good Sense and education, and recommended by General Woodford. Thus, Sir, have I, without the least view to serve an Individual, given you the Name of every one that has been mentioned to me, and the Characters of them respectively, as far as they have been delineated.

It is a matter of no small moment to the well being of an Army, that the several departments of it should be filled by Men of Ability, integrity and application; and much therefore is it to be wished that you may be fortunate in your choice of Adjutant and Quarter Master Generals to this Army. Wadsworth[14] has the reputation of being clever at business. In the Commissary's

14. Jeremiah Wadsworth, formerly Deputy Commissary General of Purchases. He became Commissary General of Purchases of the Continental Army in April, 1778; resigned in January, 1780.

department he was found active and understanding; but how far he may be qualified for the Chief management of so extensive a department as that of Quarter Master General, I know not. Experience has already evinced, in the Commissarial Line, a change which has embarrassed the movements of this Army exceedingly. I will not charge it to the measures nor the Men, but the time it happened. This, however, with truth, I can say, that we seldom have more than a day or two's Provisions before hand; and often as much behind, both of Meat and Bread. It can be no difficult matter, therefore, under these circumstances, for you, or any other Gentleman, to conceive how much the movements of an Army are clogged and retarded. And now, whilst I am upon this subject, let me add, that I am well convinced that the Salt Provisions necessary for next Year, and which (for want of Salt) can only be had to the Eastward, will not be provided, as the Season is now far advanced, and I have heard of no proper measures being taken to lay them in.

Have you any late advices from Europe? Is there any good grounds for the report of Russians coming out?[15] And is there any expectation of a War between France and Great Britain? If these are Questions which can be answered with properity, I shall be glad of a solution of them, and am etc.[16]

15. Great Britain sounded out the Empress of Russia in 1775 as to obtaining Russian mercenaries as were, later, obtained from Hesse-Cassel and other places in Germany; but though Catherine seemed willing at first, she later changed her attitude and all hope of obtaining Russian troops vanished by 1776. The rumor of their coming, however, persisted in America for some time.

16. From the Varick Transcripts in the Library of Congress.

To REVEREND NATHANIEL WHITAKER[41]

Valley Forge, December 20, 1777.

Revd. Sir: Your favour of the 24th. of September inclosing a discourse against Toryism, came safe to my hands. For the honour of the dedication, I return you my sincere thanks, and wish most devoutly that your labour may be crowned with the success it deserves.[42]

You also have my gratefl. Thanks for your affectionate wishes. With great Esteem and Respect, I am etc.

To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Head Quarters, December 31, 1777.

My Dear Marquis: Your favour of Yesterday[17] conveyed to me fresh proof of that friendship and attachment which I have happily experienced since the first of our acquaintance, and for which I

entertain sentiments of the purest affection. It will ever constitute part of my happiness to know that I stand well in your opinion, because I am

41. A Presbyterian minister of Salem, Mass.

42. Whitaker had delivered a discourse on Judges 5:23, and afterwards published it (34 pp. 12°, Newbury Port, 1777) under the title, “An Antidote of Toryism,” and dedicated it to Washington.

17. This letter, dated Dec. 30, 1777, is not now found in the *Washington Papers*. Sparks, however, prints it in vol. 5, P- 488, of his *Writings of Washington*. From this the following is an extract: “When I was in Europe, I thought that here almost every man was a lover of liberty, and would rather die free than live a slave. You can conceive my astonishment when I saw, that Toryism was as apparently professed as Whigism itself. There are open dissensions in Congress; parties who hate one another as much as the common enemy; men who, without knowing any thing about war, undertake to judge you, and to make ridiculous comparisons. They are infatuated with Gates, without thinking of the difference of circumstances, and believe that attacking is the only thing necessary to conquer. These ideas are entertained by some jealous men, and perhaps secret friends of the British government, who want to push you, in a moment of ill humor, to some rash enterprise upon the lines, or against a much stronger army.”

satisfied that you can have no views to answer by throwing out false colours, and that you possess a Mind too exalted to condescend to dirty Arts and low intrigues to acquire a reputation. Happy, thrice happy, would it have been for this Army and the cause we are embarked in, if the same generous spirit had pervaded all the Actors in it. But one Gentleman, whose Name you have mentioned,[18] had, I am confident, far different views. His ambition and great desire of being puffed off as one of the first Officers of the Age, could only be equalled by the means which he used to obtain them; but finding that I was determined not to go beyond the line of my duty to indulge him in the first, nor, to exceed the strictest rules of propriety, to gratify him in the second, he became my inveterate Enemy; and has, I am persuaded, practised every Art to do me an injury, even at the expense of reprobating a measure, which did not succeed, that he himself advised to. How far he

may have accomplished his ends, I know not, and, but for considerations of a public Nature, I care not. For it is well known, that neither ambitious, nor lucrative motives led me to accept my present Appointments; in the discharge of which, I have endeavoured to observe one steady and uniform conduct, which I shall invariably pursue, while I have the honour to command, regardless of the Tongue of slander or the powers of detraction.

The fatal tendency of disunion is so obvious, that I have, in earnest terms, exhorted such Officers as have

18. Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates.

expressed their dissatisfaction at General Conway's promotion, to be cool and dispassionate in their decision upon the matter; and I have hopes that they will not suffer any hasty determination to injure the service. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that Officers' feelings upon these occasions are not to be restrained, although you may controul their Actions.

The other observations contained in your Letter, have too much truth in them, and it is much to be lamented that things are not now as they formerly were; but we must not, in so great a contest, expect to meet with nothing but Sun shine. I have no doubt but that every thing happens so for the best; that we shall triumph over all our misfortunes, and shall, in the end, be ultimately happy; when, My Dear Marquis, if you will give me your Company in Virginia, we will laugh at our past difficulties and the folly of others; where I will endeavour, by every civility in my power, to shew you how much and how sincerely, I am etc.[19]

***To CAPTAIN HENRY LEE**

Valley Forge, January 20,[52] 1778.

My dear Lee: Altho I have given you my

19. The text is from the Varick Transcripts in the Library of Congress.

52. Sparks prints this letter under date of January 21.

thanks in the general orders of this day, for the late instance of your gallant behaviour I cannot resist the Inclination I feel to repeat them again in this manner. I needed no fresh proof of your merit, to bear you in remembrance, I waited only for the proper time and season to shew it: these I hope are not far off. I shall also think of and will reward the merit of Lindsay when an opening presents as far as I can consistently, and shall not forget the corporal whom you have recommended to my Notice. Offer my sincere thanks to the whole of your gallant party and assure them that no one felt pleasure more sensibly, or rejoiced more sincerely for yours and their escape than Your Affectionate.

To MAJOR GENERAL CHARLES LEE

Valley Forge, January 27, 1778.

Dear Sir: I last Night received your favor of the 30th. Ultimo. It gave me great pleasure to hear that you were released from your confined situation and permitted so many indulgences. You may rest assured, that I feel myself very much interested in your welfare, and that every exertion has been used on my part to effect your exchange. This I have not been able to accomplish. However, from the Letters

which have lately passed between Sir William Howe and myself upon the subject of Prisoners, I am authorized to expect that you will return in a few days to your Friends on parole, as Major General Prescot will be sent in on the same terms for that purpose. Indeed, 'till I saw Major Williams last Night, I supposed that he had arrived either at New York or Rhode Island, having directed his releasement as soon as I was at liberty to do it. I will take the earliest opportunity to recommend to your Friends, Mr. Nourse and Mr. White, the care of your Farm.[12]

Your request to Major Morris[13] in favour of Mrs. Battier, reached me only last Night. I wish I had been informed of it sooner. I have inclosed a passport for her to Major Morris, and I doubt not but

he will do every thing in his power to accommodate a Lady from whose Husband you have received so many civilities. I am, etc.[14]

***To HENRY LAURENS**

Valley Forge, January 31, 1778.

Sir: I this morning received your favor of

12. Lee's farm was at or near Winchester, Va.

13. Maj. Jacob Morris, aide to Lee.

14. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

the 27th. Ulto.

I cannot sufficiently express the obligation I feel to you for your friendship and politeness upon an occasion in which I am so deeply interested. I was not unapprized that a malignant faction had been for sometime forming to my prejudice; which, conscious as I am of having ever done all in my power to answer the important purposes of the trust reposed in me, could not but give me some pain on a personal account; but my chief concern arises from an apprehension of the dangerous consequences, which intestine dissentions may produce to the common cause.

As I have no other view than to promote the public good, and am unambitious of honours not founded in the approbation of my Country, I would not desire in the least degree to suppress a free spirit of enquiry into any part of my conduct that even faction itself may deem reprehensible.

The anonymous paper handed you[51] exhibits many serious charges, and it is my wish that it should be submitted to Congress; this I am the more inclined to, as the suppression, or concealment, may

possibly involve you in embarrassments hereafter; since it is uncertain how many, or who may be privy to the contents.

My Enemies take an ungenerous advantage of me; they know the delicacy of my situation, and that motives of policy deprive me of the defence I might otherwise

51. This anonymous paper was dated Jan. 17, 1778, and headed “The Thoughts of a Freeman.” It was, Laurens wrote Washington (January 27), “picked up on the Stairs” of Congress Hall and handed to Laurens, who, after glancing at it, “put them into my pocket and intimated to the House that it was an anonymous production containing stuff which I must be content with, as perquisites of Office, that the hearth was the proper depository for such Records.” Laurens showed the paper to no one before finally sending it to Washington, who, from his letter above, appears to have returned it to Laurens to be communicated to Congress, but there is no record as to any further action. Laurens's letter is in the President's “Letter Book” in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*.

A copy of “The Thoughts,” in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison, is in the *Washington Papers*. It is 3 folio pages in length and consists of 45 propositions or statements, all of which either reflect directly on Washington's management of the army or insinuate that such management deserved investigation by Congress. Sparks prints “The Thoughts,” taking liberties as to form, etc., in the appendix to his *Writings of Washington* (vol. 5, P. 497).

make against their insiduous attacks. They know I cannot combat their insinuations, however injurious, without disclosing secrets, it is of the utmost moment to conceal. But why should I expect to be exempt from censure; the unfailing lot of an elevated station? Merits and talents, with which I can have no pretensions of rivalship, have ever been subject to it. My Heart tells me it has been my unremitted aim to do the best circumstances would permit; yet, I may have been very often mistaken in my judgment of the means, and may, in many instances deserve the imputation of error.

I cannot forbear repeating that I have a grateful sense of the favourable disposition you have manifested to me in this affair, and beg you will believe me to be, with sentiments of real Esteem, etc.

[M.L.]

***To REVEREND WILLIAM GORDON**

Valley-forge, February 15, 1778.

Dear Sir: Since my last to you abt. the end of Jany. I have been favourd with your Letter of the 12th. of that Month. which did not reach my hands 'till within

these few days. The question there put was, in some degree, solved in my last. But to be more explicit, I can assure you that no person ever heard me drop an expression that had a tendency to resignation. the same principles that led me to imbark in the opposition to the Arbitrary Claims of Great Britn. operate with additional force at this day; nor is it my desire to withdraw my Services while they are considered of importance in the present contest; but to report a design of this kind, is among the Arts wch those who are endeavouring to effect a change, are practising, to bring it to pass. I have said, and I still do say, that there is not an Officer in the Service of the United States that would return to the sweets of domestic life with more heart felt joy than I should; but I would have this declaration, accompanied by these Sentiments, that while the public are satisfied with my endeavours I mean not to shrink in the cause; but, the moment her voice, not that of faction, calls upon me to resign, I shall do it with as much pleasure as ever the weary traveller retired to rest. This my dear Doctor, you are at liberty to assert; but in doing it, I would have nothing formal. All things will come right again and soon recover their proper tone as the design is not only seen thro but reprobated.

With sincere esteem and regard I am etc.

P.S. Mrs. Washington who is now with me joins in best respects to Mrs. Gordon.

***To THE COMMITTEE OF CONGRESS**

Valley-forge, March 1, 1778.

Gentlemen: As I do not recollect your determination respecting the resolve of Congress, in the case of Woodford &ca. Mr. Harrison[1] waits upon you for that purpose; and to explain the matter so far as it relates to Weedon and Scott.[2]

By him you will receive the proposals for collecting Cavalry. I also send, for your perusal, a Letter &ca. just received from Genl. Howe; which shews in a very conspicuous point of view, the advantage we give him, by suffering one power to counteract another; and taking things up through improper Channels, and upon hasty information, which was the case of that given by Mr. Boudinot.

Will Putnam, or Heath do for the Command at Rhode Island? If not, it is hard to furnish Tools that cannot be used, and yet expect work from them.[3]

The appointment of Genl Officers cannot be delayed without injuring the Service. Our arrangements will be the more imperfect, and we less fit for the field, the longer they are delayed; however, as these are matters that cannot have escaped[4] the Comee. I shall only add, that with sincere esteem and regard, I am, etc.

1. Lieut. Col. Robert Hanson Harrison.

2. The rank dispute between these generals.

3. The draft, in Washington's writing, was first written: “tis hard to give me Tools I cannot work with, and expect nevertheless that business must be done.”

4. First written, “that must strike.”

P.S. Is it not the present expectation of the Comee. that Genl. Green will come into the Qr. Mrs. department? [As Genl. Portail is pressing to know the Comee's decision relative to the Engineer recomd. by him, and a real want of these People appear I should also be glad to know what to expect and say to him on this head.][5]

***To BRYAN FAIRFAX**

Valley forge, March 1, 1778.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 8th. of Decr. came safe to my hands after a considerable delay in its passage.[6] The sentiments you have expressed of me in this Letter are highly flattering, meriting my warmest acknowledgements, as I have too good an Opinion of your sincerity and candour to believe that you are capable of unmeaning professions and speaking a language foreign from your Heart. The friendship I ever professed, and felt for you, met with no diminution from the difference in our political Sentiments. I know the rectitude of my own intentions, and believing in the sincerity of yours, lamented, though I did not condemn, your renunciation of the creed I had adopted. Nor do I think any person, or power, ought to do it, whilst your conduct is not opposed to the general Interest of the people and the measures they are pursuing; the latter, that is our actions, depending upon ourselves, may be controuled, while the powers of thinking originating in higher causes, cannot always be moulded to our wishes.

The determinations of Providence are all ways wise; often inscrutable, and though its decrees appear

5. The original is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 33. The part in brackets is in the letter sent and not in the draft.

6. Bryan Fairfax had returned to Virginia after attempting to go to England to live because his political views were so far out of accord with his Virginia friends and neighbors. He had repaired to Continental Army headquarters and obtained from Washington a passport to go to New York.

Arrived there, he found that the British required him to take certain oaths before allowing him to go to England. Fairfax's conscience would not permit him to subscribe to such restrictions, and he returned to Virginia, where he remained throughout the war, unmolested and respected. After his return home he wrote to Washington (Dec. 8, 1777), to which the above letter is a reply: “There are Times when Favours conferred make a greater Impression than at others, for, tho' I have received many, and hope I have not been unmindful of them, yet that, at a Time your Popularity was at the highest and mine at the lowest, and when it is so common for Men's Resentments to run high agst those that differ from them in Opinion You should act with your wonted Kindness towards me, hath affected me more than any Favour I have received; and could not be believed by some in N: York, it being above the Run of common Minds.” Fairfax's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

to bear hard upon us at times is nevertheless meant for gracious purposes; in this light I cannot help viewing your late disappointment; for if you had been permitted to have gone to england, unrestrained even by the rigid oaths which are administred on those occns. your feelings as a husband, Parent, &ca. must have been considerably wounded in the prospect of a long, perhaps lasting seperation from your nearest relatives. What then must they have been if the obligation of an oath had left you without a Will? Your hope of being instrumental in restoring Peace would prove as unsubstantial as mist before the Noon days Sun and would as soon dispel: for believe me Sir great Britain understood herself perfectly well in this dispute but did not comprehend America. She meant as Lord Campden in his late speech in Parlt. clearly, and explicitly declared, to drive America into rebellion[7] that her own purposes might be more fully answered by it but take this along with it, that this Plan originating in a firm belief, founded on misinformation, that no effectual opposition would or could be made, they little dreamt of what has happened and are disappd. in their views; does not every act of administration from the Tea Act to the present Session of Parliament declare this in plain and self evidt. Characters? Had the Comrs. any powers to treat with America? If they meant Peace, would Lord Howe have been detaind in England 5 Months after passing the Act? Would the powers of these

7. Charles Pratt, Baron Camden, in the debate on the reply to the King's speech at the opening of Parliament (Nov. 18, 1777) referring to some of the preliminary steps in the contest, had said: “The people of America showed great dissatisfaction, but that did not fully answer the intentions of government. It was not dissatisfaction, but rebellion, that was sought; dissatisfaction might furnish a pretence for adding to the intolerable oppressions, that those people had for a series of years groaned under; but nothing short of something in the shape of rebellion, or nearly approaching to it, could create a decent apology for slaughter, conquest, and unconditional submission.” In regard to the declaration that Massachusetts was in open rebellion, Camden had charged: “But all this did not do; the New Englanders were resolved not to verify the address; they were determined not to be rebels; but only to prepare, should the worst happen, to be in a situation to defend themselves. Something more was still wanting, and that was obtained. Our troops were ordered to act effectively; and self-defence was styled actual and declared rebellion.” (See Almon's *Parliamentary Register*, vol. x, pp. 30, 31.)

Comrs. have been confined to mere acts of grace, upon condition of absolute submission? No, surely, No! they meant to drive us into what they termed rebellion, that they might be furnished with a pretext to disarm and then strip us of the rights and privileges of Englishmen and Citizens. If they were actuated by principles of justice, why did they refuse indignantly to accede to the terms which were humbly supplicated before hostilities commenced and this Country deluged in Blood; and now make their principal Officers and even the Comrs. themselves say, that these terms are just and reasonable; Nay that more will be granted than we have yet asked, if we will relinquish our Claim to Independency. What Name does such conduct as this deserve? and what punishment is there in store for the Men who have distressed Millions, involved thousands in ruin, and plunged numberless families in inextricable woe? Could that wch. is just and reasonable now, have been unjust four Years ago? If not upon what principles, I say does Administration act? they must either be wantonly wicked and cruel, or (which is only anr. mode of describing the same thing) under false colours are now endeavouring to deceive the great body of the people, by industriously propagating a belief that G. B. is willing to offer any, and that we will accept of no terms; thereby hoping to

poison and disaffect the Minds of those who wish for peace, and create feuds and dissentions among ourselves. In a word, having

less dependance now, in their Arms than their Arts, they are practising such low and dirty tricks, that Men of Sentiment and honr. must blush at their Villainy, among other manœuvres, in this way they are counterfeiting Letters, and publishing them, as intercepted ones of mine to prove that I am an enemy to the present measures, and have been led into them step by step still hoping that Congress would recede from their present claims. I am, etc.

***To BRIGADIER GENERAL SAMUEL HOLDEN PARSONS**

Valley-forge, March 8, 1778.

Dear Sir: Below you will receive a copy of my last dated the 5th. to which I will add a thought which has occurred since the writing of it; and which if the Scheme is practicable at all may add not a little to the success namely to let the Officers and Soldiers imployed in the enterprize be dressed in red and much in the taste of the British Soldiery. Webb's Regiment will afford these dresses and it might not be amiss to know certainly the number of some Regiment that is quartered in the City; under some circumstances this knowledge may

avail them, especially if the number on their own Buttons should corrispond thereto. I am, etc.

P.S. The Official Papers would be a vast acquisition and might without much difficulty accompany the Person.

***To BRIGADIER GENERAL SAMUEL HOLDEN PARSONS**

March 5, 1778.

Dear Sir: I learn from undoubted authority, that General Clinton Quarters in Captn. Kenedys House in the city of New York which you know is near Fort George and by the late fire stands in a manner alone. What Guards may be at or near his Quarters I cannot with precision say and therefore shall

not add any thing on this score least it should prove a mis-information; but I think it one of the most practicable (and surely it will be among the most desirable and honorable) things imaginable to take him Prisoner.

This House laying close on the Water and a retired way through a back yard or garden leading into it what if you have Whale Boats (8 or 10) but want of secrecy can prevent the execution in the hands of an enterprizing Party. The imbarkation might even be, (and this I should think best,) at King's ferry on the first of the ebb and early in the evening. Six or eight hours, with change of hands

would row the Boats under the west shore and very secretly to the City and the flood tide will hoist them back again; or, a party of Horse might meet them at Fort Lee.

I had like not to have mentioned that no Ship of War is in the North River (was not at least) ten days ago, nor within 400 Yards of the point; all being in the East River. I shall add no more; this is dropt as a hint to be improved upon or rejected as circumstances point out and justify. I am, etc.[46]

To MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE

Head Quarters, March 10, 1778.

My Dear Marquis: I have had the pleasure of receiving your two favors of the 19th and 23rd. February, and hasten to dispel those fears respecting your Reputation, which are excited only by an uncommon degree of Sensibility. You seem to apprehend, that censure, proportioned to the disappointed expectations of the World, will fall on you in consequence of the failure of the Canadian Expedition. But, in the first place, it will be no disadvantage to you to have it known in Europe, that you had received so manifest a proof of the

46. This copy, in Washington's writing, is on the same sheet with Washington's letter to Brig. Gen. Samuel Holden Parsons, Mar. 8, 1778, *q. v.*

good Opinion and confidence of Congress, as an important detached Command, and I am persuaded that every one will applaud your prudence in renouncing a Project, in pursuing which you would vainly have attempted Physical Impossibilities. Indeed, unless you can be chargeable with the invariable effects of natural causes, and be arraigned for not suspending the course of the Seasons, to accommodate your march over the Lake, the most prone to slander can have nothing to found blame upon. However sensibly your Ardour for Glory may make you feel this disappointment, you may be assured, that your Character stands as fair as ever it did, and that no New Enterprise is necessary to wipe off this imaginary Stain. The expedition which you hint at,[86] 1 think unadvisable in our present circumstances; any thing in the way of a formal Attack, which would necessarily be announced to the Enemy by preparatory measures, would not be likely to succeed. If a stroke is meditated in that Quarter, it must be effected by Troops stationed at a proper distance for availing themselves of the first favourable opportunity offered by the Enemy, and success would principally depend upon the suddenness of the Attempt; [this therefore must rather be the effect of time and chance than premeditation.]

You undoubtedly have determined judiciously in waiting the farther Orders of Congress: Whether they allow me the pleasure of seeing you shortly, or destine you to a longer absence, you may assure yourself of the

86. An attack upon New York City.

sincere good wishes of, Dear Sir, &c.

[P.S. Your directing payment of such debts as appear to be most pressing is certainly right as there is not money enough to answer every demand, and I wish your supplies of Cloathing had been better. Your Ordering a large supply of provisions into Fort Schuyler was a very judicious measure and I thank you for it.][87]

To LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN BURGOYNE

Head Quarters, Pennsylvania, March 11, 1778.

Sir: I was only two days since honoured with your very obliging Letter of the 11th. of February.

Your indulgent Opinion of my Character, and the polite terms in which you are pleased to express it, are peculiarly flattering; and I take pleasure in the opportunity you have afforded me, of assuring you, that, far from suffering the views of national opposition, to be imbittered and debased by personal animosity, I am ever ready to do justice to the merit of the [Man] and Soldier, and to esteem where esteem is due, however the Idea of a public Enemy may interpose. You will not think it the language of unmeaning ceremony, if I add, that sentiments of

87. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens. The parts in brackets were added by Washington.

personal Respect, in the present instance, are reciprocal.

Viewing you in the light of an Officer contending against what I conceive to be the [rights] of my Country, the reverses of Fortune you experienced in the Field, cannot be unacceptable to me; but, abstracted from considerations of national advantage, I can sincerely sympathize with your feelings as a Soldier; the unavoidable difficulties of whose situation forbid his success; and as a man, whose lot combines the calamity of ill health, the anxieties of Captivity, and the painful sensibility for a reputation, exposed, where he most values it to the assaults of malice and detraction.

As your Aide de Camp went directly on to Congress, the business of your Letter to me had been decided before it came to hand. I am happy, that their chearful acquiescence with your request, prevented the necessity of my intervention; and wishing you a safe and agreeable passage, with a perfect restoration of your health, I have the honour, etc.[90]

***To GEORGE WILLIAM FAIRFAX**

Head Quarters, Pennsa., March 11, 1778.

Dear Sir: Immediately on my appointment to the

90. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

command of the American Army and arrival at Cambridge (near Boston) in the year 1775, I informed you of the impracticability of my longer continuing to perform the duties of a friend by having an eye to the conduct of your Collector and Steward, as my absence from Virginia would not only withdraw every little attention I otherwise might have given to your business; but involve my own in the same neglected predicament. What use you may have made of the information I know not, having heard nothing from you these four years, nor been in Virga. these last three.

I have heard, and fear it is true, that your Seat (Belvoir) is verging fast to destruction. In what condition, and under what management your estate in Berkeley is, I know not; and equally ignorant am I respecting the conduct of Peyton, but earnestly advise you to impower some person to attend to these matters, or the consequence is obvious.

Lord Fairfax (as I have been told) after having bowed down to the grave, and in a manner shaken hands with death, is perfectly restored, and enjoys his usual good health, and as much vigour as falls to the lot of Ninety. Your Sister Washington[91] goes on teeming, but cannot produce a boy. Miss Fairfax was upon the point of Marriage in decemr. last with a relation of mine, a Mr. Whiting, but her ill health delayed it at that time, and what hath happend since I know not. Your Nieces in Alexandria are both Married, the elder

91. Hannah Fairfax, who married Warner Washington.

to Mr. Herbert, the younger to Mr. Harry Whiting, Son of Frank in Berkeley. Mrs. Cary, her Son Colo. Cary, Mr. Nicholas, Mrs. Ambler,[92] and their respective families were all well about two Months ago. Miss Cary is married to Tom Nelson, second Son to the Secretary.

Mrs. Washington who is now in Qrs. with me joins in most Affecte Complimts to Mrs. Fairfax and yourself, with, Dear Sir, etc.[93]

***To REVEREND ISRAEL EVANS[19]**

Head Qrs. Valley-forge, March 13, 1778.

Revd. Sir: Your favor of the 17th. Ulto., inclosing the discourse which you delivered on the 18th. of December; the day set a part for a general thanksgiving; to Genl. Poors Brigade, never came to my hands till yesterday.[20]

I have read this performance with equal attention and pleasure, and at the same time that I admire, and feel the force of the reasoning which you have displayed through the whole, it is more especially incumbent upon me to thank you for the honorable, but partial mention you have made of my character; and to assure you, that it will

92. Mary Cary Ambler, wife of Edward Ambler.

93. This letter, Washington noted on the draft, was carried to England by Lieutenant General Burgoyne.

19. Chaplain to Poor's New Hampshire brigade.

20. This sermon (24 pages) was printed by Francis Bailey, at Lancaster, Pa., in 1778. It was, probably, one of these imprints which Evans sent to Washington.

ever be the first wish of my heart to aid your pious endeavours to inculcate a due sense of the dependance we ought to place in that all wise and powerful Being on whom alone our success depends; and moreover, to assure you, that with respect and regard, I am, etc.

To REVEREND TIMOTHY DWIGHT, JUNIOR

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, March 18, 1778.

Sir: I yesterday received your favour of the 8th. Inst., accompanied by so warm a recommendation from General Parsons, that I cannot but form favourable presages of the merit of the Work you propose to [honour me with the dedication of.]

Nothing can give me more pleasure, than to patronize the essays of Genius and a laudable cultivation of the Arts and Sciences, which had began to flourish in so eminent a degree, before the hand of oppression was stretched over our devoted Country. And I shall esteem myself happy, if a Poem, which has employed the labour of Years, will derive any advantages, or bear more weight in the World, by

Making its appearance under dedication to me.[63] I am, etc.[64]

***To BRIGADIER GENERAL JOHN CADWALADER**

Valley Forge, March 20, 1778.

My Dear Sir: Your favour of the 12th. Instt. came safe to my hands and gave me sincere pleasure; as it encouraged a hope, I had before entertained, of seeing you in Camp again. Most sincerely do I wish it was in my power to point out some post or place in the Army that would invite you to, and fix you in, it. We want your aid exceedingly; and the public, perhaps at no time since the commencement of the War would be more benefitted by your advice and assistance than at the present, and throughout the whole of this Campaign which must be important and critical. One thing certain is, a seat at my board, and a square on my Floor shall always be reserved for you; but this, though it would add to my pleasure, is not the height of my wishes. I want to see you in a more important Station.

By death and desertion, we have lost a good many Men since we came to this ground, and have encountered every species of hardship, that cold, wet, and hunger,

63. Dwight's “Conquest of Canaan.” It was not published until 1785.

64. The draft is in the writing of Teach Tilghman. The words in brackets were inserted by Washington.

and want of Cloathes were capable of producg; notwithstandg. and contrary to my expectations we have been able to keep the Soldiers from Mutiny or dispersion, although, in the single article of Provisns. they have encountered enough to have occasioned one or the other of these in most other Armies; as they have been (two or three times), days together, without Provisions; and once Six days without any of the Meat kind; could the poor Horses tell their tale, it would be in a strain still more lamentable, as numbers have actually died from pure want; But, as our prospects begin to brighten, my complaint shall cease.

It gives me much pleasure to hear, that the Recruiting Service in the Counties near you, is in so hopeful a way; but I despair of seeing our Battalions compleated by any other means than drafting. The importance of the place you speak of,[84] is obvious; it has engrossed much of my thoughts; but in our present situation, and under our present prospects, it is one of those things that is more like to become an object of our desire than attainment.

I have every reason, short of absolute proof, to believe that General Howe is meditating a stroke against this army. He has drawn, some say two thousand, and others 2,500 Men from New York, which I believe are arrived at Phila., as a number of Transports have just past Wilmington in their way up the Delaware; and

84. Billingsport, N.J. Cadwalader's letter of March 12 is in the *Washington Papers*.

reports from Newport say, that the Garrison there had orders to Be in readiness to imbark by the 20th. Instt; their Invalids had gone off for England; and the Women and Children for New York. I am, &c.

To GOVERNOR PATRICK HENRY

Valley Forge, March 27, 1778.

Dear Sir: About eight days ago I was honoured with your favour of the 20th. Ultimo.

Your Friendship, Sir, in transmitting me the Anonymous Letter you had received,[65] lays me under the most grateful obligations, and if my acknowledgments can be due for any thing more, it is for the very polite and delicate terms in which you have been pleased to communicate the manner.

I have ever been happy in supposing that I had a place in your Esteem, and the proof you have afforded on this occasion, makes me peculiarly so. The favourable light in which you hold me, is truly flattering, but I should feel much regret, if I thought the happiness of America so intimately connected, with my personal welfare, as you so obligingly seem to consider it. All I can say is, that she has ever

65. Dated York, Pa., Jan. 12, 1778. It is printed in Sparks's *Writings of Washington*, vol. 5, P. 495. (See Washington's letter to Gov. Patrick Henry, Mar. 28, 1778, *post*.)

had, and I trust she ever will have, my honest exertions to promote her Interest. I cannot hope that my services have been the best. But my heart tells me, they have been the best that I could render.

That I may have erred in using all the means in my power for accomplishing the objects of the arduous exalted station with which I am honoured, I cannot doubt, nor do I wish my conduct to be exempted from reprehension farther than it may deserve. Error is the portion of humanity, and to censure it, whether committed by this or that public Character, is the prerogative of Freemen. However, being intimately acquainted with the Man, I conceive the Author of the Letter transmitted; and having always received from him the strongest professions of attachment and regard, I am constrained to consider him, as not possessing at least a great degree of Candour and honest sincerity; though his views, in addressing you, should have been the result of conviction and founded in motives of public good. This is not the only secret, insidious attempt that has been

made to wound my reputation. There have been others equally base, cruel, and ungenerous; because conducted with as little frankness, and proceeding from views, perhaps, as personally interesting. I am, Dear Sir, With great Esteem and Regard, Your much obliged friend and servant.[66]

66. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson, Harrison.

To GOVERNOR PATRICK HENRY

Camp, March 28, 1778.

Dear Sir: Just as I was about to close my Letter of Yesterday, your favour of the 5th. Instant came to hand.

I can only thank you again, in the language of the most undissembled gratitude, for your Friendship; and assure you, the indulgent disposition, which Virginia, in particular, and the States in general, entertain towards me, gives me the most sensible pleasure. The approbation of my Country is what I wish, and as far as my abilities and opportunity will permit, I hope I shall endeavour to deserve it. It is the highest reward to a feeling Mind; and happy are they, who so conduct themselves as to merit it.

The Anonymous Letter, with which you were pleased to favour me, was written by Doctor Rush,[70] so far as I can judge from a similitude of hands. This Man has been elaborate, and studied in his professions of regard for me; and long since the Letter to you.

My caution to avoid any thing, that could injure the service, prevented me from communicating, but to very few of my friends, the intrigues of a faction, which I know was formed against me, since it might serve to publish our internal dissentions; but their own restless Zeal to

70. Dr. Benjamin Rush, Pennsylvania Delegate to the Continental Congress.

advance their views has too clearly betrayed them, and made concealment, on my part, fruitless. I cannot precisely mark the extent of their views, but it appeared in general, that General Gates was to be exalted, on the ruin of my reputation and influence. This I am authorised to say, from undeniable facts in my own possession, from publications, the evident scope of which, could not be mistaken, and from private detractions industriously circulated. General Mifflin, it is commonly supposed, bore the second part in the Cabal; and General Conway, I know was a very Active and malignant Partisan; [but I have good reasons to believe, that their machinations have recoiled most sensibly upon themselves.]

I am happy to hear, the Assembly have Authorised the Executive power to provide their Troops with cloathing and other necessaries. If the several States attend to this important business, I am persuaded, we shall not experience the same wants, not to say miseries, that we heretofore have.

The Commissary's department too, I trust, will be under better regulations, than what it has been. Our difficulties and distresses, in this instance, have not arisen from a scarcity of Provision, but from improper persons, or rather none at all, being employed.

The arrival of the French Ship is an agreeable circumstance, as I presume she brought Goods; and as it is a proof of the friendly disposition of the Nation.

If she was in Commission of the King, it would be still better.

With sentiments of great Esteem, and Regard, I am etc.[71]

***To MAJOR GENERAL ARTHUR ST. CLAIR**

April 10, 1778.

Dr. Sir: Majr. Schull[92] leaving Camp without giving me a second oppertunity of speaking to him, prevented another offer which I had in contemplation; and which I am still disposed to make

him if it can be done without carrying with it the appearance of importunity, and consequently embarrassment, if his Inclination leads him to a different pursuit.

The place I had in view for him was in my own family; assistant Secretary. The good character given me of this Gentn., added to the favorable opinion I have imbibed of his abilities, and prudent deportment, makes this a desirable object; and I should think myself fortunate in the success of it provided he could be brought into the Office with his own entire consent.

The pay will be Sixty Dollars and four Rations a Month. His expences trifling, as he will have the use

71. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

92. Maj. Peter Scull.

of my Table and be found forage for his Horses.

I will now, without appologizing for the freedom I take, and the consequent trouble you will receive, request the favor of you to discover, if you can, whether the offer would be agreeable to Majr. Schull, or not, and let me know as soon as you can. If I had reason to believe that it would be agreeable to him to come into my family in the capacity above-mentioned, I would immediately write to him upon this subject. on the other hand, if I found he had the least unwillingness, I should decline all thoughts of it.[93] I am, &c.

To JOHN BANISTER[74]

Valley Forge, April 21, 1778.

Dear Sir: On Saturday Evening, I had the pleasure to receive your favour of the 16th. Instant.

I thank you very much, for your obliging tender of a friendly intercourse between us; and you may rest assured, that I embrace it with chearfulness, and shall write you freely, as often as leisure will permit, of such points as appear to me material and interesting.

I am pleased to find, that you expect the

93. Scull declined the appointment offered, in a letter to Washington (April 14), a copy of which is in the *Washington Papers*.

74. Virginia Delegate to Congress.

proposed establishment of the Army will succeed; though it is a painful consideration, that matters of such pressing importance and obvious necessity meet with so much difficulty and delay. Be assured the success of the measure is a matter of the most serious moment, and that it ought to be brought to a conclusion, as speedily as possible. The spirit of resigning Commissions has been long at an alarming height, and increases daily. [Applications from Officers on furlough are hourly arriving, and Genls. Heath, of Boston, McDougal on the No. River, and Mason of Virginia are asking what they are to do with the appliants to them.]

The Virginia Line has sustained a violent shock in this instance; [not less than Ninety havg. resigned already, to me], the same conduct has prevailed among the Officers from the other States, though not yet to so considerable a degree; and there are but too just Grounds to fear, that it will shake the very existence of the Army, unless a remedy is soon, very soon, applied. There is none, in my opinion, so effectual, as the one pointed out.[75] This, I trust, will satisfy the Officers, and, at the same time, it will produce no present additional emission of Money. They will not be persuaded to sacrifice all views of present interest, and encounter the numerous vicissitudes of War, in the defence of their Country, unless she will be generous enough, on her part, to make a decent provision for their future support, I do not pronounce absolutely, that we shall have no Army, if

75. Retirement of officers on half-pay after the war. The committee from Congress at camp agreed with Washington on the justice and necessity of this and reported in favor of it to Congress. The Massachusetts and other New England Delegates strongly opposed the principle.

the establishment fails: But the Army, we may have, will be without discipline, without energy, incapable of acting with vigor, and destitute of those cements necessary to promise success, on the one hand, or to withstand the shocks of adversity, on the other. It is indeed hard to say how extensive the evil may be, if the measure should be rejected, or much longer delayed. I find it a very arduous task to keep the Officers in tolerable humour, and to protract such a combination in quitting the service, as might possibly undo us forever. The difference between our service and that of the Enemy, is very striking. With us, from the peculiar, unhappy situation of things, the Officer, a few instances excepted, must break in upon his private fortune for present support, without a prospect of future relief. With them, even Companies are esteemed so honourable and so valuable, that they have sold of late from 15 to 2,200 £Sterling, and I am credibly informed, that 4,000 Guineas have been given for a Troop of Dragoons: You will readily determine how this difference will operate; what effects it must produce. Men may speculate as they will; they may talk of patriotism; they may draw a few examples from ancient story, of great atchievements performed by its influence; but whoever builds upon it, as a sufficient Basis for conducting a long and [bloody] War, will find themselves deceived in the end. We must take the passions of Men as Nature has given them, and those principles as a guide which are generally the rule of Action. I do not mean to

exclude altogether the Idea of Patriotism. I know it exists, and I know it has done much in the present Contest. But I will venture to assert, that a great and lasting War can never be supported on this principle alone. It must be aided by a prospect of Interest or some reward. For a time, it may, of itself push Men to Action; to bear much, to encounter difficulties; but it will not endure unassisted by Interest.

The necessity of putting the Army upon a respectable footing, both as to numbers and constitution, is now become more essential than ever. The Enemy are beginning to play a Game more dangerous than their efforts by Arms, tho' these will not be remitted in the smallest degree, and

which threatens a fatal blow to American Independence, and to her liberties of course: They are endeavouring to ensnare the people by specious allurements of Peace. It is not improbable they have had such abundant cause to be tired of the War, that they may be sincere, in the terms they offer, which, though far short of our pretensions, will be extremely flattering to Minds that do not penetrate far into political consequences: But, whether they are sincere or not, they may be equally destructive; for, to discerning Men, nothing can be more evident, than that a Peace on the principles of dependance, however limited, after what has happened, would be to the last degree dishonourable and ruinous. It is, however, much to be apprehended, that the Idea of such an event will have a very powerful effect upon the Country,

and, if not combatted with the greatest address, will serve, at least, to produce supineness and dis-union. Men are naturally fond of Peace, and there are Symptoms which may authorize an Opinion, that the people of America are pretty generally weary of the present War. It is doubtful, whether many of our friends might not incline to an accommodation on the Grounds held out, or which may be, rather than persevere in a contest for Independence. If this is the case, it must surely be the truest policy to strengthen the Army, and place it upon a substantial footing. This will conduce to inspire the Country with confidence; enable those at the head of affairs to consult the public honour and interest, notwithstanding the defection of some and temporary inconsistency and irresolution of others, who may desire to compromise the dispute; and if a Treaty should be deemed expedient, will put it in their power to insist upon better terms, than they could otherwise expect.

Besides, the most vigorous exertions at Home, to increase and establish our Military force upon a good Basis; it appears to me advisable, that we should immediately try the full extent of our interest abroad and bring our European Negotiations to an Issue. I think France must have ratified our Independence,[76] and will declare War immediately, on finding that serious proposals of accommodation are made; but lest, from a mistaken policy, or too exalted an Opinion of our powers, from the

76. The treaty of alliance with France had been signed Feb. 6, 1778, but the news of this had not yet reached America. This, of course, recognized the United States as an independent sovereign nation.

representations she has had, she should still remain indecisive, it were to be wished proper persons were instantly dispatched, or our envoys, already there, instructed, to insist pointedly on her coming to a final determination. It cannot be fairly supposed, that she will hesitate a moment to declare War, if she is given to understand, in a proper manner, that a reunion of the two Countries may be the consequence of procrastination. An European War, and an European Alliance would effectually answer our purposes. If the step I now mention, should be eligible, despatches ought to be sent at once, by different conveyances, for fear of accidents. I confess it appears to me, a measure of this kind could not but be productive of the most salutary consequences. If possible, I should also suppose it absolutely necessary, to obtain good intelligence from England, pointing out the true springs of this manœuvre of Ministry; the preparations of force they are making; the prospects there are of raising it; the amount, and when it may be expected.

It really seems to me, from a comprehensive view of things, that a period is fast approaching, big with events of the most intersting importance. When the councils we pursue and the part we act, may lead decisively to liberty, or to Slavery. Under this Idea, I cannot but regret, that inactivity, that inattention, that want of something, which [unhappily, I have but too often] experienced in our public Affairs. I wish that our representation in Congress was

compleat and full from every State, and that it was formed of the first Abilities among us. Whether we continue to War, or proceed to Negotiate, the Wisdom of America in Council cannot be too great. Our situation will be truly delicate. To enter into a Negotiation too hastily, or to reject it altogether, may be attended with consequences equally fatal. The wishes of the people, seldom founded in deep disquisitions, or resulting from other reasonings than their present feeling, may not intirely accord with our true policy and interest. If they do not, to observe a proper line of conduct, for promoting the one, and avoiding offence to the other, will be a Work of great difficulty. Nothing short of Independence, it appears to me, can possibly do. A Peace, on other terms, would, if I may be allowed the expression, be a Peace of War. The injuries we have received from the British

Nation were so unprovoked; have been so great and so many, that they can never be forgotten. Besides the feuds, the jealousies; the animosities that would ever attend a Union with them. Besides the importance, the advantages we should derive from an unrestricted commerce; Our fidelity as a people; Our gratitude; Our Character as Men, are opposed to a coalition with them as subjects, but in case of the last extremity. Were we easily to accede to terms of dependence, no nation, upon future occasions, let the oppressions of Britain be never so flagrant and unjust, would interpose for our relief, or at least they would do it with a cautious reluctance and upon conditions, most probably, that

would be hard, if not dishonourable to us. France, by her supplies, has saved us from the Yoke thus far, and a wise and virtuous perseverence, would and I trust will, free us entirely.

I have sent Congress, Lord North's Speech and two Bills offered by him to Parliament. They are spreading fast through the Country, and will soon become a subject of general notoriety. I therefore think, they had best be published in our papers, and persons of leisure and ability set to Work, to counteract the impressions, they may make on the Minds of the people.[77]

Before I conclude, there are one or two points more upon which I will add an Observation or two. The first is, the indecision of Congress and the delay used in coming to determinations in matters referred to them. This is productive of a variety of inconveniences; and an early decision, in many cases, though it should be against the measure submitted, would be attended with less pernicious effects. Some new plan might then be tried; but while the matter is held in suspence, nothing can be attempted. The other point is, the *jealousy* which Congress unhappily entertain of the Army, and which, if reports are right, some Members labour to establish. You may be assured, there is nothing more injurious, or more unjustly founded. This jealousy stands upon the common, received Opinion, which under proper limitations is certainly true, that standing Armies are dangerous to a State, and from forming the same conclusion of the component parts of all, though they are totally dissimilar

77. Lord North's *Conciliatory Bills* arrived in New York on Apr. 14, 1778, and were published on the 15th by Governor Tryon, accompanied by a declaration certifying that they were genuine copies of the drafts sent to him by Lord George Germain. Tryon added: “To prepare the way for the return of peace, the above bills were read in the House of Commons on the 19th day of February last, in pursuance of unanimous resolve of the House on the 17th of the same month; and I have his Majesty's command to cause them to be printed and dispersed, that the people at large may be acquainted with their contents, and with the favorable disposition of Great Britain towards the American colonies.” Lord North's speech, on presenting the bills to Parliament, was published at the same time.

in their Nature. The prejudices in other Countries has only gone to them in time of *Peace* , and these from their not having, in general cases, any of the ties, the concerns or interests of Citizens or any other dependence, than what flowed from their Military employ; in short, from their being Mercenaries; hirelings. It is our policy to be prejudiced against them in time of *War* ; and though they are Citizens having all the Ties, and interests of Citizens, and in most cases property totally unconnected with the Military Line. If we would pursue a right System of policy, in my Opinion, there should be none of these distinctions. We should all be considered, Congress, Army, &c. as one people, embarked in one Cause, in one interest; acting on the same principle and to the same End. The distinction, the Jealousies set up, or perhaps only incautiously let out, can answer not a single good purpose. They are impolitic in the extreme. Among Individuals, the most certain way to make a Man your Enemy, is to tell him, you esteem him such; so with public bodies; and the very jealousy, which the narrow politics of some may affect to entertain of the Army, in order to a due subordination to the supreme Civil Authority, is a likely mean to produce a contrary effect; to incline it to the pursuit of those measures which that may wish it to avoid. It is unjust, because no Order of Men in the thirteen States have paid a more sanctimonious regard to their proceedings than the Army; and, indeed, it may be questioned, whether

there has been that scrupulus adherence had to them by any other, [for without arrogance, or the smallest deviation from truth it may be said, that no history, now extant, can furnish an instance of

an Army's suffering such uncommon hardships as ours have done, and bearing them with the same patience and Fortitude. To see Men without Cloathes to cover their nakedness, without Blankets to lay on, without Shoes, by which their Marches might be traced by the Blood from their feet, and almost as often without Provisions as with; Marching through frost and Snow, and at Christmas taking up their Winter Quarters within a day's March of the enemy, without a House or Hurt to cover them till they could be built and submitting to it without a murmur, is a mark of patience and obedience which in my opinion can scarce be parallel'd.]

There may have been some remonstrances or applications [to Congress], in the stile of complaint from the Army [and slaves indeed should we be, if this privilidge was denied], on Account of their proceedings in particular instances; but these will not Authorize nor even excuse a jealousy, that they are therefore aiming at unreasonable powers; or making strides, dangerous, or subversive of Civil Authority. Things should not be viewed in that light, more especially, as Congress, in some cases, have relieved the injuries complained of, and which had flowed from their own Acts.

I refer you to my Letter to yourself and

Colonel Lee which accompanies this,[78] upon the subject of Money for such of the Old Virginia Troops, as have or may reinlist.

In respect to the Volunteer Plan I [scarce know what opinion to give at this time.] The propriety of a requisition on this head, will depend altogether, on our operations. Such kind of Troops should not be called for, but upon the spur of the occasion and at the moment of executing an Enterprise. They will not endure a long service; and, of all Men in the Military Line, they are the most impatient of restraint and necessary Government.

[As the propositions, and the Speech of Lord North must be founded in the despair of the Nation of succeeding against us, or, from a rupture in Europe that has actually happend, or that certainly will; or from some deep political Manœuvre; or from what I think, still more likely, a composition of the whole, would it not be good policy, in this day of uncertainty and distress to the Tories

to avail ourselves of the occn. and for the sevl. States to hold out Pardon &ca. to all delinquents returng. by a certain day? They are frightned, and that is the time to operate upon them. Upon a short consideration of the matter it appears to me that such a measure wd. detach the Tories from the Enemy, and bring things to a much speedier conclusion and of course be a mean of saving much public treasure.]

I will now be done, and I trust that

78. This letter is dated April 23. (See Washington's letter to Francis Lightfoot Lee and John Banister, Apr. 23, 1778, *post*.)

you excuse not only the length of my Letter, but the freedom with which I have delivered my sentiments in the course of it upon several occasions. The subjects struck me as important and interesting, and I have only to wish, that they may appear to you in the same light. I am etc.[79]

***To MAJOR GENERAL CHARLES LEE**

Valley-forge, April 22, 1778.

Dear Sir: Mr. Boudenot, at Commissary Loring's request, met him at Germantown yesterday; from whence he is just return'd, after having agreed on a final exchange of yourself, and other Officers, with that Gentn. That delay may not produce danger, I shall send in a Flag to morrow for your parole. When obtaind, I shall most cordially, and sincerely, congratulate you on your restoration to your Country and to the Army. I could not however refrain till this happy event shld. take place, rejoicing with you on the probability of it and to express my wish of seeing you in Camp as soon as you can possibly make it convenient to yourself after you are perfectly at liberty to take an active part with us; of which I shall

79. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The portions in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

not delay giving you the earliest notice.

I have received your favor of the 13th. Instr. from York Town the contents, shall be the subject of conversation when I have the pleasure of seeing you in circumstances to Mount your hobby horse, which I hope will not, on trial, be found quite so limping a jade as the one you set out to York on.[82] I am, &c.

To GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

Valley Forge, April 25, 1778.

Dear Sir: I received your obliging favour of the 18th. Instant, only Yesterday evening. I thank you much for the explanatory hints it contains, and could have wished it had come to hand a little sooner. I have many things to say to you, but as the Express, who will deliver you this, is going with dispatches that will not admit of delay, I shall content myself with taking Notice of one matter, that appears to me to require immediate remedy.[4]

The resolution of Congress directs the Council to be formed of Major Generals and the Chief Engineer, who, you say, is to be a Member *officially* . By this,

82. Lee's letter said: “I perhaps ought to make an apology to you for a liberty I have taken, but if it is viewd in a proper point of view I am in hopes it can neither be considered a step of indelicacy towards you, nor by General Howe as any violation of the parole I have given.

“You must know that it has long been the object of my studies, how to form an army in the most simple manner possible. I once wrote a treatise, tho I did not publish it, for the use of the Militia of England by reading Machiavel's *institutions*, and Marshal Saxe, I have taken it into my head that I understand it better than almost any Man living, in short, I am mounted on a hobby horse of my own training, and it runs away with me indeed I am so infatuated with it, that I cannot forbear

boasting its excellencies on all occasions to Friends or Enemies. you must excuse me therefore, if I could not refrain recommending the Beast to some Members of Congress.”

Lee's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

4. Morris wrote (April 18): “All will yet go well. We have determined to send Gates to Hudson's River where he is to command very largely. But he is to receive Instructions, which shall be proper. You are directed to call a Council of *Major Generals* in which the Chief Engineer is *officially* to be a Member and to which by a subsequent Resolution Genls. Gates and Mifflin were *ordered* to repair. As these Gentlemen ought not to receive Orders *immediately* from Congress they are as you will see permitted to leave the Board of War upon *your* Order. This *Amendment* was for that Reason acquiesced in *nem con*…

Apropos, of your Council of War. Should you determine on any Thing, which considering the Course of human Affairs is I confess rather improbable Let Congress know Nothing about it. A Secret should never be trusted to many Bosoms. I will forfeit any Thing except Reputation that it will not be *well* kept even by those necessarily confided in.”

Morris's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

the Commanding Officer of Artillery is negatively excluded, who by the practice of Armies, and from the very nature of his appointment, is more *officially* a Member than the other. According to my Ideas, both, or neither, ought to be there; or, if an official preference is due to one more than the other, it is to the Commander in the Artillery line. I do not know what motives induced the discrimination in this instance; but I should suppose, it will at least be felt; and I will further add, though prejudices may be entertained by some against General Knox, there is no department in the Army, that has been conducted with greater propriety, or to more advantage, than the one in which he presides; and owing principally, if not wholly, to his management. Surely whatever plans may be come into, the Artillery will have no small share in the execution.

[You say *all will yet be well* ; I wish it heartily, but am much mistaken, if there are not some secret and retrograde Springs in motion to disprove it.]

I wish you could announce the provision for Officers concluded. It seems to me the basis of all our operations. Resignation after resignation is taking place; not here only but of Officers acting East of Hudson's river, &c.[5] I am etc.[6]

5. Morris's reply to this letter (May 1) states: “Knox will attend the Council. Conway hath resigned, and his Resignation is accepted. The Affairs of the Army are necessarily delayed by the foreign Affairs, which have broken in upon us. As to the Half Pay Matters stand thus the Questions have been carried but by an Entry on the Minutes there is an agreemt. that a final Question shall be put whether it be finally determined in Congress, or sent to the several States. When a Motion is made for the Purpose The yeas will be Massats. Rhode Island, Connec. Jersey, and South Carolina The Nays will be N York Maryland Virginia, and Georgia. Pensilvania is in a mighty flimsy Situation on that Subject having indeed a mighty flimsy Representation. I wish Boudinot were here. Delaware is absent who is with us as is N. Carolina also absent. New Hampshire is absent, who is against us. This is to go by Gates.” (A vote was taken in Congress on May 13, and Morris proved a good prophet. The half-pay was defeated as he prophesied, but Delaware voted against it.)

Morris's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

6. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The sentence in brackets is in the writing of Washington.

***To THOMAS TURNER[3]**

April 25, 1778.

Sir: Altho' I am not much accustomed to accept presents, I cannot refuse one offered in such polite terms as accompanied the Pistols and furniture you were so obliging as to send me by Captn.

Fauntleroy. They are very elegant, and deserve my best thanks, which are offered with much sincerity. The favourable Sentiments you are pleased to entertain of me, and the obliging and flattering manner in which they are expressed add to the obligation. I am etc.

To MRS. ELIZABETH NEIL[42]

Morris Town, April 27, 1777.

Madam: I hoped to have given you a more favourable Acct. Of my application to Congress, in your behalf, than the Inclosed resolution will convey;[43] but that Honble.body have, I presume, thought it rather too early to adopt a measure of this kind yet, what they may do

3. Turner lived on the Rappahannock River in King George County, Va. His father, who died in 1758, had been a friend of Washington.

42. Widow of Maj. Daniel Neil, of the New Jersey Artillery, who had been killed at Princeton, N.J. Washington spelled the name Neale.

43. The resolve of Mar. 14, 1777, respecting pensions to widows of officers.

hereafter, I cannot under take to say. In the meantime, as I sincerely feel for your distress, I beg your acceptance of the Inclosd, as a small testimony of my Inclination to serve you upon any future occasion. I am Madam, etc.

PS. I have receivd, and am much obliged to you for the Piece of Buff Cloth.

Fifty Dollars sent.

***To HENRY LAURENS**

Valley-forge, April 30, 1778.

Dear Sir: I thank you much for your obliging favor of the 27th.

I think with you, that a most important crisis is now at hand; and that there cannot be too much wisdom in all our Councils for conducting our affairs to a safe and happy issue. There should in my opinion, be a full representation of the States in Congress, which I have often regretted has not been the case for a long time past. I also concur with you in Sentiment, that Gentlemen any where, whose abilities might be of essential service in case of treaty

with the British Commissioners, ought to be called forth for the purpose. It will be a work of infinite importance and the result may lead to happiness or to misery; to freedom, or to Slavery.

The enemy are determined to try us by force, and by fraud; and while they are exerting their utmost powers in the first instance, I do not doubt but they will employ men in the second, versed in the arts of dissimulation, of temporising, negotiating, genius's.

It appears to me, that nothing short of Independance can possibly do. The injuries we have received from Britain can never be forgotten, and a peace upon other terms would be the sourse of perpetual feuds and animosities. Besides, should Britain from her love of tyranny, and lawless domination attempt again to bend our Necks to the yoke of slavery, and there is no doubt but she would, for her pride and ambition are unconquerable, no Nation would credit our professions, nor grant us aid at any rate, their favors would be obtained upon the most disadvantageous, and dishonorable terms.

I sincerely wish the provision for Officers so long the subject of discussion, was established. It is certainly equitable, and in my opinion essential. Day after day, and hour after hour produces resignations; if they were confined to bad Officers, or to those of little or no character, they would be of little or no consequence. But it is painful to see men who are of a different cast, who have rendered great Services to their Country, and who are still, and may be most materially

wanted, leaving the Army, on acct. of the distresses of their family, and to repair their Circumstances, which have been much injured by their zeal in the part they have taken in the defence of common Rights; the provision if adopted, would not produce present relief, nor a present

expence, yet it would be a compensation in future for their misfortunes and their toils; and be some support to their injured constitutions. I will be done, after observing if the measure is to be submitted to the Legislatures of the several States for their concurrance, that the delay, supposing it should be assented to will I fear, be attended with effects that will only be regretted when too late. But the chance in such case, will be rather against the adoption; for there are but few of the Legislatures, who are impressed, or who can without difficulty be fully informed of the real state of things; and while this matter is held in suspence, every thing is at a stand, and the most fatal consequences may result from it. I do not to this hour know whether (putting half-pay out of the question) the old or New establishment of the Regiments is to take place; how to dispose of the Officers in consequence; whether the instituting of the several other Corps, as agreed to by the Comee., and referred by them to Congress, is adopted or not; in a word, I have no ground to form a single arrangement upon; nor do I know whether the augmentation of the Cavalry is to take place, or was rejected, in order that I may govern myself thereby; equally unable am I to answer the incessant

applications of the Officers of the Pensylvania, and additional Battalions, who knowing the intended reduction of some of those Corps, are held in suspence, unable what part to act. In short, our present situation (now the first of May) is beyond description, irksome and dangerous. But I will trouble you no further than to assure you that, I am, etc.

[M.L.]

To THEVENAU FRANCY[38]

Head Quarters, April 30, 1778.

Sir: I take the liberty to enclose you a letter for Mr. Penet, which I request your care in transmitting to him, by the first proper conveyance. I congratulate you on the happy and interesting intelligence from France, which you will have no doubt heard, before this reaches you. I have the honor, etc.[39]

38. Jean Baptiste Lazarus Thevenau Francy. He was agent of Rodrique Hortalez & Co. (Caron de Beaumarchais) in America, and, on the date of this letter, was at York, Pa.

39. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

To PIERRE PENET

Valley Forge, in Pensylvania, April 30, 1778.

Sir: I received, not long since, your [polite and obliging] favour of the 12th. of November last, accompanied by your agreeable presents to Mrs. Washington and myself, for which we beg you will accept our acknowledgements.[36] It will [I am perswaded] enhance the pleasure you feel on the occasion to be informed, that the extra shoulder and sword knots are destined for Generals Arnold and Lincoln; Gentlemen, who were wounded, while rendering very distinguished services, in the last actions, between our Northern army and General Burgoyne's troops.

With my sincere thanks for polite expressions of regard to me, and wishes for the speedy and prosperous termination of the war, in which we are engaged, and with assurances of real esteem. I have the honour, etc.[37]

To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Camp, May 17, 1778.

Dear Sir: I received yesterday your favor of the

36. Penet was in Nantes, France, on the date of this letter.

37. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton. The words in brackets were inserted by Washington.

15th Inst., inclosing a paper, subscribed by Sundry Officers of General Woodford's brigade, setting forth their reasons for not taking the Oath of Abjuration, Allegiance and Office, and thank you much for the cautious delicacy, used in communicating the matter to me.

As every Oath should be a free act of the Mind, founded on the conviction of the party, of its propriety, I would not wish, in any instance, that there should be the least degree of compulsion exercised; or to interpose my opinion in order to induce any to make it, of whom it is required. The Gentlemen therefore who signed the paper, will use their own discretion in the matter, and swear or not swear, as their conscience and feelings dictate.

At the same time, I cannot but consider it, as a circumstance of some singularity, that the scruples against the Oath should be peculiar to the Officers of one Brigade, and so very extensive.

The Oath in itself is not New. It is substantially the same with that required in all Governments, and, therefore, does not imply any indignity; And it is perfectly consistent with the professions, Actions, and implied engagements of every Officer.

The objection, founded on the supposed unsettled Rank of the Officers, is of no validity (rank being only mentioned as a further designation of the party swearing);

Nor can it be seriously thought, that the Oath is either intended, or can prevent their being promoted, or their resignations.

The fourth objection stated by the Gentlemen, serves as a Key to their scruples, and I would willingly persuade myself, that their own reflexions will point out to them the impropriety of the whole proceeding, and not suffer them to be betrayed in future into a similar conduct. I regard them all, and cannot but regret that they were ever engaged in the measure. I am certain they will regret it themselves: [Sure I am they ought.][78] I am etc.[79]

***To GOUVERNEUR MORRIS**

Valley-forge, May 18, 1778.

My dear Sir: Your favor of the 15th. Instt. gave me singular pleasure. I thank you for the agreeable intelligence it contains, which (tho' not equal to my wishes) exceeded my expectation, and is to be lamented, only for the delay;[80] as the evils, consequent of it will soon as I have often foretold, be manifested in the movg. State of the Army, if the Departments of Quarter Master and Comy. will enable us to stir

78. Sparks prints a footnote that the above-mentioned memorial was signed by 26 officers and that their objections to taking the oath were:

“1. The tenor of the oath they in some measure consider an indignity; they will not undertake to determine it unnecessary; an indignity, as it presupposes that some of them have acted contrary to their sentiments; it may be unnecessary, for those officers, who ventured their lives and fortunes in support of American Independence, could have no other reason but the apparent one.

“2. As many officers at present are injured in their rank, and cannot possibly continue in the army exactly in their present situation, they apprehend it would be an impropriety in them to swear to continue in their present posts, as the rank of the juror is to be taken when the oath is administered.

“3. Would not the oath debar an officer from the privilege of resigning when circumstances might render it indispensably necessary that he should quit the army?

“4. The taking of the oath, while the present establishment continues, most of the subscribers are of opinion, would lay them under a pointed restraint in endeavorimg to procure a change, which the whole army have long, not only most ardently wished for, but conceived absolutely necessary for its preservation; a change, that would put them on an honorable and advantageous footing.”

This memorial is not found in the *Washington Papers*.

79. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The phrase in brackets was added by Washington.

80. See *Journals of the Continental Congress*, May 15, 1778, for the vote on the question of half pay to officers after the war or on retirement from disability incident to service. The Massachusetts Delegates had been the principal objectors to the pension idea, and James Lovell, of that State, and Oliver Wolcott, of Connecticut, were the only Delegates who voted against the resolves of May 15, which granted half pay to officers who continued in service during the war, for seven years, with various restrictions, from the end of the war. Noncommissioned officers were to receive a gratuity of $80 in lieu of half pay.

and keep pace with the enemy, who from every acct. are busy in preparing for their departure from Phila., whether for the West Indies, a rendezvous at New York to prepare for their voyage, or for some other expedition, time only can discover; the sooner however the regimental regulations and other arrangements are set abt. the sooner they will be finished; and for Godsake My dear Morris let me recomd. it to you to urge the absolute necessity of this measure with all your might.

As the Council held at this Camp was by order of Congress and the Members constituting it pointed out by them, it was determined out of respect to that Body to treat the new Members with civility. Indeed the wish of all here that no private differences should interrupt that harmony wch. is so necessary in public Councils had no small share in the amity that appeared; contrary I own to *my* expectation, the same sentiments respecting the measures to be pursued pervaded the whole; our resolutions of course were unanimous.

I was not a little surprized to find that a certain Gentleman who some time ago (when a cloud of darkness hung heavy over us and our affairs looked gloomy) was desirous of resigning now stepping forward in the line of the Army.[81] But if *he* can reconcile such conduct to his own feelings as an *Officer* and Man of *honour* and Congress hath no objection to his leaving his Seat in another department, I have nothing

81. Maj. Gen. Thomas Mifflin. He resigned as Quartermaster General of the Continental Army Nov. 7, 1777, to become a member of the Continental Board of War the same date. On May 21, 1778, Congress gave Mifflin leave to join the Army under Washington.

personally to oppose to it, yet I must think, that Gentleman's stepping in, and out, as the Sun happens to beam forth or obscure is not *quite* the thing, nor *quite* just with respect to those Officers who take the bitter with the Sweet.

I am told that C—y (from whom I have receiv'd another impertinent Letter dated the—Ulto.[82] *demanding* the comd. of a division of the Continental Army) is through the medium of his friends solliciting his comn. again. Can this be? and if so, will it be granted?[83] I am, etc.

***To JOHN PARKE CUSTIS**

Valley-forge, May 26, 1778.

Dear Sir: Your Letter of the 11th. Instt. with a Deed to Mr. Henry came safe by Mr. Lund Washington. In lieu of the latter, I have executed a Deed to you, conveying all the right title and Interest which I, or any person claiming by, from, or under me can have to the Land.[70] More than this cannot be expected, as I purchased the Land at your own desire; by the advice of your friends; and without intending, or receiving, the smallest benefit therefrom, after having the title fully investigated by Mr. Wythe;[71] for me therefore to give a general

82. This letter is not found in the *Washington Papers*.

83. Morris wrote (May 21) in answer to this: “As to your Friend who thought proper to *demand* of you a Command, I did beleive from the first that his Resignation was like some former ones from the same Quarter meerly calculated to gain other Promotion or Favor or Revenge. I was therefore led to expect that his Merits and our Misfortune in loosing him would become the Topick of Declamation and took the earliest Opportunity to express in the very strongest Terms

my Satisfaction my Joy at the Receipt of the Letter from him and of Consequence to assign the Reasons why this Event gave me so much Pleasure. This gave a very different turn to Affairs. Panegyrick dwindled to Apology and no Opposition was made to the main Point of accepting his Resignation." (See Burnett's *Letters of Members of Congress*, vol. 3, p. 260.) Conway's letter of resignation to Congress is dated Apr. 22, 1778, and the resignation was accepted on April 28. He disclaimed intending to resign and took refuge in the explanation that he was unable to express himself clearly in English; but his letter of April 22 to President Laurens states "therefore, Sir, I expect you'll make my resignation acceptable to Congress."

70. This was the plantation known as "Woromoroke," in King and Queen County, Va.

71. George Wythe.

Warrantee of the Land to Mr. Henry thereby subjecting my Estate for the value of it, is what I cannot entertain a thought of, altho I believe there is not the smallest doubt of the goodness of the Title. Mr. Henry will, I presume, require a general Warrantee; it is for this purpose therefore I make the Deed to you; and Black[72] will be responsable to you; as to myself, as I only acted the part of a friend and Trustee in the business, I do not mean to be further engaged in the matter than to convey the legal right whichis in me. If you had got a Deed drawn for the other Land (in King William) the whole might have been executed at the same time, and the sooner you do it the better; let it be drawn by the one now sent. I have got the most likely evidences I could, but unless there has been some alteration in our Laws if it is proved in Court any time within two years it will do, as I am out of the State at present.

The reasons which you assign for selling your Lotts in Williamsburg and James City, and your Lands in Hanover and New Kent (where Trowers lives) may be good, if you can get an adequate price for them and the Money is immediately vested in the funds, or laid out in other lands; but, if this is not done be assured, it will melt like Snow before a hot Sun, and you will be able to give as little acct. of the going of it; to which I may add, as I did upon a former occasion, that Lands are permanent, rising

fast in value, and will be very dear when our Independancy is established, and the Importance of America better known. To these, one observation more, may not be unworthy of attention, which is, that in proportion to the brightness of our prospects, and the heaviness of our taxes, the rage for getting quit of, and realizing paper money must cease, and Men and Measures will resume a more reasonable tone again; which, if it has already taken place, shews that your scheme will, in part, prove abortive. With respect to your purchase of Mr. Robt. Alexander's Land I can only say that the price you have offered for it is a very great one but as you want it to live at; as it answers yours and Nelly's views; and is a pleasant Seat and capable of improvement I do not think the price ought to be a capital object with you, but I am pretty sure that you and Alexander will never agree; for he is so much afraid of cheating himself that if you were to offer him five thousand pounds more than he ever expected to get for his Land the dread of injuring himself or hope of getting more, would cause him first to hesitate and then refuse; which leads me to think that the increasing of your offer, if you were disposed to do so, would answer no valuable end; nor bring you one whir nearer the mark.

The Public papers will convey all the news of this Quarter to you, except that Genl. Howe has actually Sailed for England, and that the Enemy in Phila. appear to be upon the point of evacuating the City for New York.

This has made such a change in the Language and Visages of the Tories of that place, that they are scarce known to be the same Men, a few great offenders excepted, the disaffected are now endeavouring to make peace with the Country, to which they have been advised by the Enemy; at the same time it is left optional with them to follow the Army. I am, etc.

***To HENRY LAURENS**

Valley-forge, May 29, 1778.

Dear Sir: Your polite favor of the 5th. Instr. I duly received, and thank you much for the information contained in it. at the same time, I earnestly request, that you will endulge me with an

excuse for not answering it before; a constant crowd of business, and the intervention of a variety of circumstances have been the cause; and not an inattention to the rules of civility, or to those of friendship.

Your Letter gave me the first intimation of the disagreement between our Commissioners;[8] the event is disagreeable and painful; and unless they can bring themselves to harmonize, their proceeding will not probably consult the public interest as well, as they otherwise might. It is certain

8. The United States Commissioners in Paris. (See Wharton's *Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution*.)

they will not have that degree of respect, either at home or abroad; their embassy is a most interesting one, and may involve consequences which will lead, in no small degree, to the happiness or misery of their Country. I hope re flexion and a due consideration will set them right.

The act of the 22d. of April will certainly require the Commissioners,[9] if they come at all, to be vested with much more ample powers than Lord Norths Bill profess'd, or their Mission will be rediculously mortifying. Indeed, Men who would come out under the powers expressed in the Bills, after all that has passed, deserves to be mortified in the extreme. I am happy the report and consequent resolution were previous to the treaty and alliance with France being known. The Parliament have been so much parties to this War, and to all the proceedings respecting it, that it would seem, the crown itself has no authority, either to continue, or to end it; or to do any thing else, without their express concurrance.

I sincerely wish the Military arrangement to be compleated. the delay is attended with great inconvenience and injury. While it remains open, our whole system cannot but be imperfect. I know that the Congress have a variety of important matters to claim their attention; but I assure you there are few, if any, that are more interesting than what this is.

9. The British Peace Commissioners announced as coming from England.

The question of half pay being decided, I shall not trouble you with a further discussion of the subject. It must be granted however, that in the situation of our affairs the measure, or something substantially the same had become necessary. Nor can I, after ballancing in my Mind and giving the subject the fairest consideration I am capable of, esteem it unjust.[10] I assure you Sir, however we may have differed in sentiment on this point, I am fully convinced that the strictest candour forms a part of your character and request you to believe, that I am with great attachment, &c.

P.S. The Letter for Mr. Pike[11] was sent to him in a day or two after it came to hand. I most sincerely wish that Congress would lay the charge, and order tryal of the Majr. Generals in disgrace. St. Clair is exceedingly uneasy and distressed at the delay, and with pain I add, that the proceeding, or more properly, not proceeding in this matter, is looked upon as cruel and oppressive.

[M.L.]

10. At this point the draft, which is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison, has the following crossed out: “I acknowledge that there are many Individuals out of the Army, whose losses in the present contest have been extremely severe, and whose conduct has been noble and generous in every instance, but at the same time, I think I am authorized to say, as a body, the Army have made greater sacrifices than any other order of Men belonging to the States.”

11. Thomas Pike, possibly the fencing master mentioned in Sabine's *American Loyalists*.

To HENRY LAURENS

June 11, 1778.

Dear Sir: I thank you for your favour of the 8th. which was duly received.

I must take the freedom to hint to you, that if in the packets transmitted by this conveyance there are any Letters for persons, with whom you are not acquainted, or in whose firmness and attachment you have not an entire confidence, it may not be improper to open them. This I am persuaded would be the case; However, I am the more induced to mention it, as the obvious, nay almost sole, design of Several Letters which have come to my hands, is to give the Commissioners the most favourable characters, for candour and integrity and to establish a belief, that they have the most competent and extensive powers. The Letters coming sealed was sufficient to awaken my suspicions, and I shall not transmit a single one of this complexion. You and I, I am convinced, move on the same principle, and therefore I am certain, I hazard nothing in taking this liberty. I am, etc.[80]

80. The draft, in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison, is marked "Private."

To WILLIAM EDEN

Head Quarters, June 12, 1778.

Sir: On Wednesday Evening I had the Honor to receive your polite favour of the 9th. Instant. If an occasion shall present itself of an interview with Doctor Ferguson, you may rely, Sir, I shall esteem myself happy in shewing him the civilities due to his literary and social character.

I thank you much for your care of the Letters addressed to myself. The one from your Brother [Sir Robt.][91] gave me particular satisfaction, as it not only excited a pleasing remembrance of our past intimacy and friendship, during his residence in this Country, but also served to show that they had not been impaired by an opposition of political sentiments. And you will permit me to add, that if the situation of National Affairs would admit, I should be no less desirous of cultivating your acquaintance than you would be of mine.

With respect to the other Letters, I shall transmit them to the persons to whom they are directed, as opportunities may offer. I have the Honor, etc.[92]

91. Colonial Governor of Maryland.

92. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The words in brackets were inserted by Washington.

To GOVERNOR GEORGE JOHNSTONE

Head Quarters, June 12, 1778.

Sir: I have had the Honor to receive your very obliging Letter of the 10th. Inst.

The sentiments you are pleased to entertain of me, cannot but be extremely flattering, separated as we are, by the circumstances of our political stations; and have a just claim to my [warmest] acknowledgements. If in the course of events, an opportunity should be afforded me, you may be assured I shall take pleasure in shewing Doctor Ferguson every civility, it may be in my power to render.

I shall ever be happy to relieve the anxiety of parted friends, and where Letters are calculated, either to this end, or to effect matters of mere private concern, they will have the earliest conveyance. I have the Honor, etc.[93]

93. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The word in brackets was inserted by Washington.

***To MAJOR GENERAL CHARLES LEE**

Head Quarters, June 15, 1778.

Dear Sir: I have received your Letter of this date, and thank you, as I shall do any Officer over whom I have the honor to be placed for his opinion and advice, in matters of importance; especially

when they proceed from the fountain of candor, and not from a captious spirit, or an itch for criticism.[17]

No man can be more sensible of the defects of our present arrangement than I am. No man more sensible of the advantage of having the Commander, and commanded of every Corps well known to each other, and the Army properly organized than myself. Heaven and my own Letters to Congress can Witness, on the one hand, how ardently I have laboured to effect these points during the past Winter and Spring. The Army on the other, bear witness to the effect. Suspended between the old and new establishment, I could govern myself by neither, with propriety; and the hourly expectation of a Comee. for the purposes of reducing some Regiments, and changing the establishment of all rendered a mere temporary alteration (which from its uncertainty and shortness could effect no valuable end) unnecessary; that I had a *power* to shift regiments, and alter Brigades, (every day if I chose to do it) I

17. Lee had written to Washington (June 15) regarding the division command arrangements and had also, somewhat officiously, given his opinion that the British would not march through Jersey after evacuating Philadelphia. Elias Boudinot also thought the enemy would not march through Jersey to New York; but he does not seem to have agreed with the rest of Lee's idea, which should be analyzed in connection with Lee's “Scheme” which he had submitted to Sir William Howe:

“My opinion is, that (if they are in a capacity to act offensively) They will either immediately from Philadelphia or by a feint in descending the river as far as New Castle, and then turning to the right march directly and rapidly towards Lancaster, by which means They will draw us out of our present position, and oblige us to fight on terms perhaps very disadvantageous; or that They will leave Lancaster and this Army wide on the right, endeavour to take Post on the lower parts of the Susquehanna, and by securing a communication with their Ships sent round into the Bay for this purpose, be furnished with the means of encouraging and feeding the Indian War broke out on the Western Frontier; this last plan I mention as a possibility but as less probable than the former.

”If They are not in a capacity to act offensively, but are still determined to keep footing on the Continent, there are strong reasons to think, that They will not shut themselves up in Towns, but take possession of some tract of Country which will afford em elbow room and sustenance, and which is so situated as to be the most effectually protected by their command of the Waters; and I have particular reasons to think, that They have cast their eyes for this purpose on the lower Counties of Delaware, and some of the Maryland Counties on the Eastern Shore…If They are resolv'd on this plan it certainly will be very difficult to prevent 'em or remove 'em afterwards as their Shipping will give em such mighty advantages. Whether They do or do not adopt any one of these plans there can be no inconvenience arise from considering the subject, nor from devising means of defeating their purposes, on the supposition that They will.

“in short, I think it would be proper to put these quries to ourselves, shou'd They march directly towards Lancaster and the Susquehanna or indirectly from N. Castle what are We to do? shou'd They (tho it is less probable) leave this Army and even Lancaster wide on the right, and endeavour to establish themselves on the lower parts of the Susquehanna, what are We to do? and shou'd they act only on the defensive and attempt to secure to themselves some such tract of Country as I have mention'd what measures are We to pursue? these are matters, I really, think worthy of consideration.”

Lee's letter is in the *Washington Papers* in the Library of Congress.

never entertaind a doubt of, but the *efficacy* of the measure I have very much questioned; as frequent changes, without apparent causes, are rather ascribed to Caprice and whim, than to stability and judgment.

The mode of shifting the Major Generals from the comd. of a division in the present tranquil state of affairs to a more important one in action and other capitol movements of the whole Army is not less disagreeable to my Ideas, than repugnant to yours, but is the result of necessity; for having recommended to Congress the appointment of Lieutt. Generals for the discharge of the latter duties, and they having neither approved, or disapproved the measure, I am hung in suspence, and being

unwilling, on the one hand to give up the benefits resulting from the Command of Lieutt. Generals in the cases above mentd.; or to deprive the Divisions of their Major Genls. for ordinary duty, on the other, I have been led to adopt a kind of medium course which, tho not perfect in itself, is, in my judgment the best that circumstances will admit of, till Congress shall have decided upon the proposition before them; Your remark upon the disadvantages of an Officers being suddenly removed from the command of a divn. to a Wing, tho not without foundation as I have before acknowledged does not apply so forceably in the present case as you seem to think it does. There is no Majr. Genl. in this Army that is not pretty well known, and who may if he

chooses it soon become acquainted with such Officers as may be serviceable to him. Their Commands being anounced in genl. orders and the Army prepared for their receptn. a Major Genl. may go with the same ease, to the Comd. of a Wing consisting of five Brigades, as to a division composed of two, and will be received with as little confusion, as the Brigades remain perfect, and no changes have happened in them.

Mr. Boudenots conjecture of the enemys intention altho it does not coincide with mine, is nevertheless, worthy of attention; and the evils of the measure have been guarded against as far as it has been in my power, by removing the Stores, Provisions, &ca. as fast as possible from the Head of Elk, the Susquehanna &ca., and by exploring, the Country, Surveying the Roads, and marking the defiles, and strong grounds, an Engineer and three Surveyors having been employed in this Work near a Month, though their report is not yet come in. Boats are also prepared on the Susquehanna for the Transportation of our Troops, in case we should find it necessary to move that way. But nevertheless, it gives me real pleasure to find you have turned your thoughts that way and are revolving the questions contained in your Letter; and here let me again assure you that I shall be always happy in a free communication of your Sentiments upon any important subject relative to the Service; and only beg that they may come directly to myself; the custom which many Officers have of speaking freely

of things and reprobating measures which upon investigation may be found to be unavoidable is never productive of good, and often of very mischievous consequences. I am, &c.

***To JOSEPH REED**

Valley-forge, June 15, 1778.

Dear Sir: I thank you very much for your friendly favor of this date, and your polite attention in submitting the draught of your Letter to Govr. Johnstone to my perusal. I return it again, but before you transcribe a fair copy I would wish to see you upon the subject of it; perhaps there are some parts of it, which might receive a small alteration. In the present situation of things, all corrispondence of this nature must, and will be weighed and scanned with a scrupulous exactness; and even compliment, if carried far, may not pass entirely uncensured.[16]

There is another consideration wch. weighs with me, Congress, at this instant perhaps, are deliberating on an answer to give the Commissioners to the address wch. they have received from them, should your letter therefore (considered as coming from a Member) contains sentiments repugnant

16. Reed's letter to Gov. George Johnstone, dated June 13, 1778, is in the *Washington Papers*. It is printed in Reed's *Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed* (Philadelphia: 1847), vol. 1, p. 377, under date of June 14, 1778.

to theirs, an unfavourable use more than probably, will be made of it. I am, etc.

***To JAMES HUNTER**

Valley-forge, June 15, 1778.

Sir: Your favor of the 12th. Ulto. did not come to my hands till yesterday; the Land therein mentioned hath not been legally conveyed, or properly secured, to me by my Mother; this reason if no other would prevent me from selling either the Land, or the Wood that grows on it; but I have other reasons against it, equally forceable; one is, that I have had an intention, which my present situation and absence have been the only bar to the execution, of building a Saw Mill, for

the purpose of sawing up the Pines which I am told the Land abounds in, and which constitutes the chief value of it provided its bowels have been stripped of all the Ore, and which is denied by some.

If no disadvantage, on acct. of Roads into the Land, and the consequent destruction of Wood and Timber by the Miners, and their followers, was to

result I shd. have no objection so far as the matter depended upon me, the thing at the same time appearing absolutely necessary for the well being of your Works, to part with the Ore upon terms which shall be adjudged reasonable between Man and Man. Wishing you success in your undertaking, I am etc.

***To HENRY LAURENS**

Paramous, July 11, 1778.

Dear Sir: I, this morning, had the pleasure of receiving your polite and friendly letter of the 7th.

My warmest acknowledgements are due for the indulgent terms in which you express your sense of my conduct, in our late rencounter, with the British Army. Not to be pleased with the approbation and esteem of any of the virtuous and discerning part of my countrymen would indicate a want of sensibility; but I assure you, My dear Sir, there is no man on whose good opinion and friendship, I set a higher value than on your's; and every fresh instance, I receive of them, cannot fail of affording me the most sincere and genuine

satisfaction. At the same time, it is both a pleasing and humiliating consideration to me, that the partiality of my friends greatly overates the importance of my Services. With every Sentiment of respect and affection, I am, etc.[9]

To WILLIAM HENRY DRAYTON[22]

Head Quarters, Paramus, July 12, 1778.

Dear Sir: Permit me to assure you, that the cordial terms of your obliging favour of the 5th. afford me the most sensible pleasure. It, naturally, is my ardent wish, that my well-meant endeavours, for the prosperity of my country, may meet the approbation of my countrymen; and I cannot but be peculiarly flattered by every instance of esteem, from the discerning part of them.

The want of a longer personal acquaintance, rather increases, than lessens my obligation, for your politeness on the present occasion, which certainly could need no apology on that, or on any other, account. I need not say, I shall be happy, in every occasion, of cultivating a continuance of your friendship and convincing you that I am etc.[23]

9. From the original in the possession of Judge E. A. Armstrong, Princeton, N. J., to whom the editor is indebted for many courtesies.

22. South Carolina Delegate to Congress.

23. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

To HENRY LAURENS

Camp near White Plains, July 24, 1778.

Dear Sir: I had yesterday the pleasure to receive your favor of the 18th Inst. with the inclosure and packets, which you mentioned.

I should have been sorry, if you or Monsieur Gerard had found the smallest difficulty in recommending the packets for the Count D'Estaing to my care; and I am happy to inform you, that they will meet with a speedy and safe conveyance to him by an Officer, who has set off for Rhode Island.

It is very pleasing as well as interesting to hear, that prizes are already finding the way into the Delaware. The event seems the more agreeable, as that Navigation but yesterday as it were, could

scarcely contain the Enemy's fleet and their numerous captures, which were constantly crowding in. Happy change! and I should hope, that the Two prizes which have entered, will be succeeded by many more. The want of information on the one hand of

Philadelphia's being evacuated, and the countenance which our armed Vessels will derive from the French Squadron on our Coast, must throw several into our possession.

The second Epistle from the Commissioners of which you have so obligingly favoured me with a Copy, strikes me in the same point of view that it did you. It is certainly puerile and does not border a little on indecorum, notwithstanding their professions of the regard they wish to pay to decency. It is difficult to determine on an extensive scale, tho part of their design is tolerably obvious, what the Gentlemen would be at. Had I the honor of being a Member of Congress, I do not know how I might feel upon the occasion; but it appears to me, the performance must be received with a sort of indignant pleasantry, on account of its manner, on the one hand, and, on the other as being truly typical of that confusion, in which their Prince and Nation are.[25]

By the time this reaches you, I expect the Messrs. Nevilles[26] will be in Philadelphia. From the Certificates these Gentlemen have provided, if I may hazard a conjecture, they are in quest of promotion, particularly the Elder. How far their views may extend, I cannot determine; but I dare predict, they will be sufficiently high. My present intention is to tell you, and with freedom I do it, that Congress cannot be well too cautious on this head. I do not mean or wish, to derogate from the merit of Messrs.

25. President Laurens had written to Washington (July 18) regarding the Commissioner's second letter to Congress: “If I dared to venture an opinion from a very cursory reading of the performance, it would be, that this is more puerile than any thing I have seen from the other side, since the commencement of our present dispute, with a little dash of insolence, as unnecessary as it will be unavailing.” The puerile part of this second letter, which was dated July 11, was that the Commissioners evaded the positive requirement of Congress, that as a preliminary of negotiation there must be an acknowledgment of independence, or a withdrawal of the King's fleets and armies.

The indecorous and offensive part was that the Commissioners demand to know by what authority Congress assumed the prerogative of making treaties with foreign nations, and claimed the right to be informed of the particulars contained in the treaty with France, intimating that an appeal might be made to the people, that they might judge whether such an alliance ought to be a reason for continuing the war. Congress voted (July 18) that no answer should be returned to the letter, but ordered it to be published.

26. Chevalier de La Neuville, and his brother, Noirmont de La Neuville. The chevalier was a major in the French army and became Inspector General in the Northern Army and a brigadier by brevet. Noirmont de La Neuville became a captain and aide to Conway and, later, a major by brevet.

Nevilles. The opportunities I have had, will not permit me to speak decisively for, or against it. However, I may observe from a certificate, which I have seen, written by themselves, or at least by one of them and signed by Genl. Parsons probably through surprise or irresolution, that they are not bad at giving themselves a good character; and I will further add, if they meet with any great promotion, I am fully convinced it will be illy borne by our own Officers; and that it will be the cause of infinite discontent. The ambition of these men (I do not mean of the Messrs. Nevilles in particular, but of the Natives of their Country and Foreigners in general) is unlimited and unbounded; and the singular instances of rank, which have been conferred upon them, in but too many cases, have occasioned general dissatisfaction and general complaint. The feelings of our own Officers have been much hurt by it, and their ardour and love for the service greatly damped. Should a like proceeding still be practised, it is not easy to say what extensive murmurings and consequences may ensue. I will further add, that we have already a full proportion of Foreign Officers in our General Councils and should their number be increased, it may happen upon many occasions, that their voices may equal if not exceed, the rest. I trust you think me so much a Citizen of the World, as to believe that I am not easily warped or led away, by attachments merely local or American; Yet, I confess, I am not entirely without them, nor does it appear to me that they are unwarrantable,

if confined within proper limits. Fewer promotions in the foreign line, would have been productive of more harmony, and made our warfare more agreeable to all parties. The frequency of them, is the source of jealousy and of disunion. We have many, very many, deserving Officers, who are not opposed to merit wheresoever it is found, nor insensible of the advantages derived from a long service in an experienced Army, nor to the principles of policy. Where any of these principles mark the way to rank, I am persuaded, they yield a becoming and willing acquiescence; but where they are not the basis, they feel severely. I will dismiss the subject, knowing with you, I need not labour, either a case of Justice, or of policy. I am etc.

P.S. The Baron Steuben will also be in Philadelphia in a day or two. The ostensible cause for his going, is to fix more certainly with Congress his duties, as Inspector General, which is necessary. However, I am disposed to believe the real one is to obtain an actual command in the line as a Major General; and he may urge a competition set up by Monsr. Neville for the Inspector's place, on this side the Hudson, and a denial by him of his the Barons authority, as an Argument to effect it, and the granting him the Post, as a mean of satisfying both.

I regard and I esteem the Baron, as an Assiduous, Intelligent and an experienced Officer; but, you may rely on it, if such is his view and he should accomplish it, we shall have the whole line of Brigadiers in confusion. They have said but little about his rank as Major General, as he has not had an actual command over them; But when we marched from Brunswic, as there were but few Major Generals and almost the whole of the Brigadrs. engaged at the Court Martial, either as Members or Witnesses, I appointed him pro tempore and so expressed it in orders, to conduct a Wing to the North River. This measure, tho' founded in evident necessity, and not designed to produce to the Brigadiers the least possible injury, excited great uneasiness and has been the source of complaint.[27] The truth is, we have been very unhappy in a variety of appointments, and our own Officers much injured. Their feelings from this cause, have become extremely sensible, and the most delicate touch gives them pain. I write as a Friend, and therefore with freedom. The Baron's services in the line he is in, can be singular, and the Testimonials he has already received are honorable. It will also be material to have the point of the Inspector Generalship, now in

question between him and Monsr. Neville adjusted. The appointment of the latter it is said, calls him Inspector General in the Army commanded by Genl. Gates, and under this, as I am informed, he denies any Subordination to the Baron and will not know him in his *Official capacity* . There can be but one head. Yours.[28]

27. See Alexander Hamilton's letter to Elias Boudinot, July 26, 1778, in Lodge's *Works of Hamilton*, vol. 9, P. 147.

28. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison and is indorsed: “Private.”

***To JOHN PARKE CUSTIS**

White plains, August 3, 1778.

Dear Custis: Your Letter of the 15th[92] Ulto. from New Kent came to my hands by the last Post, and gave me the pleasure of hearing that you, Nelly, and the little ones were well.

You should not delay recording my Deed to you, because you cannot, I am told, make a proper conveyance to Henry till this happens, the postponing of it, therefore, may not be a pleasing circumstance to him. As you seemed so desirous of living in Fairfax, as I know it will be an agreeable measure to your Mother, and a very pleasing one to me, I am very glad to find that you have purchased Robt. and Gerrd. Alexanders Lands as they are pleasantly situated, and capable of great improvement. These two Gentln. not only knew how to take advantage of the times but resolved to profit by them and here, early, and in time; as a friend and one who has your welfare at heart, let me entreat you to consider the consequences of paying compound Interest. Your having 24 Yrs. to pay Mr. Robt. Alexander, without his having it in his power to call upon you for any part of the principal or Interest, is in my judgment an unfortunate circumstance for you; a Dun, now and then might serve as a Monitor, to remind you of the evil tendency of paying

92. This letter is not found in the *Washington Papers*.

compound Interest, and the fatal consequence which may result from letting a matter of this sort Sleep without it; you may be plunged into a most enormous debt without thinking of it, or giving that timely attention, which the importance of it requires. I presume you are not unacquainted with the fact of £ 12,000 at compound Interest amounting to upwards of £ 48,000 in twenty four Years. Reason therefore must convince you that unless you avert the evil by a deposit of the like Sum in the loan Office, and there hold it sacred to the purpose of accumulating Interest in the proportion you pay, that you will have abundant cause to repent it. No Virginia Estate (except a very few under the best of management) can stand simple Interest how then can they bear compound Interest. You may be led away with Ideal profits; you may figure great matters to yourself to arise from this, that, or t'other Scheme, but depend upon it they will only exist in the imagination, and that year after year will produce nothing but disappointment and new hopes; these will waste time, whilst your Interest is accumg. and the period approaching when you will be called upon to be prepared perhaps to advance 4 times the original purchase money. Remember therefore, that as a friend, I call upon you with my advice to shun this rock by depositing the Sum you are to pay Alexander, in the loan Office; let it be considered as Alexanders money, and Sacred to that use and that only, for if you shd. be of opinion that pay day being a great way off will give you

time enough to provide for it and consequently to apply your present Cash to other uses it does not require the gift of prophecy to predict the Sale of the purchased Estate or some other to pay for it.

After this dissertation upon a Subject which perhaps you may think I have no business *now* to intermeddle in I shall approve your proposal for selling the Lands mentioned in your Letter to me, provided you can get an adequate price but one circumstance should not be forgotten by you in these transactions and that is that *your* Lands will go but a little way in the purchase of *others* if you sell at three or four pounds an Acre and give twelve; after this remark I shall only add that if Mrs. Washington has no objections to your selling *her thirds* in *your Lands* about Williamsburg, *or elsewhere* I have not. The loan Office Interest, of whatever Sum they fetch, I shall be content to receive whilst I have any concern in it and your Mother, if she should be the Survivor, consenting to do the same removes every impediment and difficulty to yr. selling and places the matter in

my opinion upon a fair, just, and equitable footing, as you will have the principal, if you choose it, paying the Interest or may deposite it in the loan Office, to raise the Interest there (if more desirable) during her life when the whole will revert to you as the Land would do.

As you seem so well disposed to live in Fairfax and have now fixed the matter by your late

purchases of the Alexanders, I should, were I in your place, extend my Ideas and views further than you have done, that is over and above the Sale of the Eastern Shore, Williamsburg and the Hanover Lands with the Lotts in the City I would sell, or exchange, the whole below; for, depend upon it, that whilst you live in Fairfax you will get very little benefit from an Estate in New Kent or King William, unless you have much better luck than most who have Plantations at a distance.

When I advise selling, I would not be understood to mean at all hazards. I would try in the first place, what I could get for my own Lands without bargaining for them unless it was conditionally. I would then see whether some large Tracts of Land (not leased out) could not be had in Fairfax, Loudoun, Fauquier, Berkeley, or Frederick, or, on the Maryland side of the Potomack and upon what terms they could be purchased; you will then from a comparative view be a judge of the propriety of selling your own and buying others or holding fast what you have. Among those who hold large Tracts in Fairfax are the Fitzhughs, Mr. B. Fairfax, &ca. In Loudoun and Fauquier, The Carters (who probably would be glad to exchange) the Lees, Turbervilles, Page, Burwells, &ca;. Most of these being low landers, I think it not improbable but that bargains may be had of them, either by purchase or exchange.

With candour I have given you my opinion upon the several matters contained in your Letter. If it is

faulty, it proceeds from error in judgment not from the want of Attachment, affection to you, or honest sincerety and is open to correction. I am, &c.

***To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE**

White plains, August 10, 1778.

My dear Marqs.: Your favor of the 6th. Instr. which came to my hands yesterday, afforded a fresh proof of the noble principles on which you act, and has a just claim to my sincere and hearty thanks.

The common cause, of which you have been a Zealous supporter, would I know, be benefitted by Genl. Greene's presence at Rhode Island, as he is a native of that State, has an interest with the People, and a thorough knowledge of the Country; and therefore I accepted his proffered Services; but was a little uneasy lest you should conceive that, it was intended to lessen your Command. Merely as Qr. Master Genl., Genl. Greene did not incline to act in a detached part of the Army; nor was it to be expected; It became necessary therefore to give him a Command, and consequently, to divide the Continental Troops. Your chearful acquiescence to the

Measure, after being appointed to the Command of the Brigades that Marched from this Army, obviated every difficulty, and gave me singular pleasure.

I am very happy to find that the Standards of France and America are likely to be united under your Commd. at Rhode Island. I am persuaded that the supporters of each will be emulous to acquire honor, and promote your glory upon this occasion.

The Courier to Count D'Estaing is waiting, I have only time therefore to assure you, that with the most perfect esteem, and exalted regard, I have the honor etc.

***To LUND WASHINGTON**

White plains, August 15, 1778.

Dear Lund: Your Letter of the 29th. Ulto., Inclosing a line from Captn. Marshall[25] to you came to my hands Yesterday. I have no reason to doubt the truth of your observation, that this Gentleman's Land, and others equally well situated, and under like circumstances, will sell very high. The depreciation of our Money, the high prices of every article

25. Capt. Thomas Hanson Marshall.

of produce, and the redundancy of circulating paper,will, I am persuaded, have an effect upon the price of land; nor is it to be wondered at, when a Barfl. of Corn which used to sell for 10/ will now fetch 40; when a Bark of Porke that formerly could be had for £3. sells for £15, and so with respect to other Articles which serves to enable the Man who has been fortunate enough to succeed in raising these things to pay accordingly; but, unfortunately for me, this is not my case; as my Estate in Virginia is scarce able to support itself whilst it is not possible for it to derive any benefit for my labors here.

I have premised these things to shew my inability, not my unwillingness, to purchase the Lands in my own Neck at (almost) any price. and this I am yet very desirous of doing if it could be accomplished by any means in my power, in the way of Barter for other Land; for Negroes (of whom I every day long more and more to get clear of) or in short for any thing else (except Breeding Mares and Stock of other kinds) which I have in my possession; but for money I cannot, I want the means. Marshalls Land alone, at the rate he talks of, would amount to (if my memory of the quantity he holds, is right) upwards of £3000, a sum I have little chance, if I had much inclination, to pay; and therefore would not engage for it, as I am resolved not to incumber myself with Debt.

Marshall is not a necessitous Man,

is only induced to offer his Land for Sale in expectation of a high price; and knowing perhaps but too well my wish to become possessed of the Land in that Neck will practice every deception in his power to work me (or you in my behalf) up to his price, or he will not sell. this should be well looked into, and guarded against. If, as you think, and as I believe, there is little chance of getting more (at any rate) than the reversion of French's Land,[26] I have no objection to the Land on which Morris[27] lives going in exchange for Marshalls, or its being sold for the purpose of paying for it, but remember, it will not do to contract at a high price for the one, before you can be assured of an adequate sum for the other; without this, by means of the arts which may be practised, you may give much and receive little, which is neither my Inclination nor intention to do. If Negroes could

be given in Exchange for this Land of Marshalls, or Sold at a proportionable price, I should prefer it to the Sale of Morris's Land as I still have some latent hope that Frenchs Lands may be had of D —[28] for it. but either I wd. part with.

Having so fully expressed my Sentiments concerning this matter, I shall only add a word or two respecting Barry's Land.[29] The same motives which induce a purchase in the one case prevail in the other, and however unwilling I may be to part with that small tract I hold on difficult Run (containing by Deed, if I recollect right 275 acres, but by measurement upwards of 300) on acct.

26. Daniel French. The land was purchased from his widow, Mrs. Penelope French.

27. John Morris, overseer on Dogue Run.

28. Sampson Darrell(?).

29. On Dogue Run.

of the valuable Mill Seat Meadow Grds. &ca. yet I will do it for the sake of the other but if the matter is not managed with some degree of address you will not be able to effect an exchange without giving instead of receiving, Boot. For this Land also I had rather give Negroes, if Negroes would do. for to be plain I wish to get quit of Negroes.

I find by a Letter from Mr. Jones[30] that he has bought the Phaeton which you sold Mr. Geo: Lewis[31] and given him £300 for it. I mention this, with no other view than to remind you of the necessity of getting the Money for wch. you sold it, of Lewis (if you have not already done it). He, probably, will propose to settle the matter with me, but this, for a reason I could mention, I desire may be avoided.

In your Letter of the 29th. you say you do not suppose I would choose to cut down my best Land, and build Toba. Houses, but what am I to do, or, how am I to live. I cannot Support myself if I

make nothing, and it is evident from your acct. that I cannot raise Wheat if this Crop is likely to share the fate of the three last. I should have less reluctance to clearing my richest Lands (for I think the Swamps are these and would afterwards do for Meadow) than building Houses.

I should not incline to sell the Land I had of Adams[32] unless it should be for a price proportioned to what I must give for others. I could wish you to press my

30. Joseph Jones. He was a Member of the Continental Congress from Virginia, 1777, 1778, 1780-1783; judge of the Virginia general court, 1778-79 and 1789-90; member of convention which ratified the United States Constitution and major general of Virginia Militia.

31. Capt. George Lewis, nephew of Washington.

32. Daniel Jenifer Adams. This was the Charles County, Md., land.

Tenants to be punctual in the payment of their Rents; right and justice with respect to myself requires it; and no injury on the contrary a real service to themselves as the Man who finds it difficult to pay one rent will find it infinitely more so to pay two, and his distresses multiply as the rents increase. I am &c.

***To HENRY LAURENS**

Head Quarters, August 20, 1778.

Dear Sir: I am now to acknowledge my obligations for your favor of the 31st. Ulto.[52] and for its several Inclosures.

The conduct of Governor Johnstone has been certainly reprehensible, to say no worse of it, and so I think the world will determine. His Letters to Messrs. Morris and Reed are very significant and the points to which they conclude quite evident. They are, if I may be allowed so to express myself, of a pulsefeeling cast, and the offer to the latter thro the Lady, a direct attempt upon his integrity.

When these things are known, he must share largely in public contempt, and the more so from the opposite parts he has taken.[53]

I am sorry you troubled yourself with transmitting me copies and extracts of your Letters to the French

52. Laurens's letter of July 31 is not found in the *Washington Papers*. It is printed, in part, by Burnett, *Letters of Members of Congress*, vol. 3, P. 355, from Laurens's letter book in the South Carolina Historical Society.

53. Governor Johnstone, presuming on his former friendships, had written to Robert Morris, Joseph Reed, and Francis Dana, then members of the Continental Congress, upon matters improper to have broached to them in his capacity as a British Peace Commissioner. Congress resolved (July 9) that all letters received by any of the members from the British Commissioners, or any subject of the King of Great Britain, should be laid before it. Johnstone's letters were accordingly laid before Congress and found by that body to be highly objectionable. The “Declaration” of August 11 (previously noted) was the result. In it was recited the story of Mrs. Ferguson's attempt in June to bribe Joseph Reed with £10,000 and a high office in his Majesty's gift. Reed reported his reply to have been, “He was not worth purchasing, but such as he was, the king of Great Britain was not rich enough to do it.” Congress resolved thereon, “That as Congress feel, so they ought to demonstrate, the highest and most pointed indignation against such daring and atrocious attempts to corrupt their integrity.” The “Declaration” of August 11 was the result. An effort was made to add to this a resolve, “That Congress will not, in any degree, negotiate with the present British commissioners in America, for restoring peace” but it was voted down by seven States to three, with one, North Carolina, divided.

Officers, in answer to their applications for Rank. Your word, Sir, will always have the fullest credit with me whenever you shall be pleased to give it upon any occasion; and I have only to regret that there has not been the same degree of decision and resolution in every Gentleman, as you have used in these instances. If there had, it would not only have contributed much to the tranquility of the

Army, but preserved the rights of our own Officers. With respect to Brevet Commissions, I know many of the French Gentlemen have obtained nothing more. That these were intended as merely honorary; and that they are not so objectionable as the other sort; however these are attended with great inconveniencies, for the instant they gain a point upon you, no matter what their primary professions and engagements were, they extend their views and are incessant in teasing for actual command. The reason for their pressing for printed Commissions in the usual form, in preference to the Brevits you give them is obvious. The former are better calculated to favor their Schemes as they import an idea of real command, and of consequence afford them grounds for their future sollicitations for the purpose. I am well pleased with Monsr. Girards declaration, and if he adheres to it, he will prevent many frivolous and unwarrantable applications; for finding their pursuits not seconded by his interest, many of the Gentlemen will be discouraged, and relinquish every hope of success.

Nor am I insensible of the propriety of your wish respecting our friend the Marquis. His Countrymen soon find access to his heart and he is but too apt afterwards to interest himself in their behalf, without having a sufficient knowledge of their Merit, or a proper regard to their extravagant views. I will be done upon the Subject. I am sure you have been severely punished by their importunities as well as myself.

The performance ascribd to Mr. Mauduit[54] is really curious as coming from him, when we consider his past conduct. He is a sensible writer, and his conversion at an earlier day, with many others that have lately happened, might have availed his Country much. His reasoning is plain and forcible and within the compass of every understanding.

I have nothing new to inform you of. My public Letter to Congress yesterday contained my last advices from Rhode Island. I hope in a few days from the high spirits and expectations of General Sullivan, that I shall have the happiness to congratulate you on our Success in that Quarter. I am, etc.[55]

[M.L.]

***To BRIGADIER GENERAL THOMAS NELSON**

Camp at the White-plains, August 20, 1778.

My dear Sir: In what terms can I sufficiently thank

54. Israel Mauduit. The performance was, probably, one of his pamphlets on the conduct of the Howes in America.

55. This was a private and unofficial letter.

you for your polite attention to me, and agreeable present? and, which is still more to the purpose, with what propriety can I deprive you of a valuable, and favourite Horse? You have pressed me once, nay twice, to accept him as a gift; as a proof of my sincere attachment to, and friendship for you, I obey, with this assurance, that from none but a Gentn. for whom I have the highest regard, would I do this, notwithstanding the distressed situation I have been in for want of one.

I am heartily disappointed at a late resolution of Congress for the discontinuance of your Corps, because I pleased myself with the prospect of seeing you, and many other Gentn. of my acquaintance from Virginia, in Camp. As you had got to Philadelphia, I do not think the saving, or difference of expense (taking up the matter even upon that ground, which under present circumstances I think a very erroneous one) was by any means an object suited to the occasion.[56]

The arrival of the French Fleet upon the Coast of America is a great, and striking event; but the operations of it have been injured by a number of unforeseen and unfavourable circumstances, which, tho they ought not to detract from the merit, and good intention of our great Ally, has nevertheless lessened the importance of their Services in a great degree. The length of the passage in the first instance was a capital misfortune, for had even one of common length taken place, Lord Howe with the British Ships of

56. Congress had resolved on March 2 that it be earnestly recommended to the young men of property and spirit in the States from Massachusetts to North Carolina, respectively, to form themselves into volunteer troops of light cavalry, to serve at their own expense, except in the articles of provisions and forage, and to join the main army on May 1, 1778, or earlier if possible. Nelson had arrived at Philadelphia with a troop from Virginia, but as the British had evacuated that city Congress decided that the employment of such corps was unnecessary. It, therefore, thanked Nelson and the "gentlemen under his command for their brave, generous, and patriotic efforts in the cause of their country." (See *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Aug. 8, 1778.)

War and all the Transports in the River Delaware must, inevitably, have fallen; and Sir Harry must have had better luck than is commonly dispensed to Men of his profession, under such circumstances, if he and his Troops had not shared (at least) the fate of Burgoyne. The long passage of Count D'Estaing was succeeded by an unfavourable discovery at the hook, which hurt us in two respects; first in a defeat of the enterprize upon New York; the Shipping, and Troops at that place; and next, in the delay that was used in ascertaining the depth of Water over the Bar; which was essential to their entrance into the Harbour of New York, and lastly, after the enterprize upon Rhode Island had been planned, and was in the moment of execution, that Lord Howe with the British Ships should interpose, merely to create diversion, and draw the French fleet from the Island was again unlucky, as the Count had not return'd on the 17th. to the Island, tho drawn of from it the 10th; by which means the Land operations were retarded, and the whole subject to a miscarriage in case of the arrival of Byrons Squadron.

I do not know what to make of the enemy at New York; whether their stay at that place is the result of choice, or the effect of necessity, proceeding from an inferiority in the Fleet, want of Provision, or other Causes, I know not, but certain it is that, if it is not an act of necessity it is profoundly misterious unless they look for considerable reinforcements and are waiting the arrival of them to commence

their operations, time will shew.

It is not a little pleasing, nor less wonderful to contemplate, that after two years Manœuvring and undergoing the strangest vicissitudes that perhaps ever attended any one contest since the creation both Armies are brought back to the very point they set out from and, that that, which was the offending party in the beginning is now reduced to the use of the spade and pick axe for defence. The hand of Providence has been so conspicuous in all this, that he must be worse than an infidel that lacks faith, and more than wicked, that has not gratitude enough to acknowledge his obligations, but, it will be time enough for me to turn preacher, when my present appointment ceases; and therefore, I shall add no more on the Doctrine of Providence; but make a tender of my best respects to your good Lady; the Secretary and other friends and assure you that with the most perfect regard I am etc.

P.S. Since writing the foregoing, I have been favoured with your Letter of the 25th. Ulto. from Baltimore, and 9th. Instt. from Philadelphia. The method you propose to take with the Public Horses in your volunteer Corps will be very proper and agreeable to me.

***To MAJOR GENERAL NATHANAEL GREENE**

White-plains, August 21, 1778.

Dear Sir: On Wednesday afternoon I received your favor of the 12th[58] and 13th Inst. by Mr. Hulet the Pilot, who did not arrive in Camp 'till then. I am much obliged by your particular relation of matters, and request that you will continue it from time to time whenever opportunity will permit.

There is one circumstance in your relation, of which I was exceedingly sorry to hear.[59] You will readily know which it is. I wish the utmost harmony to prevail as it is essential to success; and that no occasions be omitted on our part to cultivate it.

Your operations have been greatly retarded by the late violent storm; but as it is now over, I trust things will go on prosperously and that you will be rejoined by Count D'Estaing who has been kept out so long by it. Indeed from General Sullivans Letter of the 17th., I flatter myself you will have

made a compleat reduction of the Enemy's force before this reaches you, and that the next advices I receive will announce it. If the fact is otherwise, let me beseech you to guard against Sortee's and surprizes. The Enemy, depend upon it, will fall like a strong Man, will make many Sallies, and endeavor to possess themselves of, or destroy your Artillery; and in one of these,

58. At this date misunderstandings and antagonism were already existent between the American and French officers.

59. Greene's letters of August 12 and 13 are not found in the *Washington Papers*.

they once put the Militia into confusion, the consequences may be fatal.

By a Letter which I received yesterday from General Maxwell, inclosing one from Major Howell,[60] (who I have stationed at black point for the purpose of observn) it appears certain, that Sixteen of Lord Howe's fleet entered the Hook on the 17th. That on that, and the preceeding day, there had been heard severe Canonades at Sea, and that it was reported in New York that a 64 Gun Ship and several Transports had been taken by the French Squadron. I wish the fact may be so as to the capture, and that the Count may be with you to give a narrative of it himself. I cannot learn that Admiral Byron is arrived, nor do I believe that he is. It is said that one Ship only of the Cork Fleet is yet arrived. I have not time to add more, as Majr. Blodget[61] is in a hurry to proceed, than to assure you that I am, etc.[62]

***To HENRY LAURENS**

White plains, August 25, 1778.

Sir: If it be practicable, and convenient for

60. Maj. William Blodgett, aide to Greene.

61. Maj. Richard Howell, of the Second New Jersey Regiment.

62. From the *Nathanael Greene Papers* in the Library of Congress.

Congress to furnish me with some Specie (gold, as more portable,would be most convenient) valuable purposes I think would result from it. I have always found a difficulty in procuring Intelligence by the mean of Paper money; and I perceive that it increases. The period is critical and interesting, and the early knowledge of an Enemys intention, and movements too obvious to need explanation.

Having hinted to the Comee. of Congress when at Valley forge this want I address this Letter to you *now* rather as a private than public one; because I do not wish to have the matter again mentioned if Congress hath been apprized of my wants and find it inconvenient to comply with them.[89]

I have the pleasure to inform you that Colo. Laurens was well on the 23d. I have had a Letter from him of that date. With great respect and regard I have the honr., etc.

***To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE**

White plains, September 1, 1778.

My Dear Marquis: I have been honored with your favor

89. “This Morning upon enquiry I was confirmed in my belief that the former Camp Committee had made no application to Congress for Gold or Silver to be deposited in Your Excellency's bands for public uses, wherefore I suggested to two or three Members the necessity and utility of establishing such a fund and prevailed upon one of the Gentlemen to move the House for that purpose, the motion was accepted, and without a pause, the sum of five hundred Guineas voted, these I shall presently receive and if possible convey them to Your Excellency under the protection of Captain Josiah Stoddard of the Light Dragoons.”— *Henry Laurens to Washington*, Aug. 29, 1778. Lauren's letter is in the *Washington Papers* in the Library of Congress.

of the 25th Ulto.[50] by Monsr. Pontgebaud, and wish my time, which at present is taken up by a Comee. of Congress, would permit me to go fully into the contents; this, however is not in my power to do. But in one word, let me say, I feel every thing that hurts the Sensibility of a Gentleman; and, consequently, upon the present occasion, feel for you and for our good and great Allys the French. I feel myself hurt also at every illiberal, and unthinking reflection which may have been cast upon Count D'Estaing, or the conduct of the Fleet under his command; and, lastly I feel for my Country. Let me entreat you therefore my dear Marquis to take no exception at unmeaning expressions, uttered perhaps without Consideration, and in the first transport of disappointed hope. Every body Sir, who reasons, will acknowledge the advantages which we have derived from the French Fleet, and the Zeal of the Commander of it, but in a free, and republican Government, you cannot restrain the voice of the multitude; every Man will speak as he thinks, or more properly without thinking, consequently will judge of Effects without attending to the Causes. The censures which have been levelled at the Officers of the French Fleet, would more than probable, have fallen in a much higher degree upon a Fleet of our own (if we had one) in the same situation. It is the Nature of Man to be displeased with every thing that disappoints a favourite hope, or flattering project; and it is the folly of too many of them, to

50. Lafayette's letter of August 25 is not found in the *Washington Papers*; it is, however, printed by Sparks in his *Correspondence of the American Revolution* (Boston: 1853), vol. 2, p. 181. “I did not choose to trouble your friendship with sentiments of an afficted, injured heart, and injured by that very people I came from so far to love and support.” He then described the events at Rhode Island and that D'Estaing, “Bound by express orders from the King to go to Boston in case of an accident or superior fleet, engaged by the common sentiment of all the officers, *even of some American pilots*, that he would ruin his squadron in deferring his going to Boston,” took leave of Lafayette “with true affiction.” He then described the anger of the people in Rhode Island at the fleet's departure, “You can not have any idea of the horrors which were to be heard on that occasion. Many leaders themselves, finding they were disappointed, abandoned their minds to illiberality and ungratefulness.…I have no complaints at all to make to you against any one; but I lament, with you, that I have occasion of seeing so ungenerous sentiments in American hearts.…

All that I know is, that I shall be very happy to see the fleet cooperating with General Washington himself.…Farewell, my dear General; whenever I quit you, I meet with some disappointment and misfortune.”

Congress, on September 9, passed a resolve that the President inform the Marquis that Congress had a due sense of the sacrifice he made of his personal feelings in going to Boston and so missing the opportunity of acquiring glory in the field at Rhode Island. Lafayette, however, returned to Rhode Island while the rear-guard action in the retreat was being fought and brought off the pickets in a manner that gained applause.

condemn without investigating circumstances. Let me beseech you therefore my good Sir to afford a healing hand to the wound that, unintentionally, has been made. America esteems your Virtues and your Services, and admires the principles upon which you Act. Your Countrymen, in our Army look up to you as their Patron. The Count and his Officers consider you as a Man high in Rank, and high in estimation, here and in France; and I, your friend, have no doubt but that you will use your utmost endeavours to restore harmony, that the honour, glory, and mutual Interest of the two Nation's may be promoted and cemented in the firmest manner. I would add more on the subject, but am restraind for want of time, and therefore shall only add, that with every sentiment of esteem and regard, I am, My dear Marquis Yr. obedt. Servt. and Affecte. friend.

***To HENRY LAURENS**

White-plains, September 4, 1778.

Dear Sir: I am your debtor for two Letters bearing date the 28th and 29th Ulto.; the contents, shall be the subject of a future address.

Feeling myself interested in every occurrance that tends to the honor of your worthy Son; and sensible of the pleasure it must give you to hear his just plaudit, I take the liberty of transcribing a paragraph of General Greene's Letter to me (giving some Acct. of the conduct of particular Officers in the late Action on R. Island).

Our Troops behaved with great spirit, and the Brigade of Militia under the Command of Genl. Lovel advanced with great resolution, and in good order; and stood the fire of the Enemy with great firmness. Lt. Colo. Livingston,[77] Colo. Jackson,[78] and Colo. H. B. Livingston[79] did themselves great honor in the transactions of the day; but it is not in my power to do justice to Colo. Laurens who acted both the General and Partisan. His command of regular Troops was small, but he did every thing possible to be done, by their numbers.

Major Morris[80] affords me too good an oppertunity of returning your paper parcel of Gold, sent me by Messenger Jones to pass it by. I therefore embrace it, a more particular acknowledgement of, and thanks for this favour, shall, as I have before premised, be conveyed in my next; at present I shall only assure you, and with most perfect truth I can do it that with every sentiment of Affect. and regard, I have the honr. etc.[81]

77. Lieut. Col. William Smith Livingston, of Webb's Additional Continental regiment. He resigned in October, 1778.

78. Col. Henry Jackson, of an Additional Continental regiment.

79. Col. Henry Beekman Livingston, of the Fourth New York Regiment.

80. This was a private letter and not addressed to Laurens in his capacity as President of Congress.

81. Maj. Lewis Morris, jr., aide-de-camp to General Sullivan.

To GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

Head Quarters, White Plains, September 5, 1778.

Dear Sir: I was yesterday favoured with your Letter of the 31st. ulto. The One you allude to came to hand about five days before.

I thank you much for your very polite and friendly appeal, upon the subject of half bounty in Solid coin. The measure, I have no doubt, would produce an Instant benefit, so far as the engaging drafts &c might be concerned. But I am certain many mischievous and pernicious consequences would flow from it. It would have a tendency to depreciate our paper Money, which is already of no value, and give rise to infinite difficulties and irremoveable inconveniences. Nothing after this would do but Gold or Silver. All would demand it and None would consider the impracticability of its being furnished. The soldiers, seeing the manifest difference in the value between that and paper; that the former would procure, at least, five or Six fold as much as the latter, would become dissatisfied; they would reason upon the subject, and in fine cast their views to desertion [at least], as a very probable and the only expedient, from whence it might be derived and similar and greater advantages arise.

As the Express is now waiting, I will

not enter upon a long detail, or into an enumeration of the evils that would result from the Grant. I am satisfied they would be many and of an obstinate and injurious kind; and that they would far over ballance in their operation and effect, any present good. We have no prospect of procuring gold and Silver to discharge more than a mere Scruple of our demands. It is therefore our interest and truest policy to give a Currency, to fix a value, as far as it may be practicable, upon all occasions, upon that which is to be the medium of our internal commerce and the support of the War. I am, etc.[90]

***To HENRY LAURENS**

White-plains, September 12, 1778.

Dear Sir: A few days ago I wrote, in haste, a Letter to you by Majr. Morris, and took the liberty of returning the gold you were so obliging as to send me by Jones. For your kind intention in forwarding this Specie, and goodness, in bringing Congress acquainted with my want of this article

you will be pleased to accept my sincere and hearty thanks. These are also due to you for your polite

90. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

attention in forwarding for my perusal the late exhibitions of Govr. Johnstone and his brothers in Commission. That of the former is really a curious performance. He trys to convince you that he is not at all hurt by, or offended at, the interdiction of Congress. That he is not in a passion, while he exhibits a striking proof of his being cut to the quick, and actually biting his fingers in an agony of passion.

Your Letter to Colo. Laurens, relative to Monsr. Galvan[40] was forwarded to Rhode Island whilst he was on his return from Boston, by means of which he mist[41] it, this Gentn. (if he may be so called) waited on me a few days ago and met with a reception suited to his merit, and conduct to you. The beginning of the next paragraph of the above Letter excited my curiosity to pursue it to the end, and to my shame was reminded of my inattention to your favour of the 18th. of June which coming to hand upon my March through the Jerseys, and being laid by to be acknowledged at a time of more leisure was entirely forgot till reminded thereof by your enquiry after the Letters from Messrs. Manning and Oswald[42] which I then, and not till then recollected had been sent for perusal. I now return them and Govr. Johnstone's Letter with my thanks for the favor of the perusal of them. I am convinced that no apology to you can be of equal weight with the recital of a fact. I must

40. Lieut. William Galvan, of the First South Carolina Regiment. He was a captain in 1779; major and inspector, Continental Army, in January, 1780.

41. This is one of the occasional instances of Washington's thought outrunning his pen. From the corrections in the draft at this point it is evident that the first intention was to write “by means of which he must have missed it.”

42. William Manning and Richard Oswald.

therefore take shame to myself and acknowledge that this is the truth which I have here related. I hope no inconvenience has arisen from the detention of these Letters contrary to my intention and much more so to my wish.

I am sorry to find by your favor of the 29th. that Monsr. Gerard[43] was indisposed. I hope his indisposition was not of long continuance, and that he is perfectly recovered. Having often heard of the favourable Sentiments entertained by this Gentn. towds. the American Cause, I have placed him among the number we ought to esteem; if therefore you see no impropriety in my (being a stranger) presenting compliments to him, I would give you the trouble of doing this and assuring him that I have the honor of being among the No. of his admirers. With every Sentiment of esteem, etc.[44]

***To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE**

Fredericksburg in the State of New York, September 25, 1778.

My Dear Marquis: Since my last to you, I have been

43. Conrad Alexandre Girard de Rayneval, French minister to the United States.

44. This was a private letter.

honoured with your several favors of the 1st., 3d., and 21st. of this Month. The two first came to hand before I left the White plains, and the last at this place. I should not have delayed acknowledging the receipt of the Ist. and 3d. till this time, (thereby neglecting to pay that just tribute of respect which is due to you) but for the close attention I was obliged to bestow on the Committee of Arrangement while they remained in Camp; To the March of the Troops since, and, to the several Posts[54] which I found myself under a necessity of

The Sentiments of affection and attachment which breathe so conspicuously in all your Letters to me, are at once pleasing and honourable; and afford me abundant cause to rejoice at the happiness of my acquaintance with you. Your love of liberty; The just sense you entertain of this valuable

blessing, and your Noble, and disinterested exertions in the cause of it, added to the innate goodness of your heart, conspire to render you dear to me; and I think myself happy in being linked with you in bonds of strictest friendship.

The ardent Zeal which you have displayed during the whole course of the Campaign to the Eastward, and your endeavours to cherish harmony among the officers of the allied powers, and to dispel those unfavourable impressions which had begun to take place in the Minds of the unthinking, (from Misfortunes which the utmost stretch of human foresight could not avert) deserves, and now receives, my particular,

visiting in my way to this Incampment.

54. "1778, Sep. To paid in Visiting the Posts at West point, Dollrs. 130 "—"Accounts of Expences while Commander in Chief," in the *Washington Papers*.

and warmest thanks. I am sorry for Monsr. Touzards loss of an arm, in the Action on Rhode Island; and offer my thanks to him, thro you, for his gallant behaviour on that day.[55]

Could I have conceived, that my Picture had been an object of your Wishes, or in the smallest degree worthy of your Attention, I should, while Mr. Peale was in the Camp at Valley forge, have got him to have taken the best Portrait of me he could, and presented it to you;[56] but I really had not so good an opinion of my own worth, as to suppose that such a compliment would not have been considered as a greater instance of my Vanity, than a mean of your gratification; and therefore, when you requested me to set for Monsr. Lanfang[57] thought it was only to obtain the outlines and a few shades of my features, to have some Prints struck from.

If you have entertained thoughts My dear Marquis of paying a visit to your Court; To your Lady; and to your friends this Winter, but waver on acct. of an expedition into Canada; friendship induces me to tell you, that I do not conceive that the prospect of such an operation is so favourable at this time as to cause you to change your views. Many circumstances, and events must conspire, to

render an enterprize of this kind practicable and advisable. The Enemy in the first place, must either withdraw wholly, or in part from

55. Louis Tousard (Touzard) was a captain of French artillery; a volunteer in the Continental Army and an aide to Lafayette. The marquis wrote to Congress of Tousard's gallantry in the action at Quaker Hill, R. I, where he lost his right arm in an attempted capture of a British cannon. Congress voted him the rank of brevet lieutenant colonel and a pension of $30 a month for life. (See *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Oct. 27, 1778.)

56. John Hancock presented Comte D'Estaing with a copy of General Washington's portrait at Boston, and had promised another to Lafayette. The *Pennsylvania Packet*, Nov. 10, 1778, contained a letter from a gentleman on Rhode Island, dated Oct. 11, 1778:

“Monday, se'ennight, a large company of gentlemen and ladies dined on board the Languedoc, at the invitation of Connt D'Estaing. The entertainment was highly elegant. A picture of General Washington at full length, lately presented to the Count by General Hancock, was placed in the centre of the upper side of the room, the frame of which was covered with laurels.”

57. Pierre Charles L'Enfant.

their present Posts, to leave us at liberty to detach largely from this Army. In the next place, if considerable reinforcements should be thrown into that Country, a Winter's expedition would become impracticable, on acct. of the difficulties which will attend the March of a large body of Men with the necessary apparatus, Provisions, Forage and Stores at that inclement Season. In a word, the chances are so much against the undertaking that they ought not to induce you to lay aside your other purpose; in the prosecution of which you shall have every aid, and carry with you every honourable testimony of my regard, and entire approbation of your conduct, that you can wish; but as it is a compliment which is due, so am I perswaded you would not wish to dispense with the form, of signifying your desires to Congress on the subject of your Voyage and absence.

I come now in a more especial manner to acknowledge the receipt of your obliging favor of the 21st. by Majr. Dubois,[58] and to thank you for the important intelligence therein contained.

I do most cordially congratulate with you on the glorious defeat of the British Squadron undr. A. Keppel,[59] an event which reflects the highest honor on the good conduct and bravery of Monsr. d'Orvilliers,[60] and the offrs. of the Fleet under his Command; at the same time that it is to be considered, I hope, as the happy presage of a fortunate and glorious War to his Most Christian

58. Maj. Zachariah(?) Du Bois, of the New York Militia.

59. Augustus Keppel, admiral of the Blue, British Navy. The battle was off Ushant.

60. Louis Guillouet, Comte d'Orvilliers, admiral in the French Navy.

Majesty. A confirmation of the act. I shall impatiently wait, and devoutly wish for. If the Spaniards, under this favourable beginning, would unite their Fleet to that of France, together they would soon humble the pride of haughty Britain; and no longer suffer her to reign Sovereign of the Seas, and claim the priviledge of giving *law* to the Main.

I should be very happy in havg. you with the grand Army again, but the present designs of the enemy are wrapped in such impervious darkness, that I scarce know what measures to pursue to counteract them; and therefore have thrown the Army into a position to move either to Boston, or to our Posts in the highlands with equal celerity. If they do not mean to quit the United States altogether, there is but two objects, I conceive, that they can have in view, namely, the Fleet at Boston, and the Posts just mentioned the last of which is the security of our communication between the Eastern and Southern States, and consequently of those supplies of Flour, on which the French Fleet, and our Troops to the Eastward, depend.

The Current stream of Intelligence from the Enemys Army point to an evacuation of New York; but, there is no ground on which to form a decisive judgment of this matter; my own opinion is,

that they have not, at this time, any fixed object or plan; but are waiting orders from their Court, preparing in the mean while either to

evacuate the City wholly or in part as they shall be directed. You have my free consent to make the Count D'Estaing a visit, and may Signify my entire approbation of it to Genl. Sullivan, who I am glad to find has moved you out of a Cul de Sac.[61] It was my advice to him long ago to have no detachments in that situation, let particular places be never so much unguarded and exposed from the want of Troops. Immediately upon my removal from the White plains to this Ground the Enemy threw a body of Troops into the Jerseys, but for what purpose, unless to make a grand forage, I have not been able, yet, to learn. They advanced some Troops at the same time from their lines at Kings bridge, towards our old Incampment at the plains, stripping the Inhabitants not only of their Provision and forage, but even the Cloathes on their backs and witht. discrimination.

The information my dear Marquis, which I beg'd the favor of you to obtain, was not, I am perswaded, to be had thro the Channel of the Officers of the French Fleet, but by application to your fair Lady, to whom I should be happy in an oppertunity of paying my homage in Virginia, when the War is ended, if she could be prevailed upon to quit, for a few Months, the gaieties, and splendor of a Court, for the rural amusements of an humble Cottage.[62] I shall not fail to inform Mrs. Washington of your polite attention to her. The Gentlen. of my

61. Lafayette had been stationed with his troops near Bristol, R. I., after the main body of Sullivan's army had fallen back to Providence.

62. Several ladies had lately come out from New York, who reported that a vessel had been captured and brought to that city, in which was contained a present from the Queen of France to Mrs. Washington, as “an elegant testimonial of her approbation of the General's conduct,” and that it had been sold at auction for the benefit of the captors. This intelligence was so confidently affirmed, and from such a respectable source, that General Washington had requested tile Marquis

de Lafayette to make inquiry as to the truth of it, through the medium of the Marchioness at Versailles.— *Sparks*.

family are sensible of the honr. you do them by your kind enquiries and join with me in a tender of best regards, than whom none can offer them with more sincerity, and affection than I do. With every Sentiment you can wish, I am, etc.

***To HENRY LAURENS**

Fishkill, October 3, 1778.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 23d. Ulto. came to my hands at Fredericksburg the Evening before I left it for this place. I thank you for the transmission of Mr. Beresford's intelligence, tho I have not the smallest Idea that any thing more than a deception, is meant by it; and that Mr. Williams is either a voluntary Agent, or the innocent instrument, for carrying it on. Yet, as the case may be otherwise, common prudence bids us guard against the worst. A conclusive evidence against the measure, with me, is, his speaking of the Troops destined for the Southward in the light of a detachment only. I am well convinced myself, that the Enemy, long ere this, are perfectly well satisfied that the possession of our Towns, while we have an Army in the field,

will avail them little. It involves *us* in difficulty, but does not, by any means, insure *them* conquest. They will know, that it is our Arms, not defenceless Towns, they have to Subdue, before they can arrive at the haven of their Wishes, and that, till this end is accomplished, the Superstructure they have been endeavouring to raise, “like the baseless fabric of a vision”[34] falls to nothing. But this, tho a reason operating powerfully with me, in deciding upon the point, is by no means the most weighty consideration in my Mind. A Measure of this kind before the hostile disposition of France became so evident, and before the French Fleet arrived on this Coast, was probable, as their whole conduct was full of unaccountables; but to attempt now, to detach 10,000 Men (which is, I suppose half their Army) and to divide their Naval strength for the Protection of it, would, in my judgment, be an Act of insanity, and expose one part or the other, of both Land and Sea force to

inevitable ruin. I, therefore conclude, that they will go there wholly or not at all. Nevertheless, I may be mistaken.

As you have not acknowledged the receipt of my Letter by Majr. (now Lt. Colo. Morris) by whom I took the liberty of returning the first paper parcel of gold you were so obligg. as to send me; nor of a Subsequent Letter by Colo. Hazen, inclosing the Letters of Govt. Johnstone, Mr. Manning &ca. I am somewhat fearful

34. The Tempest (Shakespeare), act iv, scene I.

that they may have been mislaid, and forgot as these Gentlemen were charged with other business of more consequence. With every Sentiment of esteem, regard and Affec.; I am etc.[35]

***To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE**

Fish-kill, October 4, 1778.

My dear Marquis: I have had the pleasure of receiving, by the hands of Monsr. de la Colombe, your favour of the 28th. Ulto.; accompanied by one of the 24th., which he overtook somewhere on the Road. The leave requested in the former,[47] I am as much interested to grant, as to refuse my approbation of the Cartel, proposed in the latter.

The generous Spirit of Chivalry, exploded by the rest of the World, finds a refuge, My dear friend, in the sensibility of your Nation *only* . But it is in vain to cherish it, unless you can find Antagonists to support it; and however well adapted it might have been to the times in which it existed, in our days it is to be feared that your opponent, sheltering himself behind Modern opinion, and

35. This was a private letter to Laurens, rather than in his official capacity as President of Congress. The letter sent, which was also in the writing of Washington, is missing from the *Papers of the Continental Congress*. It was sold at auction in 1933, and from the catalogue description it varies in minor verbal particulars from the draft.

47. Neither of these letters, of September 24 and September 28, are now found in the *Washington Papers*; they are, however, printed in Sparks's *Letters to Washington*, vol. 2, pp. 209 and 213, The September 24 letter asked for “candid advice” on the subject of taking notice of the disrespectful references to France in the address of the British Peace Commissioners to Congress. “I am the first French officer in rank of the American Army; I am not unknown to the British and if somebody must take notice of such expressions that advantage does, I believe, belong to me.” In the letter of September 28 Lafayette requested leave to come to headquarters for an interview with Washington: “the letters I have received from home make me very anxious to see you.”

under his present public Character of Commissioner, would turn a virtue of such ancient date, into ridicule. Besides, supposing his Lordship accepted your terms, experience has proved, that chance is as often, as much concerned in deciding these matters as bravery, and always more than the justice of the Cause; I would not therefore have your life, by the remotest possibility, exposed, when it may be reserved for so many greater occasions. His Excellency the Admiral I flatter myself, will be in Sentimt. with me; and, as soon as he can spare you, send you to head Quarters, where I anticipate the pleasure of seeing you.

Having wrote very fully to you a few days ago, and put the Letter under cover to Genl. Sullivan, I have naught to add at this time, but to assure you, that with the most perfect regard, I am etc.

***To GOUVERNEUR MORRIS**

Fish-kill, October 4, 1778.

Dear Sir: My public Letters to the President of Congress will inform you of the Wind that wafted me to this place; nothing more therefore need be said on that head.

Your Letter of the 8th. Ulto. contains three questions and answers, to wit: Can the Enemy prosecute the War? Do they mean to stay on the Continent? And is it our interest to put impediments in the

way of their departure? To the first you answer in the Negative; to the second you are decided in opinion that they do not; And to the third, say, clearly No.

Much, my good Sir, may be said in favor of these answers; and *some* things against the two first of them. By way therefore of dissertation on the first, I will also beg leave to put a question, and give it an answer. Can *we* carry on the War much longer? certainly *NO* , unless some measures can be devised, and speedily executed, to restore the credit of our Currency, restrain extortion, and punish forestallers.[48]

Without these can be effected, what funds can stand the present expences of the Army ? And what Officer can bear the weight of prices, that every necessary Article is now got to? A Rat, in the shape of a Horse, is not to be bought at this time for less than £200; a Saddle under thirty or Forty; Boots twenty, and Shoes and other articles in like proportion. How is it possible therefore for Officers to stand this, without an increase of pay? And how is it possible to advance their Pay when Flour is selling (at different places) from five to fifteen pounds pr. Ct., Hay from ten to thirty pounds pr. Tunn, and Beef and other essentials, in this proportion.

The true point of light then to place,

48. Forestallers were those who purchased merchandise or supplies before they came on the market and then advanced the prices. Under old English law this was a punishable offense.

and consider this matter in, is not simply whether G. Britain can carry on the War, but whose Finances (theirs or ours) is most likely to fail: which leads me to doubt *very much* the infalibility of the answer given to your Second question, respecting the Enemy's leaving the Continent; for I believe, that they will not do it, while ever *hope* and the chapter of *accidents* can give them a *chance* of bringing us to terms short of *Independance* . But this *you* perhaps will say, they are now bereft of. I shall acknowledge that many things favor the idea; but add, that upon a comparative view of circumstances there is abundant matter to puzzle and confound the judgment. To your third answer, I subscribe with hand and heart. the opening is now fair, and God grant they may embrace

the oppertunity of bidding an eternal adieu to our, once quit of them, happy Land. If the Spaniards would but join their Fleets to those of France, and commence hostilities my doubts would all subside. Without it, I fear the British Navy has it too much in its power to counteract the Schemes of France.

The high prices of every necessary. The little, indeed no benefit which Officers have derived from the intended bounty of Congress in the article of Cloathing, The change in the establishment, by which so many of them are discontinued. The unfortunate delay of this business, which kept them too long in suspence, and set a number of evil spirits to work. The unsettled Rank, and contradictory modes of adjusting it, with

other causes which might be enumerated, have conspired to sour the temper of the Army exceedingly; and has, I am told, been productive of a Memorial, or representation of some kind, to Congress,[49] which neither directly, nor indirectly did I know, or ever hear was in agitation, till some days after it was dispatched; owing, as I apprehend, to the secrecy with which it was conducted to keep it from my knowledge, as I had in a similar instance last Spring, discountenanced and stifled a child of the same illigitimacy in its birth. If you have any News worth communicating, do not put it under a bushel, but transmit it to Dr. Sir,[50] Yrs. sincerely.

***To COLONEL JOHN COX OR JOHN MITCHELL[51]**

Fish-kill, October 4, 1778.

Dear Sir: I am informed that Sundry Goods (in the Military line) addressed to Mr. Jas. Rivington of New York, were taken, carried into Egg harbour, and axe now in Philadelphia. Among them a compleat sett of Camp equipage. As I am *perfectly incompleat* in this way, I should be glad if you would enquire into the truth of this matter, and make a purchase of

49. This memorial from the field officers and captains of the Continental Army is dated Sept. 13, 1778, and was forwarded to Congress in a letter of September 22, signed by Cols. Daniel Morgan,

Otho Holland Williams, and William Davies. The grievance was the exclusion of supernumerary officers from the Army through rearrangement, lack of half-pay and pensions, medical care, clothing, and other deficiencies. On October 20 Congress ordered it to lie on the table “until Congress have fully considered and determined on the report of the committee of arrangement.” The original papers are in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, no. 41, 7, fols. 191–204.

50. Morris answered this letter from Washington (October 26): “the Petition you mention or Representation which I have not yet seen and never wish to see … it gave my Enemies (and who were so in some Degree for my earnest Support of the Claims of the Army heretofore) no small Cause of Triumph … It was by Procedures such as these that the good Fairfax made way for a crafty Cromwell and that he dismissed a tedious Wrangling Parliament and established a military Despotism. It is a melancholy Truth that when once Faction takes Possession of the human Heart Men are hurried into Extremes which make considerate People tremble. I will not do your Army the Injustice even to permit a Thought that they wish to get Rid of their General. But Sir their and your and our Enemies do not want the Confidence to say so and indeed to say they can prove it and to attempt that Proof from the Manner of procuring (Agitating as they term it) the Petition in Question. Certainly could such Ideas be inculcated it would answer their Views. It would also answer their Views to instill into the Army a Distrust of Congress and therefore I doubt not but the Enemies of both are assiduous in this Business.” Morris's letter is in the Washington Papers in the Library of Congress.

51. Cox was an assistant deputy quartermaster general and Mitchell a deputy quartermaster general.

it for me, if it answers the description; and can be had upon terms not unreasonable.

I am also informed that there are proper Camp Trunks, with Straps &ca.; two of which, equal in size, I should be glad to get; and a Cut and thrust Sword, genteel, but not costly, with Chain and swivels, strong.

These things are to be had, I am told, in Market Street, but of whom, I have not been able to learn. Genl. Wilkenson, if in Phila., can tell. I am, etc.

P.S. If there are any of Dolands best pocket Telescopes, be so good as to get one of these also, and send it to me as soon as you can.

***To EDWARD RUTLEDGE[71]**

Fish-kill, October 5, 1778.

My dear Sir: Our correspondance seems to be at an end; but why it is so, I am at a loss to discover. In the Month of Augt. last year, from the House of Mr. H. Hill[72] near Germantown (where I was then Incamped) I wrote you a Letter as long as my Arm;[73] Since which I have not received a line from you,

71. Brother of John and member of the South Carolina Assembly in 1778.

72. Henry Hill, of Indian Queen Lane, about I mile east of Schuylkill Falls, Pa.

73. A draft of this letter is not found in the *Washington Papers*.

but enquire at every oppertunity how you do.

Many great and important changes have taken place in our Military and Political Affairs since that period, and I hope, tho fortune at times seemed to frown upon us, for the better. The day seems now to dawn upon us, but Clouds and tempests may yet arise to endanger our Bark. The designs of the Enemy as yet, are impervious to the view. They are upon the eve (if one may judge from appearances) of some capital move; but of what nature, remains to be disclosed; many circumstances point to an evacuation of the States, others discredit a belief of it; in a word, it is very difficult to form a decided judgment of their plan; my opinion of it is, that they have none, but that Ministry vainly hoping that some good might result from their Commission, have not, as yet,

communicated their final Orders to Sir Harry; who in the meanwhile, is busily preparing for a total evacuation, or an Expedition, the same preparations of Transports &ca. answering to both. If the latter is the plan, and the French Squadron at Boston is the object, which I think most important and likely, he has not a moments time to spare in commencing his operations.

Congress I presume, are suspicious of the Enemys having an eye to your State, by the measures they are taking for its defence; but I have no Idea myself of the Enemys detaching part of their Land or Sea force on an enterprize of this kind while a respectable French Fleet hovers on this Coast.

You will have the whole or none of them. Tho there is no telling; for they have done, and left undone things, so contrary to common conceptions, that they puzzle, at all times and upon all occasions, even conjecture.

The bearer Majr. Genl. Lincoln is nominated by Congress to take Command of the Southern department, and I take the liberty of recommending him to your civilities as a worthy character, a brave, and an attentive Officer.[74] My respectful compliments await your Lady, the Mr. Middletons,[75] and other Gentn. of my acquaintance. With sincere esteem and regard I remain etc.

74. On this same day (October 5) Washington wrote to President John Rutledge, of South Carolina, the same brief introduction of General Lincoln as above.

75. Arthur Middleton, the Signer, and Henry, his brother.

***To JOHN PARKE CUSTIS**

Fredg. in the State of N. York, October 10,[19] 1778.

Dear Sir: I have now, at your request, given my full consent to the Sale of the Lands which I hold in right of Dower in a Tract in the County of York, to a Water Grist Mill thereon; To Lotts in the City of Williamsburg, and others in James Town. As also to yr. Renting or otherwise disposing of the other Dower Lands and Slaves which I am possessed of in the County of King William, upon the

terms which have been specifically agreed and subscribed to; but I should think myself wanting in that friendship and regard which I have ever professed for, and endeavoured to evince towards you, were I to withhold my advice from you with respect to the disposal of them.

A Moments reflection must convince you of two things. first that Lands are of permanent value, that there is scarce a possibility of their falling in price, but almost a Moral certainty of their rising exceedingly in value;

19. George Washington Parke Custis's *Recollections of Washington* prints this as of October 12.

and secondly, that our Paper Currency is fluctuating; that it has depreciated considerably, and that, no human foresight can, with precision, tell how low it may get as the rise or fall of it depends upon contingencies which the utmost stretch of human sagacity can neither foresee, nor prevent. These positions being granted, and no one can gainsay the justice of them, it follows that by parting from your Lands you give a certainty for an uncertainty; because, it is not the nominal Price. It is not ten, fifteen, or twenty pounds an Acre, but the relative value of this Sum to Specie, or something of substantial worth that is to constitute a good price. The inference therefore I mean to draw, and the advice I shall give in consequence of it, is this, that you do not convert the Lands you now hold into Cash faster than your present Contract with the Alexanders, and a certain prospect of against vesting it in other lands more convenient, requires of you; this will be treading upon sure ground; it will enable you to discharge contracts already entered into and in effect, exchange Land for Land, for it is a matter of Moonshine to you considered in that point of view how much the Money depreciates if you can discharge one pound with another pound and get Land of equal value to that you sell; but far different from this, is the case of those who sell for Cash and keep that Cash by them, put it to Interest, or receive it in annual payments; for in either of these cases, if our currency should, unfortunately, continue to depreciate in the manner it has done in the course of the last two years,

a pound may not, in the space of two years more, be worth a Shilling, the difference of which becomes a clear loss to the possessor and evinces in a clear point of view the force and efficacy

of my advice to you to pay debts and vest it in something that will retain its primitive value; or rather, in your case, not to part with that thing for money, unless it be with a view to the Investing it in something of equal value; and it accts. at the same time for the principle upon which I act with respect to my own Interest in the Dower Lands; for I should be wanting to myself, and guilty of an inexcusable act of remission, and criminl. injustice to your Mother, not to secure an equivalent for her releasemt. of Dower; and this might be the case of a nominal sum, that had no relative value to the thing in question; and which, eventually, might be a means of giving away the Estate, for it is not the number of Pounds but the worth and what they will fetch that is to stamp the value of them. Four hundred Pounds in Paper Dollars now is, and I suppose, at the time of parting with this Dower may be, worth one hundred pounds in Specie; but two years hence, One hundred pounds in Specie may be worth, and will fetch one thousand pounds of Paper; it cannot be reasonable or just therefore to expect that I, or your Mother, if she should be the Survivor, should loose this, when no person I believe, will undertake to give it as an opinion, that the value of the Dower will decrease but the direct contrary as Lands are increasing

in their price every day.

This, if you follow the advice here given, cannot be the case with you, let money depreciate as it will; because, with a pound you pay a pound in discharge of a purchase already made and for those to be made you can regulate yr. Sales by yr. purchases.

It may be said that our money will recover a proper tone again, and in that case it would be an advantage to turn Lands &ca. into Cash for the benefit of the rise. In answer to this I shall only observe, that this is a lottery, that it may or may not happen; that, if it should happen, you have lost nothing; if it should not, you have saved your Estate, which in the other case might have been sunk. Hence it appears that you may play a good and sure game, so far as it relates to yourself, and so far as it respects me, the advantage is wholely on your side; for instance, if the difference between specie and paper at this time is as four to one, and next year is eight to one, it makes no difference to you, because the presumption is that the same Tobo., Corn, and other produce will rise in proportion to the fall of Money and fetch in quantity what it lacks in quality; but on the other

hand, if the Intt. was to be fixed at the present difference of 4 to I, and should hereafter become as one to one that is equal I should get 4 times as much as I am content to receive, and you would loose it; from hence as before you may gain, and cannot

loose; while I get the simple value of the Estate, and can neither gain or loose; which is all I aim at by fixing the value of the Dower in Specie, to be discharged in any Money currt. in the Country at the time of payment, at the prevailing Exchange or difference between Specie and Paper.

It may possibly be said that this is setting up a distinction between Specie and Paper and will contribute to its depreciation; I ask if there is a Man in the United States that does not make a distinction when 4 to 1 is the difference, and whether it is in the power of an Individual to check this when Congress and the several Assembly's are found unequal to the task. Not to require, or contract for the actual payment in Specie, but to keep this as much out of Sight as possible in common cases that are to have an immediate operation, is all that can be expected; but in a bargain that may exist for twenty years, there should be something to insure mutual advantage, which advantage tho every Man can judge of in the transactions of a day, no Man can do it when it is to be extended to years under the present fluctuating state of Paper Bills of Credit.

My design in being thus particular with you, is to answer two purposes; first, to shew my ideas of the impropriety of parting with your own Lands faster than you can vest the Money in other lands (comprehending those already purchased) and Secondly, to evince to you the

propriety of my own Conduct, in securing to myself and your Mother the intrinsic value, neither more nor less, of the Dower Estate.

I have only one piece of advice more to give, and that is to aim rather at the Exchange, than Sale of your Lands; and I think among those Gentn. mentioned in a former Letter, you may find chapmen.[20] I am etc.

***To ANDREW LEWIS**

Fredericksburg in the State of New York, October 15, 1778.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 8th. of Augt. came safe to my hands, tho delayed in the conveyance. I am very glad that the Board prevailed on you to act as a Commissioner at Fort Pitt, tho I am apprehensive the end designed, so far as an Indian treaty was in view, will not be answered by it; and am sorry that you met with so many disappointments in the beginning, on acct. of the non-attendance of the Gentn. on behalf of Pensylvania &ca.

No Man can be more thoroughly impressed with the necessity of offensive operations against Indians in

20. Buyers. (See Washington's letter to John Parke Custis, Aug. 3, 1778, *ante*.)

every kind of rupture with them, than I am; nor can any Man feel more sensibly for General Mc. Intosh than I do, on two Accts., the Public and his own. But ours is a kind of struggle designed I dare say by Providence to try the patience, fortitude and virtue of Men; none therefore that are engaged in it, will suffer themselves, I trust, to sink under difficulties, or be discouraged by hardships. General Mc. Intosh is only experiencing upon a small Scale, what I have had an ample share of upon a large one; and must, as I have been obliged to do in a variety of Instances, yield to necessity; that is, to use a vulgar Phraze, shape his Coat according to his Cloth,[63] or in other Words if he cannot do as he wishes, he must do what he can.

If the Enemy mean to hold their present Posts in the United states the presumption is, that their operations next Campaign will be vigorous and decisive because feeble efforts can be of no avail unless by a want of Virtue we ruin and defeat ourselves; which, I think, is infinitely more to be dreaded than the whole force of G. Britain, assisted as they are by Hessian, Indian, and Negro Allies; for certain I am, that unless Extortion, forestailing and other practices which have crept in and become exceedingly prevalent and injurious to the common cause, can meet with proper checks, we must inevitably sink under such a load of accumulated oppression. To make and extort money in every shape that can be devised,

63. Washington first wrote this word “Cloath” and, afterward, crossed out the “a.”

and at the same time to decry its value seems to have become a mere business and an epedemical disease, calling for the interposition of every good Man, and body of Men.

We have, for more than a Month, been kept in an awkward state of Suspence on Acct. of the Enemy's preparations for Imbarking at New York. Many circumstances indicate a total evacuation of that City and its dependancies; others tend more to prove that it is only a partial one. Some time ago I inclined to the former opinion, at present I lean more to the latter. Certain it is, they are about to detach Troops; and, I believe to the West Indies; but the weight of evidence, in my judgment, is on the side of their Garrisoning New York and Rhode Island this Winter, at least; in this case it would appear clear to you (if you knew the Circumstances of the Army) that no aid, or very trifling, can go from hence to Genl. Mc. Intosh; but I should think that the Frontiers of Virginia, Maryland and Pensylvania could furnish Men fully competent to an Expedition to Detroit and of such kind as the Service required. Two very common errors, should be avoided in getting them (if Militia), namely not to draw the Men together till every thing else is prepared; and next not to engage them for too short a time. For Militia are soon tired of waiting and will return at the expiration of their term of Service if they were upon the eve, certainly, of reaping the most important advantages.

If Congress are not convinced of the impropriety of a certain irregular promotion, they are the only sett of Men who require further and greater proofs than have already been given of the fallibility of the measure.[64]

Before I conclude, let me ask if we have any prospect of getting Lands which have been Surveyed, and located, under the Proclamation of 1763, but which might not have been Patented. this is the case with some that I had in my own right, and by purchase; having had no leizure, even in thought, to attend to the matter for near four years, it would be rather hard upon me therefore, under these circumstances, to be a looser, or put to difficulty to get my right. Was I not concerned with you in the burning Spring?[65] Is the Land Patented? and secured? With sincere regard etc.

***CERTIFICATE**

Fredericksburg in the State of New York, October 19, 1778.

I have no perfect remembrance of the conduct, or particular applications of Lieutt. Colo. Johnston[31] of Colo. Wards Regiment for a furlough; nor do

64. On Feb. 19, 1777, Congress appointed five major generals, all of whom superseded Lewis and Benedict Arnold. Lewis resigned.

65. Burning Spring was near what is now Charleston, W. Va.

31. Col. Obediah Johnson, of the Connecticut Militia. He had been lieutenant colonel of Ward's Connecticut State regiment from May, 1776, to May, 1777.

I at this period recollect how or by what means he obtained one while the Army under my command lay in Bucks County in the State of Pensylvania. It is a fact notorious however, that the situation of our Affairs at the time we lay on the West bank of the Delaware (in the Month of Decemr. 1776) was such as to require the attendance of every Officer and Soldier, and the greatest exertion of the former, our force being small and we in daily expectation of the enemy's attempting to force the passage of the River on their Rout to Philadelphia, the supposed object of the Expedition. I do not believe that Lt. Colo. Johnston had any knowledge of the intended attack upon Trenton because the success of the enterprize depended too much upon the secrecy of it, not to have used every precaution for concealment.[32]

***CERTIFICATE[47]**

West Point, September 4 1779.

The foregoing[48] is a copy in substance, if not verbatim, of the certificate given Lieutt. Colo. Johnston at the time and place before mentioned. Since which, upon being reminded of some circumstances attending the manner and time of his solliciting leave to be absent, I have a feint remembrance that his applications were importunate and teazing, and complied with reluctantly. In terms perhaps not very acceptable to a military Character.

32. This certificate was given in response to Johnson's application, Apr. 10, 1778, a photostat copy of which is in the *Washington Papers*. Johnson had been later accused of importuning for a discharge, when his application was for a furlough, which was granted; he returned to the Army before the expiration of his furlough time. (See Washington's Certificate, 1779, Sept. 4, *post*.)

47. To Lieut. Col. Obediah Johnson.

48. For the “foregoing” see Certificate, Oct. 17, 1778, *ante*.

***To JAMES HILL**

Fredericksburg in the State of New York, October 27, 1778.

Mr. Hill: Your Letter of the 5th. of Septr. came to my hands a Post or two ago. I thank you for your offer to look after the Plantation I held in King William, but having rented it to Mr. Custis I have no longer occasion for the Superintendance of a Manager; there, or elsewhere, in the lower parts of Virginia; and have to request, that all the Money you now possess, or may hereafter receive of mine before you quit Mr. Custis's business, may be sent to Mr. Lund Washington by him or some other safe hand. and before you remove from your present employment, I must further beg that you will furnish me with an exact Acct. of every thing sold from, and purchased for, my Estate under your care. In short the exact state of all expenditures, and Sales for my use, since the last Acct. which I settled with you myself; and as Letters are subject to Miscarriage, I shall be obliged to you to leave a Copy thereof, with a list of Ballances due me (if any there should be) with Mr. Custis, that I may, in case of accidents, be provided with another Copy from him. When I speak of a List of Ballances,

I hope, and trust, there will be few or none; first from your care in making your collections, and next from the plenty of Money which leaves every person without even the Shadow

of excuse to withhold payment of Debts at this time. but if the case should be otherwise, a list of those Debts first properly settled, and reduced to specialties (to avoid disputes in the collection by a new hand, unacquainted with the transaction, and unable to acct. for things which would not be disputed with you) left with Mr. Custis will enable him, or some other Person in my behalf, to receive payment of the Money with such Interest as may be due on the Bonds or Bills.

I have no doubt of your care and attention in this business. I have ever viewed you in the light of an honest Man, and doubt not but that your last transactions with me will confirm me in this opinion; yet, I cannot help observg. that from what I have been able to learn, I have derived very little profit from that part of my Estate which has been under your care for the three or four last years; but as I am not Inclined to go into an investigatn. of the matter at present, I will rather attribute it to bad Seasons and other Causes, than to the want of your good Will.

I observe what you say, respecting your wages for looking after Mr. Custis's Estate, if my Memory does not fail me the first agreement I made with you was reduced to writing, and the conditions specifically defined; after this, and some little time before I left Virginia, you complained that your lay [*sic*] was too small, and either required an augmentation or some Indulgences as an equivalent. In answer, to the best of

my recollection, I told you, that as your trouble was like to be increased by the late purchases of Mr. Black that I shd. not object to some further, reasonable allowance, provided it should appear that your conduct, the good order of the Plantation's, and Crops would justifie me in so doing; how far these conditions have been complied with on your part, is impossible for me at this distance and undr. my circumstances, to determine, but as to your claim of merit, and an allowance, for the Butter sold, because Mr. Valentine applied the greatest part, or all of what was made on the Estate to his own private emolument, it is quite new and Novel. If the case was so, which I do not believe, and think his accts. will shew the contrary, it does not follow that because one Man cheated, that

another is to be paid to the amount of the fraud for being honest; the same reasoning will apply to Corn, Tobo, and other Articles. I am very sure that if Valentine had such a priviledge it was self-granted; and that, was he now living, he might be brought to a severe Acct. for the misapplication of the Money. I am also clear that he never had an Oz of Sugar or gill of rum in the World found him by agreement; these Articles were laid in for the use of Sick Negroes, and if he made use of them for his own purposes, the greater Villain he must be.

You further remark that *you think* your Wages should rise in proportion to the depreciation of the Money. Permit me to ask whether you have sold the

produce of the Estate in proportion to the depreciation? and whether the expences have not kept pace thereto? and lastly whether during those times of common distress you are not living at the cost of another Man while you are raising and saving from your own Estate ? these are matters not unworthy of consideration, altho I do not mean by propounding these questions that it should be infer'd that your Wages ought not to be raised from the original agreement, agreeable to the Spirit and meaning of my assurances to you; it was my intention (under the conditions before mentioned) that they should; and if Mr. Custis and you cannot agree on the quantum I know of no mode so just and equitable, as leaving the matter to impartial Men to determine who can have no Interest in the decision; for it is impossible for me, at this distance, and perplexed as I am with other business, to go into such enquiries as are necessary to enable me to form a proper judgment; and without this, I might do injury to one side or the other, to neither of which am I at all disposed. I am, etc.

P S. I have understood that till Mrs. Washington was at my Plantn. at Claibornes in Augt., and directed, or rather advised the Beeves and Corn to be Sold, that no steps were taken to do it; in short that you were very seldom at, or gave yourself much trouble about the Plantn. Mr. Custis will I expect, take every

thing that is now on it at an appraised Value; Corn as well as other things, which will ease you of every kind of trouble of that sort. The Tobacco I trust will be prized and Inspected without a

Motors. loss of time and the Notes put into Colo. Bassetts hands (after Davenport has recd. his share) to be sold for my use.

***To BURWELL BASSETT**

Fredericksburg in the State of New York, October 30, 1778.

Dear Sir: By Mr. Custis I took the liberty of requesting the favor of you to set a value upon the Stock of every kind belonging to me at Claibornes except the Horses and Plantation Utensils which I gave him. I have since wrote to him (of this date) proposing that he shd. take all the Corn, Wheat, and Provender for the Cattle, so soon as it can be ascertained, at such prices as you shall affix; and if he agrees to it, I shall be much obliged to you for conferring this additional favor on me. It will be better for both of us that there should be but one Interest on the Plantation; and that the property thereon should not be seperated wch. necessarily would be the case if he was to stock it for the use of the Negroes and Cattle, while the Grain and provender raised thereon remained mine, and kept distinct from his, waiting for occasional Markets. The Cotton, I expect Mrs.

Washington will require for her own use; and I hope, and trust, that the Tobacco will be stripped, prized, and Inspected with all the dispatch possible; after which, and paying Davenport his share, I have directed Mr. Hill to put the rest into your hands, and shall be obliged to you for selling it for me in the same manner and at the same time you do your own.

I shall make no appology My dear Sir for giving you this trouble, especially as Mrs. Washington in a late Letter informs me that you have been so obliging as to assure her, that you would readily render me any Services of this kind in your power, which indeed I had no doubt of before, or I should not have asked assistance of you.

I have understood that some choice Bull-calves of the English kind were selected at Claibornes to breed from. I beg you to accept one of the best as a present from me. These being descended from Mr. Custis's English Bull are much more valuable than common Calves of the same age, inasmuch as they will improve the breed.

We still remain in a disagreeable State of Suspence respecting the Enemys determinations; there are reasons for and against a total evacuation of New York. I ought rather to have said, there are circumstances and evidence for and against it; for reason will allow no alternative so clearly does it point out the property of relinquishing their Ideal projects of bringing the United States to their terms. A few days must, I think unfold

their views as they have been, and now are busily Imployed in imbarking Troops, Stores, &ca. most of which have fallen down to Sandy hook. The West Indies is the supposed place of destination for this Armament. My Compliments to all enquiring friends. I am, etc.

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***To PATRICK HENRY**

Fredericksburg in the State of New York, November 3, 1778.

Dr. Sir: Your favor of the 15th. Ult. came to my hands by the last Post. Soon after the date of my Letter giving you an acct. of Captn. Henry's[88] having left the Service, I was informed (upon further enquiry after him) that he had gone no further than Elizabeth town in the Jerseys and was there rather distressed for want of money, having been indisposed at that place for some time. Colo. Bannister being then in Camp, and just setting out for Phila., was requested by me, and very readily undertook, to furnish what Money he wanted; and in other respects help him on to Virginia; this was about the middle of Septr.; since which I have not heard of him, but hope he is with you ere now.

88. Capt. John Henry, of the First Continental Artillery. He had resigned in August 1778.

The Enemy have Imbarked a considerable part of their Troops at New York, and the transports have fallen down to the hook; the Imbarkation still continues; but there is no evidence, so conclusive, as to lead to a demonstration that they mean a total evacuation; the proofs are equivocal, and will apply to a general, or partial one. A short time, perhaps by the end of our days of Grace (the 11th.

Instt.)[89] matters may be reduced to a certainty. I have little doubt in my own Mind, but that the greatest part of the Troops Imbark'd, and Imbarking at New York, are destined for the West Indies and their Posts. Boston and Charles Town are also talked of but with no other view, I conceive, than to perplex and confound the judgment; and yet, so far as any collateral enterprizes (in pursuance of their Predatory and Nefarious plan) can be undertaken subsurvient to, and correspondant with their more enlarged and important views, I have little doubt of their attempting them. For if motives of policy do not restrain, sure I am that those of generosity and humanity will not prevent them from committing as much devastation as they can upon our defenceless towns, Country Seats, and helpless Women and Children; resentment, and unsoldiery practices in them, now seems to have taken place of all the Manly virtues; as I wish self interest, in the shape of forestalling, Engrossing &ca. may not do among us, if not checked in time by well applied and vigorous Laws in the several States.

89. November 11 was the time limit fixed by the Peace Commissioners' Manifesto and Proclamation of October 3 on which submissions to Great Britain would be received.

I am, etc.

***To JOHN MITCHELL[34]**

Fredericksburg, November 11, 1778.

Dear Sir: I have been favoured with your Letter of the 3d. and have received the three Table Cloths which accompanied it; as also the Bear skin, which I accept, and thank you for. The Trunks will do, tho if they had been a size smaller I should have liked them better. the four Table Cloths which preceeded the three above mentioned, are not yet got to hand. I would not have you trouble yourself to procure another Bowl; the one I have, can, I believe, be mended.

Colo. Fitzgerald seems to doubt whether Mrs. Washington can get to Philadelphia without the Springs which Mr. Custis (unluckily) prevented his getting; I have therefore, as the Season is

growing cold, and the Roads getting bad, to request the favor of you to send them on by a Special Messenger, along the following Rout:

34. Colonel and Deputy Quartermaster General, then at Philadelphia.

Wilmington, Christeen, head of Elk, lower Ferry on Susquehanna, Baltimore, and Bladensburg; by doing which, if Mrs. Washington should have set out, as I have desired her to do if it be praticable and along that Road they will meet. The Springs may then be fix'd at P.

Upon her arrival in Philadelphia I must beg the favour of you to give me notice of it by the lay Expresses, that I may send for her, if my own Quarters for the Winter should happen to be fixed up; But as this is not the case yet, and I do not know when it will be, I cannot, under the uncertainty of her stay in the City, think of accepting yours and Mrs. Mitchells kind and polite Invitation to her to lodge with you; the trouble of such a visitor (for more than a day or so) being too much for a private family but I shall be equally thankful to you for providing good lodgings for her as I do not know how long it may be necessary for her to remain in them. Her Horses you will be so good as to send to the Public Stables (most convenient).

I wish the report of the reduction of the Island of St. Vincent may be true, and think the Troops at New York might be as usefully employed in defence of their possessions in the West Indies, as where they are; but, Ministry I suppose judge otherwise. My best respects to Mrs. Mitchell, I am, etc.

To HENRY LAURENS

Fredericksburgh, November 14, 1778.

Dear Sir: This will be accompanied by an official letter on the subject of the proposed expedition against Canada. You will perceive I have only considered it in a military light; indeed I was not authorised to consider it in any other; and I am not without apprehensions, that I may be thought, in what I have done, to have exceeded the limits intended by Congress. But my solicitude for the

public welfare which I think deeply interested in this affair, will I hope justify me in the eyes of all those who view things through that just medium.

I do not know, Sir, what may be your sentiments in the present case; but whatever they are I am sure I can confide in your honor and friendship, and shall not hesitate to unbosom myself to you on a point of the most delicate and important Nature.

The question of the Canadian expedition in the form it now stands appears to me one of the most interesting that has hitherto agitated our National deliberations. I have one objection to it, untouched in my public letter, which is in my estimation, insurmountable, and alarms all my feelings for the true and permanent interests of my country.

This is the introduction of a large body of French troops into Canada, and putting them in possession of the capital of that Province, attached to them by all the ties of blood, habits, manners, religion and former connexion of government. I fear this would be too great a temptation, to be resisted by any power actuated by the common maxims of national policy.[72] Let us realize for a moment the striking advantages France would derive from the possession of Canada; the acquisition of an extensive territory abounding in supplies for the use of her Islands; the opening a vast source of the most beneficial commerce with the Indian nations, which she might then monopolize; the having ports of her own on this continent independent on the precarious good will of an ally; the engrossing the whole trade of New found land whenever she pleased, the finest nursery of seamen in the world; the security afforded to her Islands; and finally, the facility of awing and controuling these states, the natural and most formidable rival of every maritime power in Europe. Canada would be a solid acquisition to France on all these accounts and because of the numerous inhabitants, subjects to her by inclination, who would aid in preserving it under her power against the attempt of every other.

France acknowledged for some time past the most powerful monachy in Europe by land, able now to dispute the empire of the sea with Great Britain, and if joined

72. The draft at this point has the following crossed out: “to lay no particular stress on that spirit of ambition and love of dominion which the enemies of France have pretended to be peculiarly characteristic of that enterprising nation.”

with Spain, I may say certainly superior, possessed of New Orleans, on our Right, Canada on our left and seconded by the numerous tribes of Indians on our Rear from one extremity to the other, a people, so generally friendly to her and whom she knows so well how to conciliate; would, it is much to be apprehended have it in her power to give law to these states.

Let us suppose, that when the five thousand french troops (and under the idea of that number twice as many might be introduced,) were entered the city of Quebec; they should declare an intention to hold Canada, as a pledge and surety for the debts due to France from the United States, [or, under other specious pretences hold the place till they can find a bone for contention], and [in the meanwhile] should excite the Canadians to engage in supporting [their pretences and claims]; what should we be able to say with only four or five thousand men to carry on the dispute? It may be supposed that France would not choose to renounce our friendship by a step of this kind as the consequence would probably be a reunion with England on some terms or other; and the loss of what she had acquired, in so violent and unjustifiable a manner, with all the advantages of an Alliance with us. This in my opinion is too slender a security against the measure to be relied on. The truth of the position will intirely depend on naval events. If France and Spain should unite and obtain a decided superiority by Sea, a reunion with England

would avail very little and might be set at defiance. France, with a numerous army at command might throw in what number of land forces she thought proper to support her pretensions; and England without men, without money, and inferior on her favourite element could give no effectual aid to oppose them. Resentment, reproaches, and submission seem to be all that would be left us. Men are very apt to run into extremes; hatred to England may carry some into an excess of Confidence in France; especially when motives of gratitude are thrown into the scale. Men of this description would be unwilling to suppose France capable of acting so ungenerous a part. I am heartily disposed to entertain the most favourable sentiments of our new ally and to cherish them

in others to a reasonable degree; but it is a maxim founded on the universal experience of mankind, that no nation is to be trusted farther than it is bound by its interest; and no prudent statesman or politician will venture to depart from it. In our circumstances we ought to be particularly cautious; for we have not yet attained sufficient vigor and maturity to recover from the shock of any false step into which we may unwarily fall.

If France should even engage in the scheme, in the first instance with the purest intentions, there is the greatest danger that, in the progress of the business, invited to it by circumstances and, perhaps, urged on by the solicitations and wishes of the Canadians, she would alter her views.

As the Marquis clothed his proposition when he spoke of it to me, it would seem to originate wholly with himself; but it is far from impossible that it had its birth in the Cabinet of France and was put into this artful dress, to give it the readier currency. I fancy that I read in the countenances of some people on this occasion, more than the disinterested zeal of allies. I hope I am mistaken and that my fears of mischief make me refine too much, and awaken jealousies that have no sufficient foundation.

But upon the whole, Sir, to wave every other consideration; I do not like to add to the number of our national obligations. I would wish as much as possible to avoid giving a foreign power new claims of merit for services performed, to the United States, and would ask no assistance that is not indispensible. I am, etc.[73]

*To LIEUTENANT GEORGE AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON[76]

Head Quarters, Fredg., November 21, 1778.

Sir: Your Letter came to my hands last Night.

73. This was a private letter. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington. The letter sent, which is entirely in the writing of

Washington, was sold at auction in 1933, and from the catalogue description varies in some particulars from the draft by Hamilton, which suffered much alteration before it was approved.

President Laurens replied (November 20): “I believe and upon good grounds, the scheme for an expedition into Canada in concert with the Arms of France, originated in the breast of the Marquis de lafayette, encouraged probably by conferences with Count d'Estaing and I also believe it to be the offspring of the purest motives so far as respects that origin, but this is not sufficient to engage my concurrence in a measure big with eventful mischiefs. As deeply as my very limited time and faculties had suffered me to penetrate, I had often contemplated our delicate connexion with France, and although it is painful to talk of one's own foresight, I had view'd and foretold fifteen Months ago the humiliating state, to which our embrio Independence would be reduced by courting from that Nation the loan of more Money than should be actually necessary for the support of the Army and of our unfortunate Navy.

“I was one of the six unsuccessful opponents to the resolution for borrowing Money from France for paying the Interest of our loan Office Certificates; we have in this single article plunged the Union into a vast amount of debt, and from neglecting to exert our very small abilities or even to shew a leading disposition to cancel any part of the former demand against us, our Bills for that Interest are now floating in imminent danger of dishonor and disgrace; fully persuaded of the true value of National honor I anxiously wished to support our own by a propriety and consistency of conduct and I dreaded the consequences of subjecting our happiness to the disposal of a powerful Creditor, who might on very specious grounds, interpret National honor to our destruction. I warned my friends against the danger of Mortgaging these States to foreign powers. Every Million of Livres you borrow implies a pledge of your Lands, and it is optional in your Creditor to be repaid at the bank of England with an exorbitant Premium, or to collect the Money due to him in any of your Ports, and according to his own mode, whenever National Interest shall require the support of pretended National honor; hence Your Excellency will perceive what were my feelings, when the propositions for subduing Canada by the aid of a french Fleet and Army were first broached to me. I demurred exceedingly to the Marquis's scheme and expressed some doubts of the concurrence of Congress, this was going as far as I dared consistently with my Office or considering him as

a Gentleman of equal honor and tenacity. I trusted the issue of his application to the sagacity of Congress, the business was referred to a Committee who conferred with the Marquis, their Report was framed agreeably to his wishes, but the House very prudently determined to consult the Commander in Chief previously to a final determination, and, although Your Excellency's observations are Committed, I am much mistaken if every Member of Congress is not decided in his opinion in favor of them. If the prosecution of so extensive a project is from the present state of our Army and funds impracticable on our part, it becomes altogether unnecessary to discuss the point in a Political view, and I trust the Marquis will be satisfied with such reasonings in apology for our desisting from the pursuit of his favorite enterprise, as our circumstances will dictate.

“The immense debts which we are involved in abroad and at home demands the most serious attention and calls for an exertion of the collected wisdom of all these States, in order to secure what we have saved from the ravages of the Enemy. I am very short sighted, if there be at this time any encouragement for attempting distant conquests. I have been uniformly averse from every proposition which tended to dissipate our strength, and to accumulate our debt; events have confirmed my opinions, and at this Instant taking in view all circumstances, I have doubts of the policy and more of the success of the pending expedition against East Florida.” Laurens's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

76. Of Lee's Partisan Light Dragoons. He resigned in December, 1778; was made ensign in the Second Virginia Regiment in 1780; lieutenant of same in May, 1781; aide to Lafayette in 1781; served to close of the war.

I have wrote to Majr. Lee on the subject.[77] When his answer arrives, you will hear further from me on the subject of it. I am, &c.

***To JOSEPH REED**

Fredericksburg in the State of N. York, November 27, 1778.

Dear Sir: I am upon the eve of my departure for Winter Quarters but shall not quit my present roof untill I acknowledge, and thank you for your obliging favor, of the 25th. Ulto.

Unless the Officer who commanded the dispersed Dragoons of Baylors Regiment was directed by Mr. Caldwell to Trenton he was not only guilty of an unpardonable piece of indiscretion, but disobedience of Orders; as he was instructed to collect the scattered remains of that Regiment and repair with them to such place (out of the common rout of the Waggons) as the Quarter Master should direct. I have ordered an enquiry into his conduct on that occasion.

It is most devoutly to be wished that some happy expedient could be hit upon to restore credit to our paper emissions and punish the infamous practice of forestalling and engrossing, such articles as are essentially necessary to the very existence of the army and which by this means come to it

77. Not found in the *Washington Papers*.

through the hands of these people at 50 pr. Ct. advance; to the great injury, and depreciation of our Money, by accumulating, the quantum necessary for ordinary purchases to an amazing Sum, which must end in our total stagnation of all purchases unless some remedy can be soon and effectually applied. It is also most devoutly to be wished that faction was at an end and that those to whom every thing dear and valuable is entrusted would lay aside party views and return to first principles. happy, happy, thrice happy Country if such was the government of it, but alas ! we are not to expect that the path is to be strewed wt. flowers. That great and good Being who rules the Universe has disposed matters otherwise and for wise purposes I am perswaded.

As my Letter to Congress of this date has given a full acct. of the cantonmts. of the Troops and other matters of public concernment, I have no need to repeat it to you as an individual Member; the conduct of the Enemy at New York and Rhode Island is too misterious to be accounted for by any rule of common sense. The Transports containing their second Imbarkation still remain in the harbour, for what purpose is not easy to conjecture.

I shall hope, when the Army gets a little settled in Winter Quarters that the Comee. of Arrangement will perfect the good Work they began in the Summer and draw order from the Chaos we have been in for a long time past.

It is eleven Oclock at Night and I am to set out early in the Morning, for which reason I shall only add my thanks for the favourable Sentiments you are pleased to entertain for, and have expressed of me but in a more especial manner for your good wishes and prayers. With sincere esteem and affection, and with Compts. to Mrs. Reed, I am etc.

***To GOUVERNEUR MORRIS**

Fredericksburg, November 27, 1778.

Dear Sir: I thank much for your favor of the 11th. which I received by the last Post. You know when a House is on the move and packing up, all the family are commonly busy, and all is hurry; so it is when an Army is changing it's ground for new Quarters. This circumstance must plead my excuse for not going fully into your Letter. You are certainly right in your position that we must act according to our powers; however they may place us, in a situation different from what we wish. In pursuance of this, I have made a disposition of our Army for the Winter more adapted to our circumstances in point

of supplies, than if the Troops had remained in a collected State; and tho it is not so sparse and divided as the plan of Cantonment mentioned in your Letter,[45] yet it has regard to the objects you had in view; and I am well pleased, that in the general it coincides with your Sentiments. A more extended Cantonment to the Southward would have facilitated the means of support; but many inconveniences attend too great a dispersion of Troops. I refer you to my Letter of today to Congress for their general and particular disposition. I must be done after expressing my obligations for your care of myself, and after assuring you that I am etc.[46]

***To PRESIDENT JOSEPH REED**

Middle Brook, December 12, 1778.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 7th. Instr. by Mr. Laurens[19] came to my hands a day or two ago; previous to which I should have done myself the pleasure of congratulating you (which I now do very sincerely) on your late Election to the government of Pensylvania had not Sir Harrys late extra Manoeuvre

45. Morris had been appointed on the committee of Congress to superintend the commissary and quartermaster departments and in this capacity he had suggested to Washington (November 11) the cantoning of the army “along thro the Towns about the Middle of Connecticut River.” The Highlands should be protected and a post maintained at Fredericksburg; the sick Morris would have quartered at Albany and advance parties at Acquackanonck, Newark, and Elizabethtown, with a strong force at Morristown; small bodies at Sussex Court House, Easton, Coryells, Brunswick, and Princeton. Amboy Morris thought too dangerous for a post, but part of the army “might be quartered at Trenton, Bordentown and Burlington and a part at Valley Forge.” Morris's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

46. From a photostat furnished by J. Stuart Groves, of Wilmington, Del.

19. Lieut. Col. John Laurens.

up the North River kept me upon the March and countermarch from the 5th. till yesterday, when I arrived at these, my quarters for the Winter; and imployed too much of my attention to investigate his designs to endulge in more agreeable amusements.

What did, or could prompt the Knight to this expedition I am at a loss to discover (considering the unseasonableness of it). three things only appeared to me probable. A rescue of the Convention Troops, a stroke at the rear of our Army or, a surprize of our Posts in the high-lands; the two first I had seen perfectly out of his reach before I left the North River and not conceiving that he could be so much out in point of intelligence as to mistime matters so egregiously (if either of the two first

was his object) it followed of consequence that the last must be his aim and tho I had left them (as I thought) in a state of security, and, in the hands of a good Officer (McDougall) I could not help being uneasy, lest disaster might happen and posted back from Elizabeth Town at 4 o'clock on the Morning of the 5th. and got within 12 or 15 Miles of King's Ferry, when I was met by an Express informing me that the Enemy had landed at that place, burn'd two or three small logged houses with 9. Barrls. of spoilt Herrings, and had reimbarkd and Sailed for New York again. Thus ended this notable expedition which was conducted (in the preparation) with so much secrecy that all the Flag boats to, and from the City were stopped and not a mouse permitted to creep

within their lines; the only bad consequence we have felt from it and as the weather has turned out not a trifling one, is that it has delayed the Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsa. Troops four days in hurting and has occasion'd them to march through Snow and bad roads to come at their ground instead of Sunshine and good ones which was the case before the Storm on thursday last.

It gives me very sincere pleasure to find that there is likely to be a coalition of the Whigs in your State (a few only excepted) and that the assembly of it, are so well disposed to second your endeavours in bringing those murderers of our cause (the monopolizers, forestallers, and engrossers) to condign punishment. It is much to be lamented that each State long ere this has not hunted them down as the pests of society, and the greatest Enemys we have to the happiness of America. I would to God that one of the most attrocious of each State was hung in Gibbets upon a gallows five times as high as the one prepared by Haman. No punishment in my opinion is too great for the Man who can build his greatness upon his Country's ruin.

General Lee's publication in Dunlaps Gazette of the third[20] (and I have seen no other) puts me in a disagreeable situation. I have neither leizure nor inclination to enter the lists with him in a News Paper, and so far as his production points to personallity I can, and do, from my inmost

20. Dunlap's *Pennsylvania Packet* of December 3 contains General Lee's defense of his conduct at Monmouth, which he begins by the argument that his orders were indefinite and must have been one of three supposititious cases, which he outlines.

Soul, despise; but when he has most bare-facedly misrepresented facts in some places, and thrown out insinuations in others that have not the smallest foundation in truth, not to attempt a refutation, is a tacit acknowledgment of the justice of his assertions; for though there are thousands who know how unsupported his piece is, there are yet tens of thousands that know nothing of the matter and will be led, naturally, to believe that bold and confident assertions uncontradicted must be founded in truth.

It became a part of General Lee's plan from the moment of his Arrest (tho it was an event solicited by himself) to have the world believe that he was a persecuted man; and that, party was at the bottom of it; but however convenient it may have been for his purposes to establish this belief, I defy him, or his most zealous partisans to adduce a single instance in proof of it (unless bringing him to tryal at his own request is considered in this light). I can do more, I will defy any person out of my own family to say that I have ever mentioned his name, if it was to be avoided; and when not, that I have not studiously declined expressing any Sentiment of him, or his behaviour; how far this conduct accords with his, let his own breast decide. If he conceives that I was opposed to him, because he found himself disposed to enter into a party against me: If he thought I stood in his road to preferment, and therefore, that it was convenient to lessen me in the esteem of my Countrymen in order to pave the way for

his own advancemt. I have only to observe, that, as I never entertained any jealousy of, or apprehended from him, so neither did I ever do more than common civility, and proper respect to his rank required, to conciliate his good opinion; his temper and plans were too versatile and violent to attract my admiration; and that I have escaped the venom of his tongue, and pen, so long, is more to be wondered at than applauded; as it is a favor that no Officer under whose immediate command he ever served has the happiness (if happiness can be thus denominated) of boasting.

Were I to give into private conveniency and amusement, I should not be able to resist the invitation of my friends to make Phila. (instead of a squeezed up room or two) my quarters for the Winter; but the affairs of the army require my constant attention and presence, and circumstanced as matters are at this time, calls for some degree of care and address to keep it from crumbling. As Peace and

retirement are my ultimate aim, and the most pleasing and flattering hope of my Soul, every thing advansive of this end, contributes to my satisfaction, however difficult and inconvenient in the attainment; and will reconcile any place and all circumstances to my feelings whilst I continue in Service.

The Officers of the Army must be grateful for your endeavours to serve them; and those of your own

State will, I trust, feel the salutary effects of your exertions in their favor. They really merit it, and resignations must cease to be wonderful when it is a fact too notorious to be denied that Officers cannot live in the Army under present circumstances whilst they see others enriching themselves by an infinity of ways. These are severe tests of public virtue and should not in point of policy be pushed too far. With sincere regard and affection, and with compliments to Mrs. Reed, I am etc.

***To MAJOR HENRY LEE**

Head Quarters, December 14, 1778.

Dear Lee: The bearer has my horse in exchange for your Mare. He takes with him another which I am willing to give for the old Mare you mentioned to me (if she has not quite passed her teeming time) he is of the same age of the other, bought at the same time, of the same person, and has given sufficient proofs of his goodness. He has been foundered, and not yet perfectly recovered of it; for which reason, and having no inclination to impose upon the public, you may take him

upon tryal to be replaced next Campaign by another if the founder should render him unfit for Service. No duty is to be expected of him this Winter.

I do not want the Mare to be sent to me, my wish is to send her and the other to my Seat in Virginia. Do you know of any good and safe oppertunity of doing it? Were you not to have sent a Horse to me to look at for my own riding? Will you come and dine with me today? I am, etc.

***To LORD FAIRFAX**

Camp at Middle brook, State of New Jersey, December 17, 1778.

My lord: I have just been informed that Mr. Tomison Ellzey has, under the idea of waste land, entered in your Lordships Office part of my purchase of Simon Pearson or William Ashford, lying in Fairfax County and on or near Dogue run. These Lands are included within ancient marked bounds by which I purchased, and have regularly, and I trust satisfactorily, paid your Lordship

the quit rent these fifteen or twenty years.

I am perswaded I need do nothing more than to bring your Lordship acquainted with these facts to stay the iniquitous and I may add dirty and sneaking proceedings of Mr. Ellzey. I therefore beg that this letter may be received and considered as a caveat to the issuing of a Patent to that person for any land adjoining those of mine above mentioned till I can be heard; when, if I do not make it appear that I neither hold, nor claim, lands that have not been paid for in the transfer and regularly to your Lordship by quit rent ever since, I will agree, not only to lose them, but forfeit my whole Estate also.

Your Lordship must be sensible that at this distance, seperated rated from my Papers, and engaged in the important duties of my command, that it is not in my power to go into an investigation of this matter at present and I repose too much confidence in your known justice to harbour a moments doubt that my local situation and confinement to the Army, will operate to my disadvantage in your Office tho it may have had no small weight in the conduct of Mr. Ellzey; whose hopes, I am perswaded, were built upon my absence.

With Sentiments of the most perfect respect, and best compliments to Colo. Martin,[58] I have the honor etc.

58. Denny Martin, brother of Thomas Bryan Martin. He later assumed the name of Fairfax by act of Parliament. He was a nephew of the sixth Lord Fairfax.

To HENRY LAURENS

Head Quarters, Middle Brook, December 18, 1778.

My dear sir: I received your Official Letter of the 8th. Instant, advising that your relinquishment of the presidency would soon take place, which I see has happened; and assuring me of the respect and esteem you should always retain for me.

Permit me in turn, Sir, to assure you in the language of the most unfeigned sincerity, that I hold myself under great obligations for the very polite and satisfactory manner, in which you conducted the Official intercourse that has subsisted between us; and for the flattering marks of confidence and friendship, with which you honoured me in a private capacity. These considerations, and the most perfect conviction of your unwearied assiduity to promote the interest of America, in every instance in your power, have attached me to you, by the ties of the truest respect and affection; and, wherever you may be, and in whatever situation, I shall ever wish you happy, and shall set a high value upon your friendship and correspondence. I have the Honor etc.[66]

66. The letter sent was entirely in the writing of Washington and was sold at auction in 1933. The above text is from the copy by Robert Hanson Harrison in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS[67]

Head Quarters, Middle Brook, December 18, 1778.

Sir: On Wednesday I had the Honor to receive your Excellency's Letter of the 12th. Instant, with the Inclosures. I very sincerely congratulate you, Sir, on the Honorable and important station you are chosen to fill. The opinion I entertain of your public character concurs with every personal consideration to make the choice pleasing to me. At the same time, that my warmest

acknowledgements are due for the sentiments you express towards me, and the polite assurances you are pleased to give; I beg you to believe that I shall, by inclination, embrace every opportunity of giving proofs of that respect and esteem; which I have ever been happy to pay to your worthy predecessors in Office. I have the Honor etc.[68]

To BENJAMIN HARRISON

Head Quarters, Middle Brook, December 18, 1778.

Sir: I had the Honor to receive Your Letter

67. John Jay, of New York.

On this same day (December 18) Washington acknowledged Secretary Charles Thomson's notification of the election of Jay as President of Congress. This letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

68. The copy is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

enclosing a Copy of the Resolution of the House of Delegates on the 23d Ulto.,[69] for presenting me with four Geldings. I assure You, Sir, I am sensibly affected by this pleasing mark of public esteem; and the flattering consideration on which the Assembly are pleased to found it, gives it a value, to which my feelings only can do justice. My warmest acknowledgements are due for the favor, and these I take the liberty to request you will offer to the House, on the first proper occasion. I have the Honor to be, etc.[70]

***To LUND WASHINGTON**

Head Quarters, Middle brook, December 18, 1778.

Dear Lund: Your Letter of the 9th. Instant came to my hands this day after I had dispatched a long letter to you by Colo. Harrison;[71] the qty. of land mentioned therein, as appears by my Plats, is,

I dare say, the exact number of Acres held by Marshall,[72] for more than which he ought not to expect payment. The three Small quantities which serve to compose the agregate 480½ are

69. “In the House of Delegates. Monday the 23rd of November 1778. Resolved, nemine contradicente that four of the finest Geldings that can be procured be immediately bought and sent to his excellency General Washington as a small Testimony of the gratitude of this State for the many signal services he has rendered America.… Teste E. Randolph c. h. d.”

General Nelson was requested to purchase the horses and send them to Washington; the treasurer to pay his drafts.

This letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

70. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The letter sent, stated to be in the writing of Washington, is in the Buffalo Historical Society. It was addressed to Benjamin Harrison, as Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates, and inclosed in Washington's letter to Harrison, Dec. 18–30, 1778, *p. v*.

71. Col. Charles Harrison, of the First Continental Artillery. (See Washington's letter to Lund Washington, Dec. 17, 1778, *ante*.)

72. Thomas H. Marshall. (See Washington's letters to Col. Thomas H. Marshall, Mar. 9 and Mar. 17, 1778, *ante*.)

(I presume) those which lye on muddy hole; the North side of the main road joining Wade's and my line; and on the South, joining Manley[73] and me. This, as it is by actual and careful measurement, and intended for my own satisfaction and government, does I am perswaded, contain to the utmost inch all that he holds, and I chearfully acquiesce to it as just. But at all events fix the matter with him by a resurvey, or any other way to close the bargain; telling him now however, that if it is resurveyed, and the Surveyor makes it less than 480½ I shall pay for no more than is fd. by the last Survey (if it should even fall short of 400 Acres) and unless you have conditioned to the contrary, I

shall expect, as the Survey will be made to gratifie him, that it will be done at his expence, and by the Surveyor of the County, or at least a Sworn Surveyor. You will see that the Chain is full 33 feet in length.

With respect to the small slipes which he engaged to let me have, the matter taken up in a strict sense, may be determined in a moment, by only solving a single question, to wit. did he, or did he not, agree to take 40/ an acre for the Land in the event of not getting Allexrs? If he did not the matter is at an end, because there is not in that case room for even the Shadow of argument. If he did, where is the hardship of it? or in other words, why is it a *greater* hardship to receive money (short of one's wishes) for lands sold, than for any other thing. The money which General Weedon wants

73. Harrison Manley.

to pay you is due for Lands I sold Doctor Mercer[74] and for the very purpose of enabling me to pay for this and other Lands in that Neck, as oppertunities might present; what difference then is therein the cases, more than in the Sum? and a case still more in point, is, that the very money advanced Alexander was in fact for the payment of this land of Marshall's. it is not harder then upon him to receive a part than for me to receive the whole. Such local disadvantages as these, are to be placed to the misfortunes of the times; some men indeed are benefited by them while others are ruined. I do not it is true come in under the latter class (so far as extends to ruin) but I believe you know, that by the comparative worth of money, Six or Seven thousand pounds which I have in Bonds upon Interest is now reduced to as many hundreds because I can get no more for a thousand at this day than a hundred would have fetched when I left Virginia Bonds, debts, Rents, and annuities undergoing no change while the currency is depreciating in value and for aught I know may in a little time, be totally sunk. I do not labour this point because I expect much from it, but simply to shew Mr. Marshall the light in which he should consider the matter if he has a mind to act upon such principles as ought to actuate every honest man and to show him moreover the falacy and error

of his arguments when he endeavours to prove that I have deriv'd benefits from his Ld. which he has not experienced from

74. Dr. Hugh(?) Mercer.

Alexander; the falacy of it, because if I have taken the timber of, it is not there, consequently the land now, is of so much less value. The error of it, inasmuch as I am exceedingly mistaken if he has not inclosed and worked part of Alexanders Land, which (now I am upon the subject) is a matter that you ought to enquire into, as I have some recollection of Alexander's telling me, that he had not only put Marshall in possession of the whole, or such part of the Land as he wanted but that the Rents wch. usually came to him ceased; intimating, that the bargain between him, me, and Marshall was so far compleated, as that he no longer recd. the Rents or all of them nor was I to expect Interest for the Money lent him. If therefore I am to pay Marshall for his whole land, at the price now agreed at by the Acre, and to receive no Interest from Alexander, I shall be very prettily handled between the two.[75] This circumstance is mentioned for your Government; at the same time I leave you at full liberty to close the Bargain with Marshall on any terms (if obliged to allow as much for the Slipes as other parts of his Land and even to come up to 500 acres for the qty.; as I neither wish to disappoint you, nor myself, in our present views. you will do the best you can to have justice done me; their impositions afterwards I must submit to as a tax to dishonourable Men.

Among those plats which contained the quantity of Marshalls Land, you will also find one which shews the contents of those Tracts I bought of the two Ashfords[76] and

75. Washington wrote “Gentn.,” but then crossed it out somewhat heavily.

76. George and William Ashford.

Simon Pearson, which with so much of the waste land (taken up by me) as lyes above the tumbling Dam, shews (after taking of what Mr. Triplet[77] is to get) the amount of what you are to have of me, and how far it will fall short of the purchase from Marshall, thereby enabling you to make a proper

Settlement. If you find more than one Plat of these Lands (as I think there is) the last is the truest, and most correct.

It is not reasonable that Mr. Triplet should remain longer out of the land which he is to get in exchange, for his by my Mill race, as there is no prospect of my seeing home this Winter; and yet I am really at a loss to find out how it can be done without my being present, as no person knows the true and complex state of that matter as well as I do. Nevertheless if he desires it, I will give you the best directions I can in order that that possession may be given him this Winter; the way that I always expected and wished to have it done, was to extend a line from the bridge, at the head of the race by the Tumbling Dam, to the little branch which you cross in going onward to Morris's, at the road leading thither; thence by a direct line to the Main road, as (if my memory serves me) my fence runs; this, if the fence is removed in, as I think it was Six or Seven years ago, will give as many Acres as I shall get between the race and the line of my New Patent; but if it should not, then to pay for the difference at whatever the land would sell for at the time of ascertaining the several quantities

77. William Triplett.

we give and take even if it should be at £50 an Acre. If Mr. Triplet will agree to this, the matter, so far as respects the land and the use of it to both of us, may be settled at any time; and a sum may also be deposited in his hands to be adjusted hereafter; which will prevent his suffering any delay or injustice on acct. of the money he is to receive. or if this will not do, from his apprehensions that he shall give more land than he will get (in which I think he will be mistaken, if I am not wrong in my ideas respecting the removal of my Fence, which was done to this very view) I would, in order to satisfie him, and bring the matter as far as possible to a close and without further delay let the line from the branch at the road (leading from the Tumbling dam to the Plantation as mentioned before) bare a little more to the right to include a little more land. A Measure of this kind must remove every difficulty and will certainly give content; the legal fees of the County Surveyor in ascertaining this work, would amount to the value of both pieces of land; for not knowing, or not depending upon the circumstances, or with a view perhaps to increase his fees, he would

Survey Harrisons Patent (on which Mr. Triplet lives) Pearsons (the Patentee of which I do not now recollect); My land taken up as waste, and part perhaps of that I bought of Geo. Ashford, all of which may be avoided by the mode I speak of, and the disadvantage resulting from the want of a final Settlement thrown upon me, by giving him more land, and more money, than he will be entitled to upon a fair

and impartial measurement of the exchanged tracts. If you and Mr. Triplet should agree without any thing, have a Stone, or a locust Post fixed at the road for the Corner.

With respect to your bargain with Lanphire[78] I can say nothing. I wish every contract that I make, or that is made for me, should be fulfilled according to the strict and equitable meaning of the Parties, and this in the present case you must be a better judge than I. If at the time of engaging him the extra allowance of Corn &ca. more was expected and promised than has been performed you are certainly under no obligation to comply with your part till he has fulfilled his; if on the other hand he has fulfilled his you are bound to comply altho it may prove hard. but from your state of the case, the true and equitable construction of the bargain seems to me to be, that he ought to have the Corn and Wool, but should be obliged to continue his and Servants labor at their present Wages, till the covered ways and such work as was particularized or had in contemplation at the time is finished; without this his Wages will be monstrous the end not answered and what neither of you at the time could possibly have in view. I therefore think that this is the proper footing to place it on, and, tho' slow, he had better be kept on those terms till you can at least bring his wages within the bounds of moderation by time if he should not quite compleat the work expected of him. The Corn (which I am told Qr. Master

78. Going Lanphire.

Finie[79] is now giving Six pounds pr. Barrl. for) should be delivered by little at a time, for if he gets the whole at once you may I suppose, catch him as you can.

I come now to mention a matter which more particularly respects yourself. The depreciation of Money, and the sudden rise in the price of produce in the course of this year and other things principally to this cause owing renders your present wages especially under short Crops, totally inadequate to your trouble and Services. I am therefore willing that you should receive a certain part of the last Crop, to be disposed of by you for your own benefit and so in future; this will give you the reward of your Industry without subjecting you to the peculiar hardship resulting from depreciation as it is presumable that the price of produce will rise in proportion to the fall of the other. I do not at this time ascertain what the part shall be, because I wish you to say what you think is just and right; this it is my full wish to give and more I do not think you would ask therefore we cannot disagree. Being little acquainted with the produce of my Estate, amount of Crops &ca. is the reason of my wishing to leave the matter to yourself as it is my first wish that you should be satisfied.

Mrs. Archer has got the letter you inclosed, and I have only to add that I am sincerely and affectionately Yrs.

79. William Finnie, Deputy Quartermaster General.

***To BENJAMIN HARRISON**

Head Qrs., Middle Brook, December 18[–30][37] , 1778.

My dear Sir: You will be so obliging as to present the inclosed to the House when oppertunity, and a suitable occasion offers.[38] I feel very sensibly the late honorable testimony of their remembrance;[39] to stand well in the good opinion of my Countrymen constitutes my chiefest happiness; and will be my best support under the perplexities and difficulties of my present Station.

The mention of my lands in the back Country was more owing to accident than design; the Virga. Officers having solicited leave for Colo. Wood to attend the Assembly of that commonwealth with some representation of theirs respecting their claims, or wishes, brought my own matters (of

a similar nature) to view; but I am too little acquainted with the minutia; of them to ground an application on or give any trouble to the Assembly concerning them. Under the proclamation of 1763, I am entitled to 5000 Acres of Land in my own right; and by purchase from Captn. Roots, Posey, and some other Officers, I obtained rights to several thousands more, a small part of wch. I patented during the Admn. of Lord Dunmore; another part was (I believe) Surveyed, whilst the major part

37. See Washington's letter to Benjamin Harrison, Dec. 18, 1778, *ante*.

38. The present of four geldings.

39. This draft was written out and dated “Philada. Deer. 26th: 1778.” Later, Washington crossed out “Philada.“ and wrote “Head Qrs. Middle Brook,” changed “Decr. 26” back to “Decr. 18” and then wrote “18” above it. Sparks prints this as two separate letters, December 18 and the P.S. as a distinct letter, December 30; Ford prints it as one letter, under date of December 18, with the P.S. properly dated December 30.

remains in locations; but where (without having recourse to my Memms.) and under what circumstances, I know not at this time any more than you do, nor do I wish to give trouble abt. them.

I can assign but two causes for the enemys continuance among us, and these balance so equally in my Mind, that I scarce know which of the two preponderates. The one is, that they are waiting the ultimate determination of Parliament; the other, that of our distresses; by which I know the Commissioners went home not a little buoyed up; and sorry I am to add, not without cause. What may be the effect of such large and frequent emissions, of the dissentions, Parties, extravagance, and a general lax of public virtue Heaven alone can tell! I am affraid even to think of It; but it appears as dear to me as ever the Sun did in its meredian brightness, that America never stood in more eminent need of the wise, patriotic, and Spirited exertions of her Sons than at this period and if it is not a sufficient cause for genl. lamentation, my misconception of the matter impresses it too strongly upon me, that the States seperately are too much engaged in their local concerns, and have

too many of their ablest men withdrawn from the general Council for the good of the common weal; in a word, I think our political system may, be compared to the mechanism of a Clock; and that our conduct should derive a lesson from it for it answers no good purpose to keep the smaller Wheels in order if the greater one which is the support and

prime mover of the whole is neglected. How far the latter is the case does not become me to pronounce but as there can be no harm in a pious wish for the good of ones Country I shall offer it as mine that each State wd. not only choose, but absolutely compel their ablest Men to attend Congress; that they would instruct them to go into a thorough investigation of the causes that have produced so many disagreeable effects in the Army and Country; in a word that public abuses should be corrected, and an entire reformation worked; without these it does not, in my judgment, require the spirit of divination to foretell the consequences of the present Administration, nor to how little purpose the States, individually, are framing constitutions, providing laws, and filling Offices with the abilities of their ablest Men. These, if the great whole is mismanaged must sink in the general wreck and will carry with it the remorse of thinking that we are lost by our own folly and negligence, or the desire perhaps of living in ease and tranquility during the expected accomplishment of so great a revolution in the effecting of which the greatest abilities and the honestest Men our (i. e. the American) world affords ought to be employed. It is much to be feared my dear Sir that the States in their seperate capacities have very inadequate ideas of the present danger. Removed (some of them) far distant from the scene of action and seeing, and hearing such publications only as flatter their wishes they conceive that the

contest is at an end, and that to regulate the government and police of their own State is all that remains to be done; but it is devoutly to be wished that a sad reverse of this may not fall upon them like a thunder clap that is little expected. I do not mean to designate particular States. I wish to cast no reflections upon any one. The Public believes (and if they do believe it, the fact might almost as well be so) that the States at this time are badly represented, and that the great, and important concerns of the nation are horribly conducted, for want either of abilities or application in the Members, or through discord and party views of some individuals; that they should be so, is to be lamented more at this time, than formerly, as we are far advanced in the dispute and in the opinn.

of many drawg. to a happy period; have the eyes of Europe upon us, and I am perswaded many political Spies to watch, discover our situation, and give information of our weaknesses and wants.

The story you have related of a proposal to redeem the paper money at its present depreciated value has also come to my ears,[40] but I cannot vouch for the authenticity of it. I am very happy to hear that the Assembly of Virginia have put the completion of their Regiment upon a footing so apparently certain, but as one great defect of your past Laws for this purpose, has lain in the mode of getting the Men to the Army, I shall hope that effectual measures are pointed out in the present, to remedy the evil and bring forward all that shall

40. Harrison's letter, forwarding the resolve of the Virginia House of Delegates, and containing this story of the redemption of paper money, is not found in the *Washington Papers*.

be raised. The Embargo upon Provisions is a most salutary measure as I am affraid a sufficiency of flour will not easily be obtained even with money of higher estimation than ours. adieu my dear Sir.

P.S. Phila. 30th. This Letter was to have gone by Post from Middle brook but missed that conveyance, since which I have come to this place at the request of Congress whence I shall soon return.

I have seen nothing since I came here (on the 22d. Instt.) to change my opinion of Men or Measrs. but abundant reason to be convinced, that our Affairs are in a more distressed, ruinous, and deplorable condition than they have been in Since the commencement of the War. By a faithful labourer then in the cause. By a Man who is daily injuring his private Estate without even the smallest earthly advantage not common to all in case of a favourable Issue to the dispute. By one who wishes the prosperity of America most devoutly and sees or thinks he sees it, on the brink of ruin, you are beseeched most earnestly my dear Colo. Harrison, to exert yourself in endeavouring to rescue your Country, by, (let me add) sending your ablest and best Men to Congress; these

characters must not slumber, nor sleep at home, in such times of pressing danger; they must not content themselves in the enjoyment of places of honor or profit in their own Country, while the

common interests of America are mouldering and sinking into irretrievable (if a remedy is not soon applied) ruin, in which theirs also must ultimately be involved. If I was to be called upon to draw A picture of the times, and of Men; from what I have seen, heard, and in part know I should in one word say that idleness, dissipation and extravagance seem to have laid fast hold of most of them. That Speculation, peculation, and an insatiable thirst for riches seems to have got the better of every other consideration and almost of every order of Men. That party disputes and personal quarrels are the great business of the day whilst the momentous concerns of an empire, a great and accumulated debt; ruined finances, depreciated money, and want of credit (which in their consequences is the want of every thing) are but secondary considerations and postponed from day to day, from week to week as if our affairs wore the most promising aspect; after drawing this picture, which from my Soul I believe to be a true one I need not repeat to you that I am alarmed and wish to see my Countrymen roused. I have no resentments, nor do I mean to point at any particular characters; this I can declare upon my honor for I have every attention paid me by Congress than I can possibly expect and have reason to think that I stand well

in their estimation but in the present situation of things I cannot help asking: Where is Mason, Wythe, Jefferson, Nicholas, Pendleton, Nelson, and another I could name;[41] and why, if you are sufficiently impressed with your danger, do you not (as New Yk. has done in the case of Mr. Jay) send an extra Member or two for at least a certain limited time till the great business of the Nation is put upon a more respectable and happy establishmt. Your Money is now sinking 5 pr. Ct. a day in this City; and I shall not be surprized if in the course of a few months a total stop is put to the currency of it. And yet an assembly, a concert, a Dinner, or Supper (that will cost three or four hundred pounds) will not only take Men of from acting in but even from thinking of this business while a great part of the Officers of your Army from absolute necessity are quitting the Service and the more virtuous few rather than do this are sinking by sure degrees into beggery and want. I again repeat to you that this is not an exaggerated acct.; that it is an alarming one I do not deny, and confess to you that I feel more real distress on acct. of the prest. appearances of things than I have done at any one time since the commencement of the dispute; but it is time to bid you once more

adieu. Providence has heretofore taken us up when all other means and hope seemed to be departing from us, in this I will confide. Yr. &ca.

41. George Mason, George Wythe, Thomas Jefferson, Wilson Cary Nicholas, Edmund Pendleton, Thomas Nelson, jr., and Benjamin Harrison.

***To BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**

Philadelphia, December 28, 1778.

Sir: The Marquis de la fayette having served with distinction as Major General in the Army of the United States, two Campaigns, has been determined by the prospects of an European War to return to his native Country.

It is with pleasure that I embrace the oppertunity of introducing to your personal acquaintance a Gentn. whose merit cannot have left him unknown to you by reputation. The generous motives which first induced him to cross the Atlantic; The tribute which he paid to gallantry at Brandy-wine; his success in Jersey before he had recovered of his Wound, in an affair where he commanded Militia against British Grenadiers;[27] the brilliant retreat by which he eluded a combined manoeuvre of the whole British force in the last Campaign; his services in the enterprize against Rhode Island, are such proofs of his Zeal, military ardour and talents as have endeared him to America, and must greatly recommend him to his Prince.

Coming with so many titles to claim your esteem, it were needless for any other purpose than to endulge my own feelings to add that I have a very particular friendship for him, and that whatever services you may have it in your

27. At Gloucester, N.J., a few miles below Philadelphia, Nov. 25, 1777. An account of the affair was written down by Sparks, after conversation with Lafayette, at Lagrange, in 1828, ant is in the Sparks Manuscripts, no. XXXII, Harvard College Library. A map of the maneuvers is m the Sparks Collection at Cornell, a photostat of which is in the Library of Congress.

power to render him will confer an obligation on one who has the honor to be etc.[28]

To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Philadelphia, December 29, 1778.

This will be accompanied by a letter from Congress, which will inform you, that a certain expedition, after a full consideration of all circumstances, has been laid aside[32] I am sorry however for the delay it has occasioned you by remaining so long undecided.

I am persuaded, My dear Marquis there is no need of fresh proofs to convince you either of my affection for you personally or of the high opinion I intertain of your military talents and merit. Yet as you are on the point of returning to your native country, I cannot forbear indulging my friendship by adding to the many honorable testimonies you have received from Congress, the inclosed letter from myself to our minister at your court. I have there endeavoured to give him an idea of the value this country sets upon you; and the interest I take in your happiness cannot but make me desire you may

28. A draft, in the writing of James McHenry, dated Dec. 29, 1778, is also in the *Washington Papers*.

32. A letter from the President of Congress to Lafayette, announcing the laying' aside of the Canadian expedition, is spread on the *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Jan. 2, 1779. Another letter of the same purport to Lafayette, but quite different in wording, is entered under date of January 3, in the “President's Letter Book,” *Papers of the Continental Congress*, no. 14, fol. 8.

be equally dear to your own.

Adieu, my Dear Marquis, My best wishes will ever attend you. May you have a safe and agreeable passage, and a happy meeting with your [lady and] friends! Yours, etc.[33]

33. The draft is m the writing of Alexander Hamilton. The words in brackets were added by Washington.

To CAPTAIN GEORGE LEWIS

February 13, 1779.

Dear George: It is with concern and resentment I find, by the return of Colonel Baylor's Regiment, that you are again absent therefrom; nay, more, that you had left it while the command devolved upon you. I am sorry to add, that these things reflect much discredit upon *you* as an Officer, and involve me in the censure, for the natural presumption is, that such indulgences arc the effect of partiality proceeding from our connexion.

With truth, I believe, it may be said, that in the course of the last 15 Months you have scarce been once with your Regiment, and when ordered to join it, the latter part of last Summer or fall, was shamefully tardy in obeying the order.

Immediately upon receipt of this Letter you will, I expect, join your Regiment and give that constant attendance on duty, which is to be expected from a good Officer. I am etc.[59]

59. The text is from the Varick Transcripts in the Library of Congress. The draft, in the writing of Washington, is much altered and partially mutilated, the alterations showing the difficulty Washington experienced in conveying the proper degree of censure. The draft, as first written and as well as can be deciphered, reads: “It was with pain and indignation I found by the return of Colo. Baylors Regiment, that you are again absent from it; nay, that you had left it while the command of it devolved upon you. I am sorry to add that these things reflect much discredit upon *you* as an Officer and involve me in the censure as it is presumed that these indulgencies proceed from and is the effect of partiallity.” The rest of the draft is the same as the above text.

***To HENRY LAURENS**

Middle brook, February 17, 1779.

Dear Sir: Altho I have delayed till now to give you the trouble of a line, I am not the less impressed with a sense of your politeness and civilities to me while I had the honor of being under yr. roof.[13] I shall think myself very happy if any poor cottage, of which I happen to be Master, can be hond. with your Company.

We have nothing new in this quarter, but are told that something great and good is in store for us at Congress. Nothing less, in short than an alliance with Spain, and a loan from that Court of thirteen million of Dollars. When I said we had nothing new, I ought to have excepted a piece of Intelligence, that the Enemy on Staten Island &ca. are busy in preparing Fascines the design of them, we are as yet ignorant. I am a little impatient to hear something further from Georgia. Mrs. Washington prays you to accept her sincere thanks for your kind attention to her while she was in the City of Philadelphia and joins in respectful compliments with, Dr. Sir, Yr. etc.

13. While in Philadelphia, Dec. 22, 1778, to Feb. 2, 1779, Washington stayed at the house occupied by Henry Laurens.

***To JOHN MITCHELL[9]**

Camp at Middle brook, February 17, 1779.

Dear Sir: My Plates and Dishes, once of Tinn, now little better than rusty iron, are rather too much worn for delicate stomachs in fixed and peaceable quarters, tho they may yet serve in the busy and active movements of a Campaign. I therefore desire that you will send me a sett of Queens China if to be had; not less I conceive, than what follows of each article will do:

2 large Turennes

3 dozn. Dishes, sized

8 dozn. Shallow Plates

3 dozn. Soup Ditto

8 Table drinking Mugs

8 Ditto Salts. and some pickle plates.

The whole to be very carefully packed.

I also desire you will send me Six tolerably genteel but not expensive Candlesticks all of a kind and three pair of Snuffers to them. I wish for as much fur as will edge a Coat, Waistcoat, and Breeches and that it may be sent to me as soon as possible. Let this be accompanied by 2 pounds of Starch.

Your Nephew gave me the Padlock keys of

9. Deputy Quartermaster General, in Philadelphia at this time.

the two last Trunks sent, but not the other keys of them; it is not in my power therefore (without spoiling the locks wch. I am not disposed to do, as I shall deliver the Trunks to Genl. Greene for his and Harrison's[10] use) to get out the Sheeting you procured for me; you will please to have enquiry made for the other keys and send them under cover by some safe conveyance. Let me know how many Table Cloths you sent to me at different times and by whom. No more than Seven ever came to my hands. 3 at one time and 4 at another. I must request you to get me a good Hat. if my old Hatter Parish[11] is furnished with materials I would prefer one of his make as those already had from him have proved they are good and he knows the size of my head. I do not wish by any means to be in the extreme of the fashion either in the size, or manner of Cocking it.

Please to examine if any of the inclosed Tickets have come up Prizes, and if any thing is to be made of them be so obliging as to do it for me.[12] My Complimts. to Mrs. Mitchell. I am etc.

P.S. I expect the Board of War will send you a box of Papers for me. Please to let them be sent to head Qrs. by a safe hand and covered waggon.

10. Lieut. Col. Robert Hanson Harrison.

11. Isaac Parish (Parrish), Philadelphia hatter.

12. Mitchell replied (February 21). The china, he feared, would be difficult to get; the candlesticks he would get; the fur would be forwarded in a day or two, in the wagon carrying the papers from the Board of War; “Mr Parish is at work to make you the best Hart in his power.…Yesterday all your Tickets were in the Wheel but one wch. is a Blank; the Lottery is very rich and much in favor of the Tickets not yet drawn;” he had sent 11 tablecloths and was making inquiry about the trunk keys. Mitchell's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

To ELIAS BOUDINOT

Middlebrook, February 28, 1779.

Dear Sir: I had not the pleasure of receiving your polite and friendly letter of the 4th January 'till within these few days, and of course had no opportunity of acknowledging it sooner.

I find myself extremely flattered by the strain of sentiment in your sister's composition. But [request it as a favr. of you to prest. my best respects to her, and assure] her, that however I may feel inferior to the praise, she must suffer me to admire and preserve it as a mark of her genius tho' not of my merits.[87]

I shall be glad when your health is so far established as to admit of a ride to Middlebrook. And if Mrs. and Miss Boudinot can accompany you it will add to our pleasure. Mrs. Washington presents her compliments, and wishes [for this event]. I am etc.[88]

To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Middlebrook, March 1, 1779.

Dear Sir: I have been a little surprised, that the

87. Boudinot's letter of January 4 is in the *Washington Papers*, but Miss Boudinot's poetry is not there found.

88. The draft is in the writing of James McHenry. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

several important pieces of intelligence lately received from Europe [such parts of it I mean as are] circulated without reserve in conversation, have not yet been given to the public in a manner calculated to attract the attention and impress the minds of the people.[94] As they are now propagated, they run through the Country in a variety of forms, are confounded in the common mass of general rumours and lose a great part of their effect. It would certainly be attended with many valuable consequences, if they could be given to the people in some more authentic and pointed manner. It would assist the measures taken to restore our currency, promote the recruiting the army and our other military arrangements, and give a certain spring to our affairs in general. Congress may have particular reasons for not communicating the intelligence officially (which would certainly be the best mode if it could be done); but if it cannot, it were to be wished that as much as is intended to be commonly known could be published in as striking a way and with as great an appearance of authority, as may be consistent with propriety.

I have taken the liberty to trouble you with this hint, as sometimes things the most obvious escape attention. If you agree with me in sentiment, you will easily fall upon the most proper mode for answering the purpose. With very great esteem etc.[95]

94. The intelligence was of the cooperation of Comte D'Estaing in a proposed expedition to recover Georgia. Jay acknowledged Washington's letter, officially, on March 4; but wrote privately March 3: “The opinion that greater advantage results from communicating important Events to the People,

in an authentic manner; than by unauthorized Reports, is certainly just, tho often neglected. The Intelligence alluded to, is unfortunately of such a Nature, or rather so circumstanced, as to render Secrecy necessary. As Congress, with the Consent of the Minister of France, have directed it to be communicated to you, further Remarks will be unnecessary. Dr. Witherspoon, who lately returned to Jersey, promised to do it in a personal Conference. A Committee was appointed this Morning to prepare an address to the People on the present State of our Affairs. If properly executed, Benefit may be expected from it."

95. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton. The words in brackets were added by Washington.

To GOVERNOR DIEGO JOSEPH NAVARRO[49]

Head Quarters, Middle Brook, March 4, 1779.

Sir: A journey to Philadelphia in the winter procured me the honor of Your Excellency's favour of the 11th. of March last by Don Juan Merailles,[50] and the pleasure of this Gentleman's acquaintance. His estimable qualities justify your recommendation and concur with it to establish him in my esteem. I doubt not he will have informed you of the cordial and respectful sentiments, which he has experienced in this country. On my part I shall always take pleasure in convincing him of the high value I set upon his merit; and of the respect I bear to those who are so happy as to interest your Excellency's friendship.

I can only express my *gratitude* for your polite offer of service by entreating you to afford me opportunities of testifying my readiness to execute any commands, with which you shall be pleased to honor me.

With my prayers for your health and happiness, and with the greatest respect I have the honor etc.[51]

49. Of Havana.

50. Don Juan de Miralles, Spanish agent in the United States.

51. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

***To MAJOR GENERAL NATHANAEL GREENE**

March 8, 1779.

Dr. Sir: Early last Fall I wrote to Mr. Mitchell for 1 Dozn. Table Cloths, and while we lay at Fredericksburg received Seven (three at one time and four at another). About a fortnight ago, by letter, I enquired why the others were not sent, and received the following answer: “I sent eleven Table cloths at different times, they went by three several Persons, General Greene had some each time, and it was particularly noted to the Quarter Master at the Quarter Master Generals Store in Camp” I shall be obliged to you to cause enquiry to be made at your Stores what was done with the four I miss.

At the same time I wrote to Mitchell for a sett of Queens Ware consistg. of the followg. articles.

2 large Turennes

3 dozn. dishes; sized

8 dozn. Shallow plates

3 dozn. Soup Ditto

8 Table drinking Mugs

8 Ditto Salts;

and Some pickle plates to which he gave the following answr. on the 21st Ulto. viz “I have made enquiry for a sett of Queens ware but am affraid it will be difficult if not impossible to procure them. I will do all in

my power to get them as quick as possible”. Since which nothing further has been said about them, from whence I conclude my chance in that quarter is but indifferent. I therefore apply to you to procure them as Lady Stirling informed me a few days ago that they were to be had at Brunswick. I am thus particular lest you may know more of my dependance on Mitchell than I do myself. I am, etc.

***To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE**

Camp at Middle brook, March 8[–10], 1779.

My dear Marquis: I am mortified exceedingly that my Letter from Philadelphia with the several inclosures, did not reach Boston before your departure from that Port. It was written as soon as Congress had come to a decision upon the several matters which became the subject of the President's Letter to you,[91] and was committed (for conveyance) to the Messenger who was charged with his dispatches to that place; how it happened (unless the passage of the North River was interrupted by Ice) that Letters dated in Philadelphia the 29th. of Decr. should be till the 15th. of the following Month on their passage to Boston, is

91. The determination of Congress to lay aside the proposed expedition against Canada. (See *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Jan. 1, 1779.) Sparks quotes from a letter of Lafayette on board the *Alliance*, Boston, January 11, but the original is not now found in the *Washington Papers*: “The sails are just going to be hoisted, my dear General, and I have only time to take my last leave of you. I may now be certain, that Congress do not intend to send any thing more by me. Farewell, my dear General. I hope your French friends will ever be dear to you. I hope I shall soon see you again, and tell you myself with what emotions I now leave the land you inhabit, and with what affection and respect I shall ever be your sincere friend.”

inconceivable; equally so is it, that I have not had the Letters returned to me by Majr. Neville,[92] who I am told (but this is no excuse) is indisposed at Fishkill. His withholding these letters, renders it necessary for me to give you the trouble of duplicates by Captn. McQueen,[93] who will do me the favor of handing this to you; and whose merits are too well known to *you* , to stand in need of any recommendation from *me* .

Monsr. la Colombe[94] did me the honor of delivering your favors of the 5th. 8th. and 10th. of Jany.; and will, probably, be the bearer of my thanks for the affectionate manner in which you have expressed your Sentiments in your last adieu; than which nothing can be more flattering and pleasing, nor is there any thing more wished for, by me, than oppertunities of giving substantial proofs of the sincerity of my attachment to, and affection for you.

Nothing of importance hath happened since you left us, except the Enemy's invasion of Georgia, and possession of its capital; which, tho it may add something to their Supplies on the score of Provisions, will contribute very little to the brilliancy of their arms; for like the defenceless Island of St. Lucia, it only required the appearance of force to effect the conquest of it, as the whole Militia of the State did not exceed twelve hundred Men, and many of them disaffected. General Lincoln is assembling a force to dispossess them, and my only fear is, that he will precipitate the attempt before he is fully prepared

92. Chevalier de La Neuville. He had been granted the rank of brevet brigadier general and was returning to France.

93. Capt. John McQueen, of the South Carolina Militia.

94. Capt. Louis St. Ange, Chevalier de la Colombe. He was aide to Lafayette; also to De Kalb.

for the execution.

In New York, and at Rhode Island, the Enemy continued quiet till the 25th. Ulto., when an attempt was made by them to surprize the Post at Elizabeth Town, but failing therein, and finding themselves close pressed, and in danger from detachments advancing towards them from this Army, they retreated precipitately through a Marsh waist deep in Mud, after abandoning all their plunder; but not before they had (according to their wonted custom) set fire to two or three Houses.

The Regiment of Anspach, and some other Troops, are brought from Rhode Island to New York.

It would my dear Marquis have given me very great pleasure to have answered your expectations respecting Messrs. la Colombe and Houden, but Congress having experienced so many unfortunate instances of disgust, and consequent resignations in the Army, arising from irregular promotions, and brevet Commissions, that they found it absolutely necessary to discontinue the practice and had done so before I received your Letters, to the no small disappointment, and loss, of many Gentlemen whom I found in Philadelphia.

We are happy in the repeated assurances, and proofs, of the friendship of our great and good Ally; whom we hope and trust, ere this, may be congratulated on the birth of a Prince; and on the joy which the nation must derive from an instance of royal felicity. We also flatter ourselves that before

this period the Kings of Spain and the two Sicilies may be greeted as Allies of the United States; and we are not a little pleased to find from good authority, that the sollicitations, and offers of the Court of Great Britain to the Empress of Russia, have been rejected with *disdain* ; Nor are we to be displeased, that overtures from the City of Amsterdam for entering into a commercial connexion with us, have been made in such open and pointed terms. Such favorable sentiments in so many powerful Princes, and States, cannot but be considered in a very honorable, interesting, and pleasing point of view, by all those who have struggled with difficulties and misfortune to maintain the rights, and secure the liberties of their Country. But, notwithstanding these flattering appearances, the British King, and his Ministers, continue to threaten us with War and desolation. A few Months however must decide whether this, or Peace is to take place, for both we will prepare; and should the former be continued I shall not despair of sharing fresh toils and dangers with you, in the

Plains of America; but if the latter succeeds, I can entertain little hopes that the rural amusemts. of an infant world, or the contracted stage of an American theatre can withdraw your attention and Services from the gaieties of a Court; and the active part which you will more than probably be called upon to share, in the admn. of your government. The Soldier will then be transformed into the Statesman, and your employment in this new walk of life will afford you no time to revisit this Continent, or

think of friends who lamt. your absence.

The American Troops are again in Hurts, but in a more agreeable, and fertile country, than they were last Winter at Valley forge; and are better clad and more healthy than they have ever been since the formation of the Army. Mrs. Washington is now with me, and makes a cordial tender of her best regards to you; and, if those of strangers can be offered with propriety, and will be acceptle. we respectively wish to have them added to your amiable Lady. We hope, and trust, that your passage has been short, agreeable, and safe, and that you are as happy as the Smiles of a gracious Prince, beloved wife, warm friends, and high expectations can make you. I have now I think, complied with your request in writing you a long letter, and shall only add that with the purest Sentiments of attachment, and the warmest friendship and regard, I am etc.

P.S. Harrison and Mead are in Virga.; all the other Gentn. of my Suit join most cordially in tendering their best respects to you.

March 10, 1779.

I have this moment receivd the letters which were in the hands of Majr. Neville; accompanied by your favors of the 7th. and 11th. of Jany.; the Majr. himself is not yet

arrived at head Qrs.; being, as I am told, very sick. I have again to thank you my dear frd. for the repeated Sentiments of friendship and affection which breathed so conspicuously in your last farewell; and to assure you, that I shall always retain a warm and grateful remembrance of them. Major Neville shall have my consent to repair to you in France; if his health will permit, and the

sanction of Congress can be obtained to whom all applications of Officers for leave to go out of the United States are referred.

To PRESIDENT JOHN RUTLEDGE[39]

Middle Brook, March 15, 1779.

Sir: Lieutenant Colonel Laurens, who will have the honor of delivering you this, has served two Campaigns in my Family in quality of aide De Camp. The whole tenor of his conduct has been such as to intitle him to my particular friendship and to give me a high opinion of his talents and merit. In the field he has given very distinguishing proofs of his bravery upon several interesting occasions. His military zeal and a concern for his own country have determined him to leave this for a time to offer his services, where he thinks they will be more essential. Though unwilling to part with him, I could not oppose his going to a place where he is called by such powerful motives, and where

39. Of South Carolina.

I am persuaded he will be extremely, useful. I have therefore given him leave of absence 'till a change of affairs will permit his return, when I shall be happy to see him resume his place in my family.

Though I imagine he is personally acquainted with your Excellency, I could not suffer him to depart, without informing you of the great value I set upon him and recommending him warmly to your attention. I have the honor etc.[40]

***To THOMAS NELSON**

Middle brook, March 15, 1779.

My dear Sir: I have to thank you for your friendly letter of the 9th., and for your obliging, tho unsuccessful endeavours to procure the Horses I am indebted to my Country for. At present I have

no immediate call for them, as we find it rather difficult to support the few we keep at Camp, in forage.

It gives me very singular pleasure to find that you have again taken a Seat in Congress; I think there

40. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

never was a time when cool and dispassionate reasoning; strict attention and application, great integrity, and (if it was in the nature of things, unerring) wisdom were more to be wished for than the present. Our Affairs, according to my judgment, are now come to a crisis, and require no small degree of political skill, to steer clear of those shelves and Rocks which tho deeply buried, may wreck our hopes, and throw us upon some inhospitable shore. Unanimity in our Councils, disinterestedness in our pursuits, and steady perseverence in our national duty, are the only means to avoid misfortunes; if they come upon us after these we shall have the consolation of knowing that we have done our best, the rest is with the Gods.

Shall I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you at Camp, when the weather gets a little settled? I can assure you that it will be a gratification of my wishes. Mrs. Washington salutes you most cordially, and offers her thanks for the letter you was[41] kind enough to send her. I am, etc.

***To HENRY LAURENS**

Middle brook, March 20, 1779.

Dear Sir: I have to thank you, and I do it

41. Washington first wrote “were” and afterward changed it to “was”.

very sincerely, for your obliging favors of the 2d. and 16th Inst.; and for their several inclosures, containing articles of intelligence. I congratulate you most cordially on Campbells[77] precipitate retreat from Fort Augusta. What was this owing to? it seems to have been a surprize even upon

Williamson.[78] but I rejoice much more on acct. of his disappointed application to the Creek Indians; this I think, is to be considered as a very important event, and may it not be the conjectural cause of his (Campbells) hasty return; this latter circumstance cannot but be a fresh proof to the disaffected (in that Country) that they are leaning upon a broken reed; severe examples should, in my judgment, be made of those who were forgiven former offences and again in Arms against us.

The policy of our arming Slaves is, in my opinion, a moot point, unless the enemy set the example;[79] for should we begin to form Battalions of them, I have not the smallest doubt (if the War is to be prosecuted) of their following us in it, and justifying the measure upon our own ground; the upshot then must be, who can arm fastest, and where are our Arms? besides, I am not clear that a discrimination will not render Slavery more irksome to those who remain in it; most of the good and evil things of this life are judged of by comparison; and I fear a comparison in this case will be productive of much discontent in those who are held in servitude; but as this is a subject that has never employed much of my thoughts, these are no more than

77. Lieut. Col. Archibald Campbell, of the Seventy-first Foot, British Army.

78. Brig. Gen. Andrew Williamson, of the Georgia Militia.

79. “Our affairs in the Southern department in more favorable light, than we had viewed them in a few days ago; nevertheless, the Country is greatly distressed, and will be more so, unless further reinforcements are sent to its relief. had we Arms for 3000 such black Men, as I could select in Carolina I should have no doubt of success in driving the British out of Georgia and subduing East Florida before the end of July.”— *Laurens to Washington*, Mar. 16, 1779. Laurens's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

the first crude Ideas that have struck me upon the occasion.

I had not the smallest intimation of Monsr. Gerards passing through Jersey till I was favoured with your Letter, and am now ignorant of the cause, otherwise than by conjecture. The inclosed I return, as Mr. Laurens[80] left this some days ago for Philadelphia, on his way to the Southward.

Mrs. Washington joins me in respectful compliments to you, and with every sentiment of regard and attachment. I am etc.

80. Lieut. Col. John Laurens.

***To GEORGE MASON**

Camp at Middlebrook, March 27, 1779.

Dear Sir: By some interruption of the last Weeks Mail your favor of the 8th. did not reach my hands till last Night. Under cover of this Mr. Mason (if he should not have Sailed, and) to whom I heartily wish a perfect restoration of health, will receive two letters; one of them to the Marqs. de la Fayette and the other to Doctr. Franklin;[34] in furnishing which I am happy, as I wish for instances in which I can testify the sincerity of my regard for you.

Our Commissary of Prisoners has been invariably, and pointedly instructed to exchange those Officers first who were first captivated, as far as Rank will apply; and I have every reason to believe he has obeyed the order; as

34. Both of these letters, dated Mar. 27, 1779, are in the *Washington Papers*. They introduce George Mason, jr., to Franklin and Lafayette; to Franklin as the son of “a Gentln. of fortune and influence … a zealous and able supporter of the liberties of this country and a particular friend of mine”; and to Lafayette in the same vein.

I have refused a great many applications for irregular exchanges in consequence, and I did it because I would not depart from my principle, and thereby incur the charge of partiality. It sometimes happens, that officers later in captivity than others, have been exchanged before them;

but it is in cases where the rank of the Enemys officers in our possession, do not apply to the latter. There is a prospect now I think of a general exchange taking place, which will be very pleasing to the parties and their connexions; and will be a mean of relieving much distress to individuals, though it may not, circumstanced as we are at this time, be advantageous to us, considered in a national and political point of view. partial exchanges have, for some time past, been discontinued by the Enemy.

Though it is not in my power to devote much time to private corrispondences, owing to the multiplicity of public letters (and other business) I have to read, write, and transact; yet I can with great truth assure you, that it would afford me very singular pleasure to be favoured at all times with your sentiments in a leizure hour, upon public matters of general concernment as well as those which more immediately respect your own State (if proper conveyances would render prudent a free communication). I am particularly desirous of it at this time, because I view things very differently, I fear, from what people in general do who seem to think the contest is at an end; and to make money, and get places, the only things now remaining to do. I have seen

without dispondency (even for a moment) the hours which America have stiled her gloomy ones, but I have beheld no day since the commencement of hostilities that I have thought her liberties in such eminent danger as at present. Friends and foes seem now to combine to pull down the goodly fabric we have hitherto been raising at the expence of so much time, blood, and treasure; and unless the bodies politick will exert themselves to bring things back to first principles, correct abuses, and punish our internal foes, inevitable ruin must follow. Indeed we seem to be verging so fast to destruction, that I am filled with sensations to which I have been a stranger till within these three Months. Our Enemy behold with exultation and joy how effectually we labour for their benefit; and from being in a state of absolute despair, and on the point of evacuating America, are now on tiptoe; nothing therefore in my judgment can save us but a total reformation in our own conduct, or some decisive turn to affairs in Europe. The former alas! to our shame be it spoken! is less likely to happen than the latter, as it is now consistent with the views of the Speculators, various tribes of money makers, and stock jobbers of all denominations to continue the War for their own private

emolument, without considering that their avarice, and thirst for gain must plunge every thing (including themselves) in one common Ruin.

Were I to indulge my present feelings, and give a loose to that freedom of expression which my

unreserved friendship for you would prompt me to, I should say a great deal on this subject, but letters are liable to so many accidents, and the sentiments of Men in office sought after by the enemy with so much avidity, and besides conveying useful knowledge (if they get into their hands) for the superstructure of their plans, is often perverted to the worst of purposes, that I shall be somewhat reserved, notwithstanding this Letter goes by a private hand to Mount Vernon. I cannot refrain lamenting however in the most poignant terms, the fatal policy too prevalent in most of the States, of employing their ablest Men at home in posts of honor or profit, till the great national Interests are fixed upon a solid basis. To me it appears no unjust Simile to compare the affairs of this great continent to the Mechanism of a Clock, each State representing some one or other of the smaller parts of it, which they are endeavouring to put in fine order without considering how useless and unavailing their labour, unless the great wheel, or spring which is to set the whole in motion, is also well attended to and kept in good order. I allude to no particular state, nor do I mean to cast reflections upon any one of them. Nor ought I, it may be said, to do so upon their representatives, but as it is a fact too notorious to be concealed, that C—[35] is rent by party, that much business of a trifling nature and personal concernment withdraws their attention from matters of great national moment at this critical period. When

35. Congress.

On March 27 Washington wrote to Capt. Nicholas Ruxton Moore, of the Fourth Continental Dragoons, accepting, with regret, his resignation.

Also on this same day (March 27) Robert Hanson Harrison, by Washington's direction, wrote to Col. Philip Van Cortlandt, asking for Col. John Cantine's description of the route from Kingston to the Delaware and from thence to Anaquaga. This description had been forwarded by Gov. George

Clinton and had been mislaid. Cantine was a colonel of Ulster County Militia. These letters are in the *Washington Papers*.

it is also known that idleness and dissipation takes place of close attention and application, no man who wishes well to the liberties of his Country and desires to see its rights established, can avoid crying out where are our Men of abilities? Why do they not come forth to save their Country? let this voice my dear Sir call upon you, Jefferson and others; do not from a mistaken opinion that we are about to set down under our own vine and our own fig tree. let our hitherto noble struggle end in ignominy; believe me when I tell you there is danger of it. I have pretty good reasons for thinking, that Administration a little while ago had resolved to give the matter up, and negotiate a peace with us upon almost any terms, but I shall be much mistaken if they do not now from the present state of our currency, dissentions, and other circumstances, push matters to the utmost extremity; nothing I am sure will prevent it but the interruption of Spain and their disappointed hope from Russia.

I thank you most cordially for your kind offer of rendering me Services. I shall without reserve as heretofore, call upon you whenever instances occur that may require it; being with the sincerest, regard, etc.

[N. Y. P. L.]

***To JAMES WARREN[61]**

Middlebrook, March 31, 1779.

Dear Sir: I beseech you not to ascribe my delay in answering your obliging favor of the 16th. of Decr. to disrespect, or want of inclination to continue a corrispondence in which I have always taken pleasure, and thought myself honord.

Your Letter of the above date came to my hands in Philadelphia where I attended at the request of Congress to settle some important matters respecting the army and its future operations; and where I was detained till some time in Feby., during that period my time was so much occupied by

the immediate and pressing business which carried me down, that I could attend to little else; and upon my return to Camp I found the ordinary business of the Army had run so much behind hand, that, together with the arrangements I had to carry into execution, no leizure was left me to endulge myself sooner in making the acknowledgment I am now about to do, of the pleasure I felt at finding that I still enjoyed a share of your confidence and esteem, and now and then am to be informed of it by Letter. believe me Sir when I add, that this proof of your holding me in remembrance is most acceptable and pleasing.

Our conflict is not likely to cease so soon as every good Man would wish. The measure of iniquity is not yet

61. Of Plymouth, Mass. He was formerly Paymaster General of the Continental Army and president of the Massachusetts Council.

filled; and unless we can return a little more to first principles, and act a little more upon patriotic ground, I do not know when it will, or, what may be the Issue of the contest. Speculation, Peculation, Engrossing, forestalling with all their concomitants, afford too many melancholy proofs of the decay of public virtue; and too glaring instances of its being the interest and desire of too many who would wish to be thought friends, to continue the War.

Nothing I am convinced but the depreciation of our Currency proceeding in a great measure from the foregoing Causes, aided by Stock jobbing, and party dissensions has fed the hopes of the Enemy and kept the B. Arms in America to this day. They do not scruple to declare this themselves, and add, that we shall be our own conquerers. Cannot our common Country Am.[62] possess virtue enough to disappoint them? Is the paltry consideration of a little dirty pelf to individuals to be placed in competition with the essential rights and liberties of the present generation, and of Millions yet unborn? Shall a few designing men for their own aggrandizement, and to gratify their own avarice, overset the goodly fabric we have been rearing at the expence of so much time, blood, and treasure? and shall we at last become the victims of our own abominable lust of gain? Forbid it heaven! forbid it all and every State in the Union! by enacting and enforcing efficacious laws for

checking the growth of these monstrous evils, and restoring matters, in some degree to the pristine state they were in at the commencement

of the War. Our cause is noble, it is the cause of Mankind! and the danger to it, is to be apprehended from ourselves. Shall we slumber and sleep then while we should be punishing those miscreants who have brot. these troubles upon us and who are aimg. to continue us in them, while we should be striving to fill our Battalions, and devising ways and means to appreciate the currency; on the credit of wch. every thing depends? I hope not. Let vigorous measures be adopted; not to limit the prices of Articles, for this I believe is inconsistent with the very nature of things, and impracticable in itself, but to punish Speculaters, forestallers, and extortioners, and above all to sink the money by heavy taxes. To promote public and private œconomy; Encourage Manufactures &ca. Measures of this sort gone heartily into by the several States would strike at once at the root of all our evils and give the coup de grace to British hope of subjugating this Continent, either by their Arms or their Arts. The first, as I have before observed, they acknowledge is unequal to the task; the latter I am sure will be so if we are not lost to every thing that is good and virtuous.

A little time now, must unfold in some degree, the Enemys designs. Whether the state of affairs in Europe will permit them to augment their Army with more than recruits for the Regiments now on the Continent and therewith make an active and vigorous compaign, or whether with their Florida and

Canadian force they will aid and abet the Indians in ravaging our Western Frontier while their Shipg. with detachments harrass (and if they mean to prosecute the predatory War threatened by Administration through their Commissioners) burn and destroy our Sea Coast; or whether, contrary to expectation, they should be more disposed to negotiate than to either is more than I can determine; the latter will depend very much upon their apprehensions from the Court of Spain, and expectations of foreign aid and powerful alliances; at present we seem to be in a Chaos but this

cannot last long as I suppose the ultimate determination of the British Court will be developed at the meeting of Parliament after the Hollidays.

Mrs. Washington joins me in cordial wishes, and best respects to Mrs. Warren;[63] she would have done herself the pleasure of writing but the present convayance was sudden. I am, etc.

***To THOMAS BISHOP**

Middlebrook, April 10, 1779.

Bishop: I received your letter by Colo. Harrison.

63. Mrs. Mercy Warren.

On March 31 Washington wrote to Lieut. Col. Frederick Weissenfels, of the Second New York Regiment, in answer to his application that the command of the regiment, late Livingston's (Fourth New York Regiment), would be given to the senior lieutenant colonel: “In determining the matter on this ground, I would flatter myself that you will not find yourself in the least injured or deprived of any rank to which you may be intitled.” This letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

In answer to it, I shall briefly inform you, that as you have been so long a Member of my family it is not my intention to let you want while we both live; but with respect to the increase of your wages, it is a circumstance that must depend upon the Services you render in return. I am very sensible that the high prices of every necessary of life are such as not to let you, or any other Man live for the same nominal Sum you formerly did, and therefore I leave it to Mr. Washington[52] to furnish you, gratis, with such a reasonable quantity of Wool and flax as he shall judge sufficient for the clothing of yourself, wife, and daughter; to be worked up by yourselves. and, besides this, if he thinks your Services entitled to an increase of Wages, I have no objection to his doing it; but I can neither direct the measure, nor the sum because of my ignorance of the benefit he derives from your

Services. This letter goes open under his cover, that he may be apprised of the contents; I thank you for your good wishes, and offer mine in return for yourself, wife and child. Yours &ca.

To JOHN JAY

[Head Quarters, Middle brook, April 14, 1779.]

Dear Sir: I have received your several favours of the 2d., 3rd. and 28th. of March and 6th. of April. I thank you for them all,

52. Lund Washington.

but especially for the last, which I consider as a distinguishing mark of your confidence and friendship.[88]

Conscious that it is the aim of my actions to promote the public good, and that no part of my conduct is influenced by personal enmity to individuals, I cannot be insensible to the artifices employed by some men to prejudice me in the public esteem. The circumstance of which you have obliged me with the communication is among a number of other instances of the unfriendly views which have governed a certain Gentleman from a very early period. Some of these have been too notorious, not to have come to your knowledge; others from the manner in which, they have been conveyed to me, will probably never be known except to a very few. But you have perhaps heard enough and observed enough yourself to make any further explanation from me unnecessary.

The desire, however which it is natural I should feel to preserve the good opinion of men of sense and virtue, conspiring with my wish to cultivate your friendship in particular, induces me to trouble you with a state of some facts which will serve to place the present attack in its proper light. In doing this, I shall recapitulate and bring into one view a series of transactions, many of which have been known to you, but some of which may possibly have escaped your memory.

An opinion prevailing, that the enemy were like shortly to evacuate these states, I was naturally led to

88. “Philadelphia, April 6th.—Mr. Jay presents his Compliments to General Washington, and encloses an Extract from a Letter in a certain Degree interesting: ‘The enclosed Copy of my Letter to General Washington of the 4th Instant in answer to his of the 14th Ulto. from Middlebrook, will give Congress a true Idea of my Opinion, respecting our entering Canada, and the only Route which we can take with reasonable Hopes of Success Individuals and not the public will be benefited by an Expedition into Canada, by either of the Routes from Albany. That of Co-os alone is practicable; but not without the Co-operation of the allied Fleet. … General Washingtons letter of the 14th Feby. is enclosed. It being the only Letter I have received from his Excellency since December, Congress will immediately judge of the Extent or Limitation which it is proper to observe in their Instructions to me.’ ”— *General Gates to the President of Congress*, Mar. 15, 1779. Gates's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

turn my thoughts to a plan of operations against Canada *in case that event should take place* . A winter campaign before the enemy could have an opportunity of reinforcing and putting themselves in a more perfect state of defence, appeared to promise the most certain and speedy success and the route by Co'os offered itself as most direct and practicable. In this I fully agreed with General Gates and some other Gentlemen, whom I consulted on the occasion, and on [the 12th. of Septr.] last I wrote to Congress *accordingly* ; submitting it to them whether it would be advisable to be laying up magazines opening a road and making other preparations for the undertaking. They approved the project and authorized me to carry it into execution. I the more readily entered into it, from a consideration, that if circumstances should not permit us to carry on the enterprise, the preparations towards it could easily be converted into another channel, and made serviceable to our Operations elsewhere, *without any material addition of expense to the Continent* . [because provisions, which would compose the principal part of the expence were at all events to be purchased on Connecticut River the only doubt being whether it should be used in an Expedition against Canada or transported to Boston; circumstances to determine this; with truth it may be added, that excepting

the articles of provisions and forage which, as before observed, would have been bot. if no Expedn. by way of Co'os had been in contemplation, the “ *incredible* ” expence mentioned by Genl. Gates in his letter of Mar. 4th. amounted to the

purchase of a few pairs of Snow Shoes, and some leather for Mocosons *only* . If any other expence has been incurred it is unknown to me; must have been by his order, and he alone answerable for it.]

In [October] following, Congress entered into arrangements with the Marquis De la Fayette for co-operating with the Court of France, in an expedition against [that Country.] In this scheme, one body of troops was to proceed from Co'os and penetrate by way of the River St. Francis; others, forming a junction at Niagara were to enter Canada by that Route; and while these were operating in this manner, a French fleet and a body of french troops were to go up the River St. Laurence and take possession of Quebec. You are well acquainted with the opposition I gave this plan and my reasons at large for it. From what has since happened, they seem to have met the full approbation of Congress. The ideas I held up were principally these; that we ought not to enter in any contract with a foreign power, unless we were sure we should be able to fulfil our engagements; that it was uncertain whether the enemy would quit the states or not, and, in case they did not, it would be impracticable to furnish the aids which we had stipulated; that, even if they should leave us, it was very doubtful whether our resources would be equal to the supplies required; that therefore it would be impolitic to hazard a contract of the kind and better to remain at liberty to act as future conjunctures should point out. I recommended nevertheless, as there were

powerful reasons to hope the enemy might go away, that eventual preparations should be made to take advantage of it, to possess ourselves of Niagara and other posts in that quarter for the security of our frontiers and to carry our views still further, with respect to a conquest of Canada, if we should find ourselves able to prosecute such an enterprise. This, Congress in a subsequent resolve, approved and directed to be done. It was not the *least motive* with me for recommending it, that operations of this nature seemed to be a very favourite object with that honourable body. The preparations on Hudson's river were undertaken in consequence.

Upon a nearer view of our finances and resources, and when it came to be decided, that the enemy would continue for some time longer to hold the posts, they were in possession of; in the course of the conferences with which I was honored by the Committee of Congress in Philadelphia, I suggested my doubts of the propriety of continuing our Northern preparations upon so extensive a plan as was at first determined. The Committee were of opinion with me that the state of our currency and supplies in general would oblige us to act on the defensive next campaign, except so far as related to an expedition into the Indian country for chastizing the savages and preventing their depredations on our back settlements, and that though it would be extremely desirable to be prepared for pushing our operations further, yet our necessities, exacting a system of œconomy, forbade our launching into much extra expence for objects which were remote and contingent. This determination having

taken place, all the Northern preparations were discontinued except such as were necessary towards the intended Indian expedition.

Things were in this situation, when I received a Letter from General Bayley [(living at Co'os)] expressing some fears for the safety of the Magazine at Co'os, in consequence of which I directed the stores to be removed lower down the Country. This I did to prevent a possibility of accident, though I did not apprehend they were in much danger. Some time afterwards, I received the letter, No. 1, from General Gates[89] expressing similar fears; to which I returned him the answer of the 14th. of february transmitted by him to Congress, [No. 2]. Knowing that preparations had been making at Albany, and unacquainted with their true design he very precipitately concluded from a vague expression in that letter,[90] that the intention of attacking Canada was still adhered to, but that I had changed the plan and was going by way of Lake Champlain, or Ontario. Either of these routes he pronounces impracticable and represents that by Co'os, as the only practicable one. He goes still further and declares, that “in the present state of our army and the actual situation of our magazines to attempt a serious invasion of Canada by whatever route would prove unsuccessful unless the fleet of our allies, should at the same time co-operate with us by sailing up the River St. Laurence.” Though I differ with him as to the *impracticability* of both the other routes, I venture to

go a step beyond him respecting our ability to invade Canada and am convinced that in our present circumstances, and with the

89. Gates's letter to Washington of Jan. 26, 1779, is in the *Washington Papers*.

90. Washington's letter to Gates, dated Feb. 14, 1779, *q. v*., contained this “vague expression ”: “as soon as I found that there was no probability of an expedition being carried into Canada by that Route, I desired the Commy. General to send orders to have the Stores removed down the Country.”

enemy in front, we cannot undertake a serious invasion of [that Country] at all, *even with the aid of an allied fleet* . You will perceive Sir, that I have uniformly made the departure of the enemy from these states *an essential condition* to the invasion of Canada; and that General Gates has intirely mistaken my intentions. Hoping that I had embarked in a scheme, which our situation would not justify, he eagerly seizes the opportunity of exposing my supposed errors to Congress; and in the excess of his intemperate zeal to injure me, exhibits himself in a point of view, from which I imagine he will derive little credit. The decency of the terms in which he undertakes to arraign my conduct both to myself and to Congress and the propriety of the hasty appeal he has made will I believe appear at least questionable to every man of sense and delicacy.

The last paragraph of the extract, with which you favour me is a pretty remarkable one. I shall make no comments, further than as it implies a charge of neglect on my part, in not writing to him but once since december. From the beginning of last Campaign to the middle of December, about 7 Months; I have copies of near fifty letters to him and about forty originals from him. I think it will be acknowledged the correspondence was frequent enough during that period; and, if it has not continued in the same proportion since, the only reason was that the season of the year, the troops being in Winter quarters and Genl. Gs. situation at Boston unfruitful of events and unproductive of any military arrangements between us, afforded very

little matter for epistolary intercourse; and I flatter myself it will be readily believed, that I am sufficiently occupied with the necessary business of my station, and have no need of increasing it, by multiplying letters without an object. If you were to peruse, my Dear Sir, the letters which

have passed between General Gates and myself for a long time back, you would be sensible that I have no great temptation to court his correspondence when the transacting of public business does not require it. An air of design, a want of candor in many instances and even of politeness give no very inviting complexion to the correspondence on his part. As a specimen of this, I send you a few letters and extracts, which, at your leisure, I shall be glad you will cast your eye upon.

Last fall it was for some time strongly suspected that the enemy would transport the whole or the greatest part of their force Eastward and combine one great land and sea operation against the french fleet in Boston harbour. On this supposition, as I should go in person to Boston, the command next in importance was the posts on the North River. This properly would devolve on General Gates; but, from motives of peculiar scrupulousness as there had been a difference between us, I thought it best to know whether it was agreeable to him; before I directed his continuance. By way of compliment, I wrote him a letter containing the extract, No. 3,[91] expecting a cordial answer and chearful acceptance. I received the evasive and unsatisfactory reply No. 4.[92] A few days after this, upon another occasion I wrote him the letter No.5,[93]

91. See Washington's letter to Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates, Sept. 30, 1778, *ante*.

92. Gates's letter to Washington, Sept. 27, 1778, is in the *Washington Papers*.

93. See Washington's letter to Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates, Sept. 30, 1778, *ante*.

to which I received the extraordinary answer, No. 6,[94] which was passed over in silence.

The plan of operations for the campaign being determined, a commanding officer was to be appointed for the Indian expedition. This command according to all present appearances will [probably be] of the second, if not of the first, importance for the campaign. The officer conducting it, has a flattering prospect of acquiring more credit than can be expected by any other this year and he has the best reason to hope for success. General Lee from his situation, was out of the question: General Schuyler, who, by the way, would have been most agreeable to me, was so uncertain

of continuing in the army that I could not appoint him: General Putnam, I need not mention. I therefore made the offer of it, [for the appointmt. could no longer be delayed] to General Gates who was next in seniority, though perhaps I might have avoided it, if I had been so disposed, from his being in a command by the special appointment of Congress. My letter to him on the occasion you will find in No. 7.[95] I believe you will think it was conceived in very candid and polite terms and merited a different answer from the one given to it in No. 8.[96]

I discovered very early in the war symptoms of coldness and constraint in General Gates behavior to me. These increased as he rose into greater consequence; but we did not come to a direct breach, 'till the beginning of last year. This was occasioned, by a correspondence, which I thought rather made

94. Gates's letter to Washington, Sept. 30, 1778, is in the *Washington Papers*. It is printed in Sparks's *Correspondence of the American Revolution*, vol. 2, p. 215.

95. See Washington's letter to Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates, Mar. 6, 1779, *ante*.

96. Gates's letter to Washington, Mar. 15, 1779, is in the *Washington Papers*.

free with me between General Gates and Conway, which accidentally came to my knowledge. The particulars of this affair you will find delineated in the packet herewith indorsed “papers respecting General Conway.”[97] Besides the evidence contained in them of the genuineness of the offensive correspondence, I have other proofs still more convincing, which, having been given me in a confidential way, I am not at liberty to impart.

After this affair subsided, I made a point of treating Genl. Gates with all the attention and cordiality in my power, as well from a sincere desire of harmony, as from an unwillingness to give any cause of triumph to our enemies from an appearance of dissension among ourselves. I can appeal to the world and to the whole Army whether I have not cautiously avoided every word or hint that could tend to disparage General Gates in any way. I am sorry his conduct to me has not been equally

generous and that he is continually giving me fresh proofs of malevolence and opposition. It will not be doing him injustice to say, that, besides the little underhand intrigues, which he is frequently practising, there has hardly been any great military question, in which his advice has been asked, that it has not been given in an equivocal and designing manner, apparently calculated to afford him an opportunity of censuring me on the failure of whatever measure might be adopted.

When I find that this Gentleman does not scruple to take the most unfair advantages of me; I am

97. Copies of the papers contained in this packet are not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

under a necessity of explaining his conduct to justify my own. This and the perfect confidence I have in you have occasioned me to trouble you with so free a communication of the state of things between us. I shall still be as passive as a regard to my own character will permit. I am however uneasy as General—has endeavoured to impress Congress with an unfavourable idea of me, and as I only know this in a private confidential way, that I cannot take any step to remove the impression, if it should be made.

I am aware Sir, of the delicacy of your situation; and I mean this letter only for your own private information; You will therefore not allow yourself to be embarrassed by its contents, but with respect to me pass it over in silence.[98]

With the truest Esteem and personal Regard, I am, etc.

P.S. General Gates in his Letter of the [30th. of Septr.] disapproves the divided state of our army, what he says being in general terms might seem plausible enough, but [by no means applies to the case in hand.] The Army was then in four divisions. Three brigades of the right wing and one from the second line under General Putnam had been stationed in the Highlands in conjunction with the garrison of West Point for the immediate defence of the passes there. The remaining two brigades of that wing, under Baron De Kalb were encamped on Fishkill plains

98. In regard to Gates's letter of March 15 to Congress, Jay wrote (April 21): “The impression attempted to be made, has not taken. It passed without a single Remark. Your Friends thought it merited nothing but Silence and Neglect. The same reason induced me 10 take no Notice of it in my Answer. I have perused the several Papers with which you favored me. The Delicacy, Candor, and Temper diffused thro' your Letters, form a strong Contrast to the Evasions and Design observable in some others. Gratitude ought to have attached a certain Gentleman to the Friend who raised him. a spurious Ambition however, has it seems made him your Enemy.” Jay's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

7 or 8 Miles from the town within less than a days march of the fort. At Fredericksburgh were three brigades of the second line under Lord Stirling, about two days march from the Fort. General Gates with the [left] wing of five brigades was at Danbury [abt. 14] miles from Fredericksburgh. The manœuvring on our flanks, of which General Gates speaks by way of the North River or the sound, must have had for object either the Highland passes or the army itself. Had they attempted those passes the force immediately on the spot and close in its vicinity, was sufficient from the nature of the ground to withstand their whole force; and the rest of the Army from the time necessarily exhausted in military operations, would in all probability have been up in time to succour that part. Without gaining those passes they could not get at the army at all on the right; and in doing it, if they could have effected it, the army would have had abundant time to collect and defend itself. To advance by land in our front would have been chimerical: they would have had a much greater distance to approach us, than the whole distance from one extremity of our force to the other; and we should have had all the leisure we could desire to assemble at any point we thought proper. Had they attempted our left flank at Danbury by way of the sound, we might either, if we had judged it expedient, have brought up the other corps to support the one there, or, if it found itself pressed for want of time, it had only to fall back upon Fredericksburgh and there our whole

force would have concentred with ease to oppose the enemy to the greatest advantage. The truth was, there was not at that time, the least probability they should attempt [an] Army [which had been the whole Summer inviting them out of their strong hold] nor did I think there was much, they

would molest the forts; yet it would certainly have been imprudent to have risked the security of either. When the enemy was in the Jerseys the change then made in the disposition gave still greater security to the different objects for which we had to provide, by drawing a greater force to the point threatened. The intention of the disposition I have described was to push a part of our force as far Eastward as possible for the aid and protection of the French fleet, in case the enemy had directed their force against that; at the same time, I did not choose to lose sight of the North river and therefore kept a sufficient force near enough to secure it. The conciliating these two objects, produced that division of our army, of which General Gates complains. No man however was more vehement in supposing the French fleet would be the object of the enemy's operations than himself; and this he so emphatically inculcated in several of his letters, that I thought it necessary in answer to one of the 6th. of October,[99] to write him as contained in mine of the 7th;[1] both of which are also herewith No. 9 and 10. [I am, &c.][2]

99. Gates's letter to Washington, Oct. 6, 1778, is in the *Washington Papers*.

1. See Washington's letter to Maj. Gert. Horatio Gates Oct. 7, 1778, *ante*.

2. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton. Washington's alterations are shown within brackets.

To JOHN JAY

Middle brook, April 23, 1779.

Dear Sir: In one of your former letters, you intimated, that a free communication of sentiments will not be displeasing to you. If under this sanction, I should step beyond the line you would wish to draw, and suggest ideas, or ask questions which are improper to be answered, you have only to pass them by, in silence. I wish you to be convinced, that I do not desire to pry into measures the knowledge of which is not necessary for my government as an executive officer, or the premature discovery of which, might be prejudicial to the plans in contemplation.

After premising this, I beg leave to ask, what are the reasons for keeping the Continental frigates in port? If it is because hands cannot be obtained to man them, on the present encouragement, some other plan ought to be adopted to make them useful. Had not Congress better lend them to Commanders of known bravery and capacity for a limited term, at the expiration of which, the vessels, if not taken or lost to revert to the States. They and their crews in the mean time enjoying the exclusive benefit of all captures they make, but acting either singly or conjointly under the direction of Congress? If this or a similar plan could be fallen upon, comprehending the whole number under some common head; a man of ability and

authority, commissioned to act as Commodore or Admiral, I think great advantages would result from it. I am not sure but at this moment by such a collection of the naval force we have all the British armed vessels and transports at Georgia might be taken or destroyed and their troops ruined. Upon the present system, our ships are not only very expensive and totally useless in port; but some times require a Land force to protect them, as happened lately at New London.[89]

The rumour of the camp is that Monsieur Gerard is about to return to France[90] Some speak confidently of its taking place. If this be a fact, the motives doubtless are powerful, as it will open a wide field for speculation, and give our enemies, whether with or without real cause, at least, a handle for misrepresentation and triumph.

Will Congress suffer the Bermudian vessels, which are said to have arrived in Delaware and Chesapeak Bay to exchange their salt for flour, as is reported to be their intention? Will they not rather order them to depart immediately? Indulging them with a supply of provisions at this time will be injurious to us in two respects; it will deprive us of what we really stand in need of, for ourselves and will contribute to the support of that swarm of privateers which resort to Bermudas, whence they infest our coast and in a manner annihilate our trade. Besides these considerations, by withholding a supply, we throw many additional mouths upon the enemy's magazines, and

89. Jay answered (April 26): “While the maritime Affairs of the Continent continue under the Direction o~ a Committee they will be exposed to all the Consequences of Want of System Attention and Knowledge. The marine Committee consists of a Delegate from each State. It fluctuates; new Members constantly coming in and old ones going out. Three or four indeed have remained in it from the Beginning and have a proportionabl Influence, or more properly *Interest* in it. Very few of the Members understand even the State of our naval Affairs or have Time or Inclination to attend to them. But why is not this System changed? It is in my opinion convenient to the Family Compact. The commercial Committee is equally useless. A Proposition was made to appoint a commercial Agent for the States under certain Regulations. Opposition was made. The ostensible Reasons were various. The true Reason was its interference with a certain commercial Agent in Europe, and his Connections.” Jay's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

The “Family Compact” thus alluded to by Jay was the Lee coterie in the Continental Congress, whose influence would have been weakened by any interference with the European activities of William and Arthur Lee.

90. Jay did not answer this question. Instead, he wrote: “You will if I mistake not find Mr. Gerard disposed to be open and communicative. He has acquired an extensive Knowledge of our Affairs. I have no Reason to believe he will use it to our Prejudice. There is as much Intrigue in this State House as in the Vatican, but as little Secrecy as in a boarding School.”

increase proportionably their distress. They will not and cannot let their people starve.

In the last place, though first in importance I shall ask, is there any thing doing, or that can be done to restore the credit of our currency? The depreciation of it is got to so alarming a point, that a waggon load of money will scarcely purchase a waggon load of provision.

I repeat what I before observed, that I do not wish for your reply to more of these matters than you can touch with strict propriety. Very truly I am, &c.[91]

***To BURWELL BASSETT**

Camp at Middle brook, April 22, 1779.

Dear Sir: I have just received your favor of the 30th. Ulto., which is the only letter I recollect to have had from you these many Months.

Thinking that Jack Custis and his Manager Posey, would have more leizure on their hands than might fall to your lot, I desired the former sometime ago to ease you of as much trouble as he could, on my Acct; but to advice with, and consult you in whatever he did

91. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

relative to my business. As he has left that part of the Country I must request the favor of you to give Mr. Posey such directions as you think best for the completion of my affairs on York River. The inclosed letter to him (left open for your perusal) is to this effect. Davenports reason for not carrying the Tob. to the Warehouse is truly excellent; and yet if one had a mind to be illnatured it might be asked why he would prize Tobacco that he thought unfit for Market? He and Hill has, I believe divided the profits of my Estate on York River tolerably well betwn. them; for the devil of any thing do I get; but why need I dwell upon or trouble myself much about trifles, when to speak within bounds, ten thousand pounds will not compensate the losses I might have avoided by being at home, and attending a little to my own concerns. I am now receiving a Shilling in the pound in discharge of Bonds which ought to have been paid me, and would have been realized before I left Virginia, but for my indulgence to the debtors.

We have nothing new or important in this quarter except the imbarkation of Nine Regiments at New York; but for what service they are destined is uncertain, though generally believed to be for Georgia.

It is most devoutly to be wished that the several States would adopt some vigorous measures for the purpose of giving credit to the paper currency and punishment of speculators, forestallers and others who are preying upon the

vitals of this great Country and putting every thing to the utmost hazard. Alas! what is virtue come to; what a miserable change has four years produced in the temper and dispositions of the Sons of America! It really shocks me to think of it!

My best respects and good wishes are offered to all our friends and with sincere truth I am, etc.[85]

***To PRICE POSEY**

April 23, 1779.

Sir: You will oblige me by lending your aid to bring my business under the care of Mr. Hill and Davenport to a close. in doing this I wish you to be governed entirely by the advice and direction of Colo. Bassett.

I would have every thing belonging to me (and not taken by Mr. Custis) disposed of and the money remitted to Mr. Lund Washington for my use. I am, etc.

85. An extract of what purports to be a letter from Washington to Rev. William Gordon (Apr. 22, 1779) is printed in the *Magazine of American History*, vol. 13, p. 489, as follows:

“To speak within bounds, ten thousand pounds will not compensate the loss I might have avoided by being at home, and attending a little to my own concerns, I am now receiving a shilling in the Found in discharge of bonds, which ought to have been paid me, and would have been realized before I left Virginia, but for my indulgence to the debtors. Alas! what is virtue come to, what a miserable change has four years produced in the tempers and dispositions of the sons of America! It really shocks me to think of it.” A copy or draft of this letter is not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

***To MAJOR GENERAL NATHANAEL GREENE**

Middle brook, April 24, 1779.

Dr. Sir: Your favor of the 22d. came to my hands about 9 O'clock this day. I thank you for the information contained. After the Minister[99] has actually set out, I shall be glad to be advised of it by express and (if the knowledge can be obtained readily) to be informd of his stages, and the hour he may be expected at Camp.

I am sorry for the difficulties you have to encounter in the department of Qr. Mr. especially as I was, in some degree, instrumental in bringing you into it; under these circumstances, I cannot undertake to give advice, or even hazard an opinion on the measures best for you to adopt. Your own judgment must direct; if it points to a resignation of your present office, and your inclination leads to the Southward; my wishes shall accompany it, and if the appointment of a successor to Genl. Lincoln is left to me I shall not hesitate in making choice of you for this command, but I have little expectation of being consulted on the occasion.[1] With truth and sincerity, I am, etc.

99. Conrad Alexander Gérard, minister from France to the United States.

1. Greene did not resign as Quartermaster General of the Continental Army until September, 1780. In his letter of Apr. 24, 1779, to Washington, he had written: “I am happy to find you have wrote so fully to Congress upon the disagreeable consequence that may follow from starving the quarter Masters Department at this critical season. I wish it may have the desired effect and rouse their attention; but I must confess I am afraid the stupor is so great that nothing can alarm their fears or promote a spirit of industry.… I have desired Congress to give me leave to resign as I apprehended a loss of Reputation if I continued in the business. They are not disposed to grant my request at all. But unless they change the system or publish their approbation upon the present I shall not remain long in the business. I will not sacrifice my Reputation for any consideration whatever. I am wiling

to serve the public; but I think I have a right to choose that way of performing the service which will be most honorable to myself.” Greene's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

***To ELIAS BOUDINOT**

Head Quarters, Middle brook, May 3, 1779.

Dear Sir: The many and important matters which pressed upon me while you were in Camp, prevented my consulting you on an affair which I have a good deal at heart, and which I wished to make the Subject of a personal, rather than an epistolary conversation —To come to the point. — It is a matter of great importance to have early and good intelligence of the enemys strength and motions, and as far as possible, designs. and to obtain them through different channels. Do you think it practicable to come at these by means of —? I shall not press it upon him; but you must be sensible that to obtain intelligence from a man of observation near the head Quarters of an Army from whence all orders flow and every thing originates must be a most desirable thing.

The person rendering such Service will entitle himself not only to thanks but reward, at a proper season.

If—is inclined to engage in a business of this kind, I shall leave it to you and him to fix upon such a mode of corrisponding as will convey intelligence in the most speedy, safe, and effectual manner. To guard against possible evils, your corrispondence might be under fictitious names, by numbers (to represent men and things), in characters, or other ways, as you shall agree. It is in my power, I believe, to procure

a liquid which nothing but a counter liquor (rubbed over the paper afterwards) can make legible. Fire which will bring lime juice, Milk and other things of this kind to light, has no effect on it. A letter upon trivial matters of business, written in common Ink, may be fitted with important intelligence which cannot be discovered without the counter part, or liquid here mention'd.

I shall add no more on this subject; enough has been said for you to found a negotiation on, at least to hint the matter to the person mentioned, for tryal of his willingness to engage in a corrispondence of this kind. No person but you, he, and I, and such as he shall make choice of to convey the intelligence to you, will be privy to this matter. Your letters to me inclosing his Accts. may be under an outer cover with the usual address, the inner cover may be directed on private Service, which will prevent any of my own family from opening it. and even under these circumstances and caution, the name of — may be avoided.

I am very sincerely and respectfully Yrs. etc.[64]

[H.L.]

***To BENJAMIN HARRISON**

Head Quarters, Middle brook, May 5–7, 1779.

My dear Sir: Your favor of the 8th. of Feby. arrivd

64. The draft, in the *Washington Papers*, is also in the writing of Washington. It, however, gives the blank name as "P—d," which was Lewis Pintard.

safe by Colo. Mead, abt. the 10th. of Apl. It conveyed to me a two fold pleasure; 1st. to hear that you were ready to obey the call of your Country in a representatn of it and 2dly, that you cd. do it with more ease and convenience to your affairs than formerly.

If my time would permit, and it was proper and safe by the Post to go into a free discussion of the political state of our affairs I could, and would, write you a very long letter on this subject; but this kind of conveyance is too uncertain (while the enemy are pursuing with avidity every means in their power to come at the sentiments of men in office) to hazard such opinions as I could wish to convey; I shall only remark therefore, that no day passes without some proofs of the justness of the observations contained in my letter to you by Colo. Mead,[8] and the necessity of the measure

there recommended; if it is much longer neglected I shall not scruple to add, that our affairs are irretrievably lost! I see no cause to retract a single sentiment contained in that long letter, but many very many, alarming proofs in confirmation of the truth of them; if the letter therefore is in being you are possessed as fully of my ideas on the several matters there touched as I have words to express them, and may allow them such weight as you think they deserve. An instance in proof of one of my positions I may give, because it is a fact of such notariety that to the enemy, and to ourselves, it is equally well known; it is, that Beef in the Market of

8. See Washington's letter to Benjamin Harrison, Dec. 18–30, 1775, *ante*.

Phila. is from ten to 15/. a pound, and other things in proportion. Country produce and imported Goods are equally dear; under these circumstances, and no appearances that I can see of a radical cure, it is not difficult to predict the fate of our Paper Money, and with it, a general Crash of all things.

The measures of Ministry are taken; and the whole strength and resources of the Kingdom will be exerted against us this Campaign; while we have been either slumbering and sleeping or disputing upon trifles, contenting ourselves with laughing at the impotence of G: Britain which we supposed to be on her knees, begging mercy of us, and foregiveness for past offences, instead of devising ways and means to recruit our Battalions, provide supplies, and improving our finances, thereby providing against the worst and a very possible contingency.

Accts. from London. to the 9th. of March have fixed me in the opinion that G. Britain will strain every nerve to distress us this Campaign; but where, or in what manner her principal force will be employed I cannot determine; that a pretty considerable number of Troops will be sent from G Britain does not, I think, admit of a doubt; but whether for the West Indies, Georgia, or New York, or partly to all three, time must unfold; my own opinion of the matter is, that they will keep a respectable force at the last mentioned place and push their operations vigorously to the Southward where we are most vulnerable and least able to afford succour.

By extracts from English Papers of the 4th. of March it appears pretty evident that Seven Regiments, besides two of the New raised Scotch Corps, Recruits for the Guards, and other Regits. now in America, were upon the point of embarking; the whole it is said would amount to 12 or 13,000 Men. A Bill has passed both Houses of Parliament obliging each parish in the Kingdom to furnish two Men by which it is said 27,000 will be raised. With this augmn. and her fleets, which are more than a match for the Naval strength of France *alone* , she may, circumstanced as we are, give a very unfavourable turn to that pleasing Slumber we have been in for the last eight Months and which has produced nothing but dreams of Peace and Independance, if Spain can be kept quiet; to effect which there is no doubt but that all the Art and address of the Ministry will be displayed and with too much success it is to be feared, as it will be difficult upon any political ground (I am capable of investigating) to acct. for the backwardness of that Court if it means to take an active part; as the Fleets of France and Independance of America are hazarded by the delay.

From present appearances, I have not the smallest doubt but that we shall be hard pushed in every quarter. This campaign will be the *grand* , and if unsuccessful, more than probably the *last* struggle of G. Britain; how much then does it behoove us to be prepar'd at all points to avert their intended blows. They are raising all the Indians from

North to South that their arts and their Money can procure, and a powerful diversion they will make in this quarter, with the aid expected from Canada. They have already begun their depredations. Under this view of things, which I believe is not exagerated, and the probability of the enemy's operating to the Southward out of supporting diste. of this Army; would it not be good policy in the State of Virginia to extend their views to the necessary and effectual support of their Southern neighbours. The slow, ineffectual, and expensive modes ordinarily used to draw out the Militia is ruinous in the extreme on acct. of the enormous expence which is incurred in the consumption of Provisions and stores, to say nothing of the useless time which they are paid for in coming, going, and waiting for each other at any given point or place of rendezvous or the injuries wch. agriculture and Manufactures sustain. I know too little of the policy, energy, and situation of your government to hazard a clear opinion on the propriety, or practicability of any measure adequate to this end; nor

do I know upon what footing your minute Men which existed at the commencement of this dispute were put (as the establishment of them happened after I left Virginia) but it appears to me, that if a certain proportion of the Militia of each County were enrolled under this description; properly Officered by Men who had seen Service and know how to train them, and were inform'd that they were to be first called to Service it might prove a very happy resource. If the proportion which shall be agreed on

cannot be obtained voluntarily from the Militia, let the privates perform the duty by rotation. These are but crude ideas, and will in case they shd. merit notice at all require time and consideration to digest them to system and order. My forebodings may lead me too far; but apprehensive as I am on acct. of the situation of the Southern states, I shall hope to stand excused for this freedom of thought, especially as I am convinced that Militia wch. can only be drawn out for short limited periods, and can afford no effectual aid while they ruin us in expence.

Little did I expect when I begun this letter that I should have spun it out to this length or that I should have run into such freedom of sentiment; but I have been led on insensibly and therefore shall not boggle at the mention of one thing more which I am desirous to touch upon, it is with respect to the treatment of the Convention troops, now in Virginia. No man in the early part of this War wished more than I did to soften the hardships of captivity by seeing the enemy's Officers, prisoners with us, treated with every mark of humanity, civility, and respect; but such invariable proofs of ungrateful returns from an opinion that all your civilities are the result of fear[9] such incessant endeavours, maugre all their paroles, to poison the minds of those around them; such arts and address to accomplish this, by magnifying the power of G. Britain to some, her favourable disposition to others and combining the two

9. Lord George Germain, in writing to Sir Henry Clinton over a year later (Nov. 9, 1780), expresses the British idea thus: “The Rebels have hitherto made the most ungrateful Return for that Lenity, which, from Principles of Humanity has been too indiscriminately shewn to them, and, instead of being grateful for Indulgence, they have always imputed Lenity to Fear, and the Remission of Punishment to the Dread of Retaliation. The wretched Pretence I understand the Congress

now make use of to avoid exchanging the Convention Troops for the Garrison at Charleston, that their Troops are only engaged for a limited time, and therefore not to be set against Ours, whose Time of Service has no Period, is a full Proof, if any had been still wanting, that no good Faith or Justice is to be expected from them, and we ought, in all our Transactions with them, to act upon that Supposition … as Major Ross seems to be of Opinion that many of the Prisoners might be induced to serve on board the King's Ships, or in Privateers, or inlist in the Regiments serving in the West Indies, or go as Volunteers upon Expeditions in that Quarter, I have recommended to Lord Cornwallis to get rid of all he can in those several ways, or in any other his Lordship shall think fit to be adopted." Germain's letter is in the Public Record Office, London: C. O. 5, 100, fol. 333.

arguments to a third set, that I cannot help looking upon them as dangerous guests in the bowels of our Country and apprehending a good deal from the hospitality and unsuspicious temper of my Countrymen. the more indulged they are, the more indulgencies they will require, and more pernicious they grow under them and I am much mistaken, if those who pay most attention to them, do not find the greatest cause for repentance. I view General Philips in the light of a dangerous Man. In his March to Charlotteville he was guilty of a very great breach of Military propriety, nay of a procedure highly criminal; for, instead of pursuing the rout pointed out to him, namely the one by which the Troops of Convention marched through Leesburg, Orange, &ca. he struck down to George Town in Maryland, from thence went by Water to Alexandria taking as I am told the soundings of the River as he went, and from thence to Fredericksburg. true it is, that the Officer who conducted him was more culpable than he, but upon inquiry it is found that this Officer is a person over whom I have no controul as he is a prisoner of theirs. I only mention these things in proof of the necessity of keeping a watchful eye upon these Officers. and let me add if you think you gain by the apparent desertion of the men, I can assure you you are deceived; we are every day apprehending these People in their attempts to get into New York. In a word, I had such good ground to suspect that under pretence of desertion numbers of them intended to get into New York, that I was induced to

March parallel with them as they pass'd thro N: Yk. and Jersey, and post guards at proper places to intercept them; notwithstanding which numbers aided by the Tories who kept them concealed in

the Mountains and obscure places effected a junction with the enemy in the city. Above all things, suffer them not to engage in your service as Soldiers, for so sure as they do, so sure do they rob you of your bounty and arms, and more than probably carry a man or two along with them to the enemy.

I have already informed you that the Indians have begun their depredations on the Frontiers, and I have the pleasure to add, that we are endeavouring to pay them in their own Coin; about a fortnight ago I sent 500 Men against the Onondago settlement which they destroyed with their provisns. and amn., killed 12 of them (and their Horses and Cattle, took 34 prisoners, 100 stand of Arms and did them other damage witht. the loss of a Man; this with what may follow, will, it is to be hoped, be attended with salutary effects.

The enemy have been busily employed some days in preparing Nine Regiments for Imbarkation but for what Service they are intended is uncertain; most likely Georgia. No measures are taking by any of the States to compleat their Battalions; none at least that promises success, except in Virginia where the measure was set about in time. I leave you under this relation and these circumstances to draw your own conclusions, and am with every sentiment of regard etc.

P.S. May 7th. This letter will go by Colo. Spotswood to Fredg. instead of the Post. I have this instant received advice of the Sailing of the Troops mentioned above (as preparing to imbark) their number said to be 4000. I have ordered all the Virginia levies to be formd into 3 Regiments and Marched under the Comd. of Genl. Scott immediately for Georgia. Officers are going from Camp to take charge of them. Blands and Baylors Regimts. will, I believe, also be sent thither, but if the Troops here mentioned are destined for the Southward more aid must be sent to our army, or South Carolina will soon be added to Georgia.[10]

***To GOVERNOR JOHN RUTLEDGE**

Camp at Middle brook, New Jersey, May 7, 1779.

Sir: Colonel Parker who will have the honr. of presenting this Letter to Your Excellency is a volunteer in the Service of the Southern States, and goes with many others from this Camp to take

charge of and march the recruits lately raised in the State of Virginia (for its Regiments now here) to Georgia. In Colo. Parker and several others who voluntarily offer themselves for this Service your Excellency will, I trust, experience good officers. Such as come under this description will, I am perswaded,

10. That is, will pass into the possession of the British.

attract your notice and protection.

The Brigade (for I presume there will be Men enough to form three compleat Regiments) will be commanded I expect by Brigr. Genl. Scott who is now in Virginia and who I can venture to recommend as a good man, and a brave and intelligent Officer. I hope his health will permit him to join you. I am etc.[21]

To PRESIDENT JOSEPH REED

Head Quarters, Middle Brook, May 8, 1779.

Dear Sir: I have delayed acknowledging the receipt of your favour of the 1st., in expectation that it would soon be followed by an official one which would enable me to take final measures on the subject of the trial.

The explanation with which you have obliged me gives me pleasure in the same proportion as the disagreeable inferences I had drawn gave me pain. It wounds me sensibly

21. A note by Washington, at the bottom of sheet, read: “A copy was also sent to the commanding officer of the Troops there.” This was Maj. Gen. Benjamin Lincoln.

to see appearances of any distrust of my equal attention to the security and welfare of the different states, and my ardent desire to cultivate mutual confidence and harmony with every one will always make me glad to find any apprehensions I may entertain on this delicate subject, illfounded.

I am also happy to find it is your opinion that the footing on which General Arnols trial is now put, will be agreeable. If the Council think the needful testimony can be ready by the first of June it will come on then. As I do not hear from them and time is slipping away fast I inclose a letter to General Arnold fixing the trial at that day; which you will be pleased [to cause to be] delivered to him in case it corresponds with the sense of the Council; otherwise it is to be returned to me. But at all events I beg you will press a decision as General Arnold has again signified his anxious desire to me that the trial might be brought on, and as the sooner it is, the more convenient it will be to our Military arrangements.

Speaking of Witnesses, you say "Congress have declined exercising any compulsory power over their officers on the occasion." Where any person in the military line is summoned, as I mentioned in my letter to the Council, it is *my* duty to order their attendance, which I shall of course do. With respect to these therefore the interposition of Congress would be unnecessary. With very great regards etc.[26]

26. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

To GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

Hd. Qrs. Middle Brook, May 8, 1779.[27]

Monsieur Gerard did me the honor to deliver me your favour of the 26th. I shall always be obliged to you, my dear Sir, for a free communication of your sentiments on whatsoever subject may occur.

The objects of your letter were important. Mr. Gerard I dare say has made it unnecessary for me to recapitulate what passed between him and myself and has informed you of the alternative I proposed for improving the important event announced by him. From what he told me it appears that sufficient assurances cannot be given of points which are essential to justify the great undertaking you had in view[28] at the expense of other operations very interesting. And indeed though I was desirous to convince the Minister that we are willing to make every effort in our

power for striking a decisive blow; yet my judgment rather inclined to the second plan as promising more certain success, without putting so much to the hazard. The relief of the S[outhern] S[tates][29] appears to me an object of the greatest magnitude and what may lead to still more important advantages. I feel infinite anxiety on their account; their internal weakness, disaffection, the want of energy, the general languor that has seized the people at large makes me

27. The date line is in the writing of Washington.

28. Morris's letter of April 26, in the *Washington Papers*, sketches a method of an attack on New York City.

29. Morris wrote (April 26): “When the Enemy went to the Southern States I considered it as a Kind of Madness and I think they will feel the Consequences but certainly it cannot be worth while to loose a Moment unnecessarily in that Quarter for the Climate will fight for us during the Summer and what shall remain may be compleated in the Autumn of the other Objects succeed.” Morris's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

apprehend the most serious consequences; it would seem too, as if the enemy meant to transfer the principal weight of the war that way. If it be true that a large detachment has lately sailed from New York and that Sir Henry Clinton is gone with it, in which several accounts I have received agree (though I do not credit the latter) and these should be destined for the Southward as is most probable, there can be little doubt that this is the present plan. Charles town it is likely will feel the next stroke. This if it succeeds will leave the enemy [in] full possession of Georgia by obliging us to collect our forces for the defence of South Carolina and, will consequently open new sources for Men and supplies and prepare the way for a further career. The climate, I am aware is an obstacle but perhaps not so great as is imagined and, when we consider the difference in our respective means of preserving health it may possibly be found more adverse to our troops than to theirs. In this critical situation, I hardly know any resource we have unless it be in the *event expected* ;[30] and the supposed reinforcement now on its way, for want of a competent land force on our part, may

make even this dependence precarious. If it should fail, our affairs which have a very sickly aspect in many respects will receive a stroke they are little able to bear.

As a variety of accidents may disappoint our hopes here it is indispensable we should make every exertion on our part to check the enemy's progress. This cannot be done to effect, if our reliance is solely or principally on militia,

30. The arrival of a French fleet, under D'Estaing, with French troops on board.

for a force continually fluctuating is incapable of any material effort. The states concerned ought by all means to endeavour to draw out men for a length of time; a smaller number, on this plan would answer their purpose better; a great deal of expence would be avoided and agriculture would be much less impeded. It is to be lamented that the remoteness and weakness of this army, would make it folly to attempt to send any succour from this quarter. Perhaps for want of knowing the true state of our Foreign expectations and prospects of finance, I may be led to contemplate the glomy side of things. But I confess they appear to me to be in a very disagreeable train. The rapid decay of our currency, the extinction of public spirit, the increasing rapacity of the times, the want of harmony in our councils, the declining zeal of the people, the discontents and distresses of the officers of the army; and I may add, the prevailing security and insensibility to danger, are symptoms, in my eye of a most alarming nature. If the enemy have it in their power to press us hard this campaign I know not what may be the consequence. Our army as it now stands is but little more than the skeleton of an army and I hear of no steps that are taking to give it strength and substance. I hope there may not be great mistakes on this head, and that our abilities in general are not overrated. The applications for succour, are numerous; but no pains are taken to put it in my power to afford them. When I endeavour to draw together the Continental troops for

the most essential purposes I am embarrassed with complaints of the exhausted defenceless situation of particular states and find myself obliged either to resist solicitations, made in such a manner and with such a degree of emphasis, as scarcely to leave me a choice; or to sacrifice the most obvious principles of military propriety and risk the general safety.

I shall conclude by observing, that it is well worthy the ambition of a patriot Statesman at this juncture, to endeavour to pacify party differences, to give fresh vigor to the springs of government, to inspire the people with confidence, and above all to restore the credit of our currency. With very great regard I am, etc.[31]

To JOHN JAY

[Hd. Qrs. Middle brook, May 10, 1779.]

I seize a moment of leisure to thank you, my dear Sir, for your obliging favours of the 21st. and 26th. of April. My friendship for you will always make me take pleasure in cultivating the esteem and confidence of which you so politely assure me.

31. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton. The word in brackets is in the writing of Washington.

You give an affecting summary of the causes of the national evils we feel,[63] and the still greater we have reason to apprehend. To me it appears, that our affairs are in a very delicate situation; and, what is not the least to be lamented, is that many people think they are in a very flourishing way; and seem in a great measure insensible to the danger with which we are threatened. If Britain should be able to make a vigorous campaign in America, this summer, in the present depreciation of our money, scantiness of supplies, want of virtue and want of exertion, 'tis hard to say what may be the consequence.

It is a melancholy consideration that any concerned in the conduct of public affairs should discover an indifference to the State of our currency. Nothing in my opinion can be more manifest, than that if something [effectual] be not done to restore its credit, it will in a short time, either cease to circulate altogether, or circulate so feebly as to be utterly incapable of drawing out the resources of the country; [this is nearly the case now.]

With every sentiment of Esteem etc.[64]

***To ELIAS BOUDINOT**

Middle brook, May 17, 1779.

Dr. Sir: Your favor of 4 Oclock yesterday afternoon

63. Jay had written (April 21):“New modes of Government not generally understood, nor in certain instances approved. Want of Moderation and Information in the People; want of Abilities and Rectitude in some of their Rulers; a wide Field open for the operations of ambitious men; men raised from low Degrees to high Stations, and rendered giddy by Elevation, and the Extent of their Views; Laws dictated by the Spirit of the Times, not the Spirit of Justice and liberal Policy; Latitude in Principles as well as Commerce; Fluctuation in manners, and public Counsels. Suspension of Education; Indifference to Religion and moral Obligations &c. &c., are Circumstances that portend Evils which much Prudence vigor and Circumspection are necessary to prevent or controul.” Jay's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

64. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

came to my hands this morning. The suggestions contained in it, I had before heard from New York; but thank you nevertheless for your attention, and communication of them.

I have no idea of the Convention Troops being rescued by the detachment from N. Yk. but if it shd. take Post at the nearest navigation to their cantonmt. it would countenance desertion, and be a means of obtaining many of them in that way. I shall endeavour as much as possible to prevent this.

If the Gentn. whose name I mentioned to you in my last, is inclined to undertake that business, and should be in want of a little specie for the purposes there expressed, I will spare part of my small stock. To know the real strength and situation of the enemy, their detachments, reinforcements,

designs, expectations, &ca., is essential. Equally important may it be, to know frequently, what Ships of War and other Armed Vessels are in the harbour of New York.

The inclosed was brought to me by Genl. Thompson. If Mr. Pintard will enquire into the truth of the representation, and give or destroy the pass as facts may appear I shall be obliged to him. I am, etc.

To CONRAD ALEXANDRE GÉRARD

Head Quarters, Middle Brook, May 18, 1779.

Sir: The obligation I felt for the visit which Your Excellency did me the honor to make me could only be increased by the manner in which you are pleased to mention the reception you met with. If there was any thing that deserved to give you pleasure, it was the sentiments which accompanied the marks of respect we were happy to have an opportunity of shewing you. As the Minister of a Prince we revere, you had a title to every thing we could do; but you have another title, not less precious to your sensibility; all the true friends of America esteem it an honor to rank you among their number, and acknowledge the distinguished instances you have given of your zealous concern for its interests. The assurances of your esteem for me are too flattering to permit any other return than that of actions; and I shall ardently wish for occasions of giving you proofs of mine as convincing as they will be sincere.

Truly sensible of your politeness Mrs. Washington entreats you to accept her most respectful thanks and compliments. I have the honor etc.

P. S. I have made inquiries on the subject of the memoir.[58] as yet without success. I shall continue them and communicate the result.[59]

***To JOHN ARMSTRONG[64]**

Head Qrs., Middle brook, May 18, 1779.

Dear Sir: I have received your favor of the 10th Instt.[65] and thank you for it. Never was there an observation founded in more truth than *yours* of my having a *choice* of difficulties. I cannot say that the resolve of Congress which you allude to has increased them; but with propriety I may observe it has added to my embarrassment in fixing on them inasmuch as It gives me *powers* without the *means* of execution when these ought to be co-equal at least. The cries of the distressed, of the fatherless and the Widows, come to me from all quarters. The States are not behind hand in making application for assistance notwithstanding scarce any one of them, that I can find, is taking effectual measures to compleat its qouta of Continental Troops, or have even power or energy enough to draw forth their Militia; each complains of neglect because it gets not what it asks; and conceives that no other suffers like itself because they are ignorant of what others experience, receiving the complaints of their own people *only* . I have a hard time of it and a disagreeable task. To please

58. On May 10 a memorial from Gérard to Congress was read and referred to the committee appointed to superintend the departments of the commissary and quartermaster general. It was also ordered that a copy of the memorial be transmitted to the Commander in Chief and “that he consider himself at liberty so to direct the military operations of these states as shall appear to him most expedient.” Gérard's memorial, or letter, advised Congress of the intended return of Comte D'Estaing to the American coast.

59. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

64. Delegate to Congress from Pennsylvania.

65. As printed in the *Virginia Historical Register*, vol. 5, p. 210. The letter has at this point “by Col. Blane.”

every body is impossible; were I to undertake it I should probably please no body. If I know myself I have no partialities. I have from the beginning, and I will to the end pursue to the best of my judgment and abilities one steady line of conduct for the good of the great whole. This will, under all circumstances administer consolation to myself however short I may fall of the expectations

of others. But to leave smaller matters, I am much mistaken if the resolve of Congress hath not an eye to something far beyond our abilities; they are not, I conceive, sufficiently acquainted with the state and strength of the Army, of our resources, and how they are to be drawn out. The powers given *may* be beneficial, but do not let Congress *deceive* themselves by false expectations founded on a superficial view of the situation and circumstances of things in general and their own Troops in particular; for in a word, I give it to *you* as my opinion, that if the reinforcement expected by the enemy should arrive, and no effectual measures be taken to compleat *our Battalions* , and stop the further depreciation of *our Money* I do not see upon what ground we are able, or mean to continue the contest. We now stand upon the brink of a precipice from whence the smallest help plunges us headlong. At this moment, *our Money does but pass* ; at what rate I need not add because unsatisfied demands upon the treasury afford too many unequivocal and alarming proofs to stand in need of illustration. Even at this hour every thing is in a manner, at a stand for want of this

money (such as it is) and because many of the States instead of passing laws to aid the several departments of the Army have done the reverse, and hampered the transportation in such a way as to stop the Supplies wch. are indispensably necessary and for want of wch. we are embarrassd exceedingly. This is a summary of our affairs in Genl. to which I am to add that the Officers unable any longer to support themselves in the Army are resigning continually, or doing what is even worse, spreading discontent and possibly the seeds of Sedition.

You will readily perceive my good Sir that this is a confidential letter and that however willing I may be to disclose such matters and such sentiments to particular friends who are entrusted with the government of our great national concerns, I shall be extremely unwilling to have them communicated to any others, as I should feel much compunction if a single word or thought of mine was to create the smallest despair in our own people or feed the hope of the enemy who I know pursue with avidity every track which leads to a discovery of the Sentiments of Men in Office. Such (Men in Office I mean) I wish to be impressed, deeply impressed with the importance of close attention and a vigorous exertion of the means for extricating our finances from the deplorable Situation in which they now are. I never was, much less reason have I now, to be affraid of the

enemys Arms; but I have no scruple in declaring to you, that I have never yet seen the time in which our affars in my opinion were at so low an ebb as the present and

witht. a speedy and capital change we shall not be able in a very short time to call out the strength and resources of the Country. The hour therefore is certainly come when party differences and disputes should subside; when every Man (especially those in Office) should with one hand and one heart pull the same way and with their whole strength. Providence has done, and I am perswaded is disposed to do, a great deal for us, but we are not to forget the fable of Jupiter and the Countryman. I am, etc.

P.S. I am not insensible of the propriety of the observn. contained in the P.S. to your Letter and can assure you that the Person[66] you allude to was not appointed from motives of partiality or in a hasty manner; after long and cool deliberation, a due consideration of characters and circumstances; and some regard to military rules and propriety I could do no better. I must work with such means as I have. You know I presume that the comd. was offered Genl. Gtes who declined the acceptance of it.

To JUAN DE MIRALLES

Hd. Qrs., Middle brook, May 18, 1779.[67]

Sir: I take the liberty to trouble you with

66. Maj. Gen. John Sullivan, commanding the Indian expedition. Armstrong suggested the propriety of detaching Colonel Brodhead from Fort Pitt for this service.

67. This date line is in the writing of Washington.

duplicate and triplicate, of a letter which I did myself the honor to write to His Excellency The Governor of Havannah[68] some time since, the original of which I am apprehensive may miscarry, and I entreat your care in forwarding them by the earliest and safest opportunities. I am anxious

that this letter should get to His Excellency, as it conveys to him my thanks for the pleasure I have received in his friend's acquaintance and a testimony of my respect for himself.

I am happy in the opportunity this gives me of assuring you of the sincere respect and esteem, with which I have the honor, etc.[69]

***To LORD STIRLING**

Head Qrs., Middlebrook, May 25, 1779.

My Lord: Your letter of yesterday inclosing a plan of operations for the ensuing campaign came to my hands this Morning. Communications of this kind are always pleasing to me, because it is my earnest wish to avail myself of every useful hint, and to have my own opinion strengthened by the concurrence of others; but where circumstances are either not well known,

68. See Washington's letter to Diego José de Navarro, Mar. 4, 1779, *ante*.

69. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

or not duly balanced, a plan may appear very well in theory which would fail in practice. The plan your Lordship has sketched out contains many valuable thoughts, not new to me, but subject to a variety of embarrassing considerations, among which the relative strength of the two Armies, the call upon me for Men (or rather impossibility of concentring what we have), and difficulty in drawing out Militia, are not the smallest. Besides these, the combining a naval force dispersed, we know not whether, subject to no one head, and to be obtained (if to be had at all) by application to a variety of powers, with a weak land force whose success must depend upon secrecy and dispatch, does not promise much; however, as you very justly observe, circumstances will at one time warrant an enterprize which prudence would reprobate most severely at another; every project therefore not fundamentally wrong, is worthy attention. For your thoughts upon this occasion you have my sincere thanks, and I wish you to offer them with the same freedom and candour upon every other.

From corrispondant accts. I am left without a doubt of the enemy's having concentered their force (that at Rhode Island excepted) at New York, and its vicinity; that they have collected their Boats, and that every thing indicates a capitol movement very shortly. With very great esteem etc.

[N.Y.H.S.]

To MRS. MARGARET DE LANCEY[96]

Head Quarters, Middle brook, May 27, 1779.

Madam: Your letter[97] accompanied by three others was delivered me this morning. I am extremely sorry that my inclination to oblige you is unavoidably restricted to a partial compliance with your request. With respect to your cloathes, I am happy to have it in my power to grant the permission you desire, but I could not extend it to the other articles without infringing rules with which I am not at liberty to dispense. The mention of these and an assurance, that I have in no instance departed from them, will I am persuaded make any further apology superfluous. I return you the Letters to Mrs. Elliot[98] and Miss Walton[99] that you may give them a form corresponding with what I now express, and I shall then forward them with pleasure and furnish the necessary passports.

Mrs. Washington begs to return her compliments. I am etc.[1]

96. Wife of James de Lancey and daughter of the royal justice, William Allen, of Pennsylvania.

97. This letter of May 24 is in the *Washington Papers*.

98. Wife of Andrew(?) Elliot, of New York City.

99. Daughter of Abraham(?) Walton, of Queens County, N.Y.

1. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton. The date line and superscription are in the writing of Washington.

***To LIEUTENANT COLONEL NICHOLAS ROGERS[29]**

Head Qrs. Middle brook, May 28, 1779.

Dear Sir: A few days ago I was hond. with your polite and obliging favor of the 6th. Instt. accompanied by a Miniature picture of Mrs. Washington.[30] I wish it was in my power to express as forcably as I feel, the lively sense I have of the repeated instances of your polite attention to her and myself. Such tribute as unfeigned thanks afford, is presented to you with much sincerity; and, if I knew how to make a more acceptable offering it should not be wanting.

Difficult as it is to strike a likeness on so small a scale, it is the opinion of many that you have not failed in the present attempt. The dress is not less pleasing for being a copy of antiquity, it would be happy for us, if in these days of depravity the imitation of our ancesters were extensively adopted; their virtues wd. not hurt us.

Mrs. Washington joins me in a tender of best wishes for you and with much esteem etc.

29. A French volunteer. He had been aide to Du Coudray and, later, to De Kalb; brevet lieutenant colonel in the Continental Army; and at this date retired and living in Baltimore.

30. The miniature was of a size to fit a ring and, according to Roger's letter of Apr. 6, 1779, in the *Washington Papers*, showed Mrs. Washington in an Elizabethan ruff and hood.

***To DANIEL BOWERS**

Head Qrs, Middle brook, May 28, 1779.

Sir: Your letter[31] of the 26th. of last Month, accompanied by a piece of Cloth made of Buffaloes hair, and manufactured in your own family, came safe to my hands. For the flattering Sentimts. contained in the letter, and for the novelty of the Cloth which you have been so obliging as to present me with the first fruits of, I thank you. I am highly sensible of these proofs of your approbation of my conduct, and thank you kindly for your good wishes. I am (though unknown) Yr. most Obedt. Servt.

***To BRIGADIER GENERAL MORDECAI GIST**

Head Qr., Middle brook, June 1, 1779.

Dear Sir: I intended to send the inclosed by you, but hurry of business prevented it. The letter for Colo. Rogers[74] you will be so good as to deliver, or cause to be delivered, safely. The other for a Mr. Bowers,[75] with his letter to me (also inclosed) I am embarrassed about. However well meant these things

31. Bower's letter was dated from New Germantown, Baltimore County, Md. It is not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

74. Lieut. Col. Nicholas Rogers. (See Washington's letter to Lieut. Col. Nicholas Rogers, May 28, 1779, *ante*.)

75. Daniel Bowers. (See Washington's letter to Daniel Bowers, May 28, 1779, *ante*.)

are, they rather distress than please; especially when they proceed from Men of whom we have no knowledge, either of their political or moral characters. In this predicament I stand with respect to Mr. Bowers, and therefore take the liberty of making you an Agent in the business.

If Mr. Bowers is a Man in such circumstances, and of such character, as not to render the acceptance of his cloth improper, I request the favor of you to forward my letter to him; but even

in this case if I could offer him something as an equivalent, I should be better pleased provided he would not think himself hurt at the idea of pay. On the other hand, if upon enquiry, or your own knowledge of Mr. Bowers, you should judge it not right in me to receive any thing from him as a present, I beg the favor of you to withhold the letter, and advise me of it, that I may return the Cloth. I unwillingly give you this trouble, but I know you will excuse it in Dr. Sir Yr. etc.

To MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT HOWE

New Windsor, June 25, 1779.[35]

I received, my Dear Sir, your favour of the 19th.

35. The date line and name “Majr. Genl. Howe” and signature are in the writing of Washington.

yesterday.

I regret that your hurt proved more serious than you apprehended; but I am happy to hear the good effects produced by the application of the lancet, and I hope it may so much accelerate the progress of your cure as to enable you in a short time to give us the pleasure of your company. I beg you however not to precipitate this event at the expense of your health and convenience.

At present there is not an immediate prospect of action. The movements of the enemy seem to be in suspense; and their situation does not offer us any opportunity to act offensively. You may depend that you shall have the earliest notice when there is a probability of *something to do* .

You have heard no doubt of the posts they have taken on the two sides of the River at Verplanks and Stoney points, positions naturally difficult of access and made more so by fortification. That part of the army which was with me at Middle Brook is incamped in Smith's Clove about twelve Miles from West Point. If the enemy expect any considerable reinforcement, it is not improbable they are waiting its arrival, and will then prosecute their operations on the River, and against the forts that protect its communication.

We are anxiously hoping for a confirmation of the Southern news. The enemy's accounts differ pretty widely from ours, though they really have an air of concealment and reserve. They assert that Charlestown had offered to

capitulate; but this is against all probability, even from their own relation of circumstances. 'Tis astonishing we do not receive some official intelligence.

I have communicated your request to Col Meade who writes by this conveyance. With great esteem etc.[36]

***To PHILIP MAZZEI[80]**

New Windsor, July 1, 1779.

Sir: Two or three Months ago I had the honor to receive your favor of the 27th of Jany. about the same time I was informed that you either had Imbarked, or was upon the point of imbarking, for Europe; this induced me to suspend my acknowledgment of your polite Lettr. till a more favourable juncture; but being lately told that you were in Virginia I address you accordingly.

I thank you for your obliging acct. of the culture of the Vine, and am happy to hear that your plantation of them is in so prosperous a way. I have long been of opinion from the

36. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

80. Italian physician and republican.

spontaneous growth of the vine, that the climate and soil in many parts of Virginia were well fitted for Vineyards and that Wine, sooner or later would become a valuable article of produce. The relation of your experiments convince me I was right. With respect to the Olive, I have been much more doubtful; and with regard to the Lemon we know it is an exotic and requires a security against

frost which must render the culture of them expensive precarious and unprofitable except for mere gratification and amusement.

I am much obliged by the communication of your design of going to Europe and asking my dispatches for France or Italy. I have nothing to give you the trouble of, but wish you an agreeable and prosperous voyage and a safe return to your adopted Country in which and rural life I should be happy to meet you.

I thank you for the flattering sentiments contained in your Letter and with esteem and respect have the honor, etc.[81]

***To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE**

New Windsor, July 4, 1779.

My dear Marqs: Since my last which was written (to the

81. Washington sent this letter to Virginia, addressed to the care of John Blair.

best of my recollection for not having my Papers with me I can not have recourse to dates) in March, both Armies continued quiet in their Winter cantonments till about the first of May when a detachmt. of abt. 2000 of the Enemy under the command of General Matthews conveyed by Sir George Collier made a sudden invasion of a Neck of land comprehending Portsmouth and Suffolk in Virginia, and after plundering and destroying the property (chiefly private) in those places and stealing a number of Negroes returned to New York the moment they found the Country rising in Arms to oppose them.

This exploit was immediately followed by a movement of Sir Henry Clinton up the North River the beginning of June. what the real object of this expedition was, I cannot with certainty inform you. Our Posts in the highlands were supposed to be his aim because they were of importance to us, and consonant to his former plan for prosecuting the War; but whether upon a nearer approach he found

them better provided and more difficult of access than he expected, or whether his only view was to cut off the communication between the East and West side of the River below the highlands I shall not undertake to decide; certain it is however that he came up in full force, disembarked at Kings ferry and there began to fortify the points on each side which to all intents and purposes are Islands and by nature exceedingly strong.

This movement of the enemy and my

solicitude for the security of our defences on the River, induced me to March the Troops which were cantoned at Middle brook, immediately to their support and for the further purpose of strengthening the defences by additional Works. in this business I have been employed near three weeks, while the enemy have not been idle in establishing themselves as above. They have reinforced their main army with part of the garrison at Rhode Island.

General Sullivan commands an Expedition against the Six Nation's which aided by Butlar and Brandt, with their Tory Friends, and some force from Canada have greatly infested our Frontrs. He has already Marched to the Susquehanna with about 4000 Men, all Continental Soldiers and I trust will destroy their Settlements and extirpate them from the Country which more than probably will be effected by their flight as it is not a difficult matter for them to take up their Beds and Walk.

We have received very favourable Accts. from South Carolina, by wch. it appears that the British Troops before Charles town have met with a defeat and are in a very perilous situation. We have this matter from such a variety of hands that it scarcely admits of a doubt and yet no official information is received of it.

When my dear Marquis shall I embrace you again? Shall I ever do it? or have the charms of the

amiable and lovely Marchioness, or the smiles and favors of your Prince withdrawn you from us entirely? At all times, and under all circumstances, I have the honor to be with the greatest regard, personal attachment and affection, Yr., etc.

To CONRAD ALEXANDRE GÉRARD

New Windsor, July 5, 1779[23] Sir: A report prevails here that Your Excellency intends shortly to take your departure for France. On a presumption of its truth, I take the liberty to request you will do me the honour to take charge of the inclosed letter for the Marquis De la Fayette.

I cannot but avail myself of this opportunity, of assuring your Excellency of the high sense I entertain of your services to this country, and how much I should regret your absence, if I were not convinced that it will be employed to promote the mutual interest of France and America. With this consolation, I entreat you will accept the homage of my sincerest wishes for your health and happiness; and that you may have a safe and agreeable passage and a happy sight of your friends, I have the honor etc.[24]

23. The date line and superscription is in the writing of Washington.

24. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

***To THOMAS WEST[25]**

New Windsor, July 5, 1779.

Sir: Your letter of the 10th. Ulto. by the Post did not reach my hands till yesterday. Although I have received money on my own account in discharge of Bonds, Mortgages &ca., at the present depreciated price of it (by which, in some instances, I have not, in reality, got a Shilling in the pound, though nominally the whole Sum) I can never consent to receive it as an Executor for others without a proper allowance unless the Laws of the State should compel it; of which you have the means of information more in your power than I have, and will act accordingly.

I do not recollect enough of Colo. Thos. Colvills Will to remember who were the residuary Legatees; I thought his relations in England had been so; but be this as it may, the case is not altered

by it; and I think Mr. Moody, before a conveyance is made him, should pay the real, not nominal value of the purchase; without this I shall never (unless matters

25. Of Alexandria, Va., and coexecutor with Washington of Col. Thomas Covill's estate.

appear to me in a different point of light than they do at present) agree to make Deeds untill compelled by a suit in chancery.

Before I conclude let me entreat you to have the Accts. of that Estate put in the best Order imaginable, and every Voucher, Paper, and memorandum which tends to explain, or can anyways illucidate matters, carefully selected; as I am very anxious, or shall be so the moment it is in my power, to have a final settlement of my Executorship of that Estate in order to obtain a discharge from the trust. I am, etc.

To JUAN DE MIRALLES

New Windsor, July 10, 1779.

Sir: A succession of military events has prevented my having the honor of making my acknowledgments sooner for your two letters of the 22d. and 25th. of May, accompanied by your agreeable present to Mrs. Washington and myself.[65] Such of the articles as we have made trial of are very fine. The glass vessels are peculiarly elegant and the whole are rendered still more agreeable by the cordial and affectionate sentiments of the giver.

The terms in which you mention the

65. Wine, chocolate, sugar, guava jelly, and sweetmeats, etc.; also crystal flasks.

testimonies of my esteem, which your short stay in camp gave me an opportunity of shewing, renews the pleasure I felt in manifesting the sense I entertained of the favour of your company. I only desire occasions of giving you other proofs more decisive.

Mrs. Washington left me on her return to Virginia about the time the army began its march this way. She charged me to present you her most respectful compliments and warmest thanks for this new instance of your politeness. In this she was joined by Mrs. Greene.

With my best wishes for your happiness and with the greatest esteem etc.[66]

***To PHILIP SCHUYLER**

West point, July 24, 1779.

Dear Sir: Permit me to thank you for your obliging Letter of the 15th, and to acknowledge with pleasure and gratitude, Mrs. Schuylers intended favor to Mrs. Washington; who, I am sure, would have been exceedingly happy in seeing her at head Qrs. if it had been convenient to her to have stayed.

66. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

My Letter of yesterday's date will convey to you the acct. of the taking of Stoney point. I was tolerably sanguine in my expectations of reducing Vetplanks, but some untoward accidents defeated my plan; of course my hopes.

I am with the most sincere esteem and affection, and with best respects to Mrs. St. etc.

***To PRESIDENT JOSEPH REED**

West-point, July 29, 1779.

Dear Sir: I have a pleasure in acknowledging the receipt of your obliging favor of the 15th. Instt., and in finding by it, that the author of the quœries “Political and Military”[13] has had no great cause to exult in the favourable reception of them by the public.

Without a clue, I should have been at no loss to trace the malevolent writer; but I have seen a history of the transaction, and felt a pleasure mingled with pain, at the narration. To stand well in the estimation of ones Country, is a happiness that no rational creature can be insensible of. To be pursued, first under the mask of friendship, and when

13. The author of these "Queries" was Maj. Gen. Charles Lee. They were published in no. 302, vol. 6, of *The Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, July 6, 1779, then being published by Mary K. Goddard. The publication aroused considerable indignation, and *The Maryland Journal* later published an apology for printing the "Queries." A copy of no. 302 is in the *Washington Papers*.

disguise would suit no longer, as an open calumniator with gross mis-representation, and *self-known* falsehoods, carries an alloy which no mind can bear with perfect composure.

The motives which actuate this Gentln. can be better accounted for by himself than me. If he can produce a single instance in which I have mentioned his name after his tryal commenced where it was in my power to avoid it, and when it was not, where I have done it with the smallest degree of acrimony, or disrespect, I will consent that the World shall view my character in as disreputable a light as he wishes to place it; what cause there is then for such a profusion of venom as he is emitting upon all occasions unless by an act of public duty in bringing him to tryal at his own sollicitation I have disappointed him and raised his ire; or conceiving that in proportion as he can darken the shades of my character he illuminates his own. Whether these I say, or motives, still more hidden and dark govern him, I shall not undertake to decide nor have I time to enquire into them at present.

If I had ever assumed the Character of a Military genius and the Officer of experience. If undr. these false colors I had solicited the command I was honoured with, or if after my appointment, I had presumptuously driven on under the sole guidance of my own judgment and self will, and misfortunes the result of obstinacy and misconduct, not of necessity, had followed, I should have thought myself a proper subject for the

lash, not only of his, but the pen of every other writer, and a fit object for public resentmt.; but when it is well known that the command was in a manner forced upon me; That I accepted it with the utmost diffidence from a consciousness that it required greater abilities and more experience than I possessed to conduct a great Military machine embarrassed as I knew ours must be by a variety of complex circumstances and as it were but little more than a mere Chaos. and when nothing more was promised on my part than has been most inviobly performed it is rather grating to pass over in silence charges which may impress the uninformed tho' others know that these charges have neither reason nor truth to support them; and that a plain and simple narrative of facts would defeat all his assertions notwithstanding they are made with an effrontery which few Men do, and for the honor of human nature none ought, to possess.

If this Gentleman is envious of my station, and thinks I stand in his way to preferment, I can assure him in most solemn terms that the first wish of my Soul is to return to that peaceful retirement, and domestick ease and happiness from whence I came.

To this end all my labours have been directed; and for this purpose have I been more than four years, a perfect Slave endeavouring under as many embarrassing circumstances as ever fell to one man's lott to encounter; and as pure

motives as ever man was influenced by, to promote the cause, and Service I had imbarked in.

You may form a pretty good judgment, of my prospect of a brilliant Campaign, and the figure I shall cut in it, when I inform you, that excepting about 400 Recruits from the State of Massachusetts bay (a portion of which I am told are children, hired at abt. 1500 dollars each for 9 months service) I have had no reinforcement to this Army since last campaign, while our numbers have been, and now are, diminishing daily by the expiring term of mens Services, to say nothing of the natural waste by sickness, death, and desertion.

Discouraging as this is, I feel more from the state of our currency, and the little attention which hitherto, appears to have been paid to our finances than from the smallness of our Army. And yet

(Providence having so often taken us up when bereft of every other hope) I trust we shall not fail even in this. The present temper and disposition of the people to facilitate a loan, to discountence Speculation, and to appreciate the money is a happy presage of resulting good; and ought to be cherished by every possible means not repugnant to good order and government.

With you, I conceive that great events are comprized in the next Six months, and wish I had such information as would carry me along with you in opinion, that Spain has declared in our favor; but having no knowledge of

facts to ground such a belief on, I am apprehensive that the natural sloth of one Court, and the intrigues and artifices of the other, will keep things in a state of negotiation till the effect of prest. exertions of G. Britain this campaign is known and some new Scene opened to our view.

The public are already possessed of the little military occurrances of this Quarter. I need not repeat them. Some considerable movement of the enemy is in agitation, but of what nature, and where pointed, I have not been able to discover.

Lord Cornwallis is arrived, and a number of Troops (it is said) are hourly expected.

My respectful Complimts. attend Mrs. Reed and the Ladies of your family.

With very great esteem etc.[14]

***To LIEUTENANT COLONEL ANTHONY WALTON WHITE**

July 31, 1779.

General Washington presents his compliments to Colo. White and thanks him for the Bridle, Stirrups and Spurs which he obligingly presented him with. The Workmanship

14. The slight verbal variations to be found in the *Reprint of the Original Letters from Washington to Joseph Reed*, by William B. Reed (Philadelphia, 1852), are of little consequence.

does great credit to the artisan and is a demonstrable proof of the perfection to which this manufactory is brought.

***To EDMUND RANDOLPH**

West-point, August 1, 1779.

Dear Sir: I recd. with pleasure and thank you for your obliging favor of the 24th. Ult. I shall be happy in such communications as your leizure, and other considerations, will permit you to transmit me, for I am as totally unacquainted with the political state of things, and what is going forward in the great National Council, as if I was an alien; when a competent knowledge of the temper and designs of our Allies from time to time, and the frequent changes and complexion of Affairs in Europe might, as they ought to do, have a considerable influence on the operations of our Army, and would in many cases determine the propriety of measures which under a cloud of darkness can only be groped at. I say this upon a presumption, that Congress, either through their own Ministers, or that of France must be acquainted, in some degree, with the Plans of G. Britn. and the designs of France and Spain. If I mistake in this conjecture it is to be lamented that they have not better information, or, if political motives render Disclosures of this kind improper, I am content to remain in ignorance.

From what causes it proceeds I shall not undertake to say, but so the fact is, we are labouring under the effects, of two of the greatest evils that can befall a State at War, viz. a reduced army at the beging. of a Campaign (which, more than probable, is intended for a decisive one), and want of Money, or rather a redundancy of it; by which it is become of no value. Why timely expedients were not hit upon to guard against the first, and what measures have been, or can be, at this late hour adopted, to remove the Second, belongs to your honorable body to point out. for me, to lament the one, and feel the ill effects of the other, is all that remains.

I heard of your arrival at Phila. with pleasure and shall when circumstances will permit you to leave it, be happy in seeing you at Camp. being with very great regard etc.

***To THE REVEREND WILLIAM GORDON**

West-point, August 2, 1779.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 22d. Ult. came to my hands by the last Post, and receives, as it deserves, my

warmest thanks. I have also to acknowledge myself your debtor for another letter of the 15th. of Decemr. which the number I am obliged to write, and read, with other papers to consider, prevented my answering till it had slipped my memory wholly.

The Assault of Stoney point does much honor to the Troops employed in it as no Men could behave better. They were composed of the light Infantry of every State (now in this part of the Army) commanded by Genl. Wayne a brave gallant and Sensible Officer. Had it not been for some untoward accidents, the stroke would have been quite compleat. The plan was equally laid Ver-plank's point, and would most assuredly have succeeded but for delays, partly occasioned by high Winds, and partly by means which were more avoidable. A combination, however of causes produced such a delay, as gave the enemy time to move in force, and render a further operation dangerous and improper; The situation of the Post and other circumstances which may be easily guessed, induced me to re solve a removal of the Stores, and the destruction of the Works at Stoney-point which was accordingly done the third day after it was taken.[64]

The Enemy have again repossessed the Gd. and are busily employed in repairing the Works with a force fully adequate to the defence of the spot, which in itself is a fortification, surrounded as it is by a deep morass exceedingly difficult of access. The rest of their Army has remainded very quiet ever since ex tending from Philips on the No. River to East Chester

64. At this point the following is crossed out: “Within the last Eight days, and up to this date, we have received between five and 600 of the New levies from the State of Massachusetts bay, Virginia has sent or were about to send hers to So. Carolina. No other State that I know of has yet

furnished any; none have come to the army under my immediate command and but abt. 150 from New York to that part under Majr. Genl. Sullivan."

on the Sound but, by my last advices from the City of New York Transports were preparing for the reception of Troops, and 4 Regiment talked of as a reinforcement to Genl. Provost.[65] Though I think it not very unlikely (if they have sailed, of which I have no advice) that they should have gone towards Penobscot as the Raisonable (a 64 Gun Ship) and others are said to have Sailed for that place.

Mrs. Washington, according to Custom, marched home when the Campaign was about to open. My best respects to Mrs. Gordon. I am, etc.

P.S. I shall (as it is now rather out of season) make but one short remark upon a passage in your Letter of the 15th. of Decr. and that is, so far from the generality of Officers wishing to have the War prolonged, it is my firm belief there will not be enough left to continue it, however urgent the necessity unless they are enabled to live such is the present distress of the genrality of them and the Spirit for resignation. The idle and foolish expressions of an individual does not by any means speak the sense of the body, and so far am I from believing that any number of them have views repugnant to the rights of Citizens, that I firmly believe the contrary; if I am mistaken I can only say that, the most distant lisp of it,

65. At this point the draft has the following crossed off: "It is to be lamented that a provident care and attention to these matters cannot be given in time when the enemy, evidently, has been exerting every nerve to make this Campaign decisive."

never reached my Ears, and would meet with the severest checks if it did.

*To THE REVEREND UZAL OGDEN[92]

West-point, August 5, 1779.

Revd. Sir: I have received, and with pleasure read, the Sermon you were so obliging as to send me. I thank you for this proof of your attention. I thank you also for the favourable sentiments you have been pleased to express of me. But in a more especial mannr. I thank you for the good wishes and prayers you offer in my behalf. These have a just claim to the gratitude of Revd. Sir, Yr., etc.

To SAMUEL PURVIANCE, JUNIOR

West point, August 7, 1779.

Sir: Every information which is in my power to give respecting the several queries contained in your letter of the 13th. Ulto (received Yesterday only) shall be communicated;

92. Of Newton, Sussex County, N. J. He was elected Protestant Episcopal Bishop of New Jersey in 1798, but consecration was refused him in 1799; later he became a Presbyterian. The sermon was "A sermon on practical religion. Inscribed to Christians of every denomination. No. I. (Chatham: Printed by Shepard Kollock)." Copies of nos. II and III are in the Washington Collection in the Boston Athenaeum.

and I wish a better knowledge and more perfect recollection of circumstances stances would enable me to give you a more satisfactory answer.

In what manner the person who makes you an offer of land, derives *his* title, I am totally ignorant; but the several conveyances from the original patentee will, and only can speak to the validity of it. If this is part of the land surveyed under a proclamation (issued by the governor and council of Virginia) in the Year 1754 and has been properly transfered to the present proprietor, and the conditions of an act of assembly, requiring certain improvements to be made in a limited period, have been complied with; or in other words, if no person has taken advantage of the non-compliance with this act, and petitioned for the land the title must be good, because the land was offered by the executive powers of Virginia (in whom sufficient authority was vested) as a bounty to encourage an expedition then on foot against the encroachments of the french on the Ohio and patents issued in legal form accordingly, after peace was restored to the frontiers. There can be little

doubt therefore of the goodness of the title (under the provisos before mentioned) and how far a non-compliance with the act, for improving and saving lands would have an operation, considering the distracted state in which that country hath been, the hostile temper of the indians and their unwillingness to have these lands settled may be

a matter of doubt. Unwilling however ever to place mine upon a precarious footing, I did at great expence and risque send out servants (bought at Baltimore) and Slaves, and saved mine in the manner prescribed by law; so may those also who are now offering to sell, for aught I know to the contrary.

Thus much Sir, respecting the title to these lands; with regard to the quality of them I have only to add, I believe it is good. I was not present at the survey of a single acre, but had a superficial view of the whole of them the year before they were surveyed; gave general directions to the surveyor respecting his conduct, and have reason to believe he included no land that was bad.

By the description of the lands offered to you they must be part of a large tract of between 50 and 60,000 acres lying in the fork of the Ohio, and great Kanhaway, patented (if my memory serves me) in the names of Muse, Stephen, Lewis, Hogg, West and others, and afterwards divided among them according to their respective claims, or agreeable to some kind of compromise entered into by mutual consent; but this is a transaction of which I never had any official knowledge, and have come at by report only; nor do I know (as hath been before observed) in what manner, to whom, or with what accuracy transfers have been made. But the title papers will discover this. Of the validity of the original patent I have not the smallest doubt. With esteem and regard etc.[12]

12. The draft is in the writing of James McHenry.

*To MAJOR GENERAL JOHN ARMSTRONG[25]

West-point, August 10, 1779.

Dear Sir: Among the number of Letters which I am continually receiving and the multiplicity of papers which are put into my hands to peruse, your favor of the 25th. of June was mixed, and for a time lost; nor did it come to light again till yesterday. this, though a bad excuse, is the truth, and consequently the best apology I can make for delaying so long an answer to the quœre in behalf of your Son.[26] I wish it was in my power to accommodate the Doctr. with a piece of Land in Berkeley upon such terms as would be agreeable to him, but several years ago I leased every foot I had in that Country and wish with all my heart he had happened to have been one of the Lessee's, as I let them for Cash on very moderate terms for lives, which under the present depreciated state of the currency, is not worth collecting.

Such a flood of good news is pouring in upon us at this Instant that (not forgetting the late Charlestown accts.) I am induced to suspend my belief of (at least) part of them, till more authentic information arrives. The taking of St. Vincents and the Grenada[27] wants no further confirmation; the relation of these matters seem pointed and clear; but the true issue, and the consequences of the engagement between the two

25. Of the Pennsylvania Militia, and Delegate to the Continental Congress.

26. Dr. James Armstrong, hospital surgeon.

27. St. Vincent and the Grenada, in the Windward Islands, West Indies.

fleets are not (to us at this place) well ascertained; nor is the Accot. of the enemys retreat from South Carolina, and the Surrender of the Troops at penobscot and destruction of their fleet at that place direct, nor the latter well related, but a few days more will remove all doubts on these several heads.

The enemy, excepting their Garrisons at Stony and Verplank's points, and a few light Troops without Kings bridge and those on Staten Island are removed to York Island. What may be the design, under the present appearances of things, is not easy to decide but a little time will disclose

this also. In the mean while I am endeavouring, by the erection of New works, and an alteration of the old, to put this Post in the best posture of defence I can. In sincerity and truth I have the honor, etc.

To JOHN JAY

West point, August 16, 1779.

Dear Sir: I beg you to accept my thanks for your obliging Letter of the 10th. transmitting an extract from Mr. Bingham's.[32]

32. William Bingham. He was United States Commercial Agent at Martinique.

The intelligence it gives is infinitely interesting, and I hope will be followed by events of still more decisive importance. The conduct of England in rejecting the mediation of Spain is more strongly tinctured with insanity than any thing she has done in the course of the contest, unless she be sure of very powerful aid from some of the Northern states. This seems to be the only rational solution, that can be given to her obstinacy.

I inclose you a letter from General Wayne, a part of the contents of which he communicated to me concerning some officers of his corps whom he omitted in his former report. As this omission has given dissatisfaction and as the Gentlemen concerned are very deserving, I shall be happy if Congress should think it proper to publish General Wayne's letter, which I doubt not will effectually remove it. I take the liberty of mentioning this to your Excellency that if you see no impropriety in the publication, you may give it your aid. With the greatest esteem etc.[33]

***To DOCTOR JOHN COCHRAN**

West-point, August 16, 1779.

Dr. Doctr: I have asked Mrs. Cockran and Mrs.

33. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton. The date and superscription is in the writing of Washington.

Livingston to dine with me to morrow; but ought I not to apprize them of their fare? As I hate deception, even where the imagination only is concerned; I will.

It is needless to premise, that my table is large enough to hold the ladies; of this they had occular proof yesterday. To say how it is usually covered is rather more essential, and this, shall be the purport of my Letter. Since our arrival at this happy spot, we have had a Ham (sometimes a shoulder) of Bacon, to grace the head of the table; a piece of roast Beef adorns the foot; and, a small dish of Greens or Beans (almost impercep table) decorates the center.

When the Cook has a mind to cut a figure (and this I presume he will attempt to do to morrow) we have two Beefstake-Pyes, or dishes of Crabs in addition, one on each side the center dish, dividing the space, and reducing the distance be tween dish and dish to about Six feet, which without them, would be near twelve a part. Of late, he has had the surprizing luck[34] to discover, that apples will make pyes; and it's a question if, amidst the violence of his efforts, we do not get one of apples instead of having both of Beef.[35]

If the ladies can put up with such entertainment, and will submit to partake of it on plates, once tin but now Iron; (not become so by the labor of scowering) I shall be happy to see them. I am, etc.

[N.Y.H.S.]

34. The draft, also in the writing of Washington, has the word “luck” crossed out and “segacity” substituted.

35. The draft has “Beef-stakes.”

***To LUND WASHINGTON**

August 17, 1779.

Some time ago (but how long I can not remember) you applied to me to know if you should receive payment of Genl. Mercer's Bonds; and after this, of the bond due from the deceased Mr. Mercers Estate to me; and was, after animadverting a little upon the subject; authorized to do so; of course I presume the money has been received. I have since considered this matter in every point of view my judgment enables me to place it, and am resolved to receive no more old debts; such I mean as were contracted and ought to have been paid before the War at the present nominal value of the money, unless compelled to it, or it is the practice of others to do it. Neither justice, reason, nor policy requires it. The law, undoubtedly, was well designed; it was intended to stamp a value and give a free circulation, to the paper bills of credit; but it never was nor could be intended to make a man take a Shilling or Six pence in the pound for a just debt, wch. he is well able to pay, thereby involving himself in ruin. I am as willing now as I ever was to take paper money for every kind of debt, and at its present depreciated value for those debts which have been contracted since the money became so; but I will

not in future receive the nominal sum for such old debts as come under the above description, except as before excepted. The fear of injuring by any example of mine the credit of our paper currency if I attempted to discriminate between the real and nominal value of Paper money, has already sunk me a large Sum if the Bonds beforementd. are paid off; the advantage taken in doing which no Man of honor or common honesty can reconcile to his own feelings and conscience; not as it respects me do I mean but transactions of this kind generally. The thing which induced me to mention the matter to you at present, is the circumstance you have related respecting the Wages of Roberts, which you say (according to his demands) will amount to upwards of £2000, and comes to as much for the Service of a *common* Miller for *one year only* , as I shall get for 600 acres of land sold Mercer in the best of times and in the most valuable part of Virginia, that ought to have been pd. for before the money began to depreciate; nay years before the War. This is such a manifest abuse of reason and justice that no Arguments can reconcile it to common sense, or common honesty. Instead of appealing to me who have not the means of informatn. or knowledge

of common usage and practice in matters of this kind in the State or the Laws that govern there, I wish you would consult Men of honor, honesty, and firm attachment to the cause, and govern yourself by their advice or by their conduct. If it be customary with others to receive money in this way, that is 6 d. or I /

in the pound for old debts; if it is thought to be advansive of the great cause we are imbarked in for individuals to do so thereby ruining themselves while others are reaping the benefit of such distress, if the Law imposes this, and it is thought right to submit, I will not say aught against it, or oppose another word to it. No man has, nor no man will go further to serve the Public than myself, if sacrificing my whole Estate would effect any valuable purpose I would not hesitate one moment in doing it, but my submitting to matters of this kind unless it is done so by others, is no more than a drop in the bucket, in fact it is not serving the public but enriching individuals and countenancing dishonesty for sure I am that no honest Man would attempt to pay 20 /, with one or perhaps half a one In a word I had rather make a present of the Bonds than receive payment of them in so shameful a way.[52]

***To PRESIDENT JOSEPH REED**

Westpoint, August 22, 1779.

Dear Sir: Mr. Tilghman delivered me your favour of the 8th. Instt.[3] for which, and the favourable sentiments expressed of me in your publication, addressed to the Printer of the Maryland Journal, you will permit me to offer my

52. This memorandum is headed by Washington: ”Extract of a Letter to Mr. Lund Washington.“

3. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

grateful acknowledgments.[4]

The loss of Fort Washington simply abstracted from the circumstances which attended it was an event that gave me much pain, because it deprivd the Army of the Services of many valuable Men at a critical period and the public of many valuable lives, by the cruelties which were inflicted upon them in their captive state. but this concern received additional poignancy from two considerations which did not appear; one of which never will be known to the world (because I shall never attempt to paliate my own faults by exposing those of another) nor indeed could either of them come before the public unless there had been such a charge as must have rendered an enquiry into the causes of this miscarriage necessary. The one was, a non–compliance in General Greene with an order[5] sent him from White plains before I marched for the Western–side of Hudsons River to withdraw the Artillery, stores, &ca. from the Fort, allowing him however some latitude for the exercise of his own judgment as he was upon the spot and could decide better from appearances and circumstances than I the propriety of a total evacuation. The other was a resolve of Congress in the strong and emphatic words following

Friday, Octr. 11th., 1776.

Resolved, That General Washington be desired, if it be practicable, by every art and whatever expence to obstruct effectually the navigation of the North River, between Fort Washington and

4. Reed's answer to Gen. Charles Lee's Queries, published in the *Maryland Journal*, are in Reed's *Life of Joseph Reed* (Phila: r847), vol. I, p. 262.

5. See Washington's letter to Gen. Nathanael Greene, Nov. 8, 1776, *ante*.

Mount constitution, as well to prevent the regress of the enemy's frigates lately gone up, as to hinder them from receiving succours.

When I came to Fort Lee and found no measures taken towards an evacuation in consequence of the order aforementioned. When I found General Greene of whose judgment and candor I entertained a good opinion, decidedly opposed to it. when I found other opinion's coincident with his. When

the wishes of Congress to obstruct the navigation of the North River and which were delivered in such forcible terms to me recurred. When I knew that the easy communication between the different parts of the Army then seperated by the River depended upon it. and lastly when I considered that our policy led us to waste the Campaign, without coming to a general action on the one hand, or to suffer the enemy to overrun the Country on the other I conceived that every impediment that stood in their way was a mean to answer these purposes, and when thrown into the scale with those opinions which were opposed to an evacuation caused that warfare in my mind and hesitation which ended in the loss of the Garrison; and being repugnant to my own judgment of the advisability of attempting to hold the Post, filled me with the greater regret. The two great causes which led to this misfortune (and which I have before recited) as well perhaps as my reasoning upon it which occasioned the delay were concealed from public view; of course left the field of censure quite open for any and every labourer

who inclined to work in it, and afforded a fine theme for the pen of a malignant writer[6] who is less regardful of facts than the point he wants to establish where he has the field wholly to himself; and where concealt. of a few circumstances answers his purposes, or where a small transposition of them will give a very different complexion to the same thing.

Why I have run into such a lengthy discussion of this point, at this time, I am at a loss myself to tell. I meant but to touch it, en-passent, but one idea succeeded to another till it would seem that I had been preparing my defence for a regular charge.

My ideas of what seems to be the only mode left to keep our Battalions to their establishment, or near it, you are already acquainted with, as they were conveyed at large to the Committee at Valley-forge in—78. I have seen no cause since to change my opinion on this head but abundant reason to confirm it. No man dislikes short and temporary inlistments more than I do. No man ever had greater cause to reprobate and even curse the fatal policy of the measure than I have. nor no man (with decency) ever opposed it more in the early part of this contest and had my advice respecting this matter been pursued in the years Seventy five and Six, our Money would have been upon a

very different establishment in point of credit to what it now is as we should have saved millions of pounds in bounty money and the consequent evils of expiring Armies

6. Maj. Gen. Charles Lee.

and New Levies, but those hours are passed never to be recalled; such men as compose the bulk of an army are in a difft. train of thinking to what they were in those early stages of the war and nothing is now left but an annual and systematical mode of drafting, which while we retain the stamina of an army (engaged for the War) will be the best, indeed I see no other substitute for voluntary enlistment. In fact, it will come to this, for there are people even (old Soldiers) who will hire as substitutes, and the difference will be, that in lieu of the public's emitting or borrowing money to pay the Bounties which increase rapidly every new enlistment these Bounties will be paid by individuals, will increase the demand for ciculating Cash, and, as with all other commodities in demand raise the value of it by multiplying the means for using it. How far those governments which are rent and weakened by internal divisions have energy enough to carry Statutes of this kind into execution I do not pretend to be a competent judge; but such as are well established and organized I am sure can do it. Those that are not, the propriety of the measure is so necessary and obvious that I should entertain little doubt of their success in the experiment.

The Spunge, which you say some Gentlemen have talked of using, unless there can be a descremination and proper saving clauses provided (and how far this is practicable I know not) would be unjust and impolitic in

the extreme. Perhaps I do not understd. what they mean by using the Spunge, if it be to sink the money in the hands of the holders of it, and at their loss it cannot in my opinion stand justified upon any principle of common policy; common sense, or common honesty. But how far a Man for instance who had possessed himself of 20 paper dollars by means of one or the value of one in Specie, has a just claim upon the public for more than one of the latter, in redemption and in that Ratio accordg. to the perds. of depreciation I leave to those who are better acquainted with the nature of the subject and have more leizure than I have to discuss. To me, a meat. of this kd.

appears substantial justice to the Public and to individls. but whether it is capable of administration I have never thought enough of to form any opinion.

We have given the enemy another little touch,[7] at Powleshook. an Acct. of which is transmitted to Congress by this conveyance and I presume will be published; between 150 and 60 prisoners were taken and brought off with the colours of the Garrison. I am, &c.

7. In Reed's *Life of Joseph Reed* this word is printed “stroke.”

***To JOHN PARKE CUSTIS**

West-point, August 24, 1779.

Dear Sir: In answer to your Letter of the 11th. Instt. I candidly acknowledge I am at a loss what advice to give you with precision respecting the Sale of your Estate upon the Eastern shore; but upon the whole in the present uncertain state of things should were I in your place, postpone the measure a while longer. Your own observation must have convinced you of the rapid depreciation of the paper currency in the course of the last 10 Mths.;[33] and this it will continue to do till there is a stop put to further emissions, and till some vigorous measures are adopted by the States respectively and collectively to lessen the circulating medium. You must be sensible that it is not £40,000 £400,000 nor any nominal Sum whatever that would give you the value of the Land in Northampton; instance your unfortunate sail of the York Estate to Colo. Braxton for £20,000 which I suppose would now fetch him £100,000 and unless for the purpose of speculating in that or some other article this sum I am persuaded would be refused by that Gentn. The present profit of your Land on the Eastern shore may be trifling; nay I will go farther, and admit that it is, at this time, an incumbrance to you, but still it retains in itself an intrinsic and real value, which

33. According to Washington's own table of depreciation, in his expense account as Commander in Chief, $2,000 was worth but £33 in September, 1779; in November $3,000 was only worth £38:14:0; and in December $3,000 was worth only £34:4:0.

rises nominally in proportion to the depreciation, and will always be valuable if (admitting the worst) the money should cease to pass but though the event is not probable, I will suppose that to be the case; or that it should continue to depreciate as it has done for the last 10 Months, where are you then ? why bereft of your Land and in possession of a large sum of money with which you can buy nothing.

There are but two motives which ought, and I trust can, induce you to sell; the one is to vest the money in the purchase of something else of equal value immediately, the other to put it in the public funds. If the first is your object I have no hesitation in giving my opinion in favour of the Sale; because lands at so great a distance from you never will be profitable, and your only consideration is, to be careful in your bargains elsewhere making the prices of the thing sold, and things bought, corrispond with respect to times and places. in fact this is but another name for barter or exchange; but when the other is your inducement, the whole matter turns upon the credit and appreciation of the money, and this again upon financing, loans, Taxes, War, Peace, good success, bad success, the arts of designing men, mode of redemption, and other contingent events, which, in my judgment very few men at this time see far enough into, to justify a capital risk; consequently you would be playing a hazardous, and possibly, in the issue, a ruinous game, merely for the chance of havg. sold at the turn of the

tide as it were when there is not much fear of foregoing this advantage by any sudden appreciation of our money. In a word by holding your Land a few Months longer you can only loose the Taxes; by selling to place the Money in the funds you may loose considerably. Selling to buy (as I have before observed) I consider as an exchange only but then both bargains should be made at the same time; this was my advice to you before; and I now repeat it; otherwise the purchases you have in view may rise 50 pr. Ct. between your sale and the final accomplishment of them.

I observe what you say also respecting payment of your old Bonds, and have less scruple in giving it to you as my opinion that you are not bound in honor or by any principle of reason or love to your Country to accept payment of Such as are upon demand and were given previous to the contest and to the depreciation of the money, at the present nominal value of it, by which a just debt, and where

great endulgences have been shewn the creditor in forbearance, is discharged at the rate of a shilling in the pound. Every man who is a friend to the cause is bound to receive the money in all payments and to give it a circulation as free as the air we breathe in but it is absurd and repugnant to every principle of honour, honesty, and common sense to say that one man shall receive a shilling in the pound of another for a just debt when that other is well able to pay 20/. and the same means which enabled him to pay the one formerly will enable him with as

much ease to pay the other now. It is necessary for me to premise, that I am totally unacquainted with your laws on this head, and the consequences of a refusal. I am only arguing therefore in behalf of the reason and justice of my opinion. and on the presumption that all law is founded in equity. The end and design therefore of this (if there is such an one as compels payment under certain penalties or forfeitures) could only be to give credit and circulation to the Bills in payment, not to enrich one man at the ruin of another which is most manifestly the case at present and is such a glaring abuse of common justice that I cannot but wonder at the practice obtaining.

Our Affairs at present put on a very pleasing aspect, especially in Europe and the West Indies and bids us I think hope for the certain and final accomplishment of our Independance. but as Peace depends upon our Allies equally with ourselves and G. B. has refused the mediation of Spain, it will puzzle the best politician to point out with certainty the limitation of the War.

Experience which is the best rule to walk by, has I am told clearly proved the utility of having the ditch for draining of sunken grounds on the inside, and at a considerable distance (for instance two shovels throw) from the Bank; consequently is a better criterian to judge from than the simple opinion of your ditcher who may govern himself by the practice of other Countries that will not apply to the circumstances of

this where there may be enemies to our banks unknown perhaps to them.

We have given the enemy another little Stroke in the Surprise of Powles-hook (within Cannon shot of N: York) and bringing off 7 Officers and 151 Non-Commd. Officers and privates. This was a brilliant transaction and performed by a detacht. of Virginians and Marylanders under the Comd. of

Majr. Lee[34] of the light Horse with the loss of not more than ten or a dozen men. The colours of the Garrison were also brought away: My Affectte. regards to Nelly and the Children; with great truth I am, etc.

To JOHN JAY

West point, September 7, 1779.

Dr Sir: I have received Your obliging Favors of the 25th. and 31st. of last month and thank you for them.

It really appears impossible to reconcile the conduct Britain is pursuing, to any system of prudence or policy. For the reasons you assign, appearances are against her deriving aid from other powers; and if it is truly the case, that

34. Maj. Henry Lee.

she has rejected the mediation of Spain, without having made allies, it will exceed all past instances of her infatuation.[91] Notwithstanding appearances, I can hardly bring myself fully to believe that it is the case; or that there is so general a combination against the interests of Britain among the European powers, as will permit them to endanger the political ballance. I think it probable enough, that the conduct of France in the affairs of the Porte and Russia will make an impression on the Empress; but I doubt whether it will be sufficient to counterballance the powerful motives she has to support England; and the Porte has been perhaps too much weakened in the last war with Russia to be overfond of renewing it. The Emperor is also the natural ally of England notwithstanding the connexions of Blood between his family and that of France; and he may prefer reasons of National policy to those of private attachment. Tis true his finances may not be in the best state, though one campaign could hardly have exhausted them, but as Holland looks up to him for her chief protection, if he should be inclined to favor England, it may give her Councils a decided biass the same way. She can easily supply what is wanting in the Article of money; and by this aid,

give sinews to that confederacy. Denmark is also the natural ally of England; and though there has lately been a family bickering, her political interest may outweigh private animosity. Her marine assistance would be considerable. Portugal too, though timid and cautious at present,

91. Jay had written (August 25) as follows: “Britain refused the mediation of Spain at a Time when their Spirits were elated by their Successes in the West Indies, and the southern States; and by the accounts they received of Discord in Congress, Discontent among the People, and a Prospect of the Evils with which we were threatened by the Depreciation of our Currency. Deceived by these illusory Gleams of Hope, they permitted their Counsels to be guided by their Pride. What Reason they may have to expect Succor from other Powers, is as yet a Secret. Mr. Gerard is decided in his opinion, that they will obtain none. The Conduct of France in establishing Peace between Russia and the Porte has won the Heart of the Empress; and the Influence of Versailles at Constantinople, will probably give Duration to her Gratitude. The Emperor and Prussia are under similar obligations. The latter wishes us well, and the Finances of the former are too much exhausted to support the Expences of War without Subsidies from Britain, who at present cannot afford them. There is no Reason to suspect that the Peace of Germany will soon be interrupted. Britain may hire some Troops there, but it is not probable she will be able to do more. Portugal and the Dutch, while directed by their Interest, will not rashly raise their Hands to support a Nation, which like a Tower in an Earthquake, sliding from its Base, will crush every slender Prop that may be raised to prevent its Fall.” Jay's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

if she was to see connexions formed by England able to give her countenance and security, would probably declare for her interests. Russia, Denmark. The Emperor, Holland, Portugal and England would form a respectable counterpoise to the opposite scale. Though all the maritime powers of Europe were interested in the independence of this Country, as it tended to diminish the overgrown power of Britain, yet they may be unwilling to see too great a preponderacy on the side of her rivals; and when the question changes itself from the separation of America to the ruin of England as a Naval power, I should not be surprised at a proportionable change in the sentiments of some of those States which have been heretofore unconcerned Spectators or inclining to our side. I suggest these things rather as possible than probable; it is even to be expected that the decisive blow will

be struck, before the interposition of the Allies England may acquire can have effect. But still as possible events, they ought to have their influence and prevent our relaxing in any measures necessary for our safety, on the supposition of a speedy peace or removal of the War from the present Theatre in America.

The account which Mr. Wharton[92] received, of the reinforcement that came with Adml. Arbuthnot, corresponds pretty well, with respect to number, with the best information I have been able to obtain upon the subject. Some recent advices make it about Three thousand, and say

92. John Wharton. He was commissioner of the Continental Navy Board, Middle District.

that these Troops are rather in a sickly condition. It is generally said, that they are Recruits; but whether there is so great a proportion of them Scotch as his intelligence mentions, is not ascertained by any accounts I have received.

With respect to the person you recommended last Winter, he was employed in consequence; and I have not the smallest doubt of his attachment and integrity. But he has not had it in his power, and indeed it is next to impossible that any one should circumstanced as he is, to render much essential service in the way it was intended to employ him.[93] You will readily conceive the difficulties in such a case. The business was of too delicate a nature for him to transact it frequently himself, and the Characters, he has been obliged occasionally to confide it to, have not been able to gain any thing satisfactory or material. Indeed, I believe it will seldom happen, that a person acting in this way, can render any essential advantages more than once or twice at any rate; and that what he will be compelled to do to preserve the pretended confidence of the other party, will generally counterbalance any thing he may effect. The greatest benefits are to be derived from persons who live with the other side; whose local circumstances, without subjecting them to suspicions, give them an opportunity of making observations and comparing and combining things and Sentiments. It is with such I have endeavoured to establish a correspondence, and on whose reports I shall most rely. From

93. Elijah Hunter.

these several considerations, I am doubtful whether it will be of any advantage for the person to continue longer in the way he has acted. The points to which he must have alluded in his Letter, were the movements up the North River and against Charles Town and the expedition to Virginia. I believe the first certain information of the first of these events came from him. He has never received any thing from me. The Gentleman who employed him first, had some Money deposited with him for confidential purposes; but I cannot tell how much he may have paid him.

With every sentiment of esteem etc.[94]

***To CONRAD ALEXANDRE GÉRARD**

West-point, September 12, 1779.

Sir: The Baron de Kalb did me the honor some days ago to communicate a letter he had received from your Excellency which flattered us with the hopes of seeing you at the Army before your departure for France. I am since told by the Baron that you have changed your intention of coming this way. In this I feel myself deprived of a great

94. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

pleasure. I cannot however permit you to leave these States without giving you a fresh testimony of my cordial attachment and esteem, at the same time that I offer my sincere congratulations on the glorious and important successes of his most Christian Majesty's Arms under the direction of Count D Estaing, and my most fervent wishes for the continuance of them.

America is indebted to your early and zealous offices in her favour. To that generous and uniform attention to the interests of both Countries by which your administration is distinguished. You carry with you the affections of a whole People, and leave behind you a reputation which will have the peculiar fortune to be every where admired by good men.

Permit me now to wish you a Safe and agreeable passage and a happy meeting with your Lady and friends; and I pray you to do me the justice to believe that no Man is more deeply impressed with these Sentiments than I am, nor none who entertains a higher esteem, respect, and regard for Your Excellency than Sir, Yr., etc.

***To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE**

West-point, September 12, 1779.

My Dear Marquis: Often, since you left this Country I have written *to you* , but have not been favoured with a single line *from you* since you lay in Boston harbour. This I shall ascribe to any cause rather than a decline of friendship. I feel my own regard for you so sensibly, that I shall never suspect a want of it in your breast.

I intended to have wrote you a very long letter by Monsr. Gerard whom I have been expecting at this place on his way to Boston for two days past but am this instant informed that he either has imbarked or is upon the very point of Imbarking at Philadelphia, not choosing that he should go without carrying some testimony of my constant remembrance of you I do in much haste scribble these lines.

Most sincerely my dear Marquis do I congratulate you on the great and glorious exploits of Count D'Estaing in the West Indies; the bright prospect of European affairs, and our little successes in America, the last of which though small on the great scale will nevertheless weigh in the ballance by our little successes I mean the storming of Stony point and surprize of Poules hook (within Cannon shott of the City of New York) and capture of the Garrisons; the first

amounting to Six hundred men, the other to two hundred. Driving the enemy out of South Carolina and defeat of the Indians which last event I have within these few days received an acct. of from General Sullivan who is now in the heart of their Country with 4000 Men, and informs me that on the 29th. Ulto. he advanced to their Intrenchments at a place called Newtown, where the Warriors of Seven Nation's some regulars, and Tories commanded by the two Butlers, Brandt, and a Captn.

McDonald had been assembled eight days to oppose him, the position was well chosen and their disposition well made but on finding themselves hard pushed in front and their left flank in danger of being turned they fled in great confusion and disorder, and with much precipitation leaving their packs, Camp kettles, Trinkets, and many Arms on the ground and eleven Warriors which they could not get off dead. The prisoners of which a few were taken, say that their slain and wounded were carried off during the action on horses and in Canoes. Our loss was trifling; in the whole to the date of his Letter under a hundred killed and wounded although he had advanced to and destroyed 14 Towns large and most flourishing Crops of Corn pulse &ca. He was proceeding in his plan of chastisement and will convince them it is to be hopd of two things, first, that their cruelties are not to pass with impunity; and secondly that they have been instigated to arms, and acts of Barbarizm by a Nation which is unable to protect them and of consequence

has left them to that correction which is due to their villainy.

The Bostonians have made an unfortunate Expedition to a place called Penobscot, where a body of about 800 Men from Hallifax under the command of Brigr. Genl. McLean had made a lodgment as is supposed for the purpose of getting Masts and Spars for their Shipping, this Armament from the Massachusetts bay (consistg. altogether of Militia) went there to disposses them but were so dilatory in their operations that Sir George Collier with a superior naval force to theirs appearing occasioned the destruction (by themselves) of all their Shipping and the Troops to get off as well as they could by land. This and the conflagration of Fairfield, Norwalk, and New haven by the intrepid and magnanimous Tryon who in defiance of all the opposition that could be given by the Women and Children Inhabitants of these Towns performed this notable exploit with 2000 brave and generous Britons adding thereby fresh lustre to their Arms and dignity to their King.

Admiral Arbuthnot with about 3 or 4000 Troops are arrived at New York, and will, it is to be presumed, afford Sir Henry Clinton an oppertunity of displaying his intentions, or Orders.

I every moment look for the Chevalier de la Luzern on his way from Boston to Congress. by him I please myself with the hope of receiving a letter from you, if I am

disappointed in this I shall assuredly hear of you.

I have spun my letter to a much greater length than I expected and as Monsr. le Colombe[32] is waiting I will only detain him while I can add that with every sentiment of esteem regard and affectn. I am, etc.

To MRS. HONOUR HARNAGE

Head Quarters, West-point, September 13, 1779.

Madam: I have been honored with your letter of the 25th. of August.

You will believe me, that my wishes and endeavours have been uniformly directed, to remove those obstacles, which stood in the way of a general exchange of prisoners. I have only to regret their having heretofore proved unsuccessful. There is now a meeting of the respective commissaries of prisoners at Elizabeth Town, which I flatter myself will be attended with better fortune. But in case a general exchange cannot be effected my commissary has been particularly instructed to propose Major Harnage and Capn Hawker for a parole exchange.

32. Capt. Louis St. Ange, Chevalier de la Colombe. He was aide to Lafayette.

I shall inclose your letter to his Excellency Sir Henry Clinton by the first flag to his lines, which I suppose will be to-morrow. I am, etc.[43]

***To COLONEL ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD[73]**

West-point, September 15, 1779.

Dear Sir: I shall be obliged by your informing me whether it has yet been in your power to provide another horse or Mare for me. Bleu-skin has been threatened with a fistula more than three Months, so that I have had no use of him. The Sorrel has, in no great degree altered in flesh or appearance

since you saw him at Middle brooke, and the Mare is with foal, out of the three therefore I have scarce one for use.

If you have not already purchased the fourth horse or Mare for me I shall be obliged to you for letting him or her (for it is indifferent to me which it is) be stouter than the other three; neither of which is compleatly master of my weight, and I shall be still more obliged to you for confining the colour to a good bay.

43. The draft is in the writing of James McHenry.

73. He was then at Fredericksburg, Va.

Be pleased to present my love to Mrs. Spotswood, and Compliments to Mrs. Campbell, and be assured that I am, etc.

***To JOSEPH WHARTON**

West-point, September 15, 1779.

Sir: Your favor of the 25th. Ulto. from Philadelphia[74] came safe to my hands a few days ago, as did the letters you were so obliging as to bring from my old acquaintance and friend Colo. Mercer. A Gentln. for whom I always had a sincere regard.

What walk of life he has been in the last four or five years, and what line of conduct he has observed in this great contest I am totally uninformed of, but from the opinion I entertain of his honor, his justice, and his love to this Country I would feign hope that it has been altogether unexceptionable.

I recollect with pleasure the civilities you did me the honor to confer on me in Philadelphia at the period you mention and shall be happy in an occasion to testify the sense I entertain of them being Sir, &c.

74. Mr. Wharton was located at Philadelphia.

***To JOHN DUNLAP**

West-point, September 15, 1779.

Sir: One of the two Gazettes which you usually send to head Qrs. for my use, be pleased to direct to “Mrs. Washington, or to Mr. Lund Washington at Mr. Vernon near Alexandria in Virginia”. and you will very much oblige Sir, Yr., etc.

***To CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE**

West-point, September 23, 1779.

Sir: Colo. Fleury this moment presented to me the letter Your Excellency did me the honor to write from Trenton, and by his communication of your arrival at that place without accident and meeting with Monsr. Gerard m good health made me perfectly happy.

Monsr. Fleury has obtained my consent to be absent from this Army. He carries with him a certificate

expressive of his great merit as an Officer, and a letter to Congress containing the sentiments I entertain of his *worth* and Services. I have the honor, etc.[28]

***To MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT HOWE**

West-point, September 27, 1779.

Dear Sir: I have this instant received your private letter of yesterdays date; fully persuaded that so respectable a body as the General Officers of this Army can hold no improper meetings, and that no representation will be made by them to Congress that is not conveyed in respectful terms, and founded in the strictest rules of propriety and justice I by no means disapprove the one you speak

of for the purpose of laying before that honourable body any disadvantages which may be peculiar to their Rank in the line of the Army. At your request I have in haste signified this for your own private satisfaction and shall only add that with sincere esteem and regard I am, etc.[62]

28. From a photostat of the original in the *Paris Archives, Aff. Etrang., Mems. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6.

62. The memorial is, probably, the one from the general officers, regarding allowances made to officers of different departments of the Army, to whom the provisions of the resolve of Aug. 18, 1779, do not extend. The memorial, undated, is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, no. 41, vol. 7, fol. 259. (See *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Aug. 18 and Nov. 18, 1779.)

***To LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN LAURENS**

West-point, September 28, 1779.

Dear. Sir: I shall consider myself hapyy to see you again in that character in which you are pleased to subscribe yourself whenever the object that drew you to Carolina may cease to be a motive for your continuing there, or will permit you to rejoin your old associates here. In this let me entreat you to believe me most sincere.

Some late movements of the Enemy have given rise to a variety of suggestions. Four Regiments have already sailed from New York; and a still more considerable embarkation is on foot, in which is included a body of their Cavalry. All reasoning on the destination of these Troops will be no better than conjecture. If we should suppose a plan formed by the British cabinet for this years Campaign, the events which have taken place in Europe, In the West Indies, and on this Continent, may have rendered its full execution impracticable, and made it expedient for their Commander here, either to suspend its operation, or to act according to the exigencies of the moment, if he is not under absolute orders.

Perhaps it is fortunate for the interests of your state and the Continent at large, that the success of

all Plans depends on matters beyond the controul of their projectors. Since the reports of the Count D'Estaing's fleet having been seen near our Coast the enemy appear rather embarrassed; should this report prove true, I leave the effects it may produce in our favor to your own conjectures.

By this time I expect Genl. Sullivan will have compleated the entire destruction of the whole Settlements of the Six Nations, excepting those of the Oneidas and such other friendly Towns as have merited a different treatment. By my last advices of the 9th. Instt. he had penetrated beyond their middle settlements, had burnt between 15 and 20 Towns, destroyed all their Crops, and was advancing to their exterior villages. The Indians, Men, women and children, flying before him to Niagara (distant more than 100 miles) in the utmost consternation, distress, and confusion with the Butlars, Brandt &ca. at their head.

Wishing you the most satisfactory issue of your endeavours, and much health to enjoy the good name you have acquired I am, etc.

PS. I shall thank you for presenting my best respects to Mr. Presidt. Rutlidge, Mr. Edwd. Rutlidge, Mr. Middleton [mutilated].[68]

68. From a photostat of the original kindly furnished by Judge E. A. Armstrong, of Princeton, N. J.

To HENRY LAURENS

West-point, September 29, 1779.

Dear Sir: You will permit me to beg your protection to the inclosed Carolina letters. Should you know of any conveyance shorter than the established post, I shall be obliged by your sending them in that line.

We have little from this quarter to engage your attention unless we should give you report and conjecture. By a vessel in 52 days from Amsterdam to Boston we are told that before the Captn. left that place, a packet had arrived from England, which brought the King's proclamation ordering

the inhabitants along the sea coast to drive off all their stock to a certain distance. The Captn. says further that 50,000 french troops had landed in England and that the combined fleets of the house of Bourbon had blocked up the English fleet in Torbay.

The different advices we have had of Count D'Estaing's having been seen in approaching our coast, leaves us little room to doubt of its truth. By a vessel arrived at Dartmouth he was spoke with to the Northward of Bermuda. But so much time has elapsed since that one would suppose he has passed us for Halifax.

[Imbarkation, and fortification keep

equal pace at New York, and go forward briskly.]

I have the honor etc.[82]

***To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE**

West-point, September 30, 1779.

My dear Marqs: A few days ago I wrote you a letter in much haste. the cause a sudden notification of Monsr. Gerards having changed the place of his embarkation from Boston (as was expected) to Philadelphia, and the hurry Monsir. de la Colombe was in to reach the latter before the Minister should have left it. Since that, I have been honourd with the company of the Chevr. de la Luzerne, and by him was favourd with your obliging letter of the 12th. of June which filled me with equal pleasure and surprise; the latter at hearing that you had not received one of the many letters I had written to you, since you left the American Shore. I cannot at this time charge my memory with the precise dates of these letters but the first, which ought and I expected would have reached you at Boston and I much wished it to do so because it contained a Letter from me

82. The draft is in the writing of James McHenry. The part in brackets is in the writing of Washington.

to Doctr Franklin expressive of the Sentiments I entertained of your Services and merit was put into the hands of a Captn. McQueen of Charles Town, who was to Sail from Phila. soon after. In March I wrote you once or twice, and in June or the first of July following, (when it was reported that Monsr. Gerard was about to leave us I took the liberty of committing to his care another of my lettrs. to you,) which sevl. efforts though they may have been unsuccessful will exhibit no bad specimen of my having kept you constantly in remembrance and a desire of giving you proofs of it.

It gave me infinite pleasure to hear from yourself of the favourable reception you met with from your Sovereign, and of the joy which your safe arrival in France had diffused among your friends. I had no doubt but that this wou'd be the case; to hear it from yourself adds pleasure to the acct. and here My dear friend let me congratulate you on your new, honourable and pleasing appointment in the Army commanded by the Count de Vaux which I shall accompy. with an assurance that none can do it with more warmth of Affection, or sincere joy than myself.[16] Your forward zeal in the cause of liberty; Your singular attachment to this infant World; Your ardent and persevering efforts, not only in America but since your return to France to serve the United States; Your polite attention to Americans, and your strict and uniform friendship for *me* , has ripened the first impressions of esteem and

16. A joint French and Spanish expedition under the command of Lieutenant General Comte de Vaux was to land in England, but the delay in the junction of the French and Spanish fleets enabled the British to concentrate their naval force at Portsmouth, A surprise landing being impossible, the attempt was abandoned. Lafayette had been appointed an aide-maréechale-général des logis, on this expedition, “a very important and agreeable place.” (See Charlemagne Tower's *Lafayette in the American Revolution*.)

attachment which I imbibed for you into such perfect love and gratitude that neither time nor absence can impair which will warrant my assuring you, that whether in the character of an Officer at the head of a Corps of gallant French (if circumstances should require this)[17] whether as a Major Genl. commanding a division of the American Army; Or whether, after our Swords and Spears

have given place to the plough share and pruning hook, I see you as a private Gentleman, a friend and Companion, I shall welcome you in all the warmth of friendship to Columbia's shore; and in the latter case, to my rural Cottage, where homely fare and a cordial reception shall be substituted for delicacies and costly living. this from past experience I know *you* can submit to; and if the lovely partner of your happiness will consent to participate with *us* in such rural entertainment and amusemts. I can undertake in behalf of Mrs. Washington that she will do every thing in her power to make Virginia agreeable to the Marchioness. My inclination and endeavours to do this cannot be doubted when I assure you that I love everybody that is dear to you. consequently participate in the pleasure you feel in the prospt. of again becoming a parent and do most Sincerely congratulate you and your Lady on this fresh pledge she is about to give you of her love.

I thank you for the trouble you have taken, and your polite attention in favouring me with a Copy of your letter to Congress;[18] and feel as I am perswaded they must

17. In his letter of June 12, which is missing from tile *Washington Papers*, but which Sparks prints in his appendix to vol. VI, *Writings of Washington*, without the postscript of June 13, Lafayette expressed a desire “to join again the American colors or to put under your orders a division of four or five thousand of my countrymen.” The Sparks text of this letter varies from the extract printed in the footnote on page 68, vol. 8, of Ford's *Writings of Washington*.

18. Of June 12, 1779. The original is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, no. 156, fol. 89. It was read in Congress on September 13, and is printed in slightly garbled form in the appendix to Sparks's vol. VI, also without Lafayette's postscript of June 13.

do, the force of such ardent zeal as you there express for the interest of this Country. The propriety of the hint you have given them must carry conviction and I trust will have a salutary effect;[19] tho' there is not, I believe, the same occasion for the admonition now, there was some months ago; many late changes have taken place in that honourable body which has removed in a very great degree, if not wholly, the discordant spirit which it is said[20] prevailed in the Winter, and I

hope measures will also be taken to remove those unhappy and improper differences which have extended themselves elsewhere to the prejudice of our affairs in Europe.

You enquire after Monsr. de la Colombe, and Colo. Neville;[21] the first (who has been with Baron de Kalb) left this a few days ago, as I have already observed, for Phila., in expectation of a passage with Monsr. Gerard. Colo. Neville called upon me about a Month since and was to have dined with us the next day but did not come, since which I have not seen him, nor do I know at this time where he is; he had then but just returned from his own home; and it was the first time I had seen him since he parted with you at Boston. It is probable he may be with the Virginia Troops which lye at the mouth of Smiths clove abt. 30 Miles from hence.

I have had great pleasure in the visit which the Chevalier de la Luzerne and Monsr. Marbois[22] did

19. “I shall frankly tell you, sir, that Nothing may more effectually hurt our interests, consequence and Reputation in Europe, than to hear Some thing like dispute or divisions between Whigs. Nothing could urge my touching this delicate matter, but the unhappy experience I every day make on this head, since I may hear myself what is said on this side of the Atlantic, and the arguments I am to fight against.”— *Lafayette to the President of Congress*, June 12, 1779.

“There is another point upon which you should employ all your influence and popularity. For God's sake prevent the Congress from disputing loudly together. Nothing so much hurts the interests and reputation of America, as these intestine quarrels. On the other hand, there are two parties in France; Mr. Adams and Mr. Lee on one part; Dr. Franklin and his friends on the other. So great is the concern. which these divisions give me, that I cannot wait on these gentlemen as much as I could wish, for fear of mentioning disputes, and bringing them to a greater height.—” *Lafayette to Washington*, June 12, 1779. (Sparks's *Writings of Washington*, vol. VI, pp. 551–552.)

20. Washington first wrote “formerly,” and later substituted “it is said.”

21. Brevet Lieut. Col. Presley Neville, of the Eighth Virginia Regiment. He had been aide to Lafayette in 1778; taken prisoner at Charleston, S.C., in May, 1780; exchanged in May, 1781.

22. François Marquis de Barbé-Marbois. He was secretary to La Luzerne.

me the honor to make at this Camp; for both of whom I have imbibed the most favourable impressions, and thank you for the honourable mention you made of me to them. The Chevr. till he had announced himself at Congress, did not choose to be received in his public character. If he had, except paying him Military honors, It was not my intention to depart from that plain and simple manner of living which accords with the real Interest and policy of Men struggling under every difficulty for the attainment of the most inestimable blessing of life, *Liberty* ; the Chevalier was polite enough to approve my principle, and condescended to appear pleased with our Spartan living. In a word he made us all exceeding happy by his affability and good humour, while he remained in Camp.

You are pleased my dear Marquis to express an earnest desire of seeing me in France (after the establishment of our Independancy) and do me the honour to add, that you are not singular in your request. let me entreat you to be perswaded, that to meet you anywhere after the final accomplishment of so glorious an event would contribute to my happiness; and that, to visit a country to whose generous aid we stand so much indebted, would be an additional pleasure; but remember my good friend, that I am unacquainted with your language. that I am too far advanced in years to acquire a knowledge of it. and that to converse through the medium of an interpreter upon common occasions, especially with the *Ladies* must appr. so extremely

aukward, insipid, and uncouth, that I can scarce bear it in idea. I will therefore hold myself disengaged for the *present* and when I see you in Virginia, we will talk of this matter and fix our plans.

The declaration of Spain in favour of France has given universal joy to every Whig, while the poor Tory droops like a withering flower under a declining Sun.

We are anxiously expecting to hear of great and important events on your side the Atlantic. At prest. the immagination is left in the wide field of conjecture. Our eyes one moment are turned to an Invasion of England. then of Ireland. Minorca, Gibralter, &ca. In a word we hope every thing, but know not what to expect or where to fix.

The glorious successes of Count DEstaing in the West Indies at the sametime that it adds dominion to France and fresh lustre to her Arms is a source of *new* and unexpected misfortune to our *tender* and *generous parent* and must serve to convince her of the folly of quitting the substance in pursuit of a shadow; and as there is no experience equal to that which is bought I trust she will have a superabundance of this kind of knowledge and be convinced as I hope all the World, and every tyrant in it will that the best and only safe road to honour, glory, and true dignity, is *justice* .

We have such repeated advices of Count D'Estaings being in these Seas that (though I have no official

information of the event) I cannot help giving entire credit to the report and looking for his arrival every moment and am preparing accordingly. The enemy at New York also expect it, and to guard agt. the consequences as much as it is in their power to do, are repairing and strengthening all the old fortifications and adding New ones in the vicinity of the City; their fear however does not retard an embarkation which was making (and generally believed) to be for the West Indies or Charles Town. It still goes forward, and by my intelligence will consist of a pretty large detachment. About 14 days ago one british Regiment (the 44th. compleated) and 3 Hessian Regiments were embarked and are gone, as is supposed, to Hallifax. Under convoy of Admiral Arbuthnot about the 20th. of last month the Enemy recd. a reinforcement consisting of two new raised Scotch Regts. some drafts and a few Recruits amounting altogether to about 3000 Men and a few days ago Sir Andw. Hammond arrived with (as it is said) abt. 2000 more; many of these new Troops died on their passage and since landing, the rest are very sickly as indeed their whole Army is while ours keeps remarkably ably healthy.

The Operations of the enemy this campaign have been confined to the establishment of works of defence. taking a post at Kings ferry, and burning the defenceless towns of New haven, Fairfield, Norwalk, &ca. on the sound within reach of their Shipping where little else was, or could be opposed to them than the cries of distressed Women and helpless children;

but these were offered in vain; since these notable exploits they have never stepped out of their Works or beyond their lines. How a conduct of this kind is to effect the conquest of America the wisdom of a North, a Germaine, or Sandwich best can tell. it is too deep and refined for the comprehension of common understandings and general run of politicians.

Colo. Fleury who I expect will have the honour of presenting this letter to you, and who acted an important and honourable part in the event, will give you the particulars of the assault and reduction of Stony point the capture of the G. consg. of 600 men with their Colours, Arms, Baggage, Stores, 15 pieces of valuable ordnance, &ca. He led one of the columns; struck the colours of the garrison with his own hands; and in all respects behaved with that intrepidity and intelligence which marks his conduct upon all occasions.

Since that event we surprized and took Paulus hook a very strong fortified post of the enemys, opposite to the city of New York and within reach of the batteries of that place. The garrison consisting of about 160 Men with the colors were brought off, but none of the stores could be removed on acct. of its insular situation and the difficulty of removing them; the first of these enterprizes was made under the command of General Wayne; the other was conducted by Majr. Lee of the light Horse both of whom have acquired much honor by their

gallant behaviour in the respective attacks.

By my last advices from Genl. Sullivan of the 9th. Instt. I am led to conclude that ere this he has completed the entire destruction of the whole Country of the Six nations, excepting so much of it as is inhabited by the Oneidas who have always lived in amity with us; and a few towns belonging to the Cayugas and Onondago's who were disposed to be friendly. At the time these advices

came away he had penetrated to the heart of their settlements after having defeated in a general engagement the united force of Indians, Tories, and regulars from Niagara. Burnt between 15 and 20 Towns, destroyed their Crops and every thing that was to be found. He was then advancing to the exterior Towns with a view to complete the desolation of the whole Country, and Remove the cruel inhabitants of it to a greater distance, who were then fleeing in the utmost confusion, consternation and distress towards Niagara, distant 100 Miles through an uninhabited wilderness; experiencing a little of that distress, but nothing of those cruelties which they have exercised on our unhappy frontier Settlers, who (Men, Women and Children) have been deliberately murdered, in a manner shocking to humanity.

But to conclude, you requested from me a long letter, I have given you one; but methinks my dear Marquis, I hear you say, there is reason in all things; that this is too long. I am clearly in sentiment with you, and will have mercy on you in my next. But at present must

pray your patience a while longer, till I can make a tender of my most respectful compliments to the Marchioness. Tell her (if you have not made a mistake, and offered your *own love* instead of *hers* to me) that I have a heart susceptable of the tenderest passion, and that it is already so strongly impressed with the most favourable ideas of her, that she must be cautious of putting loves torch to it; as you must be in fanning the flame. But here again methinks I hear you say, I am not apprehensive of danger. My wife is young, you are growing old and the atlantic is between you. All this is true, but know my good friend that no distance can keep *anxious* lovers long asunder, and that the Wonders of former ages may be revived in this. But alas! will you not remark that amidst all the wonders recorded in holy writ no instance can be produced where a young Woman from *real inclination* has prefered an old man. This is so much against me that I shall not be able *I fear* to contest the prize with you, yet, under the encouragement you have given me I shall enter the list for so inestimable a Jewell.

I will now reverse the scene, and inform you, that Mrs. Washington (who set out for Virginia when we took the field in June) often has in, her letters to me, enquired if I had heard from you, and will

be much pleased at hearing that you are well, and happy. In her name (as she is not here) I thank you for your polite attention to her; and shall speak her sense of

the honor confered on her by the Marchioness.

When I look back to the length of this letter I am so much astonished and frightened at it myself, that I have not the courage to give it a careful reading for the purpose of correction. You must therefore receive it with all its imperfections, accompanied with this assurance that though there may be many incorrections in the letter, there is not a single defect in the friendship of my dear Marquis Yr., etc.

***To CAPTAIN GEORGE GEDDIS[23]**

West-point, September 30, 1779.

Sir: Your obliging favor of the 22d. Instt. accompanying the present of a pair of very elegant Pistols came to my hands yesterday. Accept Sir my thanks for this testimony of your polite attention, and be assured that I am, etc.

23. Of Philadelphia.

***To JOHN JAY**

West-point, October 7, 1779.

Dr. Sir: Permit me, amongst the number of your friends to congratulate you and my Country on your late honourable, and important appointment.[97] be assured Sir that my pleasure on this occasion though it may be equalled cannt. be exceeded by that of any other.

I do most sincerely wish you a pleasant and an agreeable passage. The most perfect and honourable accomplishment of your ministry, and a safe return to the bosom of a grateful Country. with the greatest regard and sincerest personal attachment I have the honour etc.[98]

***To MRS. JOHN JAY[99]**

West-point, October 7, 1779.

General Washington presents his most respectful compliments to Mrs. Jay. Honoured in her request by Genl. St. Clair, he takes pleasure in presenting the inclosed with thanks

97. Jay had been elected on Sept. 27, 1779, minister plenipotentiary to negotiate a treaty of amity and commerce with Spain.

98. The letter sent, as printed in the *Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay* (H. P. Johnston, ed., N. Y., 1890), vol. i, p. 246, varies slightly from this autograph draft in word arrangement.

99. Who, before her marriage, had been Sarah Van Brugh Livingston, daughter of Gov. William Livingston, of New Jersey.

for so polite a testimony of her approbation and esteem. He wishes most fervently, that prosperous gales, an unruffled Sea, and every thing pleasing and desirable, may smooth the path she is about to walk in.[1]

***To CHARLES WILLSON PEALE**

West-point, October 15, 1779.

Sir: My Sister informs me that she has received the Miniature picture you drew for her.[80] I thank you for doing it and shall be glad to know the cost that I may pay it to you or your order. With esteem and regard I am, etc.

To JUAN DE MIRALLES[85]

[West-point, October 16, 1779.]

Sir: I was honored with your friendly letter of the 2d. of last month.[86]

1. The United States frigate *Confederacy*, on which the Jays sailed, ran into a gale, was dismasted, and forced to put into Martinique. From there Jay proceeded to Spain in a French ship and did not reach Cadiz until near the end of January, 1780. He was not fairly established in Madrid until April.

80. Difficult to identify. It may possibly be the miniature now in the Corcoran Gallery of Art Washington, D. C. Cf. Gustav A. Eisen's volumes on *Washington Portraits*.

85. Spanish agent in the United States.

86. The letter was dated Oct. 2, 1779, and is in the *Washington Papers*.

Nothing could be more acceptable than your present,[87] but the manner in which it was bestowed. This enhanced its value, because it encreased our esteem. I can only send you from this quarter, in return, what you have long had, my very sincere friendship.

The intelligence, you have been pleased to intrust me with, is very agreeable, [except that part which relates the loss of yr. despatches; for this I am concerned]. I promise myself the most happy events from the known spirit of your nation. United with the arms of France, we have every thing to hope over the arms of our common enemy, the English. [I shall not fail to inform Mrs. Washington of the obligation she is under for your polite attention to and remembrance of her. I am sure she

will receive your complimts. (which I shall make a tender of in my next letter) with gratitude and pleasure as you stand high in her estimation.] I have the honor to be, etc.[88]

***To JOHN MITCHELL[90]**

West-point, October 17, 1779.

Dear Sir: As I do not at this time know where my

87. Miralles sent Washington a sea tortoise weighing 100 pounds and a box of lemons. He informed the General that war had been declared by Spain against England.

88. The draft is in the writing of James McHenry. The portions in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

90. Deputy Quartermaster General.

Winter Quarters will be, or when I shall get into them. As I have little prospect of seeing my own home this Winter and Mrs. Washington desirous of coming to me before the Roads get bad and weather severe, I shall be obliged to you for enquiring and informing me, if she can *hire* lodgings in some genteel (but not a common boarding) house in Phila. till I know where I shall be fixed for the Winter.[91]

Your answer to this letter, so soon as you can have made the necessary enquiry will be thankfully received. My Complimts. attend Mrs. Mitchell. I am, etc.

***To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE**

West-point, October 20, 1779.

My dear Marqs: On the 30th., of last Month I wrote you a letter which in point of length, would almost extend from hence to Paris. It was to have been borne to you by Colo. Fleury, to whom the

relation of some particulars was referred; but the advice of Count D'Estaings arrival at Georgia, and the hope given us by Congress of seeing him at New York has induced this Officer to suspend his voyage to go in pursuit of fresh

91. “I have this day taken lodgings for Mrs. Washington at Mrs. Roche's who has Rented the late Mr. Israel Pemberton's house and Garden. Mrs. Washington is to have a handsome front Parlour, a good Bed Chamber, Kitchen, and Rooms for Servants, I shall order wood to be laid in, and get some of the best Tea, Sugar, Coffee &ca. for her before she arrives in this City, I hope this will be agreable to your Excellency and Your Lady, nothing shall be wanting in my power to make every thing as agreable and Convenient as possible, and will meet Mrs. Washington on the road as far as in my power. Mrs. Mitchell will do every thing to render her Accomodations convenient and agreable, and as it is near me it will be more Easy and Convenient.” — *Mitchell to Washington*, Oct. 30, 1779. Mitchell's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

laurels: of course my letter to you remained on hand, and gave me an oppertunity (at leizure hours) to take a copy of it; which is now sent by Monsr. de la Colombe. The Original I put into the hands of Monsr. Gerard a few days ago, who gave me the honor of a visit before his departure for his native Country.

We have been in hourly expectation for the last 15 days of seeing Count D'Estaing off Sandy-hook. We have not heard a Syllable from Charles-town (in So. Carolina) since the 8th. of Septr.; those Accts. mentioned, that the Count intended to make his attack the next day. Under such circumstances you may easily form an idea of our impatience and anxiety. We are making every preparation in our power for an extensive and perfect co-operation with the fleet (if it comes) while the enemy, whose expectation of it keeps pace with ours, are equally vigorous in preparing for defence. They are throwing up strong works at the narrows (both on long Island and Staten Island); they are fortifying the point at Sandy-hook (on which the light Ho. stands) and every other spot which can contribute to the defence either of the harbour or the City; besides which, they have already sunk eight, and have 12 more large Ships to sink in the Channel within the light House; and Transports are gone to Rhode Island with a view, it is said, to take off the Garrison. in a word, if

they are not horribly frightened, they certainly are in horrid confusion; they work incessantly; and will, it is

to be feared, render the entrance into the harbour extremely difficult, if not impracticable, if the operations to the Southward should delay the Count much, if any longer.

General Sullivan has compleated the entire destruction of the Country of the Six Nations; driven all the Inhabitants, Men Women and Children out of it; and is at Easton on his return to join this Army, with the Troops under his command. He has performed this Service without loosing 40 Men either by the enemy or by sickness, while the Six Nations were under this rod of correction, the Mingo and Muncy Tribes living up the Alligany, French Creek, and other Waters of the Ohio above Fort Pitt, met with similar chastisemt. from Colo. Brodhead, who with 600 Men advanced upon them at the same Instt. and laid waste their Country. These unexpected and severe strokes, has disconcerted, humbled, and distressed the Indians exceedingly, and will, I am perswaded, be productive of great good; as they are undeniable proofs to them that Great Britain cannot protect them, and that it is in our power to chastise them whenever their hostile conduct deserves it.

The embarkation mentioned in my letter of the 30th. of Septr. did actually take place, and consisted of near 6000 Men (the flower of the British Army) under the command of Lord Cornwallis who with these Troops Sailed the 25th. of that Month; and two days afterwards returned, having received some Intelligence of Count D'Estaings being on the Coast of

Georgia whither it is said this armament was destined. they are relanded and now at N York. The first detachment from that place supposed to have Sailed for Hallifax, but in reality designed for Canada (consisting as I mentioned to you in my last of the 44th compleated British and two Hessian Regiments) met with a storm at Sea which dispersed the transports, two of which containing near 400 Hessians fell into our hands and are now in Phila.; two others returned to New York dismasted; of the others no acct. is yet obtained.

Before this letter reaches you, you will no doubt have heard, that Mr. Jay (late Presidt. of Congress) goes Minister Plenipo: to the Court of Madrid and Mr. Carmichael as his Secretary. That Mr. John

Adams returns to your Court for special purposes and Mr. Dana goes as his Secretary; and that Mr. John Laurens (my Aid)[30] who flew to So. Carolina when his Country was in danger is appointed Secretary to Doctr. Franklin but whether he will accept or not I cannot say as I have not seen him since the Month of March last.

I hope, ere this, my letter of the 29th. of Decr. or the duplicate of it, inclosing one to Doctr. Franklin expressive of the Sentiments I entertained in your favour has got to your hands but lest they should not, I forward, though late, triplicates; more from a desire of proving to you my inclination to do justice to your merit, than from an opinion it will be of any service to you to possess these testimonials.

30. Laurens was appointed by Congress on Sept. 29, 1779. He declined in a letter dated December 6, which was read in Congress on December 10.

It only remains for me now, to beg the favour of you to present my respectful compliments to *your* (but have I not a right, as you say she has made a tender of her love to *me* , to call her *my*) amiable and lovely Marchioness, and to assure you that with every sentiment of the most perfect regard, and personal attachmt. I have the honr, etc.

***To JOSEPH REED**

West-point, October 22, 1779.

Dear Sir: Three days ago I received your obliging favour of the 14th.[17] and was sorry to find you had been so much indisposed. Before this I hope you have perfectly recovered.

Your early attention and that of the Assembly to my requisitions, have my warmest thanks; and the more so, from the situation in which they found you. I could wish however, that the three Months Service of the Militia had been made to commence, only from the time of their joining the Army. I

need not enter into a detail of reasons for this with you, as your own judgment and experience will, I am perswaded, have

17. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

already anticipated them. Your intention of leading your Militia, in case they are brought to the field, is a circumstance honourable to yourself and flattering to me. The example alone would have its weight, but, seconded by your knowledge of discipline, abilities, activity and bravery, it could not fail of happy effects. Men are influenced greatly by the conduct of their superiors, and particularly so, where they have both their confidence and affection.

With respect to the point to which you call my recollection I confess when you intimated your desire of Continental rank to me, as it passed cursorily through my mind, it struck me as a matter of indifference; or at least as one against which no important objections then occurred inasmuch as it was to have no operation in the line; however I must now candidly acknowledge and shall do it without hesitation, from motives of general duty; from a confidence in your friendship as well as in your zeal for the public service, and from the express authority of your letter, that having maturely weighed the subject, and examined the consequences to which it might lead. I think it cannot be obtained, either with a view to the purposes you mentioned, when you first broached the point to me, or with respect to the present occasion for which the Militia are called out.

The discontents, the jealousies, the uneasinesses that have prevailed in the Army; the complaints which have been added on acct. of rank being conferred out of the

common course, are all opposed to the measure. These uneasinesses my dear Sir tho' not quite so prevalent among the different ranks of officers as they were, are far, very far, from being done away, and would I fear, proceed to more than their former height upon any supposed injury, whether real or imaginary, to what they esteem their rights. Among the General Officers and those next in Rank, there would be much reason to apprehend this, as they (particularly the former) have loudly complained on the subject of Rank being given, even where motives of National policy, and indeed necessity, were urged to justify it, and reluctantly yielded to it, merely from

that consideration. From hence, and as in your case this consideration could not be urged, I should fear, that it would be attended with greater disgust, not from any personal, individual objection, but from an idea that the appointment itself materially affected their rights and those of the Officers in General. Hence it is that I have uniformly with-held my aid to all applications for brevet Commissions to foreigners and others, who had, or were about to quit the Service, professedly, never to interfere with the line of our Army.

The situation of our Officers is delicate, and perhaps requires a greater degree of attention, than that of any others deriving no emoluments from the Service, but rather losing at the best, Patriotism and a love of honor are the motives to their continuing in it. These must be the considerations which influence the conduct of by far the greater part; and tho' by these motives the Officers are placed in a much more respectable point of

view than if they were governed by interest, yet the ties are not strong to induce their submission, or at least without great difficulty, to any measures they esteem injurious.

For these several reasons I cannot in policy advise to any measures that might have a tendency to obtain it for you. Nor do I think, after mature reflexion, that the rank being given by Brevet, which is contrary to the present views of Congress and their own resolves (24th Novr. 1778. and 20th. Feby. 1779 founded on the discontents which a contrary practice had created); or circumscribed in its extent by any qualifications which could be thought of, would alter the matter, or produce the least change in the Sentiments of the Officers. In any case the ideas of rank and precedence would occur; and I have too much reason to believe would give great uneasiness. The temper of the General Officers is at this moment a good deal soured, their distresses proceeding from the amazing depreciation of money, on the one hand, and a discrimination of Congress in the allowance of subsistance on the other needs no fresh leven to sett their discontents a working. Rank then being the greatest, if not the only benefit they are likely to derive for their perseverance in service, and injured fortunes, they become more and more tenacious of its value and attd. the distribution of it with a watchfl. eye.

I have been rather prolix on this subject but thought it incumbent on me to assign the reasons which

govern my opinion, because I wish you to be convinced, that I do not want inclination to comply with your wishes in any instance that is within the reach of my power (consistently) to aid them. With very great regard and esteem I am, etc.[18]

***To BENJAMIN HARRISON**

West-point, October 25, 1779.

My dear Sir: Letters of a private nature and for the mere purposes of friendly intercourse are, with me, the production of too much haste to allow time (generally speaking) to take, or make fair copies of them; and my memory (unfortunately for me) is of too defective a frame to furnish the periods at which they were written. But I am much mistaken if I have not, since I came to the prest. Incampmt. wrote you a full acct. of the situation of things in this quarter. Your last letter to me was in May.

The Pensylvania Gazettes, which I presume you regularly receive, will have conveyed official accts. to the public of all occurrances of any importance. A repetition would be

18. Although the draft is addressed by Washington: "His Excelly Josh. Reed, Prest. Pensa." this letter is, evidently, a purely personal one. This draft varies slightly from the text as printed by Win. B. Reed, in *Reprint of the Original Letters from Washington to Joseph Reed* (Philadelphia: 1852).

unnecessary and tedious. But it may not be amiss to observe, that excepting the plundering expedition to Virginia, and the burning one in Connecticut the enemy have wasted another Campaign (till this stage of it at least) in their ship-bound Islands, and strong-holds, without doing a single thing advancive of the end in view, unless by delays and placing their whole dependance in the depreciation of our money, and the wretched management of our finances, they expect to accomplish it.

In the meanwhile they have suffered, I do not know what other term to give it, a third part of the Continental Troops wch. altogether was inferior to theirs, to be employed in the total destruction of all the Country inhabited by the hostile tribes of the Six Nations, their good and faithful Allies! While the other two thirds without calling upon the Militia for the aid of a single man excepting upon the Inhabitants in the vicinity of this Post (and that for a few days only) at the time Genl. Clinton moved up the River in the Spring and before we could reach it restrained their foraging parties, confined them within very circumscribed bounds at the same time bestowing an immensity of labour on this Post, more important to us, considered in all its consequences, than any other in America.

There is something so truly unaccountable in all this that I do not know how to reconcile it with their own views, or to any principle of common sense; but

the fact is nevertheless true. The latter end of May as I have hinted already Genl. Clinton moved up to Kings-ferry in force, and possessed himself of Stony and Verplanks points; alarmed at this (for I conceived these works, and the command of the river in conseque. was really the object, and the other only an advance to it) I hastened to its succour; but the return of the enemy towards the last of June, after having fortified and garrisoned the points, convinced me that that was not their design, or that they had relinquished it, till their reinforcemts. shd. have arriv'd since which these Posts have changed Masters frequently and after employing the enemy a whole campaign, costing them near a thousand men in Prisoners by desertion, and otherways, and infinite labour is at length in Statu-quo that is, simply, a continental Ferry again.

The reinforcements from G: Britain under Convoy of Adml. Arbuthnot and Sir Andw. Hammend from the best Acct. we have received amounted to about 4000 Men, mostly new recruits, and sickly; many having died on their passage and since their arrival.

We are now in appearances, launching into a wide and boundless field, puzzled with mazes and o'er spread with difficulties; a glorious object is in view, and God send we may attain it. Some time ago

it was much within the reach of probability; but the Season, and the incessant labour of the enemy to secure the City and harbour of New York are much

opposed to us, and serve to lessen my hopes in proportion as time rolls on. It is now 30 days since Congress gave me official notice of Count D'Estaing's intended co-operation, and no authentic acct. of him is since come to hand. The probability therefore is, that we shall have hot work in a cold season.

I have called upon Massachusetts bay, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Pensa. for Militia, and every thing being in a proper train for a capitol enterprize, to the Gods and our best endeavours the event is committed.

Verplanks and Stony points as I have before observed are already evacuated and from every acct. and appeares the like will happen at Rhode Isld., things being in a train for it. Their whole force then will be concentred at New York, and in regular Troops only, will amount to at least 18,000, besides Seamen from near 1000 Sail of Vessels of different kinds. Refugees, and the Militia of those Islands wch. are actually in their power, and which they have had employed on their works of defence ever since the first rumour of the french fleets being in these Seas.

I have no doubt but that the Assembly of Virginia, at its last session, had cogent reasons for opening the Land Office; but so far as it respects the Army, the measure is to be lamented; for I believe, from what I have heard, that it will be a means of breaking up the Virginia line.[40]

40. At this point the following is crossed off: “The Officers who have already foregone every advantage which is to be derived from civil employment, and are wasting their substance in the dangerous and difficult service of the field seem determined from what I have understood not to pass by this last chance of making some provision for themselves and families the consequence of which must be that the Troops of that State will be left without Officers and the consequence of this again, too obvious to need animadversion.”

I have never read the Act with any degree of attention, and at this time, have but an imperfect recollection of the purport of it. But in general conversation I learn from the Officers, that by some clause in this or an antecedant Act those who have already taken pains, and have been at expence to secure Lands in that Country, will receive little benefit from either the one or the other unless some requisites before Commissioners are complied with; and this they add is not to be done (if I understand them properly) otherwise than by personal attendance. While this operates powerfully upon the minds of all those who have already taken measures to secure an Interest in that new world a desire prevails universally amongst the whole of them to become adventurers before the Cream is skimmed.

I am informed that the New York Assembly which is now sitting, mean to make an offer of Land to the Officers and Soldiers of other States, equally with their own, who may incline to take the Continental bounty in it; the policy of this measure may not be unworthy of consideration by the Assembly of Virginia. If it is conceived, that this great Country will long continue to be part of the present government of that commonwealth, no measure that can be adopted will, in my opinion, give it a more vigorous growth than the opening of this door and add more to its population which ever has been considered the riches of a Country.

To any enquiring friends you will

please to make a tender of my compliments and do me the justice to believe that in truth and sincerity I am, etc.

***To EDMUND PENDLETON**

West-point, November 1, 1779.

Dear Sir: Recollecting that I am your debtor for an obliging letter written some time last Winter, I will, while my eyes are turned Southwardly (impatiently looking for, or expecting to hear

something decisively[1] of Count D'Estaing) make my acknowledgements for it, as a proof that I am not unmindful of the favor, though I have been dilatory in thanking you for it.

I shall not at this late period recount to you the occurrances of the past Campaign. I take it for granted that the published accts. which have been officially handed to the public have regularly reached you and are as ample as I could give.

A New scene, though rather long delayed, is opening to our view and of sufficient importance to interest the hopes and fears of every well wisher to his Country and will engage the attention of all America. This I say on a supposition that

1. Washington first wrote “decisive accts.” and then changed it to “decisively.”

the delays to the Southward and advanced season does not prevent a full and perfect co-operation with the French fleet in this quarter. Be this as it may; every thing in the preparatory way that depends upon me is done, and doing. To Count D'Estaing then, and that good Providence wch. has so remarkably aided us in all our difficulties, the rest is committed.

Stony point which has been a bone of contention the whole Campaign, and the principal business of it on the part of the enemy, is totally evacuated by them. Rhode Island is also abandoned, and the enemys whole force is drawn to a point at New York; where neither pains nor labour have been spar'd to secure the City and harbour; but in their attempts to effect the latter some unexpected disappointments have occurred (in sinking their hulks). This makes them more intent on their land batteries, wch. are so disposed as to cover the Town and the shipping equally.

All lesser matters, on both sides, are suspended while we are looking to the more important object. The consequences of all these movements are not easy to be foretold; but, another Campaign having been wasted; having had their Arms disgraced, and all their projects blasted, it may be conceiv'd that the enemy like an enraged Monster summoning his whole strength, will make some violent

effort, if they should be relieved from their present apprehensions of the French fleet. If they do not detach largely for the West Indies (and I do not see how

this is practicable while they remain inferior at Sea) they must from the disagreeableness of their situation feel themselves under a kind of necessity of attempting some bold, enterprizing stroke, to give, in some degree, eclat to their Arms, spirits to the Tories, and hope to the Ministry, but I am under no apprehension of a capital injury from any other source than that of the continual depreciation of our Money. This indeed is truly alarming, and of so serious a nature that every other effort is in vain unless something can be done to restore its credit. Congress, the States individually, and individuals of each state, should exert themselves to effect this great end. It is the only hope; the last resource of the enemy; and nothing but our want of public virtue can induce a continuance of the War. Let them once see, that as it is in our power, so it is our inclination and intention to overcome this difficulty, and the idea of conquest, or hope of bringing us back to a state of dependance, will vanish like the morning dew; they can no more encounter this kind of opposition than the hoar frost can withstand the rays of an all chearing Sun. The liberties and safety of this Country depend upon it. the way is plain, the means are in our power, but it is virtue alone that can effect it, for without this, heavy taxes, frequently collected, (the only radical cure) and loans, are not to be obtained. Where this has been the policy (in Connecticut for instance) the prices of every article have fallen and the money consequently is in demand; but in the other States you can scarce get a single thing for it, and yet

it is with-held from the public by speculators, while every thing that can be useful to the public is engrossed by this tribe of black gentry, who work more effectually against us than the enemys Arms; and are a hundd. times more dangerous to our liberties and the great cause we are engaged in.

My best respects attend Mrs. Pendleton, and with much truth and regard I am, etc.

***To ROBERT CARTER NICHOLAS**

Hd. Qrs. West point, November 2, 1779.

Dear Sir: Colo. Fairfax before he left Virginia last, vested me with powers to superintend his interest in that Country; and till I accepted the command of the American Army, I attended to it accordingly.

So soon as I found that private attentions would no longer comport with public duty, and that it was not in my power to do justice to the trust which he had been pleased to repose in me, I acquainted him of it, and, in repeated Letters, requested that he would appoint some other for his Attorney.

A few days since, letters from him 3d. of Augt. 1778[15] and 23d May 1779. of which

15. In the *Washington Papers*. The copy is in the writing of George William Fairfax.

I take the liberty to inclose you copies, were presented to me by Mr. Willm. Lee.[16] The original of the first I have not yet seen.

These letters are so expressive of the desires of our mutual friend, that I can say nothing in addition to them, unless you will permit me to observe, that the declining state of Colo. Lewis's[17] health (from the accts. I have of it) afford little prospect of an acceptance on his part in case of your refusal; and that I shall be at a loss in making my next application.[18]

My best respects attend Mrs. Nicholas and the rest of yr. family. With much esteem and regard I am etc.

To HENRY LAURENS

West-point, November 5, 1779.

Dear Sir: I am much indebted to you for your obliging favours of the 7th. and 24th. of last Month, and offer my thanks for the several agreeable pieces of intelligence contained in the latter. No part of which believe me Sir, gave more sincere pleasure than the Acct. of your appointment to the

States of Holland.[50] No person (if you will permit me to say as much) is more impressed with the importance of those duties which I conceive

16. Usually known as “Mr Alderman Lee.”

17. Col. Fielding Lewis.

18. On Mar. 10, 1780, Washington wrote again to Nicholas: “Having received no answr. to the letter annexed, [the above of Nov. 2] I am apprehensive it has miscarried, and I therefore give you the trouble of a duplicate. …” This letter is in the *Washington Papers*. No answer is found in the *Washington Papers*. Nicholas died Sept. 8, 1780.

50. To negotiate a treaty of amity and commerce.

to be the objects of your Mission than you are; nor no one whose punctuality and close attention to business affords a happier presage of success to any negotiation within the reach of our powers, and reasonable expectations.

Your observations upon the resolve of Congress “to stop the press” are striking,[51] and awakens those ideas which I entertained on this subject at the time of passing it. I reconciled myself however to the measure, at *that* time, from a perswation that such previous assurances had been obtained, founded in clear and demonstrable evidence of the certainty of getting the necessary Supplies by taxation and loans, as would leave nothing to *chance* . To find the promoters of the measure impressed with doubts is not a little alarming when we consider the consequences of a failure. A Virtuous exertion in the States respectively, and in the individuals of each State, may effect a great deal. But alas! virtue and patriotism are almost kicked out! Stock jobbing, speculating, engrossing, &ca. &ca., seems to be the great business of the day, and of the multitude whilst a virtuous few struggle, lament, and suffer in silence, tho' I hope not in vain.

Your state of matters respecting the Cloathing department is not less distressing. What pity it is that the Work of a day should be postponed a week! a month! a year! When not a possible good, but much evil is the inevitable consequence of it.

Our sollicitude on acct. of the operations at Savanna may easily be conceived when I add

51. Laurens's letter of October 7, in the *Washington Papers*, said: “Your Excellency will also remember my sentiments on the question of appreciation of our paper Money and the foundation on which I built the opinion which I had then the honor of delivering. I had not been long returned to this City when I discovered there was no solidity in the intelligence alluded to; and our internal circumstances from that time have been descending from bad to worse. referring to the latter I hope we are now at our ne plus ultra. At length you have seen Sir, a Resolution to 'stop the Press' as it is termed, an act which I ardently wished for in Augt. 1777. on condition of necessary previous steps of taxation, had we then determined this important point out public debts foreign and domestic would have been at this day comparatively trifling but when the proposition even at a much later day and when we were overwhelmed with paper, was, to make that an Harbinger which ought to have been consecutive and secondary. I found my self necessitated to dissent from it. We have pledged our honor that we will emit no more promissory Notes and are reduced to dependance on contingent circumstances for supplies for carrying on the War and for supporting public Credit. we are now but beginning to call on the several States for their quota of 15 Million Dollars per Month from the 1st February, to the 1st October next inclusive.”

that we have not heard a tittle from thence since the receipt of your obliging letter of the 24th; and our anxiety for European news is little inferior; the present aera is big of events.

We turn an impatient eye to the Sea-board, looking for the arrival of the French fleet; and begin to apprehend much from the Season &ca. It would be a most desirable thing to be ascertained of the extent of Count D'Estaings intentions in this quarter that not more than corrispondant preparations may be made. at present our situation is awkward and expensive.

Nothing new has happened in these parts since the evacuation of Rhode Island; report indeed inform us, that the Troops of that garrison did not disembark at New-York but receiving an augmentation of Hessians proceeded to the Hook, and from thence to Sea; of the truth of this, and of Transports Wooding and Watering I shall soon have authentic accts.

I perswade myself that it is unnecessary for me to have recourse to assurances in proof of the sincere pleasure with wch. I should receive my worthy aid Colo, Laurens. It is an event however I have little expected since I have heard of his late appointment; nor shall I suffer a selfish wish to come into the scale of determination. His abilities in whatever station they are employed will render essential services to his Country. My attachment therefore to him, not my desire of benefitting by his

Aid shall not weigh in the ballance. For his past services and attention to me, he will ever have my warmest thanks; for his honor, happiness, and advancement in life my unfeigned wishes; these in every step you take, in every station of life to wch. you may be called, will also attend you, as I can with truth assure you that with the greatest esteem and regard I am, etc.

***To GOUVERNEUR MORRIS**

West-point, November 6, 1779.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 21st. Ulto. did not reach me till a longer time after its date, than is usual between this and Philadelphia. I cannot for a variety of reasons which will occur to you, undertake to designate the persons who shd. receive the provision of Congress; or to fix upon the Sums which might be adequate. They are points of too great delicacy for me to interfere in. The Committee on the business will of course have a list of all the appointments in the Army before them, with the pay and emoluments annext to each. they will also know the services of each Officer, and from thence they will be able to determine who are yet to be considered, and what present and future provision will be just.

I am exceedingly happy in your postscript;[60] for I am a great friend to harmony at all times, and especially in public Councils.

I send a New York paper of the 26th. Ulto. to the President of Congress; which will shew you according to the enemys Accts. how matters were in August with respect to the combined fleets and Sir Chas. Hardy, and that the Inhabitants on the coast of England seemed to be at least as much alarmed as we used to be. I hope the panic will extend pretty generally through the Kingdom, and that we shall feel the good effects of it. I cannot say more, having, I cannot tell you how much, pressing business before me. I am, etc.

[M.H.S.]

***To SAMUEL GRIFFIN**

West-point, November 6, 1779.

Dr. Sir: I have been hond. with your favor of the 24th. Ulto., but not till yesterday. The present[61] offered by the board of War of Virginia I shall receive as a testimony of their polite attention and good Will, and beg the favr. of you to make my acknowledgments accordingly. Permit me at the same time to thank you for the obliging expressions which

60. “I recollect that it is long since I received a Letter from you recommending Union in Congress. I could not answer it then as I wished for I could *truly* say it existed or was like to exist. I would not go into a Detail of the Reasons it would have involved too much Egotism and of Consequence could not have been quite impartial. At length let me congratulate your *virtuous Modiration* (I do not compliment) that we are united as much as is safe for the Public.”— *Gouverneur Morris to Washington*, Oct. 21, 1779. Morris's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

61. “a Suit of Cloths, and a few other Articles.”— *Samuel Griffin to Washington*, Oct. 24, 1779. Griffin's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

accompanied the present, and to assure you that in great truth I am, etc.

***To JOHN MITCHELL**

West-point, November 6, 1779.

Dr. Sir: Your favors of the 24th. and 30th. Ulto. are both at hand; accept my thanks for the trouble you have had in providing lodgings for Mrs. Washington. I have no doubt of their being such as will prove agreeable to her, and shall write to her by the next Post to come up and occupy them till I shall be able to know where my own quarters will be and remove her to them. At present I am totally in the dark respecting this matter.

I shall be much obliged to you for furnishing Mrs. Washington with whatever she may have occasion for. Of Mrs. Mitchells kind attentions I am sure she will have no cause to complain. I am sure also, she will hold them in grateful remembrance.

If the Gentn. to whom the inclosed letters are addressed should have left Phila. be plea'd to forward them by the Post. or any other good conveyances.

Mr. Tournon[62] talked of proceeding immediately to So. Carolina; if no express should be going from Congress that way the conveyance by him may be a good one.

My compliments attend Mrs. Mitchell; and I am, etc.[63]

***To COLONEL ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD**

West-point, November 10, 1779.

Dr. Sir: As you have again been so obliging as to offer me the horse you got of Lt. Colo. Washington I have desired Mrs. Washington (who will set out immediately for Camp) to send for

him that he may come up with her, but I again beg my dear Sir that if he is a favourite of yours that you will not send him as any other may answer my purpose.

I will send the sorrel by Mr. Geo. Washington when he re turns (which I believe will be shortly) that he may be properly taken care of being now in good order.

The Mare I esteem highly, and as blew-skin is likely to get the better of his fistula (without its coming to a head) he and the others will serve me without the aid of the Mare,

62. Jean Baptiste Ternant.

63. From the original in the Maine Historical Society.

for sometime at least. My love to Mrs. Spotswood. I am etc.

***To MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT HOWE**

West-point, November 20, 1779.

Dear Sir: Herewith you will receive Mr. Pulteney's[55] lucubrations, and my thanks for the perusal of them. He has made I perceive, the dependance of America essential to the existance of Great Britain as a powerful Nation. This I shall not deny; because I am in sentiment with him in thinking her fallen state in consequence of the seperation too obvious to be disputed. It was of magnitude sufficient to have made a wise and just people look before they leaped. But I am glad to find that he has placed the supplies necessary to support that dependance upon three things which I am perswaded will never again exist in his nation; namely Public virtue, public œconomy, and public union in her grand Council.

Stock Jobbing, speculation dissipation luxury and venality with all their concomitants are too deeply rooted to yield to virtue and the public good. We that are not yet hackneyed in vice, but infants as it were in the arts of

55. William Pulteney.

Several copies of Mr. Pulteney's *Thoughts on the Present State of Affairs with America, and the Means of Conciliation* (London: 1778) are in the Library of Congress.

corruption, and the knowledge of taking advantage of public necessity (tho' I am much mistaken if we shall not soon become very great adepts at them), find it almost, if not quite impossible to preserve virtue enough to keep the body politic and corporate in tolerable tune. It is scarcely to be expected therefore that a people who have reduced these things to a system and have actually interwoven them into their constitution should at once become immaculate.

I do not know which rises highest, my indignation or con tempt for the Sentiments which pervade the Ministerial writings of this day; these hireling scribblers labour to describe and prove the ingratitude of America in not breaking faith with France, and returning to her Allegiance to the Crown of Great Britain after its having offered such advantageous terms of accommodation. Such Sentiments as these are insulting to common sense and affrontive to every principle of sound policy and common honesty. Why has She offered these terms ? because after a bloody contest, carried on with unrelenting and savage fury on her part the issue (which was somewhat doubtful while we stood alone) is now become certain by the aid we derive from our Alliance; notwithstanding the manifest advantages of which, and the blood and treasure which has been spent to resist a tyranny which was unremitted as long as there remained a hope of subjugation we are told with an effrontery altogether unparrallelled that every cause of complaint is now done

away by the generous offers of a tender parent; that it is ungrateful in us not to accept the proffered terms; and impolitic not to abandon a power (dangerous I confess to her but) which held out a Saving hand to us in the hour of our distress. What epithet does such Sentiments merit ? How much shd. a people possessed of them be despised ? From my Soul I abhor them ! A Manly struggle, had it been con ducted upon liberal ground; an honest confession that they were unequal to conquest, and wished for our friendship, would have had its proper weight; but their cruelties, exercised upon those who have fallen within their power; the wanton depredations committed by themselves and

their faithful Allies the Indians; their low and dirty practices of Counterfeiting our money, forging letters, and condescending to adopt such arts as the meanest villain in private life would blush at being charged with has made me their fixed enemy.

I have received your letter by Colo. Moylan of yesterdays date. The Instructions given to — are full and compleat. I have no thought of withdrawing the effective horse till the other Troops go into quarters. I am, etc.

To PHILIP SCHUYLER

West point, November 24, 1779.

My Dr Sir: I yesterday Evening received your Favors of the 16th and 18th. Accept my thanks for them and for your other very kind Offices.

Genl Du portail has returned; Colo Hamilton not yet, being detained unfortunately by a slight indisposition at Morris Town. I hope it will be soon over.

The Resolution You allude to has reached me. You will see by my Official Letter of this date to Congress, that after receiving their Letter, with a Copy of Genl Lincoln's dispatches, I did not wait for their decision on the point submitted. These dispatches and a Copy of the Act from the Marine Committee for the sailing of the Three Frigates, which had been detained for a cooperation, seemed explicit as to the line of conduct to be pursued.

The disaster at Savannah,[18] puts matters at least on a delicate footing in the South. I do not know what we can do more. You will have seen before this a particular state of the Army, transmitted in my public Letter of the 18th. Our finances, depreciation &c. are alarming. We have much to apprehend from them, if they are not remedied.

I have touched upon the subject of the

18. Captured by the British on Dec. 29, 1778.

Commissary. I thank you for the hint, as I shall for every Other you may be pleased to favor me with.

The Gentlemen of my family are sensibly obliged, by the manner in which you mention them and request you to receive their respective compliments.

You will see I am all hurry, and I implicitly confide in your indulgent excuse for this hasty scrawl, and have only to add that I am, etc.[19]

***To BRIGADIER GENERAL WILLIAM WOODFORD**

Morris town, December 13, 1779.

My dear Sir: I have the pleasure to find that the Artillery is at length ready, and that the rear of the Virginia troops will march early to morrow Morning. By advices this day received from Congress, it seems to be their intention that the whole shall move by water from the head of Elk to Williamsburg, and thence by land to South Carolina. I wish it were practicable to send them by Water, but by this arrangement I take it for granted it is not. I am apprehensive as the troops pass through their own State, the March will be attended with very considerable desertion; but

19. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

I rely upon your vigilance and care, that you will take every precaution for preventing it as far as will be possible. The most rigid discipline will be indispensible for this purpose. A Chain of Senteries round every incampment will be the best security.

I sincerely wish you and the troops under your command a comfortable march and a speedy arrival. The interests of America may very essentially require the latter, towards which I am perswaded you will do all in your power. Nothing will make me happier, than to hear at all times that the

Virginia line distinguishes itself in every qualification that does honor to the Military profession. Its composition is excellent, and a strict attention to discipline will always entitle it to vie with any Corps in this, or in any other service. They are going into a new and probably important field; to act with troops to whom they have been hitherto strangers. This ought to prove an additional incitement to a spirit of emulation.. My affection for the troops, and my concern for the credit of the army under my command, as well as for their own credit make me anxiously desire the Officers may exert themselves to cultivate that perfection in discipline on which the usefulness and reputation of a Corps absolutely depends. Similar motives joined to a regard for the honor of the State to which they belong, will, I am confident, be felt with all the force they deserve; and will inspire them to a zealous and punctual discharge of their duty in *all its parts* , for here permit me to add, that though bravery and good conduct

in time of action are very essential, yet they are by no means the most material parts of an Officer's duty. To train and prepare men for the field (without which no exertion in the moment of action will avail much); To supply their necessary wants as far as circumstances will enable; To restrain licentiousness; To support the honor and dignity of the Corps; To be attentive to the cloathing (seeing that it is al ways in place; in order; and well put on, without which there is little difference in *appearance* between a soldier in rags and a Soldier in uniform); To have the Arms, ammunition, and accoutrements always in order. In a word, To abide strictly by Military rules, regulations, and orders. These constitute the essence of a Soldier, and are characteristic of good Officers. Without these no Service can be well conducted, and every service must be disagreable, sluggish, and expensive; partaking more of the nature of Militia than the regularity of well organized troops which *ought* and *may* , move like clock work where the componant parts discharge their respective duties with propriety and exactness.

I entreat you to communicate what I have said to the Gentn. of the line; and at the same time to assure them of my warmest esteem and best wishes for their welfare and success. With the truest regard I am, etc.

To JOHN SULLIVAN

[Morris-town, December 15, 1779.]

I had the pleasure of receiving a few days since by Captain Briun your Letter of the 1st instant.[51] I assure you, my Dear Sir, I am sensibly touched by so striking an instance of your friendship, at a time and in a manner, that demonstrates its sincerity, and confirms the opinion I have always entertained of your sentiments towards me.[52] I wish you to believe, that your uneasiness on the score you mention had never the least foundation. A slender acquaintance with the world must convince every man that actions, not words are the true criterion of the attachment of his friends, and that the most liberal professions of good-will are very far from being the surest marks of it. I should be happy that my own experience had afforded fewer examples of the little dependance to be placed on them.

I am particularly indebted to you for the interesting information you give me of the views of a certain party. Against intrigues of this kind, incident to every man in a public station, his best support will be a faithful discharge of his duty, and he must rely on the justice of his country for the event.[53]

I flatter myself it is unnecessary for me to repeat to you, how high a place you hold in my esteem. The confidence you have experienced and the manner in which

51. Sullivan resigned his major generalcy on account of ill health on Nov. 30, 1779.

52. In his letter, in the *Washington Papers*, Sullivan wishes to be considered sincere.

53. “The Factions Raised against you in 1777, into which General Conway was unfortunately and Imprudently Drawn, is not yet Destroyed: The Members are waiting to Collect Strength and Sieze Some favorable moment, to appear in force. I Speak *not* from Conjecture, *but* from Certain Knowledge. Their Plan is, to take Every method of proving the Danger, Arising from a Commander, who Enjoys the full and intimate Confidence of his army, and Alarm the People with the Prospect of Imaginary Evils; nay, they will Endeavor to Convert your virtue into Arrows with

which they will Seek to wound you. This Plan was adopted Last winter, and if you will take the Trouble of reading Mr Tudors Oration, Delivered at Boston in March Last, you will find Every Line Calculated to answer this purpose. The words are Tudor's, but, the Thoughts are Borrowed. I heard them thrown out, Long before they were by him laid before the publick. Here, I Cannot help Digressing, to Congratulate your Excellency, on your Compelling them to attack your virtues, and not putting it in their power to point out a Single *vice*. The next Step, is to persuade Congress, That the military power of America Should be placed in three or four Different hands, Each having a Seperate Quarter of the Continent assigned him, Each Commander to answer to Congress only, for his Conduct. This they Say, will prevent one Aspiring Commander from Enslaving his Country, and put it in the power of Congress, with the assistance of the other Commanders, to punish the Attempt. This is a Refinement in Politicks, and an Improvement on Publick virtue, which Greece or Rome Could never Boast. The present time is unfavorable to their Design, They well know, that the voice of Citizens and Soldiers would be almost unanimously against them; But they wait a more favorable opportunity, which, they will Certainly Improve. I am well Convinced, that they Cannot Succeed, yet, I thought it my Duty, in the moment of my Departure, to give your Excellency this notice, that, you may not only be on your Guard, but avoid Entrusting those Persons, in matters, where, your Interest and Honor are nearly Concerned. *Appearances may Deceive Even an Angel*. Could you have believed four years Since, that those Adulators, those persons So Tenderly and So friendly used, as were Gates, Mifflin, Read and Tudor, would become your Secret and bitter, Though unprovoked Enemies."— *Sullivan to Washington*, Dec. 1, 1779.

you have been employed on several important occasions testify the value I set upon your military qualifications and the regret I must feel that circumstances have deprived the army of your services. The pleasure I shall always take in an interchange of good offices, in whatever station you may hereafter be placed will be the best confirmation of the personal regard with which I have been and am very truly and sincerely Dr Sir etc.[54]

***To ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD**

Morris-town, December 15, 1779.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 21st. of Novr. did not come to hand 'till the last Post. Mine in the same Month under cover to Mrs. Washington has no doubt been forwarded to you.

I waited in continual expectation of my Nephews[55] return for a good oppertunity to send the Sorrel but as he seems to have an inclination to remain longer with the Army I embrace Captn. Burwells[56] offer of taking the horse to you. He goes from me in very good order, and I have no doubt of his being delivered so to you.

I will take the horse you had of

54. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton. The date line is in the writing of Washington.

55. George Augustine Washington.

56. Capt. Nathaniel Burwell(?), of the First Continental Artillery. He was then a major and aide to Genl. Robert Howe and retired in January, 1783.

Lt. Colo. Washington as Men take their Wives, better for worse; and if he should prove a jade and go limping on; I must do as they are obliged to do, submit to the bargain; your directions respecting his treatment shall be followed.

If you should not have succeeded in purchasing the horse you had in view at the time your letter of the 21st. was wrote I have only to entreat that you may not put yourself to any trouble in pursuit of one in a hurry but when you do buy, to let your choice light on a good bay; be it horse or Mare, either of which will please.

We have, after our disappointment in the intended cooperation with the French fleet against New York repaird to this place, that is to a wood in the vicinity of it, for Winter quarters.

My love to Mrs. Spotswood and complimts. to Mrs. Campbell. I am, etc.

***To BRIGADIER GENERAL WILLIAM WOODFORD**

Morris-town, December 18, 1779.

Dr. Sir: My Nephew George Augustine

Washington (Son of Charles) seems to have a warm desire to enter the Service; altho' I think it rather late in the day, contest I should say, to begin a military career yet in gratification of his wishes I shd. be glad to endulge him if there is any Ensigncies which want filling in the Virginia line.

Should this be the case, and he is recommended to the State, I should be glad to receive their approbation as soon as may be that a Commission may be obtained from the board of War; after which I shall keep him for some time doing the duty of Ensign in my guard at least till he can be rigged and made somewhat acquainted with his duty as an Officer.

I have not mentioned this matter to any but yourself nor is it my wish that it should take place if it interferes in the smallest degree with the rights, or reasonable expectation of any others; if he is appointed at all I could wish it were to one of the oldest and best Regiments. With great regard I am, etc.

***To PHILIP SCHUYLER**

Morris-town, December 25, 1779.

My dear Sir: Your favor of the 12th. Instt. came

safe to hand and conveyed all that pleasure which is derived from an assurance of mutual friendship; to continue and deserve which shall be my care, and among the sincerest of my wishes.

Your Recollect has not yet appeared in this quarter;[44] more may be gathered from his appearance, and the manner in which he tells his tale, than from the authority under which he comes, for this may cloathe him with very good or very evil designs, according as his Sub-holiness[45] happens to be affected.

Mrs. Washington is not yet arrived at this place, but is at Philada. on her way, and expected in a day or two. I am sure it would give her pleasure to make you a visit; certain I am it would add much to mine, but the difficulties under which the Army labour at this moment from the scantiness of our sup plies and the near approach in full force of those evils wch. we talked of at our last interview will compel me I am persuaded to remain here and endeavour to stem a torrent which seems ready to overwhelm us.

From present appearances I see not the most distant prospect of makg. any establishment at the North end of L— C—[46] this Winter; an attempt even to burn the enemy's vessels at St. Johns by surprise or stratagem, from the present view of things, seems scarcely within the reach of possibility; and yet, not knowing how to lay aside the idea, I am induced to beg of you (if chance should throw the means of information in your way) to enquire into the strength of the

44. “A Religious of the Recollect Order Is arrived here from Canada he is come away as he Says with leave of his Superiors and of the Bishop of Canada, I will not Anticipate his tale as he will Soon have the honor of presenting himself to you being to set of In the Morning In the Same Sled with the bearer of this.”— *Schuyler to Washington*, Dec. 12, 1779. Schuyler's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

45. The Archbishop(?) of Quebec.

46. Lake Champlain.

garrison at St. Johns, and the Posts on this side; whether forage now is, or in an instant (by adequate exertns.) could be put on the communication between Albany and lake Champlain; and whether in

case a measure of this kind should suddenly be adopted at a fit season for execution a number of Sleds sufficient for the quick conveyance of 600 Men with sufficient provisions, and forage from Tyconderoga, to carry them to St. Johns and back, could be collected in the course of two or three days at Albany with out previous measures (which might betray the design) being taken to effect it?

I shall not apologize for the trouble these enquiries must necessarily give you, because I wish them to be made, as it were, en passant, and am satisfied none can do it so well, or will under take them more readily than yourself.

I very sincerely wish you, Mrs. Schuyler and family the complimts. of the Season and a return of many happy New Years. In this the Gentlemen of my family join most cordially with Dr. Sir Yr., etc.

P.S. I have recd. the Extracts from the Annual Registr. of 74. and thank you much for directing them to be sent to me. If Monsr. Loriot[47] is candid in his narrative the discovery, or

47. M. Loriot, master of mechanics to His Most Christian Majesty. (See *Annual Register*, 1774, “Useful Projects,” p. 105.)

re discovery is of a most interesting nature. The only matter to be wondered at, if it is a re-discovery, is, that a cement so important and simple and wch. must have been in such constant use should ever be lost.

Will you be so good as to ask Colo. Vansoick[48] what steps he has taken in consequence of my order to prepare a number of Snow Shoes and Mocason's? and when they will be ready?

48. Col. Goose Van Schaick.