

George Washington Papers, Series 2, Letterbooks 1754-1799

To MARQUIS DE CHARTIER DE LOTBINIÈRE

Mount Vernon, February 22, 1788.

Sir: I have been honored by the receipt of your letter of the 27th. Ulto. and am sorry to find, by it, that you have been so violently attacked by the tertium ague. I hope the bad effects of it are removed before this, and that you will not be afflicted by any returns of it.

I am very happy to find that matters have been adjusted between the Courts of Versailles and London without coming to an open rupture; for notwithstanding the exploits that may be performed or the eclat which may be acquired by military operations, yet the effects of war must be sincerely regretted by every humane and feeling mind.

I thank you, Sir, for your politness in offering me the services of the young Gentleman, your relation, who is at present with you, as my Aid de Camp; I have not the smallest doubt but his abilities and dispositions are such as would do him credit in any post, but, Sir, I must decline the honor which you would do me, for, at the close of the war, I resigned my military employments and quitted publick life, I have, therefore, no occasion for the services of an Aid de Camp, and I hope that a continuance of peace in this Country will render them unnecessary at any future period. I have the Honor etc.⁷⁶

76. In the writing of Tobias Lear. From a photostat of the original kindly furnished by the Bostonian Society.

To THOMAS SMITH

Mount Vernon, February 22, 1788.

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Sir: I have, at this late period, to acknowledge the rect. of your letter of the 22d. of May last. The reason of my not doing it in course, was not owing to any neglect or inattention on my part, but to the want of knowing that it was in my hands, for I received the Title papers of my land in Washington County which you sent to me in Philadelphia, and not expecting that anything was contained in the enclosure more than those, I delay'd opening it till a few days since.

I have forwarded the letter to Mr. Bushrod Washington which was under the same cover with my papers; but I expect the contents of it have been anticipated by a letter from you since that time.

You have undoubtedly recd. a letter from me before this, requesting you to retain whatever you consider as a compensation for the trouble of yourself and Mr. Ross in prosecuting my land suit, out of the money which you may recover on my acct. from the bonds in your hands and transmit the residue to Clement Biddle Esqr. in Philadelphia. I am, etc.77

77. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To SIR EDWARD NEWENHAM

Mount Vernon, February 24, 1788.

Dear Sir: I have been favored with your letter of the 10th. of Augt. and am very sorry to find, by it, that your intended voyage to this Country was prevented, and especially after you had made your arrangements and was upon the point of sailing; the cause of your detention must have made it still more displeasing to you, for, of all the vexations in life, that of a tedious and perplexing Lawsuit is the most disagreeable. I am, however, in hopes that your visit is not wholly given up, but only postponed.

You will be so good, my dear Sir, as to inform your friend Colo. Persse that I have a grateful sense of the favourable sentiments which he entertains of me, and present my

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best thanks to him for the Hay seed and Goosebury bushes which he is so polite as to propose sending me.

I must beg that you would not put yourself to any trouble or inconvenience in obtaining the wolf dogs for me, for however desirous I may be to procure a breed of them, I should think they were too dearly purchased if you met with any difficulty in getting them.

At the same time you complain of having been deluged by incessant rains, we were, in this part of the continent, distressed by the opposite extreme. The drought, in this neighbourhood, was as severe last summer and fall as was ever known in the memory of man; The Grass and small grain were greatly injured by it; and the Indian Corn, in some places, almost entirely cut off.

My farms were among the number of those which felt it in its greatest severity, but, happily, it was not general. The middle and eastern States had favourable seasons and food crops. A very severe winter has added to the inconvenience of short crops. We have since Christmas, experienced a series of cold weather which is very seldom felt in this climate, the navigation of our Rivers has been stopped by the frost since the first of January.

I thank you, my dear Sir, for your information upon the general State of politics in Europe; and would, in return, give you some account of our public affairs here had anything of importance transpired since my last letter to you of the of . I can only say that we are still in a state of expectation, waiting the result of the State Convention relative to the proposed plan of Government. Six States only have as yet decided upon it; they are favourable. The convention of new Hampshire is now in session. The most formidable opposition to it is expected to come from New York and Virginia; but as nine States will have determined upon it (and in all probability adopted it) before their Conventions take place, it is expected that its opponents in those States will not have sufficient influence to

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prevent its adoption there when it is found to be the general voice of the continent. Rhode Island has discovered some symptoms of recovering from her

delirium; the papers mention the votes of several towns instructing their delegates in the legislature to have a convention of the People for the purpose of considering the proposed constitution.

Mrs. Washington joins me in Compliments to Lady Newenham and yourself. I am, etc.78

To BENJAMIN LINCOLN

Mount Vernon, February 28, 1788.

My dear Sir: I have to acknowledge the receipt of your three letters of the 3d. 6th and 9th inst. The information conveyed by the last was extremely pleasing to me, though I cannot say it was altogether unexpected, as the tenor of your former letters had, in some measure, prepared me for the event; but the conduct of the minority was more satisfactory than could have been expected. The full and fair discussion, which you gave the subject in your convention, was attended with the happiest consequences; it afforded complete information to all those who went thither with dispositions to be informed, and at the same time gave an opportunity to confute, and point out the fallacy of those specious

78. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

arguments which were offered in opposition to the proposed Government. Nor is this all. The conciliating behaviour of the minority will strike a damp on the hopes which opponents in other States might, otherwise have formed from the smallness of the majority, and must be greatly influential in obtaining a favourable determination in those States which have not yet decided upon it.

There is not perhaps a man in Virginia less qualified than I am, to say from his own knowledge and observation, what will be the fate of the Constitution here, for I very seldom

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ride beyond the limits of my own farms, and am wholly indebted to those gentlemen who visit me for any information of the disposition of the people towards it; but from all I can collect I have not the smallest doubt of its being accepted.

I thank you, my dear Sir, for the accounts which you have, from time to time, transmitted me since the meeting of your convention, nothing could have been more grateful or acceptable to me, I am also obliged by your promise to inform me of any important matters, that may transpire, and you know I shall, at all times be happy to hear of your welfare. Mrs. Washington joins me in compliments to Mrs. Lincoln and yourself. With the greatest esteem &c.79

79. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To CALEB GIBBS

Mount Vernon, February 28, 1788.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 9th. inst. accompanied by the papers which you was so polite as to send me. I must beg you to accept my thanks for your attention in forwarding to me the pleasing decision of your convention upon the proposed Government. The candid and conciliating behaviour of the minority places them in a more favourable point of view than the debates of the Convention gave room to expect, and sufficiently shews the good effects of the full and fair discussion which the subject met with.

The adoption of the Constitution in Massachusetts will, I presume, be greatly influential in obtaining a favourable determination upon it in those States where the question is yet to be agitated.80

No person can, at this moment pretend to say what *will* be its fate here, and I am perhaps less qualified to give an opinion upon it, from my own observation, than almost anyone,

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as I very seldom ride off my farms, and am indebted to Gentlemen who call upon me for any information which I have of the disposition of the people towards it, but from what I can collect, I have no doubt of its being accepted here. I am, etc.⁸¹

80. The Massachusetts convention on Feb. 6, 1788, ratified the Constitution by a vote of 187 to 168.

81. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To RUFUS KING**

Mount Vernon, February 29, 1788.

Sir: I have received the letter with which you were pleased to honor me from Boston, and pray you to accept my thanks for and congratulations on, the important information it contains.

Happy, am I, to see the favorable decision of your Convention upon the proposed Government; not only on acct. of its adding an important State to the number of those which have already accepted it, but because it must be productive of good effects in other States, whose determination may have been problematical. The candid, and open behaviour of the minority, is noble and commendable. It will have its weight.

From my own knowledge, I cannot undertake to say what will be the fate of the Constitution in this State. I am altogether indebted to Gentlemen who visit me for information respecting the disposition of the people towards it, not having gone Six Miles beyond the limits of my own farms since my return from Philadelphia. From there accounts, no doubt, from the first, has been entertained in my mind of the acceptance of it here; notwithstanding the *indefatigable* pains which some very influential characters take to oppose it.

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I beg you to present me in respectful terms to Mrs. King, and to receive assurances of the esteem and regard with which I have the honor etc.

[N.Y.H.S.]

To EDMUND PENDLETON

Mount Vernon, March 1, 1788.

Sir: When Doctor Stuart was in Richmond I sent a number of public securities to him that he might receive the interest due upon them; among them was a Certificate for a Negro executed in the year with Interest due from the date, which he informs me he left in your hands to have the Interest paid thereon and transmitted to me as it could not be done while he was there. As I find, by the Revenue act, that the Interest drawn upon Certificates of this kind will be received in taxes for the year 1787, I shall be much obliged to you Sir, if you will take the trouble to have every thing which is necessary to be transacted respecting the matter done, and transmitted to me as I expect a visit from the Sheriff very soon. I am etc.⁸²

82. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To ANTHONY SINGLETON

Mount Vernon, March 1, 1788.

Sir: Two of the enclosed Certificates dated Jany. 4th. 1788 were received at the Auditors office on my acct. by Doctor Stuart when he was in Richmond, but as he was, by some means or other, prevented from having the necessary business respecting them transacted at the Treasurer's Office before he left that place, and has informed me that you will be so good as to do whatever is proper to be done respecting them, I have taken the liberty of sending them to you, requesting that you will be so kind as to return them to me

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completed, as soon as possible, because I depend upon them for discharging a part of my taxes of the year 1787.

I have likewise enclosed to you five others recd. in the year 1786. as I see they are of the same tenor And I suppose require the same to be done with them as the above two. These last mentioned warrants have laid by me since their dates. I am so little acquainted with matters of this kind that I hardly know the use of them, much less the necessary forms they must pass before they are receivable in taxes. I am, etc.⁸³

83. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

A DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF AUDITORS WARRANTS SENT TO TREASURERS OFFICE DIRECTED TO CAPTAIN SINGLETON⁸³

March 1, 1788.

£. S. d. One dated—18th. Apl. 1786 for Interest due on a Loan office certificate—No. 237, dated 24 June, 1780 for 17 16 4 One dated—29 Novr. 1786 for sundry articles furnished for the use of the Mila. in the year 1774 allowed by the Court of claims in Fairfax County 20 0 0 One ditto ditto ditto for 20 0 0 One ditto ditto ditto for 20 0 0 One ditto ditto ditto for 27 16 6 One dated Jany. 4th. 1788 for Interest on a Lone Office Certificate, No. 252 dated 26th. March 1779 for 43 4 10 One dated Jany. 4th. 1788 for Interest on a lone office Certificate, No. 237, dated 24th. June 1780 for 6 9 0 £155. 5. 8

83. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JAMES MADISON

Mount Vernon, March 2, 1788.

Sir: The decision of Massachusetts, notwithstanding its concomitants,⁸⁴ is a severe stroke to the opponents of the proposed Constitution in this State; and with the favorable determinations of the States which have gone before, and such as are likely to follow after, will have a powerful operation on the Minds of Men who are not actuated more by

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disappointment, passion and resentment, than they are by moderation, prudence and candor.⁸⁵ Of the first description however, it is to be lamented that there are so many; and among them, *some* who would hazard *every* thing rather than their opposition should fail, or have the sagacity of their prognostications impeached by an issue contrary to their predictions.

The determination you have come to,⁸⁶ will give pleasure to your friends. From those in your County you will learn with more certainty than from me, the expediency of your attending the election in it. With *some*, to have differed in sentiment, is to have passed the Rubicon of their friendship, altho' you should go no further. With others (for the honor of humanity) I hope there is more liberality; but the consciousness of having discharged that duty which we owe to our Country, is superior to all other considerations, will place small matters in a secondary point of view.

84. Massachusetts accompanied her ratification with 9 proposed amendments.

85. The "Letter Book" copy reads: "who are are not more influenced by passion, Peak and resentment, than they are by candor, moderation and Judgement."

86. To stand for election as a delegate to the convention for ratifying the Constitution.

His Most Ch—n M—y speaks, and acts in a style not very pleasing to republican ears or to republican forms; nor do I think this language is altogether so to the temper of his own subjects at *this* day. Liberty, when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth. The checks he endeavors to give it, however warrantable by ancient usage, will, more than probably, kindle a flame, which may not be easily extinguished; tho' for a while it may be smothered by the Armies at his command, and the Nobility in his interest. When the people are oppressed with Taxes, and have cause to suspect that there has been a misapplication of their money, the language of despotism is but illy brooked. This, and the mortification which the pride of the Nation has sustained in the affairs of Holland (if

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one may judge from appearances) may be productive of events which prudence will not mention.

To-morrow, the Elections for delegates to the Convention of this State commences; and as they will tread close upon the heels of each other this month becomes interesting and important. With the most friendly sentiments and affectionate regard &c.87

87. From the printed text in the sales catalogue of the *Washington-Madison Papers* (McGuire Collection, 1892).

To THE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mount Vernon, March 3, 1788.

Dear Sir: In acknowledging the rect. of your obliging favor of the 3d. Ult, permit me to thank you for the Rhubarb seed which accompanied it. To the growth of which, if food, a fair trial shall be given.

I have two imported female Asses from the Island of Malto; which, tho' not quite equal to the best spanish Jennies will serve to establish a valuable breed of these animals in this Country, besides, I have disseminated the breed of my spanish Jack to many of the still small kind of this Country, and if you have one of these or a better Jenny and should think the trouble of sending her here not too great she shall have the free use of the Jack and every necessary attention, and I shall have great pleasure in obliging you by it.

I was not unapprised of the treatment of letters in the post Offices of France but am not less obliged by the Friendly hint you have given me respecting this matter, mine contain nothing which will be injurious to the receiver if the contents of them are inspected.

The decision of Massachusetts would have been more influential had the majority been greater, and the ratification

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unaccompanied by the recommendatory Act. As it stands the blow is severely felt by the antifederalists in the equivocal States. This adoption added to the five States which have gone before it, and the three which more than probable will *next* follow, will (as there can be little doubt of Rhode Island following the example of her Eastern brethren) be too powerful I conceive for locality and sophistry to combat.

On this day, our elections of Delegates to the Convention of the State, commences, they will progress as our Court days in this month arrive, and form an interesting epocha in our Annals. After the choice is made, the probable decision on the proposed Constitution (from the character of members) can with more ease be conjectured; for myself I have never entertained much doubt of its adoption tho' I am a very incompetent Judge, never having been Six miles beyond the limits of my own Farms since my return from Philadelphia and receiving information of the sentiments of the people from visitors *only* .

It gives me much pleasure to hear that Mrs. Jays health is restored, and that you have the slight remains only of your long and painful indisposition, a little time and more moderate weather (if it should ever arrive, for at present there is no appearance of it) will, it is to be hoped, set you quite right again. In wishes for these, and offering compliments, I am Joined by Mrs. Washington with sentiments of the highest esteem and regard. I am, etc.88

88. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, March 3, 1788.

Dear Sir: If this should reach you before the sailing of the vessel which you informed me in your last was bound to Alexandria, I must request you to put on board her, on my acct. two good Linnen Wheels, one dozn. good strong wool Cards with [strong] teeth, and one

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hundred pounds of Clover seed in addition to the quantity which I have before desired you get. I am etc.

PS. Pray send me as soon as you conveniently can 40 yards of Lace, of the width and colour of the enclosed; that, or any other figure will do.⁸⁹

[H.S.P.]

To I. HUIBERTS⁹¹

Mount Vernon, March 3, 1788.

Sir: I have received your polite letter of the 22d. Ult., and am much obliged to you for the kind tender of your services to execute any commissions for me in Holland; but as I have no business, at present in that quarter I cannot avail myself of your obliging offer, I have however, a no less grateful sense of it on that acct.

⁸⁹. In the writing of Tobias Lear. The P.S. is in the writing of Washington.

⁹¹. Of Baltimore, Md.

You will please, Sir, to accept my best wishes for a safe voyage, a prosperous completion of your business in Europe, and a happy return to this Country. Mrs. Washington and the rest of the family Join in this wish. I am, etc.⁹²

To HENRY KNOX

Mount Vernon, March 3, 1788.

My dear Sir: I pray you to accept my acknowledgments of your favors of the 10th. and 14th Ult. and congratulation on the acceptance of the new Constitution by the State of Massachusetts. Had this been done without its concomitants, and by a larger Majority the stroke would have been more severely felt by the antifederalists in other States. As it is, it

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operates as a damper to their hopes, and is a matter of disappointment and chagreen to them all.

Under the circumstances enumerated in your letters, the favourable decision, which has taken place in that State, could hardly have been expected; Nothing less than the good sense, sound reasoning, moderation and temper of the Supporters of the measure, could have carried the question. It will be very influential on the equivocal States.

92. From the "Letter Book" copy in the Washington Papers.

In the two, which are next to convene (New Hampshire and Maryland) there can be no doubt of its adoption and in So. Carolina but little, which will make nine States without a dissentient; the force of this argument is hardly to be resisted by local sophistry; candor and prudence therefore, it is to be hoped will prevail, and yet I believe there are some characters among us who would hazard *every* thing rather than cease their opposition or leave to the operation of the government the chance of proving the fallacy of their predictions of it, by which their sagacity and foresight might be impeached.

This day introduces the Elections for the Convention of this State, and they will progress regularly thro' the month as the Court days arrive. After which a more accurate opinion may be formed of the probable decision of the State.

From the last European intelligence, the Political state of affairs in France seem to be in a delicate Situation; what will be the issue is not easy to determine; but the spirit, which is diffusing itself may produce changes in that Government which a few years ago could hardly have been dreamt of. All these things, together with the importance assumed by G. B. on the occasion of her dispute with this power and the state of other powers on the Continent are strong

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additional motives for us to establish a well-toned Government. Mrs. Washington joins me in every good wish for you, Mrs. Knox and the family; and with sentiments of the most friendly and etc.⁹⁰

To RICHARD PETERS

Mount Vernon, March 5, 1788.

Sir: When I had the pleasure to be at your house last Summer you shewed me a triangular harrow with trowel tines for the purpose of cultivating your dell Crops. The appearance was prepossessing. But I forgot whether you spoke of its merits from theoretical, or practical knowledge. If the latter, will you permit me to request the favor of you to direct your workmen to furnish me with one, compleat in all its parts accompanied with lines or trowells sufficient for 4 more. Colo. Biddle will pay the cost, upon demand.

That you may be enabled to Judge of the proper sizes, I will inform you for what particular uses they are intended.

From the experience of two years,

⁹⁰. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

one the wettest, the other the dryest that ever was felt in *this* neighbourhood I am persuaded that as much (Indian) Corn can be raised in rows as in any manner which has yet been tried in such (midling) land and with such management as is usually allowed for this Grain and that by drilling Potatoes between, the quantity of the latter will at least quadruple that of the former. whether Potatoes in addition to the Corn will bear too hard upon the soil is a question, that has received an affirmative and negative answer. and both (it is said) from the experience of Husbandry. I mean therefore to learn that which seems most profitable and in the practice of which I am already engaged. These Harrows then are to work the intervals between the Corn and Potatoes; which being 4 feet *only*

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, the dimensions of them must be proportioned to the space they are to operate in. But, notwithstanding the levelness of my land, the straitness and equi-distance of my rows, it would seem nevertheless dangerous to depend upon a *single* bout of this implement because if perchance the width between the Rows should exceed 4 feet the ground will not be broken, and if it falls short the plants will be cut up; twice therefore in each Row, seems necessary for safe and proper tillage. I mention it for your consideration only; my own opinion of the matter I must confess is (but it yields to experience) that two feet

from the center of the hindmost lines would be a proper Medium; this, with the outer lines of the trowel, will stir near, or quite 2½ feet of earth; and under certain circumstances may be sufficient without going twice in the same row, for cultivation of the plants; at all events, two bouts will give part of it a double stirring.

I will not trouble you with an apology for this request as it affords an opportunity to Mrs. Washington and myself to present our best wishes to Mrs. Peters and yourself and an occasion for me to assure you of the esteem with which I am, etc.93

To THOMAS SMITH

Mount Vernon, March 5, 1788.

Sir: Your letter of the 5th. Ult. came duly to hand. The sum of £50 which you and Mr. Ross have received for bringing and prosecuting my Ejectments is perfectly satisfactory to me; I only wish it may be so to you, if it is not I must repeat my request that you will satisfy yourself.

I find that the greatest part of the money which you have received on my acct. has been

93. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

paid without suits being brought as in this case you have all the trouble of a collector, without the benefit of a Lawyer, it is my wish that you would retain whatever is the

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customary commission for collecting, or receive a compensation for your trouble in some other way.

Major Freeman, in a letter to me before he left Fayette County, mentioned his having deposited in the hands of a Mr. Richd. Noble at Red-Stone about £30 for me and sundry papers which he was to forward to me. I have written to him twice upon the subject but have reed. no answer, I will, fore, be much obliged to you, Sir, if you will get them from Mr. Noble whenever you are again in that part of the Country, and convey them to me. I am, etc.⁹⁴

94. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, March 5, 1788.

Dear Sir: In your letter of the 3d of February you mentioned Messrs. Dunlap and Claypole having put into your hands a Vol. of their News Papers for the years 1785 and 86, which they desired might be forwarded to me and my acceptance thereof requested. I must now beg the favor of you to return them my best thanks for their politeness, and at the sametime, to inform them that I believe they misunderstood me in my application for their paper when I was in Philadelphia, for it was my intention to have taken it after my return home as well as in Philadelphia; they will, therefore, be so good as to forward them to me by every post, and at the end of each year I shall be glad to have a Vol. of them bound. I have, hitherto taken the Pensylvania Herald, but, from some cause or other, it has been discontinued for a number of weeks past; I will thank you to discharge whatever may be due on my account for that paper, and inform the printers, in decent terms, that it need not be sent on to me in future, as I conceive one will be sufficient to give all the information that is necessary.

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I have recd. a Letter from Thomas Smith Esqr. of the 5th ultimo, wherein he informs me that he has £200 in his hands for me, which he should forward to you by the first safe conveyance. Whenever you receive it you will please to discharge the balance which may be due to you for articles purchased on my acct. since our last settlement, and forward the remainder to me in the manner mentioned in a former

letter, reserving in your hands about £20 to pay for any articles I may have occasion to procure in Philadelphia.

I must beg the favor of you to forward the enclosed letters to their respective addresses by the first conveyance that may offer after you receive them. I have, in the one to Mr. Peters, desired him to have a harrow made for me similar to one which I saw when I was [at his house] with some spare teeth; I will thank you to pay his bill for the same, and have them sent to me by the first Vessel bound to Alexandria, after the one which I suppose is now about sailing for that place, provided they cannot be compleated in time to be sent by her. I am etc.95

[H.S.P.]

To WILLIAM DEAKINS, JUNIOR

Mount Vernon, March 8, 1788.

Sir: This will be handed to you by my overseer who goes to George Town to procure a quantity of twine suitable for making a Sein, as there is none in Alexandria fit for that purpose. Should you have any

95. In the writing of Tobias Lear. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

such as he may chuse, I will thank you to let him have 150lb., and if the Balance of the Bond assigned to me by Mrs. Kirk has not yet been paid into the hands of Colo. Simms,

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you will please to retain that as part payment of the amount of the twine, and charge me with the surplus. Should you not have any yourself, you will oblige me by assisting Mr. Fairfax⁹⁶ in getting it, if to be sold in George Town, and, if the above mentioned Balance has been paid to Colo Simms, I will discharge the amount of the twine at the end of the fishing season. I am, etc.⁹⁷

To BURWELL BASSETT

Mount Vernon, March 9, 1788.

Dear Sir: If my last letter to you, containing the Bond of the deceased Mr. Dandridge on which you were requested to bring suit, was not sufficiently explanatory of the intention, I now beg leave to inform you that my meaning is after Judgement shall have been obtained and execution levied on the Slaves belonging to the estate of the decd. Gentn. that you, or Mr. John Dandridge, in behalf of his Mother, wd. purchase for her use such as she may want, on my

96. John Fairfax.

97. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

acct. In a word, as it is at the request of Mr. John Dandridge that suits are instituted, my wish is to accommodate the family as far as I can consistently, the mode of doing it I leave to you. being with very great esteem etc.⁹⁷

To BENJAMIN LINCOLN

Mount Vernon, March 10, 1788.

My dear Sir: Your favor of the 20th ulto. and the papers accompanying it, came duly to hand. I believe none of your letters to me have miscarried, as I have recd. the papers containing the debates of your Convention very regularly.

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I am sorry to hear that the issue of the Government in New Hampshire is, in any measure, dubious. Our concurrent accounts from that quarter have been favourable in the highest degree, they would have justified the expectation of unanimity in their Convention. The growing attachment of the people in your State to the proposed

97. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

Constitution is certainly a strong proof of its general excellence. It shows that a due and impartial consideration of the subject will decide in its favor.

At the end of the present month we shall be able to form a tolerable judgment of what may be its fate here, as our returns for the delegates to the convention will be known at that time, and the characters chosen will be pretty generally decided in their opinions upon the matter before their delegation, and as that will determine the people in their choice. The general tenor of the information, which I derive from those Gentlemen who call upon me, seems to agree in the opposition losing ground. and that nothing is wanting to render the people so favourably disposed towards it as to put the decision beyond a doubt but proper information upon the subject. The opponents are indefatigable in their exertions, while the friends to the Constitution seem to rest the issue upon the goodness of their cause. There will undoubtedly be a greater weight of abilities against the adoption in this convention than in any other; we had a right to expect it from the characters who first declared against it here, but notwithstanding this, my own opinion is (as it has ever been) that it will be received. with great esteem and regard &c.98

98. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THOMAS CUSHING

Mount Vernon, March 10, 1788.

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Dear Sir: Your letter of the 12th. Ultó. inclosing the recommendatory Amendments to the proposed plan of Government by your Convention, did not come to hand till last Saturday or it should have had an earlier acknowledgement.

The adoption of the Constitution by the State of Massachusetts will undoubtedly have a very happy influence upon the decision of those States which have yet to determine upon the important question. The respectability of your Majority, added to the candid and manly behaviour of the minority, will obviate any improper impressions which might have been made by its smallness. The full and fair decision which the subject met with in your Convention evidently shew the advantage of it by its effects, for, from every information which we could obtain here, it appears that there would have been a decided majority against the Constitution, had the matter been determined early in the session; nor will this be the only benefit derived from it, the publication of the debates will serve to remove objections in the minds of unprejudiced persons in other States who seek for information.

It is not in the power of the best informed among us to say, at present, how it will terminate in this State; at the end of this month some judgement may be formed, as we shall then have a return of the delegates from the several Counties who are to compose the convention. There is perhaps no person less qualified than I am to give an opinion upon the matter from his own observation, as I am wholly indebted to those Gentlemen who visit me for any knowledge that I have of the dispositions of the people, not having been ten miles from home since my return from Philadelphia, but from every information, I have not a doubt of its being adopted here.

Mrs. Washington joins me in Compliments to Mrs. Cushing and yourself. I am, etc.⁹⁹

To SAMUEL HANSON

Mount Vernon, March 18, 1788.

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Sir: Your letter of the 16th. Inst. was handed me yesterday in Alexandria as I was going to dinner; previous to that I had seen my Nephew George Washington,¹ and asked him if he had heard of any suitable place for himself and Lawrence to board at after their quarter with Mr. McWhir expired; he

99. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

1. George Steptoe Washington.

told me that it was probable a place might be obtained at a Mrs. Sanford's; I desired him to inform himself of the terms &c. and let me know them; as I had not an opportunity of seeing him again before I left town to know the result of his enquiries, it is not, at this moment, in my power to give a decided answer to your offer of taking them again into your family.

Your candid and free communications respecting the conduct of my Nephews, while with you, meet my warmest approbation and deserve my best thanks, and I should think myself inexcusable, if, upon this occasion, I did not act a part equally open and candid, by informing you of general allegations which they have, from time to time, offered on their part, viz: They having been frequently detained from school in the morning beyond their proper hour, in consequence of not having their breakfast seasonably provided, and sometimes obliged to go to school without any. They have likewise complained of their not being permitted to dine with company at the House; and served indifferently in another place afterwards and, after being a short time with Mr. McWhir, they made application for shirts, and upon being asked what they had done with those which were made for them not long before, they replied that the manner of washing them at Mr. Hanson's (in Lye without soap) had entirely destroyed them.

This communication, Sir, cannot, I think, be displeasing to a person of your candor. I do not state the above as *facts* but merely as the reports of the boys, and if they should live

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with you again it will undoubtedly have a good effect by shewing them that their reports will always be made known to you, and the truth or falsehood of them discovered.

The motive which first induced me to put the Boys with you, explained upon a former occasion together with the advantage of throwing them into company will still operate, and incline me to give a preference to your House upon terms nearly equal in other respects but I cannot decide upon the matter till I know the result of George's enquiries, and so soon as I do, you may depend upon hearing further from Sir, &c.2

2. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To CAPTAIN NATHANIEL INGRAHAM

Mount Vernon, March 22, 1788.

Dear Sir: When I requested you to procure a Gardiner for me in Holland, which you was so obliging as to promise to do, I fear I was not explicite enough with respect to the terms &c. upon which I would wish to have him.

If one properly qualified for the business, could be obtained to come over in the nature of a redemptioner, or which will be more certain, who will indent himself for a certain term of years it would be most agreeable to me, because he would be much cheaper; but if one of a proper description cannot be procured in this way, I should be willing to give a good Gardener £15 Sterling per annum. more than this I do not incline to offer, because I presume they might be obtained for that sum in this Country. I should prefer a single man, but have no objection to one who is married provided his wife understands spinning &c. and will indent as her husband does. and provided they have not a number of Children. A middle aged man will suit me best, as the necessary services cannot be expected from, or performed by, one advanced in years.

I should likewise be glad to procure a good coarse Weaver, and will

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be much obliged to you if you will endeavour to get one for me to come over on the terms mentioned above, I should give the preference to one who understands weaving both woollen and linen, but would be satisfied with one could do either well.

If it is necessary (or would be more convenient for you) for me to make any advance for defraying the charges &c. which may arise from this business, I will thank you to let me know it and will provide accordingly. As I also shall be for your telling me with the *utmost* candor if the request here made will be attended with the smallest inconvenience to you. It not being by any means, my intention to lay you under the most trifling difficulty by the request.

Wishing you a prosperous voyage and a speedy return. I am, etc.³

3. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, March 24, 1788.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 16th. Inst. enclosing the Bill of Lading and Certificate of the Articles shipped on my Acct. came duly to hand. The Packet has not yet arrived unless she passed by here yesterday.

I thank you for your attention to the letters which I committed to your care. As I do not know whether you may have received the Interest due upon my Certificate in your hands, and some charges will arise from the harrow furnished by Mr. Peters, and the livery lace, I enclose you a Bank Bill for forty Dollars, which you will please to pass to my Credit. I am etc.⁴

[H.S.P.]

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4. In the writing of Tobias Lear.

***To ELÉONOR FRANÇOIS ÉLIE, COMTE DE MOUSTIER**

Mount Vernon, March 26, 1788.

Sir: I have received the letter wch. your Excellency did me the honor of addressing to me by the hand of Mr. Madison. While I am highly gratified with the justice you do me in appreciating the friendly sentiments I entertain for the French Nation; I cannot avoid being equally astonished and mortified in learning that you had met with any subject of discontent or inquietude since your arrival in America. Be assured, Sir, as nothing could have been more unexpected: so nothing can now give me greater pleasure than to be instrumental in removing (as far as might be in the power of a private citizen as I am) every occasion of uneasiness that may have occurred. I have even hoped, from the short time of your residence here, and the partial acquaintance you may have had with the characters of the persons, that a natural distance in behavior and reserve in address, may have appeared as intentional coldness and neglect. I am sensible that the apology itself, though it should be well founded, would be but an indifferent one, yet it will be better than none: while it served to prove that it is our misfortune not to have the same chearfulness in appearance and facility in deportment, which some nations possess. And this I believe, in a certain degree, to be the real fact; and that such a reception is sometimes given by individuals as may affect a foreigner with very

disagreeable Sensations, when not the least shadow of an affront is intended.

As I know the predilections of most of our leading characters for your Nation; as I had seen the clearest proofs of affection for your King given by the people of this Country, on the birth of the Dauphin; as I had heard before the receipt of your letter that you had been received at your public audience by Congress, with all the marks of attention which had ever been bestowed upon a Representative of any Sovereign Power; And as I found that

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your personal character stood in the fairest point of light; I must confess, I could not have conceived that there was one person in public office in the United States capable of having treated with indifference, much less with indignity, the representative from a Court with which we have ever been upon the most friendly terms. And confident I am that it is only necessary for such conduct to be known to be detested.

But in the mean, [time] so ardently do I wish to efface any ill impressions that may have been made upon Your Excellency's mind to the prejudice of the Public, by individuals; that I must again repeat, that I am egregiously deceived if the people of this Country are not in general extremely well affected to France. The prejudices against that Kingdom had been so rivetted by our English

connection and English policy that it was sometime before our people could entirely get the better of them. This, however, was thoroughly accomplished in the course of the War, and I may venture to say that a greater revolution never took place in the sentiments of one people respecting another. Now as none of their former attachments have been revived for Britain, and as no subject of uneasiness has turned up with respect to France, any disgust or enmity to the latter would involve a mystery beyond my comprehension. For, I had always believed that some apparent cause, powerful in its nature and progressive in its operation, must be employed to produce a change in National sentiments. But no prejudice has been revived, no jealousy excited, no interest adduced, and, in short, no cause has existed (to my knowledge) which could have wrought a revolution unfriendly to your nation. If one or a few persons in New York have given a different specimen of thinking and acting, I rely too much upon your candor to apprehend that you will impute it to the American people at large.

I am happy to learn that your Excellency is meditating to strengthen the commercial ties that connect the two Nations: and that your ideas of effecting it by placing the arrangements upon the basis of mutual advantage coincide exactly with my own. Treaties

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which are not built upon reciprocal benefits, are not likely to be of long duration. Warmly as I wish to second your views, it is a subject of regret that my little

acquaintance with commercial affairs and my seclusion from public life, have not put me in a state of preparation to answer your several questions with accuracy. I will endeavor to inform myself of the most interesting particulars and shall take a pleasure in communicating the result.

At present I can only remark that I think the taste for many articles of French merchandize is rather encreasing. Still there are three circumstances, which are thought to give the British merchants an advantage over all others. 1st. their extensive credit: (which, I confess, I wish to see abolished). 2dly. their having in one place Magazines containing all kinds of Articles that can be required: and 3dly. their knowledge of the precise kind of merchandize and fabrics which are wanted.

For my own part I could wish as I have just observed, to see the time when no credit should be given. Attention and experience in the American trade would enable the French merchants, I apprehend to accommodate our markets in other respects. Between this Country and England many causes of irritation exist: and it is not impossible but that the ill-policy of the British Court may accelerate the removal of our trade into other channels. With sentiments of the greatest respect etc.⁵

5. From a photostat of the original in the Paris Archives, *Aff. Etrang. Mems. et Docs., E. U.*, vol. 6.

***To HENRY KNOX**

Mount Vernon, March 30, 1788.

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My dear Sir: Your favor of the 10th. came duly to hand, and by Mr. Madison I had the pleasure to hear that you had recovered from a severe indisposition, on which event I sincerely congratulate you.

The conduct of the State of

New Hampshire has baffled all calculation, and happened extremely mal-a-propos for the election of delegates to the Convention of this State; for be the *real* cause of the adjournment to so late a day, what it may, the anti-fœderal party with us do not scruple to declare, that, it was done to await the issue of this Convention before it would decide; and add, that if this State should reject it, all those which are to follow will do the same; and consequently, the Constitution cannot obtain, as there will be only eight States in favor of the measure.

Had it not been for this untoward event, the opposition in this State would have proved entirely unavailing, notwithstanding the unfair conduct (I might have bestowed a harder epithet without doing injustice) which has been practiced to rouse the fears, and to inflame the passions of the people. What will be the result *now*, is difficult for me to say with any degree of certainty, as I have seen but a partial return of the delegates, and [am] not well acquainted with the political sentiments even of those few. In the Northern part of the State the tide of Sentiment, I know, is *generally* in favor of the proposed system. In the Southern part, *I am told*, it is the reverse. While [in] the middle, it is said, it is pretty much divided. The Kentucky district will have great weight in deciding this question; and the idea of its becoming an impediment to its separation,⁶ has got hold of them; while no pains is spared to inculcate a belief that the Government proposed will, without scruple or delay, barter away the right of Navigation to the River Mississippi.

The postponement in New-

6. From Virginia.

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On March 30 Washington wrote to a Captain Speak: "I cannot omit the occasion of communicating a piece of information I have received, to wit: that your Boat is engaged to meet passengers on this side to take them to the other by which I am deprived of the Ferriages. I hope the practice will not be continued except for yourself. I find the Ferry inconvenient, and unprofitable enough without this, to wish the discontinuance of it. A little matter more wo'd induce me to put it down and stop up the Road leading thereto." A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

On this same day (March 30) Washington also wrote to a Mr. O'Connor, in Alexandria, thanking him for a complimentary ticket to his lecture on "Eloquence." "Business (and indeed disinclination to leave my own bed when I am within a few miles of it) would not permit my attendance at the lecture last evening." A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

Hampshire will also, unquestionably, give strength and vigor to the opposition in New York; and possibly, will render Rhode Island more backward than she otherwise would have been, if *all* the New England States had *finally* decided in favor of the measure.

Mrs. Washington joins me in every good wish for Mrs. Knox, yourself and family, with Dear Sir Yr. Affecte. friend etc.

[MS.H.S.]

To BATTAILE MUSE

Mount Vernon, March 31, 1788.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 19th. inst. and Mr. Lear has, agreeable to your request therein, called upon Messrs. D. and I. McPherson and Wm. Hunter Junr. Esqr. who have informed him that the money shall be paid conformable to your advice.

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It would have suited me exceedingly well to have discharged my proportion of the assessment on the Potomack Company in the manner mentioned in your letter, could I have received it previous to the 15th. Inst. as I paid Mr. Hartshorne on that

day. As you say it will be more convenient for you to pay me the money which you have, or may receive on acct. of my Rents, in the first week in May than sooner, I have no objection to its being delayed till that time. I am, etc.⁷

To BENJAMIN LINCOLN

Mount Vernon, April 2, 1788.

My dear Sir: I have to acknowledge the reception of your favor of the 24th. of February which I have delayed answering till this time, in expectation of being able to give you some information of what will probably be the determination of this State upon the Constitution; but the proceedings of New Hampshire, so directly opposite to what we had reason to hope for from every Account, has entirely baffled all calculation upon the subject, and will strengthen the opposition in this State. The only ground upon which an opinion can be formed of what will be the decision here, is the return of the members for the Convention; of these I have as yet seen but a partial list, and of this list there are many who are unknown to me, so that I am not able to give you any more satisfactory information

7. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

upon the subject than when I wrote last to you. This, however, I may say, that the Northern, or upper Counties are generally friendly to the adoption of the Government, the lower *are said* to be generally unfriendly, the sentiments of the western parts of the State are not fully known; but no means have been left untried to prejudice them against the System; every art that could inflame the passions or touch the interests of men have been essayed; the ignorant have been told, that should the proposed Government obtain, their lands would be taken from them and their property disposed of; and all ranks are informed

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that the prohibition of the Navigation of the Mississippi (their favorite object) will be a certain consequence of the adoption of the Constitution. But notwithstanding these unfair and unjust representations I have the fullest confidence in its being received in this State. With great regard, etc.⁸

8. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOHN LANGDON

Mount Vernon, April 2, 1788.

Sir: Your letter of the 28th. of February came regularly to hand. The conduct of New Hampshire respecting the proposed government was a matter of general surprise in this, and I believe in every other part of the United States; for her local situation, unconnected with other circumstances, was supposed to be a sufficient inducement to the people of that State to adopt a general government, which promises more energy and security than the one under which we have hitherto lived, and especially as it holds out advantages to the smaller States equal, at least, to their most sanguine expectations.

Circumstanced as your Convention was, an adjournment was certainly prudent, but it happened very mal-apropos for this State, because the concurrent information from that quarter would have justified the expectation of a unanimity in the convention, whereas an account so opposite to every former one having arrived at the very time when the elections were carrying on here, gave an opportunity to the opponents of the proposed Constitution to hold up to the people its not having been so generally approved of in other States as they had been taught to believe, and of consequence prepared them to receive other impressions unfriendly to the Government and tending to influence their votes in favor of antifederal characters. However I am still strong in the expectation of its being adopted here notwithstanding the

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unjust and uncandid representations, which have been made by the opponents to inflame the minds of the people and prejudice them against it. I am &c.9

To CALEB GIBBS

Mount Vernon, April 3, 1788.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 24th. of Feby. and the enclosed news papers came duly to hand. The conduct of New Hampshire has I believe, been a matter of surprize in every part of the Country, and from what I can learn, wholly unexpected by a considerable part of the Convention themselves; The adjournment was, however, (circumstances as they were) a very prudent step, for it appears that the great question would have been lost if the sense of the convention had been taken upon it at that time.

It is still uncertain what the determination of this State will be; the Northern Counties are generally favourable to the adoption of the Constitution,

9. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

the Southern are said to be unfavourable: and the Sentiments of the western parts of the State are not fully known; no pains, however, has been spared, and no art untried to inflame the minds of the people and prejudice them against the proposed system of Government. I am, etc.9

To RICHARD BUTLER

Mount Vernon, April 3, 1788.

Dear Sir: I have received your letter of the 13th Ulto. my acknowledging the reception of the printed Vocabulary must have been an omission, for it came safely to hand with the manuscript one. Your observation respecting the instability and inefficacy of our General Government is very just. They are not only apparent in the instance, which you mention,

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but have for a long time, strongly marked all our national transactions. This in my opinion, is a powerful argument, for adopting the proposed Constitution even if it were less perfect than it is, and while a constitutional door is left open for amendments whenever they

9. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

may be found necessary.

I thank you, my dear Sir, for your information respecting the opposition to the proposed Government in the Country west of the Susquehanna. Notwithstanding the rancour and activity of the opponents in Pensylvania, I trust that they are generally speaking, persons of too little importance to endanger the general welfare of the Union by extending their influence to other States, or even any further in their own than to a few Counties, or over persons whose characters, dispositions, and situations are conformable to theirs.

How the important question will be decided in this State is yet uncertain. Opinions are various, and I can say nothing upon the subject from my own knowledge, as I but very rarely ride off my own farms, and am wholly indebted to the public papers and those Gentlemen who visit me for any information which I have; however from everything that I can collect, I am still confident of its adoption here. I am etc.¹⁰

10. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To SAMUEL CHAMBERLINE

Mount Vernon, April 3, 1788.

Sir: I have been favored with your letter of the 10 Ult^o. and feel myself much obliged by the communication of your mode of cropping, which you have been pleased to make to me.

Every improvement in husbandry should be gratefully received and peculiarly fostered in this Country, not only as promoting the interest and lessening the labour of the farmer,

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but as advancing our respectability in a national point of view; for, in the present State of America, our welfare and prosperity depend upon the cultivation of our lands and turning the produce of them to the best advantage.

The method of treading out wheat with horses is certainly a very execrable one, and nothing but the necessity of getting it out by some means or other can justify the practice. Your mode of cropping (with the assistance of the Winlaw Thrasher) claims the preference to every other if only considered as getting the wheat out so expeditiously as to preserve it from the ravages of the fly.

I wrote sometime in January last, to Arthur Young Esquire (Editor of the Annals of Agriculture) requesting him to send over to me one of Winlaw's thrashing Machines, if it was found, from the experience which it must have had in England, to possess that merit is ascribed to it in his Annals, I hope to receive it in time to prove it after the next

harvest, and should its operation be as favourable as is represented, I shall conceive the cultivation of wheat to be infinitely more worthy of the farmers attention in this country than it is at present.

If, in the course of your farming, you should meet with anything further that is interesting and worthy of attention I shall be much obliged to you for a communication of it. I am,
etc.¹²

To THOMAS SMITH

Mount Vernon, April 3, 1788.

Sir: Previous to the reception of your letter of the 11th. Inst. Colo. Biddle advised me of his having received from you £192.13.4. on my acct. he mentioned £200 having been brought to him by the Gentleman into whose charge you had given it but £7.6.8. being in bad gold,

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he did not incline to receive it, and had therefore returned it to the Gentleman by whom it was sent. I am, etc.

12. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

P.S. Since writing the above your letter of the 17th. Ult. has come to hand. Mr. Smith of Baltimore transmitted to me the sum of £75.15.10. which you lodged in his hands, for me in October last.¹¹

11. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To BARBÉ MARBOIS

Mount Vernon, April 4, 1788.

Sir: I have regularly received the letter you did me the honor: to write to me on the 30th. of November last, accompanied by one from the Count de la Luzerne, respecting the claim of M. de Saqui des Tourts¹³ to be admitted a member of the Society of the Cincinnati.

I should certainly find myself extremely happy in an opportunity of gratifying the wishes of so meritorious an officer as M. des Tourets; if I thought myself at liberty to take any part whatever in the premises. Recommended strongly as he is by the Count de la Luzerne and yourself I cannot have a doubt that he would be an acquisition and a credit to the Institution: nor can I have a hesitation in believing that his pretensions are as good as those of some who have found admission into the Society. Yet as I have (amidst the almost innumerable applications that have been made to me) scrupulously avoided giving any decision and only referred the Documents I had received to the General Meeting I flatter myself I shall be considered as having done everything that was properly within my sphere, by making a similar reference in the present instance.

You will be sensible, I perceive

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13. Louis Charles Hilarion, Chevalier de Saqui des Tourès. He was a captain in the French Navy.

Sir, that, from the Constitution of our Society, it would not have been right in me to have given a positive determination on the question. It would not be less proper than ever for me to take that upon myself. For, having by a circular letter to the several State Societies requested that I might not be re-elected President on account of my numerous avocations: the last Genl. Meeting was pleased so far to indulge me, as to make it a condition for inducing my acceptance, that I should be absolutely excused from all trouble and application incident to the office; and the whole business should devolve on the Vice President, viz, General Mifflin. As I shall not be present at the next General Meeting, I will transmit the application of M. des Tourets to Genl. Knox, the Secretary of the General Society.

The appointment of the Count de la Luzerne to the office of Minister of Marine and his *consequent removal to Europe*, will, I presume, supersede the expediency of my addressing him on this subject. Had that not been the case, I should have seized with eagerness the occasion of paying the tribute of my homage to his acknowledged talents and virtues. I am truly rejoiced to hear of the felicity of Madame de Marbois and yourself and hope you will be made still more happy *in the growing cement* of the two nations to which you allude. I am, etc.¹⁴

14. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, April 4, 1788.

Dear Sir: The articles which you shipped on my Acct. on board of the Charming Polly have arrived safe and in good order.

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As I am under the necessity of purchasing, every year, a quantity of coarse Linen, Blanketings &c. for the clothing of my negroes, and sundry other articles for various purposes, and Goods of every kind being sold in Alexandria at a high advance, I am desirous of knowing if I could not supply myself from Philadelphia, or some other place, upon lower terms. I will therefore be much obliged to you if you would inform me of the price of the following articles, as soon as is convenient after you have received this, viz. German and British Oznaburgs of the best quality, suitable for making Negroes shirts and shifts. A kind of Rolls proper for summer Petticoats and Trousers, Dutch Blanketings, Nails from 6d. to 20d, and good ditching Spades by the dozen or single one.

I will thank you to be so good as to forward the enclosed letters to their respective addresses by the first safe conveyances and am, with great esteem etc.15

[H.S.P.]

15. In the writing of Tobias Lear.

To JAMES WILSON

Mount Vernon, April 4, 1788.

Dear Sir: You will please to accept of my best thanks for the copy of the debates of your late convention, which you have been so polite as to send me. That, together with your favor of the 11 Ult. was handed to me by Mr. Madison. The violent proceedings of the enemies of the proposed constitution in your State are to be regretted as disturbing the peace of society; but in any other point of view they are not to be regarded; for their unimportance effectually precludes any fear of their having an extensive or lasting influence, and their activity holds up to view the general cast and character of them, which need only to be seen to be disregarded.

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It is impossible to say, with any degree of certainty, what will be the determination of the Convention in this State upon the proposed plan of Government. I have no opportunity of gaining information respecting the matter, but what comes through the medium of the news papers or from those Gentln. who visit me, as I have hardly been ten miles from my farms since my return from Philadelphia. Some judgment may be formed when the members chosen by the several Counties to serve in Convention, are known, as their sentiments will be decided, and their choice determined, by their Attachments or opposition to the proposed System. A majority of those names I have yet seen are said to be friendly to the Constitution;

but these are from the Northern parts of the State from whence less opposition was to be expected. It is however certain that there will be greater weight of abilities opposed to it here than in any other State. I am, &c.16

To CHARLES LEE

Mount Vernon, April 4, 1788.

Dear Sir: I am very sorry I have not yet been able to discharge my acct. with the James River Company for the amount of which you presented me with an order.

The almost total loss of my crop last year by the drought which has obliged me to purchase upwards of eight hundred Barrels of Corn, and my other numerous and necessary demands for cash, when I find it impossible to obtain what is due to me, by any means, have caused me more perplexity and given me more uneasiness than I ever experienced before from the want of money. In addition to the disappointments which I have met with from those who are indebted to me,

16. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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I have in my hands a number of indents and other public securities which I have received from time to time as the interest of some Continental loan office certificates etc. which are in my possession; as I am so little conversant in public securities of every kind as not to know the use or value of them, and hardly the difference of one species from another, I have kept them by me from year to year without having an idea that they would depreciate as they were drawn for interest, and never doubting but they would be received in payment of taxes at any time, till I have found by the Revenue Law of the last session, that only a particular description of them will pay the taxes of the year 1787; the others pay all arrearages of taxes and I am informed are not worth more than $\frac{2}{6}$ in the pound. The injustice of this measure is too obvious and too glaring to pass unobserved; it is taxing the honest man for his punctuality, and rewarding the tardy or dishonest with the sum of $\frac{17}{6}$ in every pound which is due from him for taxes. As you are now in Richmond I take the liberty of enclosing to you (in a letter from Mr. Pendleton) a Certificate for a negro executed in the year 1781 Amounting to £69. which I will thank you to negotiate for me there upon the best terms you can and pay the proceeds thereof in behalf of what is due from me to the James River Company. The principal for the negro, and three years interest thereon (which is all that was allowed) amounted to £138. which was divided into two Certificates, one receivable in the taxes now due, which I retain, to discharge part of my taxes for the year 1787 and the

other you have with this. Upon what principle of justice interest is allowed on the above certificates from the 1st. of Jany. 1785 *only* my ideas are not sufficiently comprehensive to understand and if it should fall in your way to enquire should be glad to know; as also what will or is likely to be the final result of my holding the Certificates, which have been given to me for interest of the money I lent the Public in the day of its distress. I am well apprized that these are negotiable *things* as above, and when a person is *obliged* to part with them, he must, as with other commodities at market, take what they will fetch, but the object of my enquiry, is to know, as above, what the final end of them will be if retained in my chest. Strange indeed it seems, that the Public Officers should take in the original Certificates,

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issued new, by a scale of their own, reducing the money, as *they* say, to specie value, give warrants for interest accordingly, and then behold! these specie warrants are worth 2/6 in the pound. To commit them to the flames, or suffer this is a matter of indifference to me. there can be no justice, where there is such practices. You will pardon me for dwelling so long upon this subject. It is a matter which does not concern me *alone* but must affect many others. With great esteem etc.17

17. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On April 4 Tobias Lear wrote to Thomas Mahony, an house carpenter and joiner, giving the terms, by the year, at which Washington was willing to reemploy him. A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

On April 15 Mahony and Washington signed an agreement, as to terms, for one year. This agreement is in the *Washington Papers*.

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, April 11, 1788.

Dear Sir: I have recd. your favor of the 31st Ulto. enclosing a letter and some seeds from Mr. Peters, and will thank you to send me, by the first Vessel bound this way, a good Wheat fan (if there have been any late improvements on the common sort, which has been found useful, I shall prefer one with such improvements), and a steel-plated whip-saw of the best kind, seven and an half feet long; if you are not a competent judge yourself of the quality of the saw, I will thank you to get somebody to chuse one who is, as I wish it to be free from flaws and good in every respect.

You will oblige me by conveying the enclosed letter to Mr. Peters by the first good opportunity. I am etc.18

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[H.S.P.]

18. In the writing of Tobias Lear.

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, April 14, 1788.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 3d. inst. and the news papers accompanying it came to hand by the last mail.

In my letter to you of the 11th inst. I requested you to procure a wheat fan for me, but since that time I have found one more than I then knew of which compleated the number on my several farms and supersedes the necessity of your sending the one which I wrote for, provided this letter reaches you in time to prevent your procuring it.

I will thank you to inform me of the price of good Shad and Herring per Bbl. and if a quantity of them would meet with a ready sale in Philadelphia.

With great esteem etc.19

19. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To THOMAS JOHNSON**

Mount Vernon, April 20, 1788.

Dear Sir: As well from report, as from the ideas expressed in your letter to me in December last, I am led to conclude that you are disposed (circumstanced as our public affairs are at present) to ratify the Constitution which has been submitted by the federal Convention to the People; and under this impression, I take the liberty of expressing a *single* sentiment on the occasion. It is, that an adjournment, (if attempted), of your

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Convention to a later period than the decision of the question in this State, will be tantamount to the rejection of the Constitution. I have good ground for this opinion, and am told it is *the blow* which the leading characters of the opposition in these two States have meditated, if it shall be found that a direct attack is not likely to succeed in yours. If this be true, it cannot be too much deprecated, and guarded against. The postponement in New-Hampshire, altho' made without any reference to the Convention of this State, and altogether from the local circumstances of its own, is ascribed by the opposition *here* to complaisance towards Virginia; and great use is made of it. An event similar to this in Maryland, would have the worst tendency imaginable; for indecision there wld. have considerable influence upon South Carolina, the only other State which is to precede Virginia, and submits the question almost wholly

to the determination of the latter. The *pride* of the State is already touched upon this string, and will be raised much higher if there is an opening for it.

The sentiments of Kentucky are not yet known here. Independent of these, the parties with us, from the known, or presumed opinions of the members, are pretty equally balanced. The one in favor of the Constitution preponderates at present; but a small matter cast into the opposite scale, may make it the heaviest.

If in suggesting this matter, I have exceeded the proper limit, my motive must excuse me. I have but one public wish remaining. It is, that in *peace and retirement*, I may see this Country rescued from the danger which is pending, and rise into respectability maugre the Intrigues of its public and private enemies.

With very great esteem &c.

[M.D.H.S.]

To MARQUIS DE CHASTELLUX

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Mount Vernon, April 25[–May 1], 1788.

My dear Marquis: In reading your very friendly and acceptable letter of 21st. December 1787, which came to hand by the last mail, I was, as you may well suppose, not less delighted than surprised to come across that plain American word “my wife.” A wife! well my dear Marquis, I can hardly refrain from smiling to find you are caught at last. I saw, by the eulogium you often made on the happiness of domestic life in America, that you had swallowed the bait and that you would as surely be taken (one day or another) as you was a Philosopher and a Soldier. So your day has, at length, come. I am glad of it with all my heart and soul. It is quite good enough for you. Now you are well served for coming to fight in favor of the American Rebels, all the way across the Atlantic Ocean, by catching that terrible Contagion, domestic felicity, which time like the small pox or the plague, a man can have only once in his life: because it commonly lasts him (at least with us in America, I dont know how you manage these matters in France) for his whole life time. And yet after all the male-dictions you so richly merit on the subject, the worst wish which I can find in my heart to make against Madame de Chastellux and yourself is, that you may neither of you ever get the better of this same domestic felicity during the entire course of your-mortal existence.

If so wonderful an event should

have occasioned me, my dear Marquis, to have written in a strange style, you will understand me as clearly as if I had said (what in plain English, is the simple truth) do me the justice to believe that I take a heartfelt interest in whatever concerns your happiness. And in this view, I sincerely congratulate you on your auspicious Matrimonial connection. I am happy to find that Madame de Chastellux is so intimately connected with the Dutchess of Orleans, as I have always understood that this noble lady was an illustrious pattern of connubial love, as well as an excellent model of virtue in general.

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While you have been making love, under the banner of Hymen, the great Personages in the North have been making war, under the inspiration, or rather under the infatuation of Mars. Now, for my part, I humbly conceive, you have had much the best and wisest of the bargain. For certainly it is more consonant to all the principles of reason and religion (natural and revealed) to replenish the earth with inhabitants, rather than to depopulate it by killing those already in existence, besides it is time for the age of Knight-Errantry and mad-heroism to be at an end. Your young military men, who want to reap the harvest of laurels, don't care (I suppose) how many seeds of war are sown; but for the sake of humanity it is devoutly to

be wished, that the manly employment of agriculture and the humanizing benefits of commerce, would supersede the waste of war and the rage of conquest; that the swords might be turned into plough-shares, the spears into pruning hooks, and, as the Scripture expresses it, "the nations learn war no more."

Now I will give you a little news from this side of the water, and then finish. As for us, we are plodding on in the dull road of peace and politics. We, who live in these ends of the earth, only hear of the rumors of war like the roar of distant thunder. It is to be hoped, that our remote local situation will prevent us from being swept into its vortex.

The Constitution, which was proposed by the fœderal Convention, has been adopted by the States of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Georgia. No State has rejected it. The Convention of Maryland is now sitting and will probably adopt it; as that of South Carolina is expected to do in May. The other Conventions will assemble early in the summer. Hitherto there has been much greater unanimity in favour of the proposed government than could have reasonably been expected. Should it be adopted (and I think it will be) America will lift up her head again and in a few years become respectable among the nations. It is a flattering and consolatory reflection, that our rising

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Republics have the good wishes of all the Philosophers, Patriots, and virtuous men in all nations: and that they look upon them as a kind of

Asylum for mankind. God grant that we may not disappoint their honest expectations, by our folly or perverseness.

With sentiments of the purest attachment &c.

P.S. If the Duke de Lauzun is still with you, I beg you will thank him, in my name, for his kind remembrance of me, and make my Compliments to him.

May 1st. Since writing the above I have been favoured with a duplicate of your letter in the hand-writing of a lady, and cannot close this without acknowledging my obligations for the flattering Postscript of the fair Transcriber. In effect, my dear Marquis, the Characters of this interpreter of your sentiments are so much fairer than those through which I have been accustomed to decypher them, that I already consider myself as no small gainer by your Matrimonial connection. Especially, as I hope, your amiable amanuensis will not forget, at sometimes, to add a few annotations

of her own to your original text.³⁸

To WILLIAM STEPHENS SMITH

Mount Vernon, May 1, 1788.

Dear Sir: I consider myself the more indebted to your obliging care in transmitting the letter of the Marquis de la Fayette, as by that means you have given me the double advantage of hearing from two of my distant, military friends at once.

It is so long since I have had the satisfaction of holding any immediate intercourse with you, that I may be allowed to touch on a subject rather obtrusive [*sic*] indeed, but not (I presume) the less pleasant on that account: I mean your entrance upon the road of

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connubial life. Permit me, then, to wish that it may be strewed with flowers, and that every possible happiness may attend you and the partner³⁹ of your Journey, who, (if I am not egregiously misinformed by those who are well acquainted with her) is worthy of that distinguished lot of felicity. Mrs. Washington wishes that her compliments may be presented with mine to yourself and Lady. You may ever count upon my sincere regard, and believe me to be, Dear Sir, etc.⁴⁰

38. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

39. Smith married Abigail Adams, daughter of John Adams.

40. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOHN HOPKINS

Mount Vernon, April 27, 1788.

Sir: I received the enclosed Tax bill by the last post in a letter from Mr. Charles Lee who informed me that you had furnished him with it, and was so obliging as to offer to settle it with the Sheriff. I must beg you to accept of my best thanks for your kind offer, and shall take the liberty to trouble you upon the occasion.

The specie Tax for the years 1785 and 6 amounts to £107.11.9 which I find, by the Revenue act passed the last Session, may be discharged in Certificates of a particular description, and for the payment of which I have enclosed you 8 Warrants amounting to £107.12.2.

To discharge the Certificate tax for the above mentioned years, amounting to £91.12.8. I have enclosed 305–53/90 Dollars in Indents, which, if I am rightly informed, will pay all arrears of the Certificate tax.

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I shall endeavour to procure Tobacco notes to pay £71.14.6 due for the year 1787, and will forward them to you as soon as I can obtain them.

I observe that the Sheriff, of Green Briar has, in the enclosed bill, given in a tract containing 10,990 Acres which lies on the west

side of the Great Kanawa, and has omitted one of 7276 acres patented in my name and that of George Muse but now my sole property laying on the East side of said River. If the Great Kanawa seperates the County of Green Briar from any other (as I conceive it does) this statement is erroneous; however I am not sufficiently acquainted with the bounds and divisions of those Counties to decide upon it; the Sheriff ought to know whether it is right or not, and I will thank you to mention the matter to him. The tract of 2000 Acres is also on the West side of the Great Kanawa, tho' by the tax bill it is placed in the County of Green Briar. Independently of the tracts here mentioned, I have 3 other lying on the Ohio, between the mouths of the Great and little Kanawa, but in what Counties they be or under what predicament they are, I know not [they may be]²⁵ *possibly sold* ;²⁶ tho no application has ever been made to me, or any person in my behalf, to my knowledge, for the taxes, these contain 2314 Acres and 4395 Acres making together 9157 Acres. I have also, higher up the Ohio a small tract of 587 Acres called the round bottom but how it is taxed, or what steps have been taken to collect it I know not.

Upon the reception of this you will be so obliging as to inform me if the warrants and Indents are such as will answer the purpose. I am, etc.²⁷

25. The words in brackets are inserted at a venture in an effort to clarify the careless copying.

26. To satisfy the taxes(?).

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27. Immediately following this letter, in the "Letter Book" is a "List of Warrants and Indents sent to Mr. John Hopkins, to pay the taxes due upon my Lands in Green Briar County April 27, 1788" as follows:

WARRANTS One dated 29th Novr. 1786 for sundry articles furnished for the use of the Militia in the year 1774 allowed by the Court of Claims in Fairfax County for £ s d 20 0 0 One ditto ditto for 20 0 0 One ditto ditto for 20 0 0 One ditto ditto for 27 16 6 One issued to Thomas Swain for his Services in the militia of this State under Captain Sandford from Fairfax County dated Dec 8 1783 H. Randolph J. Pendleton signers for 4 16 0 One issued to Joshua Smolley for Do under Captn. Span from Louden County Augt. 5, 1782 B Clark H. Randolph Signers for 2 14 8 One payable to Mathew Whiting for Corn furnished the Continent dated 2d November 1783 allowed by the Court of Claims in Prince Wm. County M. Carrington Saml. Jones Signers for 9 0 0 One payable to Wm. Smith for waggon hire in Septr. 1781, dated 4 October 1783, Louden County M Carrington Jams. Jones Signers for 3 6 0 £107 13 2 Green Briar taxes 2000 Acres at 6/ 10,990 do at 6/ 2950 do at 6/ Value £4782 Tax on the above for the year 1785 £35 17 3 Do 1786 71 14 6 Do 1787 71 14 6 £179 6 3 Certificate tax 1785 45 16 4 Do 1786 45 16 4 £91 12 8

The receipts for these payments are in the *Washington Papers* under date of May 14, 1788.

To JAMES McHENRY

Mount Vernon, April 27, 1788.

Dear Sir: Not having sent to the Post office for several days, your favor of the 20th. inst. did not get to my hand till last night. I mention this circumstance as an apology for my not giving it an earlier acknowledgment.

As you are pleased to ask my opinion of the consequences of an adjournment of your Convention until the meeting of ours, I shall (tho' I have meddled very little in this political dispute less perhaps than a man so thoroughly persuaded as I am of the evils and confusions which will result from the rejection

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of the proposed Constitution, ought to have done) give it as my sincere and decided opinion that the postponement of the question would be tantamount to the final rejection of it, that the adversaries of the new Constitution Virginia and Maryland view it in this light, and they will press for the accomplishment of this measure as the denier resort. I have very good reason to believe to adduce arguments in support of this opinion is as unnecessary as they would be prolix. They are obvious, and will occur to you on a moments reflection.

Tho' the period to which the adjournment in New Hampshire was fixed, with no respect to the meeting of the Convention in this State, but was the effect, solely of local circumstances within itself, yet the opposition *here* ascribe it wholly to complaisance towards Virginia, make great use of it and undertake to pronounce that all the States thereafter whose Conventions were to precede hers will pursue the same line of Conduct, and of course that those which are to follow will receive their [direction] from it. Should Maryland fulfil this prognostic South Carolina may indeed be staggered and the prediction of the foes to the Constitution will thereby be realized, for the assertion so far as it respects North Carolina may with some truth I believe be applied while the opposition in New York it is well known will avail

itself of every pretext for rejection.

The sentiments of the Western district of this State, are not yet brought to my view. Independently thereof the Majority, so far as the opinions of the Delegates are known or presumed, is in favor of the adoption and is encreasing; but as the parties from report are pretty equally poized a small matter cast into either scale would give it the preponderancy. Decisions, or indecisions then with you, will in my opinion, determine the fate of the Constitution, and with it, whether peace and happiness or discord and confusion is to be our lot. The fœderalists here see and deprecate the idea of the latter, and their opponents

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doing all they can to encourage it as their last hope. Thus stands the matter in my eyes at present. with very great esteem etc.²⁸

28. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To DANIEL OF ST. THOMAS JENIFER

Mount Vernon, April 27, 1788.

Dear Sir: Accept my thanks for the obliging information contained in your letter of the 15th. inst.²⁹ The great, the important question must ere this, have received its first features in, if not the final of your Convention. If they are decisive and favourable, it will most assuredly raise the edifice. Seven affirmatives without a negative carries weight with them, that would almost convert the unbelieving Sister and yet, but in place of what I was going to add, I will say that, I am, etc.

To CHARLES LEE

Mount Vernon, April 27, 1788.

Dear Sir: Your two favors of the 11th. and 17th. Inst. have been duly received. I am much obliged to you for the trouble which the negotiating the Certificate that I forwarded to you has given, and must further intrude upon you by requesting that you will dispose of the certificates which are in your hand

29. Jenifer had written (April 15): "But three Counties in the State have chosen Members Antifederal to wit Ann Arundel, Baltimore and Harford and the Elections of these three will be controverted as to these Members to wit Mr. Saml Chase for Ann Arundel on account of being a Non resident the same objection to Mr Paca and Luther Martin in Harford. Baltimore a Double return 4 for and 4 against the Constitution. Tho' I am opinion when the ultimate decision happens that Mr Paca will vote for the proposed plan as it stands and

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recommend amendments, rather than risque a new Convention." Jenifer's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

to the best advantage and have the proceeds of them passed to my Credit with the James River Company. As I have already discharged my taxes here for the last year, I shall have no occasion for them on that score.

I thank you, my dear Sir, for your kind attention in forwarding the Acct. of my taxes due upon my lands in Green Briar and as you inform me that Mr. Hopkins is so obliging as to offer to settle with the Sheriff for them, I shall write to him upon the subject, and enclose him Certificates to discharge all that is due previous to the year 1787, for the payment of which I shall endeavour to procure Tobacco notes, which shall be forwarded to him as soon as I can obtain them. With great regard etc.

P. S. Enclosed is a letter to Mr. Hopkins under a flying seal which you will be so good as to close and deliver to him; you will see by the contents what steps I have taken to discharge the tax bill which you forwarded to me, and as it is probable that others of a similar nature will be rendered in (if the lands are not already sold) I think it would be best to lodge the Certificates which you have in the hands of Mr. Hopkins to pay that part of the tax which is due for 1787, and I will devise some other method to

answer the demands of the James River Company.³⁰

To JOHN VAUGHAN

Mount Vernon, April 27, 1788.

Sir: I have received your two letters of the 17th and 21st inst. and the papers containing the four numbers of Fabius which accompanied them.

I must beg you to accept my best thanks for your polite attention in forwarding those papers to me. The writer of the pieces signed Fabius, whoever he is,²³ appears to be

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master of his subject; he treats it with dignity, and at the same time expresses himself in such manner as to render it intelligible to every capacity. I have no doubt but that an extensive republication of those numbers would be of utility in removing the impressions which have been made upon the Minds of many by an unfair or partial representation of the proposed constitution, and would afford desirable information upon the subject to those who sought for it. I am happy to hear of your Father's safe arrival in Jamaica; you will please to tender my regards to him whenever you write. I am &c.24

30. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

23. He was John Dickinson.

24. From a copy furnished by Mrs. Louis C. Madeira, of Philadelphia, Pa.

To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Mount Vernon, April 28, 1788.

I have now before me, my dear Marqs. your favor of the 3d of August in the last year; together with those of the 1st. of January, the 2d. of January and the 4th. of February in the present. Though the first is of so antient a date, they all come to hand lately, and nearly at the same moment. The frequency of your kind remembrance of me, and the endearing expressions of attachment, are by so much the more satisfactory, as I recognise them to be a counterpart of my own feelings for you. In truth, you know I speak the language of sincerity and not of flattery, when I tell you, that your letters are ever most welcome and dear to me.

This I lay out to be a letter of Politics. We are looking anxiously across the Atlantic for news and you are looking anxiously back again for the same purpose. It is an interesting subject to contemplate how far the war, kindled in the north of Europe, may extend its conflagrations, and what may be the result before its extinction. The Turk appears to

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have lost his old and acquired a new connection. Whether England has not, in the hour of her pride, overacted her part and pushed matters too far for her own interest, time will discover: but, in my opinion (though from my distance and want of minute information I should form it with diffidence) the affairs of that nation cannot long go on in the same prosperous train: in spite of expedients and in spite of resources, the Paper bubble

will one day burst. And it will overwhelm many in the ruins. I hope the affairs of France are gradually sliding into a better state. Good effects may, and I trust will ensue, without any public convulsion France, were her resources properly managed and her administrations wisely conducted, is (as you justly observe) much more potent in the scale of empire, than her rivals at present seem inclined to believe.

I notice with pleasure the additional immunities and facilities in trade, which France has granted by the late Royal arret to the United States. I flatter myself it will have the desired effect, in some measure, of augmenting the commercial intercourse. From the productions and wants of the two countries, their trade with each other is certainly capable of great amelioration, to be actuated by a spirit of unwise policy. For so surely as ever we shall have an efficient government established, so surely will that government impose retaliating restrictions, to a certain degree, upon the trade of Britain. at present, or under our existing form of Confederations, it would be idle to think of making commercial regulations on our part. One State passes a prohibitory law respecting some article, another State opens wide the avenue for its admission. One Assembly makes a system, another Assembly unmakes it. Virginia, in the very last session of her Legislature, was about to have passed some

of the most extravagant and preposterous Edicts on the subject of trade, that ever stained the leaves of a Legislative Code. It is in vain to hope for a remedy of these and innumerable other evils, untill a general Government shall be adopted.

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The Conventions of Six States only have as yet accepted the new Constitution. No one has rejected it. It is believed that the Convention of Maryland, which is now in session; and that of South Carolina, which is to assemble on the 12th of May, will certainly adopt it. It is, also, since the elections of Members for the Convention have taken place in this State, more generally believed that it will be adopted here than it was before those elections were made. There will, however, be powerful and eloquent speeches on both sides of the question in the Virginia Convention; but as Pendleton, Wythe, Blair, Madison, Jones, Nicholas, Innis and many other of our first characters will be advocates for its adoption, you may suppose the weight of abilities will rest on that side. Henry and Mason are its great adversaries. The Governor, if he opposes it at all will do it feebly.

On the general merits of this proposed Constitution, I wrote to you, some time ago, my sentiments pretty freely. That letter had not been received by you, when you addressed to me the last of yours which has come to my hands. I had never supposed that perfection could be the result of accommodation and mutual concession. The opinion of Mr. Jefferson and yourself is certainly a wise one, that the Constitution ought by all means to be accepted by nine States before

any attempt should be made to procure amendments. For, if that acceptance shall not previously take place, men's minds will be so much agitated and soured, that the danger will be greater than ever of our becoming a disunited People. Whereas, on the other hand, with prudence in temper and a spirit of moderation, every essential alteration, may in the process of time, be expected.

You will doubtless, have seen, that it was owing to this conciliatory and patriotic principle that the Convention of Massachusetts adopted the Constitution in toto; but recommended a number of specific alterations and quieting explanations, as an early, serious and unremitting subject of attention. Now, although it is not to be expected that every individual, in Society, will or can ever be brought to agree upon what is, exactly, the best form of government; yet, there are many things in the Constitution which only need to be

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explained, in order to prove equally satisfactory to all parties. For example: there was not a member of the convention, I believe, who had the least objection to what is contended for by the Advocates for a *Bill of Rights* and *Tryal by Jury* . The first, where the people evidently retained every thing which they did not in express terms give up, was considered nugatory as you will find to have been more fully explained by Mr. Wilson and others:

And as to the second, it was only the difficulty of establishing a mode which should not interfere with the fixed modes of any of the States, that induced the Convention to leave it, as a matter of future adjustment.

There are other points on which opinions would be more likely to vary. As for instance, on the ineligibility of the same person for President, after he should have served a certain course of years. Guarded so effectually as the proposed Constitution is, in respect to the prevention of bribery and undue influence in the choice of President: I confess, I differ widely myself from Mr. Jefferson and you, as to the necessity or expediency of rotation in that appointment. The matter was fairly discussed in the Convention, and to my full convictions; though I cannot have time or room to sum up the argument in this letter. There cannot, in my judgment, be the least danger that the President will by any practicable intrigue ever be able to continue himself one moment in office, much less perpetuate himself in it; but in the last stage of corrupted morals and political depravity: and even then there is as much danger that any other species of domination would prevail. Though, when a people shall have become incapable of governing themselves and fit for a master, it is of little consequence from what quarter he comes. Under an extended view of this part of the subject, I can see no propriety in precluding ourselves from the services of any man, who on some great emergency shall be deemed universally, most capable of serving the Public.

In answer to the observations you make on the probability of my election to the Presidency (knowing me as you do) I need only say, that it has no enticing charms, and no fascinating allurements for me. However, it might not be decent for me to say I would refuse to accept

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or even to speak much about an appointment, which may never take place: for in so doing, one might possibly incur the application of the moral resulting from that Fable, in which the Fox is represented as inveighing against the sourness of the grapes, because he could not reach them. All that it will be necessary to add, my dear Marquis, in order to show my decided predilection, is, that, (at my time of life and under my circumstances) the encreasing infirmities of nature and the growing love of retirement do not permit me to entertain a wish beyond that of living and dying an honest man on my own farm. Let those follow the pursuits of ambition and fame, who have a keener relish for them, or who may have more years, in store, for the enjoyment.

Mrs. Washington, while she requests that her best compliments may be presented to you, joins with me in soliciting that the same friendly and affectionate memorial of our constant remembrance and good wishes may be made acceptable to Madame de la Fayette and the little ones. I am &c.

P. S. May 1st. Since writing the foregoing letter, I have received Authentic Accounts that the Convention of Maryland have ratified the new Constitution by a Majority of 63 to 11.³²

To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU

Mount Vernon, April 28, 1788.

My dear Count: I have just received the letter which you did me the honor to write to me on the 18th of January; and am sorry to learn that the Count de Grasse, our gallant coadjutor in the capture of Cornwallis, is no more. Yet his death is not, perhaps, so much to be deplored as his latter days were to be pitied. It seemed as if an unfortunate and unrelenting destiny pursued him, to destroy the enjoyment of all earthly comfort. For the disastrous battle of the 12th of April, the loss of the favor of his king, and the subsequent connection in marriage with an unworthy woman, were sufficient to have made him weary of the burden of life. Your goodness, in endeavoring to sweeten its passage, was truly commendable; however it might have been marred by his own impetuosity. But his frailties

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should now be buried in the grave with him, while his name will be long deservedly dear to his country, on account of his successful co-operation in the glorious campaign of 1781. The Cincinnati in some of the States have gone into mourning for him.

Altho' your nation and England have avoided, from prudential motives, going into

32. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

a war, yet I fancy, their affections have not been much increased by the affair in Holland. The feeling occasioned to France by the interference of Prussia and Britain, may not pass away altogether without consequences. I wish, indeed, the affairs of France to be on a footing which would enable her to be the arbiter of peace to the neighboring nations. The poor Dutch Patriots seem, by some means or another, to have been left sadly in the lurch and to be reduced to a most humiliating condition. And as if the two Powers, who reinstated the Stadt Holder, had not done enough to set the middle nations together by the ears; they have embroiled, forsooth, all the north of Europe by bringing the Turks into hostility with the two Imperial Courts. Should France join with the latter, or even should she continue neuter, I can scarcely conceive that the Ottomans will be permitted to hold any of their possessions in Europe. The torch of hostility, being once kindled, commonly spreads apace; but it is beyond my pre-science to foretell how far this flame will extend itself, before it shall be entirely extinguished.

Here, in America, we have not much news worth the trouble of communicating to you, my dear Count, though I know what is to ourselves often [a] matter of indifference, is to our friends at a distance a subject of curiosity. For that reason, I will

sub-join, in one word, a State of affairs on this side of the water. All the public attention has been, for many months past, engrossed by a new Constitution. It has met with some opposition from men of abilities, but it has been much more ably advocated. Six States, that is to say, those of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Jersey Pennsylvania, Delaware and Georgia have accepted it. The opinion is that Maryland and South Carolina will soon

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do the same. One more State, only, will be [then] wanting to put the Government into execution. And as the other Conventions are to meet early in the summer, we hope for the best. As to the intimation which your partiality for me has prompted you to make on my behalf: I need only say that every body knows that private life is my decided choice in preference to any thing the world can bestow. I am &c.31

***To PIERRE CHARLES L'ENFANT**

Mount Vernon, April 28, 1788.

Sir: I have been duly favoured with your letter of the 15 Instt., enclosing a Memorial to the General Meeting of the Cincinnati; and, agreeably to your request, shall transmit the

31. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

Enclosure to the Secretary, to be laid before the meeting.

As your embarrassments have been a source of long and severe inquietude, I should be truly happy in knowing that they were removed. But, as it was the express condition of my accepting the Presidency of the Society, "that I should be exempted from all applications and cares respecting it: I trust when this stipulation shall be generally known that all addresses will be made to the Vice-President or Secretary.

While I sincerely condole with you on the loss of your good father; you will permit me to remind you, as an inexhaustible subject of consolation, that there is a good Providence which will never fail to take care of his Children: and be assured, Sir, it will always give me real satisfaction to find that prosperity and felicity have been attendant on all your steps.

With sentiments of great esteem etc.33

33. From a microfilm of the original in the Hayes Memorial Library, Fremont, Ohio.

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To DOCTOR BENJAMIN RUSH

Mount Vernon, April 28, 1788.

General Washington presents his best compliments and thanks to Doctor Rush, for the polite attention manifested in forwarding the elegant engraving³⁴ from the Right Hble. the Earl of Buchan. The General takes the liberty of requesting that the Doctor (whenever an occasion may happen) will have the goodness to make his most grateful acknowledgments to that patriotic Nobleman, for so flattering a token of his esteem and friendship.³⁵

To SAMUEL GRIFFIN

Mount Vernon, April 30, 1788.

Dear Sir: I am now to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th. of April, in which you did me the favor to enclose an extract from the original Statute, designating the duties of the Office to which I had been appointed.

Influenced by a heart-felt desire to promote the cause of Science in general, and the prosperity of the College of William and Mary in particular, I accept the office of Chancellor in the same; and request you will be pleased to give official notice

34. This was "a print of the celebrated Mr Napier," who was John Napier, or Neper, laird of Merchiston, inventor of logarithms, the present notation of decimal fractions, etc.

35. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

thereof to the learned Body, who have thought proper to honor me with the appointment. I confide fully in their strenuous endeavours for placing the system of Education on such a basis, as will render it most beneficial to the State and the Republic of letters, as well as to the more extensive interests of humanity and religion. In return, they will do me the justice

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to believe, that I shall not be tardy in giving my cheerful concurrence to such measures, as may be best calculated for the attainment of those desirable and important objects. For the expressions of politeness and friendship blended with your communications, you are desired to receive my best acknowledgments. I am &c.36

To JOHN PORTER

Mount Vernon, April 30, 1788.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 9th. instant by the Post and have found myself not a little at a loss to know how to answer it.

While rivetted to the toils

36. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

and perplexities inseperable from the Commission of Commander in Chief; I sought not to avoid trouble, I shunned not to enter into the minutest investigation of innumerable disagreeable subjects, for, unfortunately, in our army, they were but too numerous and too troublesome to my repose. But to rip open again the disagreeable subjects that seemed to be forever closed with the war and my retirement, I could not think of doing it, unless I would first consent to give up all the prospects of tranquility, which, I flattered myself, awaited the last years of a life, that had been devoted almost invariably to the services of others. The sacrifice would be too great, and the expectation unreasonable. All that I can be expected to do in your case is to observe upon the state of it (not from a recurrence to papers which are packed away but according to the best of my recollection) that your absence from the Army appeared to be rather the effect of an unaccountable indiscretion than of a premediated criminality; and that, altho' precedent and the good of service made your dismissal indispensable on account of your having gone beyond Sea without a regular permission, your character in other respects stood unexceptionable: insomuch that considerable interest was made in your behalf by Officers of good reputation.

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Upon this State of facts; although it would be highly improper for me to give any opinion to Congress, yet so far am I from wishing to prejudice an impartial examination into the

Justice of your applications, that I cannot have the least objection to their investigating and determining the matter, in whatsoever manner may seem most proper to them. In whatsoever manner the business may result, I cannot ever with propriety say anything more on the subject. I am, etc.³⁷

To BENJAMIN LINCOLN

Mount Vernon, May 2, 1788.

My dear Sir: I have now to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 29 of March which should have been done at an earlier period had any thing transpired in these parts that was worth communicating.

I can now with pleasure, inform you that the State of Maryland adopted the proposed Constitution last Monday by a very great majority; this you will undoubtedly have announced by the public papers before this letter reaches you but that State will not receive the sole benefit of its

37. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

adoption, it will have a very considerable influence upon the decision in Virginia, for it has been strongly insisted upon by the opponents in the lower and back counties in this State that Maryland would reject it by a large majority; the result being found so directly opposite to this assertion will operate very powerfully upon the sentiments of many who were before undecided and will tend to fix them in favor of the Constitution, it will if I am not misinformed, have this effect upon many who are chosen to the Convention and who have depended in a great measure upon the determination of Maryland to confirm their opinion. But, exclusive of this influence, the most accurate returns of the members of the

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Convention, with their sentiments, so far as they were known, annexed, gave a decided majority in favor of the Constitution, and the prevailing opinion is, that it gains advocates daily. I never have, for my own part once doubted of its adoption here, and if I have at any time been wavering in my opinion the present appearances and concurrent information would have compleatly fixed it.

I am very sorry to find by your letter that there is so much of the spirit of insurrection yet remaining in your State, and that it discovered itself so strongly in your Assembly. but I hope the influence of those Gentlemen who are friendly to the proposed constitution, and the conciliatory disposition which was shown by many of the minority in your Convention will so far pervade the States as to prevent that factious spirit from gaining ground.

Mrs. Washington and the Children thank you for your kind remembrance of them and unite with me in the best wishes for your happiness. With sentiments of the highest esteem etc.

P.S. Enclosed is a letter from your young friend.⁴³

To REVEREND JOHN ETTWEIN⁴⁴

Mount Vernon, May 2, 1788.

Reverend Sir: I have received your obliging letter of the 28th of March, enclosing a copy of some remarks on the Customs, Languages &c. of the Indians, and a printed pamphlet containing the stated rules of a Society for propagating the Gospel among the Heathen⁴⁵ for which tokens of polite attention and kind remembrance I must beg you to accept my best thanks.

So far as I am capable of judging, the principles upon which the society is founded and the rules laid down for its government, appear to be well calculated

43. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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44. A Moravian bishop.

45. The remarks on the customs and languages of the Indians, by David Zeisberger, is in the *Washington Papers*. The printed pamphlet will be found in the *Washington Papers* under date of Nov. 1, 1787.

to promote so laudable and arduous an undertaking, and you will permit me to add that if an event so long and so earnestly desired as that of converting the Indians to Christianity and consequently to civilization, can be effected, the Society of Bethlehem bids fair to bear a very considerable part in it. I am, Reverend Sir, with sentiments of esteem, &c.

To GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

Mount Vernon, May 2, 1788.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 29th. Ult. reminds me of an omission which I should have been ashamed of, did I not conceive that my apology will be as Satisfactory as it is Just. The omission I allude to is not acknowledging the receipt of your favour which accompanied the Books⁴⁶ and thank you for your care of the latter. The apology is the hourly expectation of seeing you at this place on your return to Philadelphia. Whether the latter is adequate to the former you are to Judge of, be this as it may, it is the best I can offer.

I have not at any moment, despaired of this States acceptance of the new Constitution and less since the ratification of

46. Morris's letter, which is in the *Washington Papers*, makes no mention of books.

Maryland by so large and decided a Majority; the *fury* of the opposition, I believe is spent, the grand push was made at the Elections and failing of success therein the hopes of its leaders begin to flag and many of them or I am mistaken wish the business was to

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commence de novo; in which case a different line of March would be taken up by some of them.

It was with very singular pleasure I received information of the intended visit from Mrs. Morris &c. I take it for granted, tho' Mr. Morris has not said as much, that he will add to our happiness by becoming one of the Party, to repeat the same to you is, I hope unnecessary, as you cannot doubt of the pleasure it would give me. Mrs. Washington offers her compliments to you, and with sentiments of sincere esteem and regard I am, etc.

P.S. Colo. Humphrey's who is here, thanks you for your kind remembrance of him, and prays you to accept his best wishes.⁴⁷

47. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JAMES MADISON

Mount Vernon, May 2, 1788.

My dear Sir: Your favor of the 10th. ult. came duly to hand, and the enclosure for Mr. D. Carroll⁴⁸ was forwarded the next day by a direct and safe conveyance. That Gentleman however was not of the Convention; but the body, of which you supposed him a member by a large (of sixty odd to twelve) and decided majority have ratified the new Constitution. A thorn this is in the sides of the leaders of opposition in this State; should South Carolina give as unequivocal approbation of the system the opposition here must become feeble for eight affirmatives without a negative carries *weight* of argument if not eloquence with it that would cause even the unerring sister to hesitate. Mr. Chace, it is said, made a display of all his eloquence. Mr. Mercer discharged his whole artillery of inflamable matter; and Mr. Martin did something; I know not what, presume with vehemence, but no converts were made, no, not one. So business after a very short Session, ended; and will if I mistake not render yours less tiresome. I am, etc.⁴⁹

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48. Daniel Carroll, of Rock Creek.

49. The text is from the sales catalogue of the *Washington-Madison Papers* (McGuire Collection, 1892).

To ROBERT MORRIS

Mount Vernon, May 2, 1788.

Dear Sir: Permit me to assure you in unequivocal terms, that the proposed visit of Mrs. Morris, and such parts of your family as are mentioned in your letter of the 29th. Ultio. will give sincere pleasure at Mount Vernon. Mrs. Washington and myself only wish that you had not confined it to Miss, and the two Mr. Morris; of this I have taken the liberty to inform Mrs. Morris in a letter, hoping that she may find it convenient to bring the other parts of your family along with her. I hope you will not (tho' you are silent on the head) let us not want the pleasure of your Company to make the party perfectly happy.

On the safe arrival of your Sons I heartily congratulate you as I hope I may do on the recovery of your finger from the severe blow we are told it received in your tour to Norfolk. Mrs. Washington joins me in every good wish for you, and with Sentiments of very great esteem and regard I am, etc.⁵⁰

50. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To GEORGE STEPTOE WASHINGTON

Mount Vernon, May 5, 1788.

Dear George: I yesterday received a letter from Mr. Hanson, informing me that you slept from home three nights successively, and one contrary to his express prohibition. Complaints of this nature are extremely painful to me, as it discovers a degree of impropriety in your conduct, which, at your time of life your good sense and discretion

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ought to point out to you and lead you to avoid. Although there is nothing criminal in your having slept with a companion of good manners and reputation as you say you have, yet your absenting yourself from your own lodgings under that pretence may be productive of irregularities and disagreeable consequences; and I now insist upon it, in the most pointed terms, that you do not repeat it without the consent and approbation of Mr. Hanson.

One strong motive for my placing you in your present lodgings was that you might, in your conduct out of school, be guided by Mr. Hanson's advice and directions, as I confide very much in his discretion and think that he would require nothing of you but what will conduce to your advantage; and at the age to which you have now arrived you must be capable of distinguishing between a proper and improper line of conduct, and be sensible of the advantages or disadvantages which will result to you through life from the one or the other.

Your future character and reputation will depend very much, if not entirely, upon the

habits and manners, which you contract in the present period of your life; they will make an impression upon you which can never be effaced. You should therefore be extremely cautious how you put yourself into the way of imbibing those customs which may tend to corrupt your manners or vitiate your heart. I do not write to you in this style from knowing or suspecting that you are addicted to any vice, but only to guard you against pursuing a line of conduct which may imperceptibly lead on to vicious courses. Mr. Hanson has done you and Lawrence justice in saying, that your behavior since you have been last with him has been unexceptionable except in this instance and one more which he has not mentioned, and I hope this is the last complaint I shall ever hear while you remain in your present situation at least, as it will prevent me from using means to regulate your behaviour, which will be disagreeable to us both. I am your sincere friend and affectionate uncle.⁵¹

51. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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To SAMUEL HANSON

Mount Vernon, May 5, 1788.

Sir: Your letter of yesterday was handed to me last evening. I am sorry that the conduct of one of my Nephews has been such as to render a complaint to me necessary, but I am extremely obliged to you for the communication. George has now advanced to that time of life when it is absolutely necessary that his conduct should be regulated by some means or other. Coercion would be extremely

painful to me, but if advice, remonstancance and gentle methods will not answer the purpose others must be taken. Enclosed is a letter to him which I have left open for your perusal.

I am glad to find that Lawrence has behaved so well, I rather suspected that trespasses would have commenced on his part than on that of George. I am, etc.⁵²

To JOHN FITZGERALD AND GEORGE GILPIN

Mount Vernon, May 6, 1788.

Gentn: If you have fixed upon Monday next for the meeting of the Directors of the Potk. Company at the Falls of the Shanandoah, have given Messrs. Johnson and Lee notice of it, and informed Mr. Stuart⁵³ and his accusers thereof you will please to let me know it, (having heard nothing yet of the determination) In these cases, and that I may have nothing to retard my speedy return after the business of the meeting is finished I shall set off on thursday, take the great and

52. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

53. Richardson Stewart.

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Seneca Falls in my way up, make a visit or two in Berkeley, and be at the place of meeting by ten o'clock on Monday. I am, etc.⁵²

***To JAMES McHENRY**

Mount Vernon, May 8, 1788.

Dear Sir: To a letter which I wrote you some days ago, I beg leave to refer you. I congratulate with you on the happy decision of your Convention; having no doubt of its weight on those States which are to follow.

In a letter (just received) from Colo. Spaight⁵⁴ of North Carolina he informs me of his having sent a small bag of Pease to your care, for me. Have you received them? If so, be so good as to forward them by the Stage (the Cost of which I will pay; without dispatch they will come too late) to Alexandria.

A Monsr. Campion who brought over my Asses, says he is in distress, and has written to me for money. Pray what is his character in Baltimore, and what has he been employed about this year and half, in that place? Though he had no demand upon me for the service he performed, yet, I gave him a sum of money as an acknowledgment of my sense of the proper discharge of the trust reposed in him. He told

52. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

54. Richard Dobbs Spaight.

me at that time (fall was twelve months) that he should spend the winter in Baltimore and Sail for France in the Spring. In the Spring (as I was going to Phila. he told me he should sail in the Fall. In the fall, as I returned from thence, he assured me he should Sail in a fortnight. Since which I have heard nothing from, or of him till now, his application to me for

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money. Your answer (soon) to this part of my letter will be very acceptable to Dear Sir Yr. etc.55

To DOCTOR BENJAMIN RUSH

Mount Vernon, May 10, 1788.

Sir: Your favour of the 26th. ulto. together with the seeds of the manger werzel⁵⁶ and the Pamphlet respecting the cultivation and use of this valuable plant, came safe and claims my particular acknowledgments. I thank you for both, and shall endeavor to propogate the former with care and attention: Mrs. Washington joins me in compliments to Mrs. Rush. I am, etc.57

55. From a photostat of the original kindly furnished by Judge E. A. Armstrong, of Princeton, N.J.

56. The root of scarcity.

57. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To PETERSON & TAYLOR

Mount Vernon, May 10, 1788.

Gentn: Enclosed is a Bill of the Scantling which you sent me according to the measurement of it. There is a deficiency of 21 pieces, as you will see by the bill annexed which is a copy of the one sent to you last winter; you will see the dimensions of the deficient pieces by comparing the two bills. There are 15 pieces among those sent which are not conformable to any mentioned in the original bill, and of course are useless to me, unless 7 of them., which are 12 ft. long, 6 by 4, should be included with the studs 10 ft. long 6 by 4, of which you will observe there is a deficiency of 19. I would wish to be

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informed whether you could supply those pieces which are wanting immediately because if you cannot I must get them myself.

Should you have any doubts respecting the proper measurement of the Scantling they can easily be removed (and it is my wish that they may) by being measured by yourselves or by a person of your own appointing as the pieces are now stacked and can be run over in a few hours. I am, etc.⁵⁸

58. Following this letter in the "Letter Book" is a copy of the scantling sent for and the scantling received.

To VICTOR MARIE, CHEVALIER DU PONT

Mount Vernon, May 12, 1788.

Sir: I have lately had the honor of receiving your polite letter of the 22d. of April enclosing one from the Marquis de la Fayette, which would have given me a double pleasure to have received from your own hands by informing me of the welfare of that much esteemed character and giving me an opportunity of paying a proper attention to a person recommended by him.: this pleasure however I flatter myself I shall yet receive by your visiting Mount Vernon.

You will please, Sir, to accept of my best wishes that your tour to this Country may be perfectly pleasing and conformable to your expectations, and that you may return to your native land with impressions favourable to America and its Citizens. I have the honor, etc.⁵⁹

59. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To MISS JAMES JAMIMA JACOBINA DOUGLAS⁶⁰

Mount Vernon, May 12, 1788.

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Miss: I have received your letter of the 26th. of November and have lately had an opportunity, (by a Gentleman of this neighbourhood who was in Richmond) of making the enquiries which you desired. He informs me that he was the Gentleman mentioned in your letter which acknowledges there is a balance in his hands due to your father but says the sum is not so large as you mention, some part of it having been already paid.

It will readily occur to you that the only method of recovering the money will be to invest some person on the spot with proper power to act on your behalf and receive it for you. The necessity of appointing some person living in the neighbourhood of the Gentleman from whom the money is due is so obvious that you cannot but be sensible of it. And permit me to observe here that my agency in this business thus far has been no ways inconvenient or disagreeable to me, but my various avocations which require an unremitting attention would compel me to do an injury to my feelings by declining to take any part in

60. Of Edinburgh.

recovering or receiving the money if it should be proposed. I am, etc.61

***To BEZALEEL HOWE**

May 12, 1788.

I do hereby certify and make known to all to whom the presents shall come that Mr.—Howe, late a Lieutt. in the New-Hampshire line of the Continental Army, was an Officer of a fair and respectable character, that he served some part of the last year of the War as an auxiliary Lieutenant with my own Guard, that he commanded the Escort which came with my baggage and Papers to Mount Vernon at the close of the War, and that in all my acquaintance with him I had great reason to be satisfied with his integrity, intelligence and good dispositions.

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61. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, May 12, 1788.

Dear Sir: I have received your two letters of the 29 of April and 4th of May. Since my application to you for the prices of Linen and Blankets I have had an opportunity of supplying myself with both, upon pretty reasonable terms, but am no less obliged to you for the trouble of your inquiries respecting them.

The Philadelphia Packet has not yet arrived, but if she sailed at the time you mention she may be expected very soon.

I will thank you to inform me whether you have received the Interest due upon my Certificate in your hands, as there is a balance due to you in consequence of those articles last purchased on my Acct. which shall be remitted if it is not adjusted by the above Interest.

Will you be so obliging as to let me know in your next what the price of dble and single refined Sugar is with you?

Nails from 8d to 20d can be purchased cheaper in Alexandria than in Philadelphia. 20d can be had in the former place at 10/2 per M allowing 20 lb

to the M ; whereas 20 lb at 9d would amount to 15/ Pennsylvania Currency; but I believe all under 8d would come cheaper at 9d per pound. With great esteem, I am etc.

PS. Pray forward the Letter to Genl. Armstrong when a good conveyance offers.⁶²

[H.S.P.]

To THE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mount Vernon, May 15, 1788.

Dear Sir: I am indebted to you for your favors of the 20th and 24th Ult, and thank you for your care of my foreign letters; I do the same for the Pamphlet you were so obliging as to send me.⁶³ The good sense, forcible observations, temper and moderation with which it is written cannot fail, I should think of making a serious impression, even upon the antifœderal mind where it is not under the influence of such local views as will yield to no argument, no proofs. If you could conveniently furnish me with another of these Pamphlets I would thank you, having sent the last to a friend of mine.

Since the Elections in this State little doubt is entertained of the adoption of the proposed Constitution with us (if no mistake has

62. In the writing of Tobias Lear. The P. S. is in the writing of Washington.

63. Jay's letter of Apr. 10, 1788, which is in the *Washington Papers*, merely mentions but does not give the title of the pamphlet.

been made with respect to the sentiments of the Kentucky members). The opponents to it I am informed are *now* also of this opinion. Their grand manœuvres were exhibited at the Elections, and some of them if reports be true were not much to their credit. Failing in their attempt to exclude the friends to the new government from the Convention, and baffled in their exertions to effect an adjournment in Maryland, they have become more passive of late; should South Carolina (now in session) decide favourably, and the Government thereby (nine States having acceded) get in motion I can scarcely conceive that any one of the remainder, or all of them together were they to convene for the purpose of deliberation, separated from each other as they then would be, in a geographical point of view would

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incline to with draw from the Union of the other nine. Mrs. Washington unites with me in Compliments and good wishes for you and Mrs. Jay, and I am etc.⁶⁴

64. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THOMAS LEWIS

Mount Vernon, May 19, 1788.

Sir: Enclosed is the duplicate of a letter I wrote to you agreeably to the date, but having heard nothing from you since, I am apprehensive it may have met with a miscarriage and therefore send this copy by your Brother who will endeavor to contrive it safe to you.

I have been called upon for Taxes, and threatened at the sametime with a Sale of the land after June, if the money is not paid before, by the Sheriff of Green brier County. As I have been suffering loss after loss for near ten years while I was in the public Service and have scarcely had time to breathe since. this proceedure seems to me to be a little hasty, no regular application been made to me, nor I might add any application at all but by these threats indirectly sent. to be threatned with a Sale when I cannot upon enquiry find that others who have lands in the same County have been treated in that rigorous manner seems to carry with it singular appearance. I am however, endeavouring to provide for the payment but wish to meet with that measure and indulgence which is shewn to others.

I have heard also, that People, under some other authority than mine, are settling in the point of a Fork between Cole River and the Great Kanhawa; as I have a tract of two thousand

Acres which includes this spot these persons should be informed thereof to prevent deception to themselves, or trouble to me. The authority (if you incline to act under it) with which you are invested will enable you to settle this matter with them and to continue them thereon if you can agree on terms. I am, etc.⁶⁵

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***To RICHARD DOBBS SPAIGHT**

Mount Vernon, May 25, 1788.

Sir: The letter with which you honored me the 25th. of last month, and the Pease (by way of Baltimore) are safe at hand. I pray you to accept my thanks for them. I shall cultivate the Pease with care, this year in hills, to accumulate Seed, next year in broadcast, for a crop.

I am sorry to find by your letter that the State of North Carolina is so much opposed to the proposed Government. If a better could be agreed on, it might be well to reject this; but without a prospect (and I confess none appears to me) policy I think must recommend the one that is submitted. The

65. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

sentiments of this State will soon be known. The second day of June the Convention is to meet. Since the election of delegates to it, the prevailing opinion is, that a majority of the members are in favor of the Constitution, but as they are soon to speak their own sentiments it would be imprudent to anticipate them, even, if they were reduced to certainty. Maryland has ratified by a very large Majority; Sixty three to Eleven. With great esteem etc.⁶⁶

To JOHN COWPER

Mount Vernon, May 25, 1788.

Sir: I have been duly favored with your letter of the 12th. Inst. In answer thereto I beg leave to inform you that I am not disinclined to part with my moiety of the land purchased (by the deceased Colo. Fielding Lewis and myself) in North Carolina, provided a reasonable and adequate price can be obtained for it.

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For this land, that Gentleman and myself paid (to the best of my recollection) a pistole an Acre 20 odd years ago, and expended considerable Sums in ditching to reclaim the low parts thereof. If under this information you should feel disposed

66. From the original in the North Carolina Historical Commission.

to give a sum that would in some measure make us whole, I would in order to accomodate the Executors of Colo. Lewis who are desirous of selling his moiety, part with mine also; and will as soon as Mr. John Lewis can be consulted communicate the terms to you. Without such disposition on your part, it would be useless to fix on any price or the credits because I am not inclined to sell my part at any considerable loss being fully convinced that if a good government is established and property thereby secured that Land *generally* , will again be in demand and consequently rise, and those which are situated as *this* is will command almost any price, if the Cut between Elizabeth River and Pasquetant (to make which nothing in my opinion is easier) should be effected. I am, etc.⁶⁷

67. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

Mount Vernon, May 28, 1788.

My dear Count: I take the liberty of introducing to your acquaintance Mr. Barlow,⁶⁸ the person who will have the honor of handing this letter to you. He is a Gentleman of liberal education, respectable character, great abilities, and high reputation for literary accomplishmts. He is peculiarly and honorably known in the Republic of Letters both here and in Europe, for being the Author of an admirable Poem, in which he has worthily celebrated the glory of your Nation in general and of yourself in particular. Attended, as he is, with so many interesting circumstances and under so many unusual advantages, I need add no more than just a recommendation to your attention and civilities.

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Since I had the pleasure of writing to you by the last Packet, nothing worthy of notice has happened in America, except the adoption of the Constitution in Maryland by a very great Majority. I embrace you, my dear Count, with all my heart; and have the honor, etc.⁶⁹

68. Joel Barlow.

69. From the original in the *Rochambeau Papers* in the Library of Congress.

To MARQUIS DE LA LUZERNE

Mount Vernon, May 28, 1788.

Sir: As not anything which is interesting to your happiness and glory can be indifferent to me, I have a sincere, pleasure in congratulating you on your appointment as Ambassador from the most Christian King to the Court of London.

Altho your Excellency may possibly have had some knowledge of Mr. Barlow (the gentleman who will put this letter into your hands and of whom it is recommendatory) during your residence in America; yet his celebrity as a writer was not then so great as to have attracted the same admiration and applause, which he hath since merited and obtained by the publication of his celebrated Poem entitled the Vision of Columbus. That Work is dedicated by permission to the King of France, and is intended as an honorable testimony of America's gratitude and affection for the French nation. I observe that it has been republished in London, and that the Critical Reviewers have treated that Author, in their Strictures upon it, as a person possessed of a very distinguished and sublime Genius. I will only trespass on your time to add that Mr. Barlow's character and talents are such as authorize

me to commend him to your particular notice: and to assure you, my dear Marquis, with how great personal consideration and esteem. I have the honor, etc.⁷⁰

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***To REVEREND FRANCIS ADRIAN VANDERKEMP71**

Mount Vernon, May 28, 1788.

Sir: The letter which you did me the favor to address to me the 15th. of this instt. from New York has been duly received, and I take the speediest occasion to well-come your arrival on the American shore.

I had always hoped that this land might become a safe and agreeable Asylum to the virtuous and persecuted part of mankind, to whatever nation they might belong; but I shall be the more particularly happy, if this Country can be, by any means, useful to the Patriots of Holland, with whose situation I am peculiarly touched, and of whose public virtue I entertain a great opinion.

You may rest assured, Sir, of my best and most friendly sentiments of your suffering

70. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

71. A Menonite minister from Holland.

compatriots, and that, while I deplore the calamities to which many of the most worthy members of your Community have been reduced by the late foreign interposition in the interior affairs of the United Netherlands; I shall flatter myself that many of them will be able with the wrecks of their fortunes which may have escaped the extensive devastation, to settle themselves in comfort, freedom and ease in some corner of the vast regions of America. The spirit of the Religions and the genius of the political Institutions of this Country must be an inducement. Under a good government (which I have no doubt we shall establish) this Country certainly promises greater advantages, than almost any other, to persons of moderate property, who are determined to be sober, industrious and virtuous members of Society. And it must not be concealed, that a knowledge that these are the general characteristics of your compatriots would be a principal reason to consider their

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advent as a valuable acquisition to our infant settlements. If you should meet with as favorable circumstances, as I hope will attend your first operations; I think it probable that your coming will be the harbinger for many more to adventure across the Atlantic.

In the meantime give me leave to request that I may have the pleasure to see you at my house whensoever it can

be convenient to you, and to offer whatsoever services it may ever be in my power to afford yourself, as well as to the other Patriots and friends to the rights of Mankind of the Dutch Nation.⁷² I am etc.

[H.S.P.]

To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Mount Vernon, May 28, 1788.

My dear Marquis: I have lately had the pleasure to receive the two letters by which you introduced to my acquaintance M. Du Pont and M. Vanderkemp and altho' those gentlemen have not as yet been to visit me, you may be persuaded that whensoever I shall have the satisfaction of receiving them, it will be with all that attention to which their merits and your recommendations entitle them.

Notwithstanding you are acquainted with Mr. Barlow in person, and with his works by reputation, I thought I would just write you a line by him, in order to recommend him the more particularly to your civilities. Mr. Barlow is considered

72. Vanderkemp visited Mount Vernon July 29–30, 1788.

by those who are good Judges to be a genius of the first magnitude; and to be one of those Bards who hold the keys of the gate by which Patriots, Sages and Heroes are admitted to immortality. Such are your Antient Bards who are both the priest and door-

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keepers to the temple of fame. And these, my dear Marquis, are no vulgar functions. Men of real talents in Arms have commonly approved themselves patrons of the liberal arts and friends to the poets of their own as well as former times. In some instances by acting reciprocally, heroes have made poets, and poets heroes. Alexander the Great is said to have been enraptured with the Poems of Homer and to have lamented that he had not a rival muse to celebrate his actions. Julius Cæsar is well known to have been a man of a highly cultivated understanding and taste. Augustus was the professed and magnificent rewarder of poetical merit, nor did he lose the return of having his atcheivments immortalized in song. The Augustan age is proverbial for intellectual refinement and elegance in composition; in it the harvest of laurels and bays was wonderfully mingled together. The age of your Louis the fourteenth, which produced a multiude of great Poets and great Captains, will never be forgotten: nor will that of Queen Ann in England, for the same cause, ever cease to reflect a lustre upon the

Kingdom. Although we are yet in our cradle, as a nation, I think the efforts of the human mind with us are sufficient to refute (by incontestable facts) the doctrines of those who have asserted that every thing degenerates in America. Perhaps we shall be found, at this moment, not inferior to the rest of the world in the performances of our poets and painters; notwithstanding many of the incitements are wanting which operate powerfully among older nations. For it is generally understood, that excellence in those sister Arts has been the result of easy circumstances, public encouragements and an advanced stage of society. I observe that the Critics in England, who speak highly of the American poetical geniuses (and their praises may be the more relied upon as they seem to be reluctantly extorted,) are not pleased with the tribute of applause which is paid to your nation. It is a reason why they should be the more caressed by your nation. I hardly know how it is that I am drawn thus far in observations on a subject so foreign from those in which we are mostly engaged, farming and politics, unless because I had little news to tell you.

Since I had the pleasure of writing to you by the last Packet, the Convention of Maryland has ratified the federal Constitution by a majority of 63 to 11 voices. That makes the

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seventh State which has adopted it, next Monday the Convention in Virginia will assemble; we have still good hopes of its adoption here: though by no great plurality of votes. South Carolina has probably

decided favourably before this time. The plot thickens fast. A few short weeks will determine the political fate of America for the present generation and probably produce no small influence on the happiness of society through a long succession of ages to come. Should every thing proceed with harmony and consent according to our actual wishes and expectations; I will confess to you sincerely, my dear Marquis; it will be so much beyond any thing we had a right to imagine or expect eighteen months ago, that it will demonstrate as visibly the finger of Providence, as any possible event in the course of human affairs can ever designate it. It is impracticable for you or any one who has not been on the spot, to realise the change in men's minds and the progress towards rectitude in thinking and acting which will then have been made.

Adieu, my dear Marquis, I hope your affairs in France will subside into a prosperous train without coming to any violent crisis. Continue to cherish your affectionate feelings for this country and the same portion of friendship for me, which you are ever sure of holding in the heart of your most sincere, &c.73

73. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On May 29 Washington sent a bill of lading to Clement Biddle, for 10 barrels of shad and 40 barrels of herrings "which you will please dispose of on Commission to the best advantage." A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

To SAMUEL HANSON

Mount Vernon, June 8, 1788.

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Sir: Your letter of the 4th. instant,⁷⁴ which was delivered to me on my return from my late journey, is now before me; and requires that I should say something in reply on a subject, in which I feel myself more embarrassed and more awkwardly situated than ever I have been before.

It is but justice to my own feelings to observe, that I am conscious I have never been indisposed to do whatever might be in my power in favor of those whose misfortunes had been unavoidably brought upon them, without any fault of their own. In this predicament, I doubt not, I was not a little concerned at an application for employment under a Government which does not yet exist,

74. In the *Washington Papers*.

and with the Administration of which (in case it should be adopted and carried into execution) it is *much more* than possible I may never be concerned. The chaos of uncertainty in which we are involved, and the impropriety of my anticipating events or hazarding opinions, would scarcely permit me to touch, however slightly, on these delicate topics.

These circumstances, I observe, had not entirely escaped your attention, you will not, therefore, think it hard that I should mention the subject as peculiarly distressing and perplexing to me. Delicacy forbids that I should enlarge as to myself; as to yourself, I will only add that I know nothing but that your character stands in the fairest possible point of light, and consequently cannot be actuated by any prejudice against your pretensions.

I beg, Sir, that the candour and freedom which I have used on this occasion may not be misinterpreted to give you any unintended and unnecessary anxiety; or to induce you to believe that I have taken in ill part the application, although I thought it to be altogether untimely and improper.

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On the contrary you may rely upon my protestation, that I am in

every personal consideration, with real esteem and Friendship. Sir, Your, etc.⁷⁵

To JAMES MADISON

Mount Vernon, June 8, 1788.

My dear Sir: I am much obliged by the few lines you wrote to me on the 4th, and though it is yet too soon to rejoice one cannot avoid being pleased at the auspicious opening of the business of your Convention. Though an ulterior opinion of the decision of this State on the Constitution would, at any time previous to the discussion of it in the Convention, have been premature yet I have never yet despaired of its adoption here. What I have mostly apprehended is that the insidious arts of its opposers to alarm the fears and inflame the passions of the Multitude, may have produced instructions to the Delegates that would shut the door against argument and be a bar to the exercise of judgment. If this is not the case I have no doubt but that the good sense of this Country will prevail against the local views of designing characters and the arrogant opinions of

75. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

chagreened and disappointed men.

The decision of Maryland and South Carolina by so large Majorities and the moral certainty of the adoption of the proposed constitution by New Hampshire will make *all*, except desperate men look before they leap into the dark consequences of rejection. The Ratification by eight States without a negative. By three of them unanimously. By six against one in another. By three to one in another. By two for one in two more; and by *all* the weight of *abilities* and *property* in the other is enough to produce a cessation of opposition. I donor mean that numbers alone is sufficient to produce conviction in the

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Mind, but I think it is enough to produce some change in the conduct of any man who entertains a doubt of his infallibility.

Altho' I have little doubt of your having received a copy of the enclosed pamphlet,⁷⁸ yet I send it. It is written with much good sense and moderation. I conjecture, but upon no certain ground, that Mr. Jay is the author of it. He sent it to me some time ago, since which I have received two or three more copies.

With sincere esteem and affectionate regard.⁷⁹

78. Probably Jay's "Address to the People of the State of New York on the subject of the Constitution."

79. The text is from the sales catalogue of the *Washington-Madison Papers* (McGuire Collection, 1892), which is palpably more accurate than the "Letter Book" copy.

To JONATHAN TRUMBULL

Mount Vernon, June 8, 1788.

My dear Sir: Although a multitude of avocations, joined to a recent Journey which I have been obliged to make in order to visit the works on the Potomac, have occasioned me to postpone giving an answer to your letter in favor of Lieut. Howe; yet I delayed not to forward the necessary Certificate for that Gentleman so that it might come to him, before the time fixed for his departure. I have at length found a moment's leisure to take up my pen and to tell you, in few words, the state of Politics in this part of the Union.

Our Convention has been assembled about a week, and so far as I am advised of their proceedings seem to have made as auspicious a beginning as could have been expected. Mr. Henry and Colo. Mason are at the head of the opposition; in favour of the Constitution are many very able men: among these we count Messrs. Pendleton, Wythe, Blair, Madison, Nicholas, Innis, Marshall and a long train of other worthies. Governor

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Randolph, (in answer to a speech in which Mr. Henry had insinuated that the federal Convention had exceeded their Powers and that nothing forbade us to live happy under the old Confederation with some alterations) described pathetically our perilous situation as a full Justification of the proceedings of the federal Convention and declared since so many of the States have adopted the Constitution without alterations, that he should vote for it in its present form. Upon the whole (though great and

unwearied artifices have been practiced to prejudice the people in many parts of the State against the new government) I cant avoid hoping and believing, to use the fashionable phrase, that Virginia will make the ninth Column in the federal Temple. May all things turn out for the best; in respect to this highly favored Continent, is the constant and unfeigned prayer of Yours, etc.⁸⁰

To JOSEPH BARRELL⁷⁶

Mount Vernon, June 8, 1788.

General Washington, having lately received with great satisfaction the medal which the Owners of the adventure to the Pacific Ocean have been pleased to transmit to him, begs leave to return his best acknowledgments to those Gentlemen for the very acceptable Compliment, and to assure them that his hearty wishes for success attend their enterprise, he hopes and even flatters himself that the day will arrive (at no very distant period) when the sources of commerce shall be enlarged and replenished; and when the new Constellation of this Hemisphere

80. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

76. Of Boston, Mass.

shall be hailed and respected in every quarter of the terraqueous globe!⁷⁷

To THE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mount Vernon, June 8, 1788.

Dear Sir: By the last Mail, I had the pleasure to receive your letter of the 29th. of May, and have now the satisfaction to congratulate you on the adoption of the Constitution by the Convention of South Carolina. I am sorry to learn there is a probability that the majority of members in the New York Convention will be Antifederalists. Still I hope that some event may turn up before they assemble, which may give a new complexion to the business. If this State should, in the intermediate time, make the ninth that shall have ratified the proposed government, it will, I flatter myself, have its due weight. To shew that this event is now more to be expected than heretofore, I will give you a few particulars which I have from good authority and which you might not, perhaps, immediately obtain through any public channel of conveyance.

On the day appointed for the meeting of the Convention a large proportion of the members assembled and unanimously placed Mr. Pendleton in the Chair. Having on that and the subsequent

77. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

day chosen the rest of their officers and fixed upon the mode of conducting the business, it was moved by some one of those opposed to the Constitution to debate the whole by paragraphs, without taking any question until the investigation should be completed. This was as unexpected as acceptable to the federalists: and their ready acquiescence seems to have somewhat startled the opposite party, for fear they had committed themselves.

Mr. Nicholas opened the business by very ably advocating the system of Representation. Mr. Henry in answer went more vaguely into the discussion of the Constitution, intimating that the federal Convention had exceeded their powers and that we had been and might be happy under the old Confederation with a few alterations. This called up Govr.

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Randolph, who is reported to have spoken with great pathos in reply: and who declared, that, since so many of the States had adopted the proposed Constitution, he considered the sense of America to be already taken, and that he should give his vote in favor of it without insisting previously upon amendments. Mr. Mason rose in opposition and Mr. Madison reserved himself to obviate the objections of Mr. Henry and Colo. Mason the next day. Thus the matter rested when the last accounts came away.

Upon the whole the following inferences seem to have been drawn:

that Mr. Randolph's declaration will have considerable effect with those, who had hitherto been wavering; that Mr. Henry and Colo Mason took different and awkward ground, and by no means equalled the public expectation in their speeches; that the former has probably receded somewhat from his violent measures to coalesce with the latter, and that the leaders of the opposition appear rather chagreened, and hardly to be decided as to their mode of opposition.

The sanguine friends of the Constitution counted upon a majority of twenty at their first meeting, which number they imagine will be greatly increased: while those equally strong in their wishes, but more temperate in their habits of thinking speak less confidently of the greatness of the majority, and express apprehensions of the arts that may yet be practised to excite alarms with the members from the Western district (Kentucky). All, however, agree that the beginning has been auspicious as could possibly have been expected. A few days will now ascertain us of the result. With sentiments of the highest esteem etc.⁸¹

81. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To OLIVER POLLOCK

Mount Vernon, June 8, 1788.

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Sir: I received your letter of the 11th. of May, at the moment when I was setting out on a preconcerted Journey to meet the Directors of the Potomac Company, on business of importance, at the Shanandoah Falls, that circumstance has necessitated me to defer giving an acknowledgment untill this time.

It would be with peculiar pleasure that I should write to his Excellency the Governor of Louisiana, on your behalf; if I did not think that there would be a glaring impropriety in my assuming that liberty with that Representative of the Spanish King. Especially as I have never had the honor of a personal acquaintance or any correspondence with the Governor, and as I do not feel myself authorised to take a greater latitude of freedom in this respect, than any other unknown, private citizen. These motives of delicacy on my part, I hope will be considered, in the same point of light and of the same weight by you, as they have appeared to me. I am, etc.⁸²

82. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THOMAS PLEASANTS, JUNIOR

Mount Vernon, June 8, 1788.

Sir: I have been duly favored with your letter of the 2d. inst. containing an extract from Mr. Didsbury's letter to you. In addition to what he has there recited, I can only inform you that the tract in which Major Vanbraam⁸³ holds or held a share, lays on the *little* Kanhawa, but in what County (whether Greenbrier, Ohio, or Harrison) I am not sufficiently acquainted with the boundaries of them to decide. nor can I say whether or in what manner the tract of 28,400 has been divided or give the least information with respect to the *quality* of the land; consequently can say nothing as to the value of it. The natural situation of it is exceedingly advantageous for it is not only a part of the highest survey on the Ohio (that was made under the Proclamation of 1754) but it lays on the Communication which is opened, or opening under the authority, and at the expence of the State from Morgan

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Town (Harrison Court House) to the Ohio. From Judge Mercer you may, possibly, get a more particular acct. of this matter for if my memory does not deceive me, his brother Colo. George Mercer (for whom he was acting Attorney) either by purchase, or by the advance of his (Vanbraams) quotas of the expence of Surveyd. Patenting &c. is involved in this business. I am, etc.⁸⁴

83. Jacob Van Braam.

84. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To WILLIAM SMITH AND OTHERS

Mount Vernon, June 8, 1788.

Gentlemen: Captain Barney has just arrived here in the miniature ship called the Federalist;⁸⁵ and has done me the honor to offer that beautiful *Curiosity* as a Present to me on your part. I pray you, Gentlemen, to accept the warmest expressions of my sensibility for this *specimen of American ingenuity* : in which the exactitude of the proportions, the neatness of the workmanship, and the elegance of the decorations (which make your Present fit to be preserved in a Cabinet of Curiosities) at the same time that they exhibit the skill and taste of the artists, demonstrate that Americans are not inferior to any people whatever in the use of mechanical instruments and the art of ship-building.

The unanimity of the agricultural State of Maryland in general, as well as of the commercial Town of Baltimore in particular, expressed in their recent decision on the subject of a general Government, will not (I persuade myself) be without its due efficacy on the minds of their neighbors, who, in many instances, are intimately connected not only by the nature of their produce, but by the ties of blood and the habits of life. Under these circumstances, I cannot entertain an idea, that

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85. The *Federalist* was a miniature ship, 15 feet long and perfect in every detail. It had been mounted on wheels and drawn by 4 horses in the procession with which Baltimore celebrated the adoption of the Constitution by Maryland. After the procession the merchants and shipowners of Baltimore sent it to Mount Vernon as a present to Washington. Capt. Joshua Barney navigated it down Chesapeake Bay and up the Potomac, where it was moored to the Mount Vernon wharf for several weeks until blown from its moorings and sunk in a high wind which did much damage to the trees and shrubberies of Mount Vernon.

the voice of the Convention of this State, which is now in session, will be dissonant from that of her nearly-allied sister, who is only separated by the Potomac.

You will permit me, Gentlemen, to indulge my feelings in reiterating the heart-felt wish, that the happiness of this Country may equal the desires of its sincerest friends; and that the patriotic Town, of which you are Inhabitants (in the prosperity of which I have always found myself strongly interested) may not only continue to encrease in the same wonderful manner it has formerly done; but that its trade, manufactures and other resources of wealth may be placed permanently in a more flourishing situation than they have hitherto been. I am &c.86

***To HENRY KNOX**

Mount Vernon, June 17, 1788.

My dear Sir: I received your letter of the 25th. of May, just when I was on the eve of a departure for Fredericksburgh to pay a visit to my mother from whence I returned only last evening. The information of the accession of

86. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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South Carolina to the New Government, since your letter, gives us a new subject for mutual felicitations. It was to be hoped that this auspicious event would have considerable influence upon the proceedings of the Convention of Virginia; but I do not find that to have been the case. Affairs in the Convention, for some time past, have not worn so good an aspect as we could have wished: and, indeed, the acceptance of the Constitution has become more doubtful than it was thought to be at their first meeting.

The purport of the intelligence, I received from my private letters by the last night's mail, is, that every species of address and artifice has been put in practice by the Antifederalists to create jealousies and excite alarms. Much appears to depend upon the final part which the Kentucke members will take; into many of whose minds apprehensions of unreal dangers, respecting the navigation of the Mississippi and their organization into a separate State, have been industriously infused. Each side seems to think, at present, that it has a small majority, from whence it may be augered that the majority, however it shall turn, will be very inconsiderable. Though, for my own part, I cannot but imagine, if any decision is had, it will be in favor of the adoption. My apprehension is rather that a strenuous, possibly, successful effort may be made for an adjournment; under an idea of opening a correspondence with those who are opposed to the Constitution in other States. Colo. Oswald⁸⁷ has

87. Eleazer Oswald.

been at Richmond, it is said with letters from Antifederalists in New York and Pennsylvania to their Co-adjutors in this State.

The Resolution, which came from the Antefederalists (much to the astonishment of the other party) that no question should be taken until the whole Plan should have been discussed paragraph by paragraph; and the remarkable tardiness in their proceedings (for the Convention have been able as yet only to get through the 2d. or 3d. Section), are thought by some to have been designed to protract the business until the time when the

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Assembly is to convene, that is the 23d. instant, in order to have a more colorable pretext for an adjournment. But notwithstanding the resolution, there has been much desultory debating and the opposers of the Constitution are reported to have gone generally into the merits of the question. I know not how the matter may be, but a few days will now determine.

I am sorry to find not only from your intimations, but also from many of the returns in the late Papers, that there should be so great a majority against the Constitution in the Convention of New York. And yet I can hardly conceive, from motives of policy and prudence, they will reject it absolutely, if either this State or New-Hampshire should make the 9th. in adopting it; as that measure which gives efficacy to the system, must place any State that shall actually have refused its assent to the New-Union in a very awkward and disagreeable predicament.

By a letter which I have just recd. from a young Gentleman⁸⁸ who lives with me, but who is

88. Tobias Lear.

now at home in New-Hampshire, I am advised that there is every prospect that the Convention of that State will adopt the Constitution almost immediately upon the meeting of it. I cannot but hope then, that the States which may be disposed to make a secession will think often and seriously on the consequences. Colo. Humphreys who is still here, occupied with literary pursuits, desires to be remembered in terms of the sincerest friendship to you and yours.

Mrs. Washington and the family offer, with me, their best Compliments to Mrs. Knox and the little ones. You will ever believe me to be, with great esteem etc.

[MS.H.S.]

To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Mount Vernon, June 19, 1788.

I cannot account for your not having received some of my letters, my dear Marquis, before you wrote yours of the 18th of March, as I have been writing to you, at short intervals, constantly since last autumn. To demonstrate the satisfaction I enjoy on the receipt of your favours; I always answer them almost as soon as they arrive. Although, on account of my retirement from the busy scenes of life and the want of diversity in the tenour of our affairs, I can promise to give you little novelty or entertainment in proportion to what I expect in return. Were you to acknowledge the receipt of my letters, and give the dates of them when you write to me, I should be able to ascertain which of them had reached you, and which of them had miscarried. I am left in doubt whether the Indian Vocabularies &c. &c. have got to you or not.

There seems to be a great deal of bloody work cut out for this summer in the North of Europe. If war, want and plague are to desolate those huge armies that are assembled, who that has the feelings of a man can refrain from shedding a tear over the miserable victims of Regal Ambition? It is really a strange thing that there should not be room enough in the world for men to live, without cutting one anothers throats. As France, Spain and England have hardly recovered from the wounds of the late war, I would fain hope they will hardly be dragged into this.

94. Both Ford and Sparks print this under June 18.

However, if the war should be protracted (and not end in a campaign as you intimate it possibly may) there seems to be a probability of other powers being engaged on one side or the other. by the British papers (which are our principal source of intelligence, though not always to be relied upon, as you know) it appears that the Spaniards are fitting out a considerable fleet and that the English Ministry have prohibited the subjects

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of their Kingdom from furnishing transports for the Empress of Russia. France must be too intent on its own domestic affairs to wish to interfere, and we have not heard that the King of Prussia, since his exploits in Holland, has taken it into his head [not to] meddle with other people's business. I cannot say that I am sorry to hear that the Algerines and other piratical powers are about to assist the Porte, because I think Russia will not forget and that she will take some leisure moment, just to keep her fleets in exercise, for exterminating those nests of Miscreants.

I like not much the situation of affairs in France. The bold demands of the parliaments, and the decisive tone of the King, shew that but little more irritation would be necessary to blow up the spark of discontent into a flame, that might not easily be quenched. If I were to advise, I would say that great moderation should be used on both sides. Let it not, my dear Marquis, be considered as a

derogation from the good opinion, that I entertain of your prudence, when I caution you, as an individual desirous of signaling yourself in the cause of your country and freedom, against running into extremes and prejudicing your cause. The King, though, I think from every thing I have been able to learn, he is really a good-hearted tho' a warm-spirited man, if thwarted injudiciously in the execution of prerogatives that belonged to the Crown, and in plans which he conceives calculated to promote the national good, may disclose qualities he has been little thought to possess. On the other hand, such a spirit seems to be awakened in the Kingdom, as, if managed with extreme prudence, may produce a gradual and tacit Revolution much in favor of the subjects, by abolishing Lettres de Cachet and defining more accurately the powers of government. It is a wonder to me, there should be found a single monarch, who does not realize that his own glory and felicity must depend on the prosperity and happiness of his People. How easy is it for a sovereign to do that which shall not only immortalize his name, but attract the blessings of millions.

In a letter I wrote you a few days ago by Mr. Barlow (but which might not possibly have reached New York until after his departure) I mentioned the accession of Maryland to the

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proposed government, and gave you the state of politics to that period. Since which the Convention of South Carolina has ratified the Constitution by a great majority: that of this State has been setting almost three weeks; and so nicely does it appear to be ballanced, that each side asserts that it has a preponderancy of votes in its favour. It is

probable, therefore, the majority will be small, let it fall on whichever part it may; I am inclined to believe it will be in favour of the adoption. The Conventions of New York and New Hampshire assemble both this week; a large proportion of members, with the Governor at their head, in the former, are said to be opposed to the government in contemplation: New Hampshire it is thought will adopt it without much hesitation or delay. It is a little strange that the men of large property in the South, should be more afraid that the Constitution will produce an Aristocracy or a Monarchy, than the genuine democratical people of the East. Such are our actual prospects. The accession of one State more will complete the number, which by the Constitutional provision, will be sufficient in the first instance to carry the Government into effect.

And then, I expect, that many blessings will be attributed to our new government, which are now taking their rise from that industry and frugality into the practice of which the people have been forced from necessity. I really believe, that there never was so much labour and economy to be found before in the country as at the present moment. If they persist in the habits they are acquiring, the good effects will soon be

distinguishable. When the people shall find themselves secure under an energetic government, when foreign nations shall be disposed to give us equal advantages in commerce from dread of retaliation, when the burdens of war shall be in a manner done away by the sale of western lands, when the seeds of happiness which are sown here shall begin to expand themselves, and when every one (under his own vine and fig-tree) shall begin to taste the fruits of freedom, then all these blessings (for all these blessings will come) will be referred to the fostering influence of the new government. Whereas many causes will have conspired to produce them. You see I am not less enthusiastic than

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ever I have been, if a belief that peculiar scenes of felicity are reserved for this country, is to be denominated enthusiasm. Indeed, I do not believe, that Providence has done so much for nothing. It has always been my creed that we should not be left as an awful monument to prove, “that Mankind, under the most favourable circumstances for civil liberty and happiness, are unequal to the task of Governing themselves, and therefore made for a Master.”

We have had a backward spring and summer, with more rainy and cloudy weather than almost ever has been known: still the appearance of crops in some parts of the country is favorable, as we may generally expect will be the case, from the difference of soil and variety of climate in so extensive a region; insomuch that, I hope, some day or another, we shall become a storehouse and granary

for the world. In addition to our former channels of trade, salted provisions, butter, cheese &c. are exported with profit from the eastern States to the East Indies. In consequence of a Contract, large quantities of flour are lately sent from Baltimore for supplying the garrison of Gibraltar. With sentiments of tenderest affection etc.⁹⁵

To RICHARD HENDERSON

Mount Vernon, June 19, 1788.

Sir: Your favour of the 5th. instant was lodged at my house, while I was absent on a visit to my Mother. I am now taking the earliest opportunity of noticing its contents, and those of its Enclosure. Willing as I am to give satisfaction so far as I am able, to every reasonable enquiry (and this is certainly not only so, but may be highly important and interesting,) I must however, rather deal in general than particular observations: as I think you will be able, from the length of your residence in the country, and the extensiveness of your acquaintance with its affairs, to make the necessary

95. From the “Letter Book” copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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applications and add the proper details. Nor would I choose that my interference in the business should be transmitted, lest, in a malicious world, it might be represented that I was officiously using the arts of seduction to depopulate other countries, for the sake of peopling our own.

In the first place it is a point conceded, that America, under an efficient government, will be the most favorable Country of any in the world for persons of industry and frugality, possessed of a moderate capital, to inhabit. It is also believed, that it will not be less advantageous to the happiness of the lowest class of people because of the equal distribution of property the great plenty of unoccupied lands, and the facility of procuring the means of subsistence. The scheme of purchasing a good tract of freehold estate and bringing out a number of able-bodied men, indented for a certain time appears to be indisputably a rational one.

All the interior arrangements of transferring the property and commencing the establishment you are as well acquainted with as I can possibly be. It might be considered as a point of more difficulty, to decide upon the place which should be most proper for a settlement. Although, I believe that Emigrants from other countries to this, who shall be well-disposed, and conduct themselves properly, would be treated with equal friendship and kindness in all parts of it; yet, in the old settled States, land is so much occupied, and the value so much enhanced by the contiguous cultivation, that the price would, in general be an objection.

The land in [the] western country, or that on the Ohio, like all others, has its *advantages and disadvantages*. The neighborhood of the Savages and the difficulty of transportation were the great objections. The danger of the first will soon cease by the strong establishments now taking place; the inconveniences of the second will be, in a great degree, remedied by opening the internal Navigation. No Colony in America was ever settled under such favorable auspices, as that which has just commenced at the Muskingum. Information, property and strength, will be its characteristics. I know many

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of the settlers personally and that there never were men better calculated to promote the welfare of such a community.

If I was a young man, just preparing to begin the world or if advanced in life, and had a family to make a provision for, I know of no country where I should rather fix my habitation than in some part of that region, for which the writer of the quæries seems to have a predilection. he might be informed that his namesake and distant relation, Genl. St. Clair, is not only in high repute, but that he is Governor of all the Territory westward of the Ohio, and that there is a gentleman (to wit Mr. Joel Barlow) gone from New York by

the last French Packet, who will be in London in the course of this year, and who is authorized to dispose of a very large body of land in that Country. The author of the quæries may then be referred to the "Information for those who would wish to remove to America:" and published in Europe in the year 1784, by the great Philosopher Dr. Franklin. Short as it is, it contains almost every thing, that needs to be known on the subject of migrating to this Country. You may find that excellent little Treatise in "Carey's⁸⁹ American Museum, for September, 1787."

It is worthy of being republished in Scotland, and every other part of Europe.

As to the European Publications respecting the United States, they are commonly very defective. The Abbe Raynal is quite erroneous.⁹⁰ Guthrie,⁹¹ though somewhat better informed, is not absolutely correct. There is now "an American Geography preparing for the press by a Mr. Morse⁹² of New Haven in Connecticut" which, from the pains the Author has taken in travelling through the States and acquiring information from the principal characters in each, will probably be much more exact and useful. of books at present existing, Mr. Jefferson's "Notes on Virginia" will give the best idea of this part of the Continent to a Foreigner: and the "American Farmer's Letters," written by Mr. Crèvecoeur (commonly called Mr. St. John) the French Consul in New York (who actually resided twenty years as a farmer in that State) will afford a great deal of profitable and amusing

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89. Mathew Carey.

90. Guillaume Thomas François, Abbé Raynal's *A Philosophical and Political History of the British Settlements and Trade in North America*, published in Edinburgh, in 1779.

91. William Guthrie. His *New Geographical, Historical and Commercial Grammar* was published in London in 1777.

92. Rev. Jedidiah Morse.

information, respecting *the private Life* of the Americans; as well as the progress of agriculture, manufactures, and arts in their Country. Perhaps the picture he gives, though founded on fact, is in some instances embellished with rather too flattering circumstances. I am, &c.⁹³

To EDWARD PEMBERTON

Mount Vernon, June 20, 1788.

Sir: I have just received the letter and piece of poetry¹ which you did me the favour to address to me on the 21st. of March last: and take an early opportunity of acknowledging the receipt of them, and of expressing my sense of the sentiments you are pleased to entertain for me. It cannot fail of being agreeable to me, that my conduct (through the difficult scenes in which I have been called to act) should be approved where my person is unknown.

Not arrogating to myself any particular skill in deciding critically on the merits of poetical compositions, you will excuse me for being silent on a subject

93. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

1. Pemberton's letter and poem are in the *Washington Papers*.

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in which I pretend not to judge and for adverting rather to the friendly wishes you make for myself and Country, than to the style and numbers in wch. they are communicated. You may be assured, Sir, that the good opinion of honest men, friends to freedom and well-wishers to mankind, wherever they may be born or happen to reside, is the only kind of reputation a wise man would ever desire.

Although your observations on ancient Colonization, and the recent Contest between Great Britain and America seem to be [well] founded: yet it only remains now to profit of our actual situation by a liberal commercial intercourse. In the mean time, your disinterested friendship for this Country will probably be gratified, on the adoption of measures now in contemplation, in finding that it will arrive at a degree of respectability and happiness, to which it has hitherto been a stranger. I am &c.2

2. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To NICHOLAS PIKE

Mount Vernon, June 20, 1788.

Sir: I request you will accept my best thanks for your polite letter of Jany. 1st. (which did not get to my hand till yesterday) and also for the copy of your "System of Arithmetic" which you were pleased to present to me. The handsome manner in which that Work is printed and the elegant manner in which it is bound, are pleasing proofs of the progress which the Arts are making in this Country. But I should do violence to my own feelings, if I suppressed an acknowledgment of the belief that that work itself is calculated to be equally useful and honorable to the United States.

It is but right, however, to apprise you, that, diffident of my own decision, the favorable opinion I entertain of your performance is founded rather on the explicit and ample testimonies of gentlemen confessedly possessed of great mathematical knowledge, than on the partial and incompetent attention I have been able to pay to it myself. But I must

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be permitted to remark that the subject, in my opinion, holds a higher rank in the literary scale than you are disposed to allow. The science of figures, to a certain degree, is not only indispensably

requisite in every walk of civilised life; but the investigation of mathematical truths accustoms the mind to method and correctness in reasoning, and is an employment peculiarly worthy of rational beings. In a clouded state of existence, where so many things appear precarious to the bewildered research, it is here that the rational faculties find a firm foundation to rest upon. From the high ground of mathematical and philosophical demonstration, we are insensibly led to far nobler speculations and sublimer meditations.

I hope and trust that the Work will ultimately prove not less profitable than reputable to yourself. It seems to have been conceded, on all hands, that such a System was much wanted. Its merits being established by the approbation of competent Judges, I flatter myself that the idea of its being an American production, and the first of the kind which has appeared, will induce every patriotic and liberal character to give it all the countenance and patronage in his power. In all events, you may rest assured, that, as no person takes more interest in the encouragement of American Genius, so no one will be more highly gratified with the success of your ingenious, arduous and useful undertaking than he, who has the unfeigned pleasure to subscribe himself. Yrs. etc.³

3. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To MRS. ELIZA HARRIOT O'CONNOR

Mount Vernon, June 20, 1788.

Madam: I have received the letter which you did me the favor to write to me on the 17th. instant, and am happy that the acknowledgment of it affords me an occasion of expressing my real satisfaction at the present flourishing state of your Academy⁴ and ardent wishes for its future prosperity. Should my avocations (which have been multiplied

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by two Journeys I have lately been obliged to make) and my attentions at home (which this busy season of the year will peculiarly demand) permit it to be in any manner convenient, I shall cheerfully attend either at the first or some subsequent exhibition of the Pupils in your Institution: and doubt not of my being highly gratified with their proficiency in useful and elegant accomplishments.

These Madam are the ideas I must have intended to intimate to Mr. O'Connor on his first mentioning the subject to me. If he understood my having no objection to an occasional or casual visitation, as a willingness to become one of the official and stated visitors at the examinations, he must have misconceived. my meaning.

4. For young ladies in Alexandria, Va.

The reasons are well known, why, at my time of life, under my actual circumstances, and assailed (as I may say) with a multiplicity of applications of different kinds since the termination of the war, I have studiously declined entering into any new engagements which may tend to draw me, in the least degree, from my agricultural and private pursuits.

I thought it necessary to be thus explicit in order to obviate any misapprehensions that might have taken place, and to assure you with how much truth I have the honour, etc.⁵

***To REVEREND JOHN LATHROP**

Mount Vernon, June 22, 1788.

Reverend and respected Sir: Your very acceptable favour of the 16th. of May, covering a recent publication of the proceedings of the Humane Society,⁶ have, within a few days past, been put into my hands. I observe, with singular satisfaction, the cases in which your benevolent Institution has been instrumental in recalling some of our

5. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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6. Of Massachusetts.

Fellow creatures (as it were) from beyond the gates of Eternity, and has given occasion for the hearts of parents and friends to leap for joy. The provision made for the preservation of ship-wrecked Mariners is also highly estimable in the view of every philanthropic mind and greatly consolatory to that suffering part of the Community. These things will draw upon you the blessings of those, who were nigh to perish. These works of charity and goodwill towards men reflect, in my estimation, great lustre upon the authors and presage an æra of still farther improvements. How pitiful, in the eye of reason and religion, is that false ambition which desolates the world with fire and sword for the purposes of conquest and fame; when compared to the milder virtues of making our neighbours and our fellow men as happy as their frail conditions and perishable natures will permit *them to be* !

I am happy to find that the proposed general government meets with your approbation as indeed it does with *that* of the most disinterested and discerning men. The Convention of this State is now in session, and I cannot but hope from all the accounts I receive that the Constitution will be adopted by it; though not without considerable opposition. I trust, however, that

the commendable example exhibited by the minority in your State will not be without its salutary influence in this. In truth it appears to me that (should the proposed government be generally and harmoniously adopted) it will be a new phenomenon in the political and moral world; and an astonishing victory gained by enlightened reason over brutal force. I have the honor &c.7

***To JAMES MADISON**

Mount Vernon, June 23, 1788.

My dear Sir: Since my last, acknowledging the first letter you did me the favor to write to me after your arrival in Richmond, I have received your subsequent ones of the 13th

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and 18th instant; which, tho' less favourable than the former, are more pleasing than Suspence.

I will yet hope that the good sense of this Country, maugre all the arts of opposition, will ultimate decide right on the important question now depending before the Convention.

7. From a facsimile in a London sales catalogue (1929).

I hear with real concern of your indisposition. At Fredericksburgh (on a visit to my aged and infirm mother) I understood that you intended to proceed immediately from Richmond to New York, when the Convention shall have arisen. Relaxation must have become indispensably necessary for your health, and for that reason I presume to advise you to take a little respite from business and to express a wish that part of the time might be spent under this roof on your journey thither. Moderate exercise, and books occasionally, with the mind unbent, will be your best restoratives. With much truth I can assure you that no one will be happier in your company than your sincere and Affecte. etc.8

To CHARLES MORROW

Mount Vernon, June 25, 1788.

Sir: Your letter of the 13th. instant from Shepherds town came duly to hand. In answer to the question you have propounded to me, consequent you add of a report, "that Mr. Rumsey left the Service of the President and Directors of the Potomack Company in *disgrace*" I answer the fact

8. From a facsimile of the letter sent, and sold at auction in 1917.

is, otherwise; and that his quitting superintendency of the Companies concerns was an act of his own acquiesced in, at his desire by the P. and Directors. I am, etc.9

***To MATHEW CAREY**

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Mount Vernon, June 25, 1788.

Sir: Although I believe “the American Museum” published by you, has met with extensive, I may say, with universal approbation from competent Judges; yet, I am sorry to find by your favor of the 19th. that in a pecuniary view it has not equaled your expectations. A discontinuance of the Publication for want of proper support would, in my judgment, be an impeachment on the Understanding of this Country. For I am of opinion that the Work is not only eminently calculated to disseminate political, agricultural, philosophical and other valuable information; but that it has been uniformly conducted with taste, attention, and propriety. If to these important objects be superadded the more immediate design, of rescuing public Documents. from oblivion: I will venture to pronounce, as my sentiment, that a more useful literary plan has never

9. From the “Letter Book” copy in the *Washington Papers*.

been undertaken in America, or one more deserving public encouragement. By continuing to prosecute that plan with similar assiduity and discernment the merit of your Museum must ultimately become as well known in some Countries of Europe as on this Continent; and can scarcely fail of procuring an ample compensation for your trouble and expence.

For myself, I entertain an high idea of the utility of periodical Publications: insomuch that I could heartily desire, copies of the Museum and Magazines, as well as common Gazettes, might be spread through every city, town and village in America. I consider such easy vehicles of knowledge, more happily calculated than any other, to preserve the liberty, stimulate the industry and meliorate the morals of an enlightened and free People.

With sincere wishes for the success of your undertaking in particular, and for the prosperity of the Typegraphical Art in general. I am etc.¹⁰

10. From a facsimile of the original kindly furnished by Lea & Febiger, off Philadelphia, Pa.

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On June 25 Washington forwarded this letter to Carey in a note, "with liberty for you to make whatsoever use you shall think proper of it. If my opinion would be of any avail with the public, I believe this might be a more eligable mode of communication, than by confining it to a simple and formal Certificate and one which is preferd. by Sir Yr. etc." This letter is in the New York Public Library.

To CHARLES CARTER

Mount Vernon, June 28, 1788.

Dear Sir: When Mrs. Washington was at the Church in Fredericksburg she perceived the Tomb of her Father the late John Dandridge Esqr. to be much out of sorts and being desirous to have it done up again, will you permit me to request the favour of you to engage a workman to do this, the cost of which I will remit as soon as you shall

signify to me that the work is accomplished, and inform me of its amount. I would thank you, My dear Sir, for the ascertainment of this before hand. I have (not inclining to dispute Accounts) felt, in too many instances, the expansion of Tradesmens consciences when no previous agreement has been made ever to put it in their power to charge what they please in future. My best wishes, in which Mrs. Washington joins me, is tendered to Mrs. Carter. With much truth etc.¹¹

11. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY

Mount Vernon, June 28, 1788.

Dear Sir: I had the pleasure to receive, a day or two ago, your obliging letter of the 24th of last month, in which you advise me of the ratification of the foederal Constitution by South Carolina. By a more rapid water conveyance, that good news had some few days

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before arrived at Baltimore, so as to have been very opportunely communicated to the Convention of this State, in session at Richmond. It is with great satisfaction I have it now in my power to inform you that, on the 25th instant, the Delegates of Virginia adopted the Constitution, in toto, by a division of eighty nine in favour of it to seventy nine against it; and that, notwithstanding the majority is so small, yet, in consequence of some conciliatory conduct and recommendatory amendments, a happy acquiescence it is said is likely to terminate the business here in as favorable a manner as could possibly have been expected.

No sooner had the Citizens of Alexandria (who are fœderal to a man) received the intelligence by the Mail last night, than they determined to devote this day to festivity. But their exhilaration was greatly increased, and a much keener zest given to their enjoyment, by the arrival of an Express (two hours before day) with the news that the Convention of New Hampshire shire had, on the 21st instant, acceded to the new Confederacy by a majority of eleven voices, that is to say, fifty seven to forty six.

Thus the Citizens of Alexandria,

when convened, constituted the first public company in America, which had the pleasure of pouring [a] libation to the prosperity of the ten States that had actually adopted the general government. The day itself is memorable for more reasons than one. It was recollected that this day is the Anniversary of the battles of Sullivan's Island and Monmouth. I have just returned from assisting at the entertainment, and mention these details, unimportant as they are in themselves, the rather because I think we may rationally indulge the pleasing hope that the Union will now be established upon a durable basis, and that Providence seems still disposed to favour the members of it, with unequalled opportunities for political happiness.

From the local situation as well as the other circumstances of North Carolina, I should be truly astonished if that State should withdraw itself from the Union. On the contrary, I

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flatter myself with *a confident expectation* that more salutary counsels will certainly prevail. At present there is more doubt how the question will be immediately disposed of in New York; for it seems to be understood that there is a majority in the Convention opposed to the adoption of the New fœderal System. Yet it is hardly to be supposed (or rather in my judgment it is irrational to suppose) they will

reject a government, which, from an unorganized embryo ready to be stifled with a breath, has now in the maturity of its birth assumed a confirmed bodily existence. Or, to drop the metaphor, the point in debate has, at least, shifted its ground from policy to expediency. The decision of ten States cannot be without its operation. Perhaps the wisest way, in this crisis will be, not to attempt to accept or reject, but to adjourn until the people in some parts of the State can consider the magnitude of the question and of the consequences involved in it, more coolly and deliberately. After New York shall have acted, then only one little State will remain; suffice it to say, *it is universally believed, that the scales are ready to drop from the eyes and the infatuation to be removed from the heart, of Rhode Island* . May this be the case, before that inconsiderate People shall have filled up the measure of iniquity before it shall be too late!

Mrs. Washington and all with us desire their best Compliments may be presented to Mrs. Pinckney and yourself: wishing that mine may also be made acceptable to you both, I am,
&c.12

12. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On June 28 Washington wrote to the Reverend Mr. West, inclosing a letter of introduction to Wakelin Welch for Wests's son, who was going to England to study painting. The letter to Welch, dated June 28 also, speaks of Wests's father as an Episcopalian clergyman of Maryland. Copies of both of these letters are in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

To BENJAMIN LINCOLN

Mount Vernon, June 29, 1788.

My dear Sir: I beg you will accept my thanks for the communications handed to me in your letter of the 3d. instant, and my congratulations on the encreasing good dispositions of the Citizens of your State of which the late elections are strongly indicative. No one *can* rejoice more than I do at every step the people of this great Country take to preserve the Union, establish good order and government, and to render the Nation happy at home and respectable abroad. No Country upon Earth ever had it more in its power to attain these blessings than United America. Wondrously strange then, and much to be regretted indeed would it be, were we to neglect the means, and to depart from the road which Providence has pointed us to, so plainly; I cannot believe it will ever come to pass. The great Governor of the Universe has led us too long and too far on the road to happiness and glory, to forsake us in the midst of it. By folly and improper conduct, proceeding from a variety of causes, we may now and then get bewildered; but I hope and trust that there is good sense and virtue enough left to recover the right path before we shall be entirely lost.

You will, before this letter can have reached you, have heard of the Ratification of the new Government by this State. The final question without previous amendments was taken the 25th. Ayes, 89. Noes, 79; but something recommendatory, or declaratory of the rights, [accompanied] the ultimate decision. This account and the news of the adoption by New Hampshire arrived in Alexandria nearly about the same time on Friday evening; and, as you will suppose, was cause for great rejoicing among the Inhabitants who have not I believe an Antifederalist among them. Our Accounts from Richmond are, that the debates, through all the different Stages of the business, though [brisk] and animated, have been conducted with great dignity and temper; that the final decision exhibited an awful and solemn scene, and that there is every reason to expect a perfect acquiescence therein by the minority; not only from the declaration of Mr. Henry, the great leader of it, who has signified that though he can never be reconciled to the Constitution in its present form,

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and shall give it every *constitutional* opposition in his power yet that he will submit to it peaceably, as he thinks every good Citizen ought to do when it is in exercise and that he will both by precept and example inculcate this doctrine to all around him.

There is little doubt entertained here *now* of the ratification of the proposed Constitution by North Carolina; and however great the opposition to it may be in New York the

leaders thereof will, I should conceive, consider well the consequences before they reject it. With respect to Rhode Island, the power that governs there has so far baffled all calculation on this question that no man would chuse to hazard an opinion lest he might be suspected of participating in its phrensy. You have every good wish of this family and the sincere regard of your affectionate, &c.13

To THOMAS NEWTON, JUNIOR

Mount Vernon, July 7, 1788.

Sir: I am in want of a quantity of *good* eighteen Inch shingles and am informed that they will come better and *cheaper* from Norfolk than from the Eastern shore. Be so good, therefore, as to advise me by the first Post after you shall have received, this letter if I can be supplied with 100,000 from the former. In what time, and at what price; delivered at *my landing* distinguishing between what is called bald, and

13. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

green Cyprus. As my work will soon call for these Shingles I repeat my wish for early advice on this subject. That there may be a clear understanding, the length, breadth, and thickness under which the Shingles shall not be should be specified, among them I shall want about 3000 of Twenty one Inches long. I am etc.

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P.S. It runs through my mind, that I have heard of Shingles being had from No. Carolina on good terms.¹⁴

To GUSTAVUS SCOTT¹⁵

Mount Vernon, July 15, 1788.

Sir: I am much obliged to you for the two curiosities you were pleased to transmit, as well as for your distinct and ingenious account of them. The facts have been so clearly stated by you, as I believe, to render a farther elucidation or confirmation unnecessary.

It is greatly to be regretted, that we have not in America some general Museum or Cabinet for receiving all the rare Phenomena and unusual productions of nature, which might

14. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

15. Later appointed by Washington one of the Commissioners for the District of Columbia.

be collected in this Country: especially as natural History affords, perhaps, a more ample field for investigation here, than in any other part of the world. It is, however, laudible under all abilities to devote some part of their attention to so rational and curious a study.

In the meantime, as I shall take a particular pleasure in letting the Marquis de la Fayette know to whose care he may consider himself indebted for those articles, so I shall ever be happy in demonstrating. With great esteem, etc.¹⁶

To SAMUEL HOLDEN PARSONS

Mount Vernon, July 15, 1788.

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Dear Sir: By some unusual delay in the Post office, I did not receive your kind letter of the 21st. of April untill the 30th. of June; or I should have sooner done myself the pleasure of acknowledging the receipt and of returning my best thanks

16. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

for your friendly sentiments and wishes. I beg you will be persuaded of the satisfaction I take in hearing from my old military friends and of the interest I feel in their future prosperity. You will then do me the Justice to believe that my ardent desires attend the success and happiness of an establishment, in which the fortunes of so many of that worthy description of Citizens are comprehended.

You will doubtless have heard, before you can receive this letter, that the proposed general Government has been accepted by the Conventions often States. The prospect brightens apace, and I flatter myself the interior Settlements will find their interest concur with their inclination in maintaining an intimate connection with the Atlantic States.

It is with sincere pleasure I can inform you, that the navigation of the Potomac, so interesting in its consequence to the welfare of your Establishment as well as to the emolument of this Country, is in a fair way of being opened in as short a time and in as beneficial a manner as could have been expected. In order to meet the Directors of the Potomac Company on business, I have lately been obliged to make a visit to the Great falls, the Seneca and the Shenandoah; and, therefore, give you this information from my own knowledge. Indeed, I may venture to conjecture, from the enormous quantity of labour already established by the Legislatures

of Virginia and Maryland to obtain the Subscription Money, that, instead of ten years which the Company is allowed for opening the navigation, it will be made passable in little more than half the time. I do not mean, however, but that it will take a considerably longer period (perhaps the ten years) to meliorate and improve the works in the best manner.

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As I thought this intelligence might be agreeable to your brother Settlers, I have been the more confident and precise in expressing it according to my observation and Judgment. With sentiments of esteem I am, etc.¹⁷

To THE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mount Vernon, July 18, 1788.

Dear Sir: A few days ago, I had the pleasure to receive your letter from Poughkeepsie; since which I have not obtained any authentic advices of the proceedings of your Convention. The clue you gave me, to penetrate into the principles and wishes

17. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

of the four classes of men among you who are opposed to the Constitution, has opened a large field for reflection and conjecture. The accession of Ten States must operate forcibly with all the opposition, except the class which is comprehended in your last description. Before this time you will probably have come to some decision. While we are waiting the result with the greatest anxiety, our Printers are not so fortunate as to obtain any papers from the Eastward. Mine which have generally been more regular, have, however, frequently been interrupted for some time past.

It is extremely to be lamented, that a new arrangement in the Post Office, unfavorable to the circulation of intelligence, should have taken place at the instant when the momentous question of a general Government was to come before the People. I have seen no good apology, not even in Mr. Hazard's publication, for deviating from the old custom, of permitting Printers to exchange their Papers by the Mail. That practice was a great public convenience and gratification. If the privilege was not from convention an original right, it had from prescription strong pretensions for continuance, especially at so interesting a period. The interruption in that mode of conveyance, has not only given great concern to

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the friends of the Constitution, who wished the Public to be possessed of every thing, that might

be printed on both sides of the question; but it has afforded its enemies very plausible pretexts for dealing out their scandals, and exciting jealousies by inducing a belief that the suppression of intelligence, at that critical juncture, was a wicked trick of policy, contrived by an Aristocratic Junto. Now, if the Post Master General (with whose character I am unacquainted and therefore would not be understood to form an unfavorable opinion of his motives) has any candid Advisers who conceive that he merits the public employment they ought to counsel him to wipe away the aspersion he has incautiously brought upon a good cause; if he is unworthy of the Office he holds, it would be well that the ground of a complaint, apparently so general, should be inquired into, and, if [well] founded, redressed through the medium of a better appointment.

It is a matter in my judgment of primary importance that the public mind should be relieved from inquietude on this subject. I know it is said that the irregularity or defect has happened accidentally, in consequence of the contract for transporting the Mail on horseback, instead of having it carried in the *Stages* ; but I must confess, I could never account, upon any satisfactory principles,

for the inveterate enmity with which the Post Master General is asserted to be actuated against that valuable institution. It has often been understood by wise politicians and enlightened patriots that giving a facility to the means of travelling for Strangers and of intercourse for citizens, was an object of Legislative concern and a circumstance highly beneficial to any country. In England, I am told, they consider the Mail Coaches as a great modern improvement in their Post Office Regulations. I trust we are not too old, or too proud to profit by the experience of others. In this article the materials are amply within our reach. I am taught to imagine that the horses, the vehicles, and the accommodations in America (with very little encouragement,) might in a short period become as good as the same articles are to be found in any Country of Europe. and at the same time, I am sorry

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to learn that the line of Stages is at present interrupted in some parts of New England and totally discontinued at the Southward.

I mention these suggestions only as my particular thoughts on an Establishment, which I had conceived to be of great importance. Your proximity to the Person in question and connection with the characters in Power, will enable you to decide better than I can on the validity of the allegations; and, in that case, to weigh the expediency of dropping such hints as may serve to give satisfaction

to the Public. With sentiments of the highest consideration &c.

P. S. Since writing the foregoing, I have been favored with your letter which was begun on the 4th and continued till the 8th. and thank you for the information therein contained. Your next will, I hope, announce the ratification by your State without previous amendments.¹⁸

To PETERSON & TAYLOR

Mount Vernon, July 19, 1788.

Gentl: Your letter of the 14th. came duly to hand as did the other to which there is an allusion. The first time my Nephew comes to Town. I will send you what money I have towards discharging your bill for the Scantling furnished me. I wish it may be recollected, however that you have not been kept longer from the former than I have been from the latter, and that you may be moreover convinced, and sure I am,

18. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

In an undated letter, indorsed by Washington "June —," Jay had written: "The Leaders in opposition seem to have more extensive views than their adherents, and untill the latter perceive that circumstance, they will probably continue combined. The greater number are I believe averse to a vote of Rejection; some would be content with recommendatory amendments; others wish for explanatory ones to settle Constructions which they

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think doubtful; others would not be satisfied with less than absolute and previous amendments; and I am mistaken if there be not a few, who prefer a separation from the Union to any national Government whatever." On July 8 Jay again wrote: "From what I have just heard the Party begins to divide in their opinions; some insist on *previous* conditional amendments; a greater number will be satisfied with *subsequent* conditional amendments, or in other words they are for ratifying the Constitution on Condition that certain amendments take place within a given Time; these circumstances afford Room for Hope," Both of these letters are in the *Washington Papers*.

that my disadvantages arising from the one is at least equal to what yours can be from the other, and with more injurious consequences. Fish too (in Barrels.) which was the fund I allotted for payment, and which if my memory has not failed me it was so intimated at the time, has not yet brought me in Cash but notwithstanding what I have you shall receive as above. I am, etc.¹⁸

To PRESIDENT JOHN LANGDON

Mount Vernon, July 20, 1788.

Dear Sir: I had the satisfaction to receive regularly your favour of the 21st. Ulto, announcing the adoption of the foederal government by the Convention of New Hampshire. You will already have been informed through the ordinary channels of communication, that the same event took effect in this State a few days afterward. And I am happy to say, that, so far as I have been able to learn, a spirit of harmony and acquiescence obtained among the large and respectable minority, in as great a degree as could possibly have been expected.

If we may calculate upon

18. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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In an undated letter, indorsed by Washington "June —," Jay had written: "The Leaders in opposition seem to have more extensive views than their adherents, and untill the latter perceive that circumstance, they will probably continue combined. The greater number are I believe averse to a vote of Rejection; some would be content with recommendatory amendments; others wish for explanatory ones to settle Constructions which they think doubtful; others would not be satisfied with less than absolute and previous amendments; and I am mistaken if there be not a few, who prefer a separation from the Union to any national Government whatever." On July 8 Jay again wrote: "From what I have just heard the Party begins to divide in their opinions; some insist on *previous* conditional amendments; a greater number will be satisfied with *subsequent* conditional amendments, or in other words they are for ratifying the Constitution on Condition that certain amendments take place within a given Time; these circumstances afford Room for Hope," Both of these letters are in the *Washington Papers*.

rectitude in the views, and prudence in the conduct of the leading characters throughout the States, accompanied by industry and honesty in the Mass of the people, we may assuredly anticipate a new æra; and, perhaps, we shall not deceive ourselves by expecting a more happy one than has before appeared on this checkered scene of existence. But we ought not to be too sanguine or to expect that we shall be entirely exempted from the ills which fall to the lot of humanity. With congratulations to your Excellency on your elevation to the Chief Magistracy of your State, and with sentiments of consideration etc.¹⁹

19. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, July 20, 1788.

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Dear Sir: Your favors of the 26th. of May, 13th of June and 7th. instt. are before me; and I believe unacknowledged. The several Articles sent by the Packet came safe, except one of the Wheels belonging to the harrows which was not landed by Captn. Ellwood who dropped them at my landing as he passed by in the Night returning. Whether the omission was in *him* or in putting them on board in Philadelphia I know not.

I am sorry my Herrings are likely to meet so unfavourable a market. If the price should not rise, I could have got what you say those from the head of Elk are selling at, in Alexandria; and am not a little surprized to hear of the deficiency having repacked them (at least ordered them to be so), When they were shipped for Philadelphia.

I beg you will send me 200 wt. of single and 100 wt. of dble refined Sugar of good quality and a gross of Mr. Hairs best bottled Porter if the price of it is not much enhanced by the copius droughts you took of it at the late Procession.

As you have not yet furnished me with my account I know not to what amount I stand indebted to you; and it not being my wish to put you to the smallest inconvenience

by advancing money for the purchase of articles for my use I pray you to forward the account that I may draw on the Bank of Philadelphia in your favor.

I beg you would be so obliging as to forward the enclosed letter for General Parsons by the first *safe* conveyance. I am, etc.

P.S. Pray send me by the *Post* 12 yards of Velvet ribbon of the width and quality of the enclosed sample.²⁰

To JONATHAN TRUMBULL

Mount Vernon, July 20, 1788.

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My dear Trumbull: I have received your favor of the 20th of June and thank you heartily for the confidential information contained in it. The character given of a certain great Personage,²¹ who is remarkable for neither forgetting nor forgiving, I believe to be just. What effect the addition of such an extraordinary weight of power and influence as the new Arrangement of the East

20. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

21. King George III.

India affairs gives to one branch of the British Government cannot be certainly foretold; but one thing is certain, that is to say, it will always be wise for America to be prepared for events. Nor can I refrain from indulging the expectation that the time is not very distant, when it shall be more in the power of the United States than it hath hitherto been, to be forearmed as well as forewarned against the evil contingencies of European politics.

You will have perceived from the public Papers, that I was not erroneous in my calculation, that the Constitution would be accepted by the Convention of this State. The Majority, it is true, was small, and the minority respectable in many points of view. But the great part of the minority here, as in most other States, have conducted themselves with great prudence and political moderation; insomuch that we may anticipate a pretty general and harmonious acquiescence. We shall impatiently wait the result from New York and North Carolina. The other State which has not yet acted is nearly out of the question.

As the infamy of the conduct of Rhode Island outgoes all precedent, so the influence of her counsels can be of no prejudice. There is no State or description of men but would blush to be involved in a connection with the Paper-Money Junto of that Anarchy. God grant that the honest men may acquire an ascendancy before irrevocable ruin shall confound the innocent

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with the guilty.

I am happy to hear from Genl. Lincoln and others that affairs are taking a good turn in Massachusetts; but the Triumph of salutary and liberal measures over those of an opposite tendency seems to be as complete in Connecticut as in any other State and affords a particular subject of congratulation. Your friend Colo. Humphreys informs me, from the wonderful revolution of sentiment in favour of federal measures, and the marvellous change for the better in the elections of your State, that he shall begin to suspect that miracles have not ceased; indeed, for myself, since so much liberality has been displayed in the construction and adoption of the proposed General Government, I am almost disposed to be of the same opinion. Or at least we may, with a kind of grateful and pious exultation, trace the finger of Providence through those dark and mysterious events, which first induced the States to appoint a general Convention and then led them one after another (by such steps as were best calculated to effect the object) into an adoption of the system recommended by that general Convention; thereby, in all human probability, laying a lasting foundation for tranquillity and happiness; when we had but too much

reason to fear that confusion and misery were coming rapidly upon us. That the same good Providence may still continue to protect us and prevent us from dashing the cup of national felicity just as it has been lifted to our lips, is the earnest prayer of My Dear Sir, your faithful friend, &c.22

***To SIR EDWARD NEWENHAM**

Mount Vernon, August 29, 1786

Dear Sir: I beg you will be persuaded that it always gives me singular pleasure to hear from you; and that your obliging letter of the 22nd and 25th of March afforded me particular satisfaction. I am also to thank you for the Irish Parliamentary Papers which have come

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safe to hand. The Edition of Cooke's⁸⁷ Voyage, which you mention to have forwarded by a former occasion, has not been so successful in its voyage to me; any more than the *New Books* wch. (in a letter of the 13th of Novr. 1786) you say had been sent to me by the Mary Captn. Mathews; or I should not have neglected the acknowledgement of them.

22. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

86. The "Letter Book" dates this letter July 20 and Sparks prints it, in garbled form and with unnoted omissions, under that date. The letter sent, however, has had the date altered (apparently by George Augustine Washington) to August 29.

87. Capt. James Cook.

I am heartily glad to find that the prosperity of Ireland is on the encrease. It was afflicting for the Philanthropic mind, to consider the mass of People, inhabiting a Country naturally fertile in productions and full of resources, sunk to an abject degree of penury and depression. Such has been the picture we have received of the Peasantry. Nor do their calamities seem to be entirely removed yet, as we may gather from the Spirited speech of Mr. Gratton⁸⁸ on the commutation of tythe. But I hope, ere long, matters will go right there and in the rest of the World. For instead of the disconsolatory idea that every thing is growing worse, I would fain cheer myself with a hope that every thing is beginning to mend. As you observe, if Ireland was 500 miles farther distant from Great Britain the case with respect to the former would be as speedily as materially changed for the better.

But what shall we say of Wars and the appearances of Wars in the rest of the World? Mankind are not yet ripe for the Millenial State. The affairs of some of the greatest Potentates appear to be very much embroiled in the North of Europe. The question is, whether the Turks will be driven out of Europe or not? One would suppose, if discipline and arrangement are to be calculated upon in preference to ignorance and brutal force, that the Porte must recede before the two

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88. Henry Grattan. He was a Member of the Irish Parliament.

Imperial Powers. But in the game of War, there are so many contingencies that often prevent the most probable events from taking place; and in the present instance, there are so many causes that may kindle the hostile conflagration into a general flame, that we need not be over hasty and sanguine in drawing our conclusions. Let us see how far the sparks of hostility have been scattered. The almost open rupture between the Emperor of Germany and his subjects in the Low Countries; the interference of Prussia in Holland and the disordered condition of that republic; the new alliances on the part of that republic with England and Prussia; the humiliating dereliction (or rather sacrifice) which France has been obliged to make of the Dutch Patriots in consequence of the derangement of her finances; the troubles, internally, which prevail in France, together with the ill temper she must feel towards England on acct. of the terms lately dictated by the latter; the animosity of Britain and Morocco, in conjunction with several smaller subjects of National discussion, leave but too much ground to apprehend that the tranquility of Europe will not be of long continuance. I hope the United States of America will be able to keep disengaged from the labyrinth of European politics and Wars; and that before long they will, by the adoption of a good national government, have become respectable in the eyes of the world so that none of the maritime Powers, especially none of those who hold possessions in the New World or the West Indies shall presume to treat them with insult

or contempt. It should be the policy of United America to administer to their wants, without being engaged in their quarrels. And it is not in the ability of the proudest and most potent people on earth to prevent us from becoming a great, a respectable and a commercial Nation, if we shall continue United and faithful to ourselves.

Your sollicitude that an efficient and good government may be established in this Country, in order that it may enjoy felicity at home and respectability abroad serves only to confirm me in the opinion I have always entertained of your disinterested and ardent friendship for this Land of freedom. It is true, that, for the want of a proper Confœderation, we have

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not yet been in a situation fully to enjoy those blessings which God and Nature seemed to have intended for us. But I begin to look forward, with a kind of political faith, to scenes of National happiness, which have not heretofore been offered for the fruition of the most favoured Nations. The natural political, and moral circumstances of our Nascent empire justify the anticipation. We have an almost unbounded territory whose natural advantages for agriculture and Commerce equal those of any on the globe.

In a civil point of view we have unequalled privilege of choosing our own political Institutions and of improving upon the experience of Mankind in the formation of a confœderated government, where due energy will not be incompatible with unalienable rights of freemen. To complete the picture, I may observe, that the information and morals of our Citizens appear to be peculiarly favourable for the introduction of such a plan of government as I have just now described.

Although there were some few things in the Constitution recommended by the Fœderal Convention to the determination of the People, which did not full accord with my wishes; yet, having taken every circumstance seriously into consideration, I was convinced it approached nearer to perfection than any government hitherto instituted among Men. I was also convinced, that nothing but a genuine spirit of amity and accomodation could have induced the members to make those mutual concessions and to sacrifice (at the shrine of enlightened liberty) those local prejudices, which seemed to oppose an insurmountable barrier, to prevent them from harmonising in any system whatsoever.

But so it has happened by the good pleasure of Providence, and the same happy disposition has been diffused and fostered among the people at large. You will permit me to say, that a greater Drama is now acting on this Theatre than has heretofore been brought on the

American Stage, or any other in the World. We exhibit at present the Novel and astonishing Spectacle of a whole People deliberating calmly on what form of government

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will be most conducive to their happiness; and deciding with an unexpected degree of unanimity in favour of a System which they conceive calculated to answer the purpose.

It is only necessary to add for your satisfaction, that, as all the States, which have yet acted and which are ten in number, have adopted the proposed Constitution; and as the concurrence of nine States was sufficient to carry it into effect in the first inste. it is expected the government will be in complete organization and execution before the commencement of the ensuing year.

I failed not, on the receipt of your letter, to make the best arrangements in my power for obtaining the Opossums and birds you mentioned. But I shall not be able to succeed in time for this conveyance. Having heard of a Male and female Opossum, with several young ones, at the house of one of my friends in Maryland, I sent for them, but unfortunately they were all dead. I may probably be more successful in Autumn.

I please myself with the

hope that the impediments which have prevented your visiting America will soon be removed, and that we shall have the satisfaction of witnessing to you personally our veneration for the Patriots of other Countries. In the interim Mrs. Washington desires that I will not fail to blend her best respects with mine for Lady Newenham and yourself. It is with pleasure I sieze occasions to assure you with how much truth I have the honor etc.

[M.L.]

To MATHEW CAREY

Mount Vernon, July 21, 1788.

Sir: I have been favored with your letter of the 5th. instant,²³ and shall be happy if mine to which you allude, may have any operation in favour of your literary undertaking.

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If I had more leisure, I should most willingly give you any such communications (that might be within my reach) as would serve to keep up the reputation of your Museum. At present, occupied as I am with my agriculture and correspondencies, I can promise little. Perhaps some Gentleman connected with me may make some selections

23. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

from my repositories: and I beg you will be persuaded that I can have no reluctance to permit anything to be communicated that might tend to establish truth, extend knowledge, excite and promote happiness among mankind. With unremitting wishes for your success. I am, etc.

To NATHANIEL GORHAM

Mount Vernon, July 21, 1788.

Sir: I received your congratulatory letter of the 5th. instant by the last Mail. It gives me reciprocal satisfaction to find that the adoption of the Constitution by Virginia has difused so general a Joy through the other States. The good disposition manifested by the Citizens of your Commonwealth excites also a flattering and consolatory reflection in all who wish well to the Federal interest and the glory of the American Nation. Much happiness

may rationally be anticipated from the encreasing prevalence of industry and frugality, invigorated and encouraged by the operation of a free yet efficient general Government.

Although I am passing rapidly into the *Vale of Years* , where the genial warmth of youth that fires its votary with a generous enthusiasm becomes extinct and where the cheerlessness²⁴ of the prospect often infects the animal spirits with a similar contagion; yet I trust there are few who rejoice more fervently in the expectation that the beams of prosperity will break in upon a Country, which has ever engaged my most disinterested wishes and fondest hopes. And although I shall not live to see but a small portion of

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the happy effects, which I am confident this system will produce for my Country; yet the precious idea of its prosperity will not only be a consolation amidst the encreasing infirmities of nature and the growing love of retirement, but it will tend to sooth the mind in the inevitable hour of seperation from terrestrial objects.

With earnest prayers that you and all the worthy Patriots of America may long enjoy uninterrupted felicity under the New Government, I have the honor etc.²⁵

24. The printed text, kindly furnished by Frederick S. Peck, of Providence, R. I., has "cheerfulness."

25. From the "Letter Book" copy, in the *Washington Papers*.

The following note is found in Washington's summary of work done on the Mount Vernon farms in 1788, under July 23: "From the experience of this years Harvest, I am of opinion that Reaping of Wheat, if the Negros could be once instructed, would be *nearly* if not quite as expeditious a method of getting *down* a harvest as cutting with a Scythe and Cradle; and less wasteful and more convenient for Stacking and threshing by grt. odds. I am also clearly of opinion that instead of Shocking grain in the Field, and then to have it to transport to the Barn that it [is] best to do this at once; little, if any more time is required for the accomplishment of it in the first instance and much saved on the whole besides avoiding the risques which grain is subject to in the field and depriving for a considerable length of time one's stock from reaping the benefit of the shattered grain and pasturage."

To SAMUEL HANSON

Mount Vernon, July 26, 1788.

Sir: The letter which you was pleased to write to me on the 21st. instant did not get to my hands in time to attend the meeting of the Trustees of Alexandria Academy. It is not *a/ways* that I send to the Post Office on Post days. But on Monday last I directed a white

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man who lives with me, and who *said* he had business at Court to call for my letters in the evening. That, however which was infinitely more agreeable, and equally injurious to himself allowed him no time to think of Post Office or letters and accordingly he came home, without the latter.

The want of Arithmetical and Mathematical instructor at this Academy is in my Judgment, a very great defect in the Institution. To find boys who have been Six or seven years at the Classics *entirely* unacquainted with those parts of literature which are to fit them for the *ordinary* purposes of life, incapable of writing legibly; and *altogether* ignorant in accts. does not in the smallest degree, comport with my ideas of useful and essential

education. Of this, I have already informed Mr. McWher; and shall feel myself under the necessity of withdrawing my Nephews from the Academy unless some change in this respect takes place, and that in a short time. With esteem and regard I am, etc.²⁶

To ROBERT TOWNSEND HOOE

Mount Vernon, July 28, 1788.

Dear Sir: Having had but very little agency in the management of Colo. Thomas Colvills Affairs, but (after my return from public life and the death of Mr. John West) being very desirous of getting them settled; I applied to Mr. Thomas West for such Papers as were in his possession which (unfortunately are very diffident and unsatisfactory) and more than a year ago placed them with such as, I had myself in the hands of Mr. Keith to make a final Statement for the Court. The incompetency of the Papers had from Mr. West I presume the cause why it has not been

26. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On July 28 Washington wrote the following permit for Robert Hanson Harrison: "The bearer hereof, the Honble. Judge Harrison of Maryland, is hereby authorized to take

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possession of Houses and lotts in the Town of Bath in the County of Berkeley, and to have the Free and uninterrupted use of them during his stay at that place who ever may have them in care or occupation is requested to surrender them accordingly." A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

done ere this. From him you may, possibly, get some information, from me till the Papers are returned it is impracticable for want of documents to refer to. I am, etc.²⁶

26. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On July 28 Washington wrote the following permit for Robert Hanson Harrison: "The bearer hereof, the Honble. Judge Harrison of Maryland, is hereby authorized to take possession of Houses and lotts in the Town of Bath in the County of Berkeley, and to have the Free and uninterrupted use of them during his stay at that place who ever may have them in care or occupation is requested to surrender them accordingly." A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

To NOAH WEBSTER

Mount Vernon, July 31, 1788.

Sir: I duly received your letter of the 14th. instant, and can only answer very *briefly*, and generally from *memory*: that a combined operation of the land and naval forces of France in America, for the year 1781, was preconcerted the year before: that the point of attack was not absolutely agreed upon, because it would be easy for the Count de Grasse, in good time before his departure from the West Indies, to give notice by Express, at what place he could most conveniently first touch to receive advice, because it could not be foreknown where the enemy would be most susceptible of impression; and because we (having the command of the water with sufficient means of conveyance) could transport ourselves to any spot with the greatest celerity: that it was determined by me (nearly twelve months beforehand) at all hazards to give out and cause it to be believed by the

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highest military as well as civil Officers that New York was the destined place of attack, for the important purpose of inducing the Eastern and Middle States to make greater exertions in furnishing specific supplies than they otherwise would have done, as well as for the interesting purpose of rendering the enemy

less prepared elsewhere: that, by these means and these alone, artillery, Boats, Stores and Provisions were in seasonable preparation to move with the utmost rapidity to any part of the Continent; for the difficulty consisted more in providing, than knowing how to apply the military apparatus: that before the arrival of the Count de Grasse it was the fixed determination to *strike the enemy in the most vulnerable quarter* so as to ensure success with moral certainty, as our affairs were then in the most ruinous train imaginable: that New York was thought to be beyond our effort and consequently the only hesitation that remained was between an attack upon the British army in Virginia or that in Charleston: and finally that (by the intervention of several communications and some incidents which cannot be Detailed in a letter; and wch. were *altogether unknown* to the late Quartermaster General of the Army,²⁷ who was informed of nothing but what related to the immediate duties of his own department) the hostile Post in Virginia, from being a *provisional and strongly expected* became the *definitive and certain object* of the Campaign.

27. Timothy Pickering.

I only add, that it never was in contemplation to attack New York, unless the Garrison should first have been so far disgarnished to carry on the southern operations, as to render our success in the siege of that place as infallible as any future military event can ever be made.²⁸ For I repeat it, and dwell upon it again and again, some splendid advantage (whether upon a larger or smaller scale was almost immaterial) was so essentially necessary to revive the expiring hopes and languid exertions of the Country, at the crisis in question, that I never would have consented to embark in any enterprize; wherein, from the most rational plan and accurate calculations, the favourable issue should not have appeared as clear to my view, as a ray of light. The failure of an attempt

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agst. the Posts of the enemy, could, in no other possible situation during the war, have been so fatal to our cause.

That much trouble was taken and finesse used to misguide and bewilder Sir Henry Clinton in regard to the real object, by fictitious communications, as well as by making a deceptive provision of Ovens, Forage and Boats in his Neighborhood, is certain. Nor were less pains taken to deceive our own Army; for I had always conceived, when the imposition did not completely take place at home, it could never sufficiently

28. Webster had written (July 14): "The late Quarter Master General has assured me that a combined attack was intended to be made upon New York, and that the arrival of the French fleet in the Bay of Chesapeak was unexpected, and changed the plan of operations." Webster's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

succeed abroad.

Your desire of obtaining truth is very laudable, I wish I had more leizure to gratify it: as I am equally solicitous the undisguised verity should be known. Many circumstances will unavoidably be misconceived and misrepresented. Notwithstanding most of the Papers which may properly be deemed official are preserved; yet the knowledge of innumerable things, of a more delicate and secret nature, is confined to the perishable remembrance of some few of the present generation. With esteem I am.

[M.L.]

To JAMES McHENRY

Mount Vernon, July 31, 1788.

Dear Sir: In reply to your recent favour, which has been duly received, I can only observe, that, as I never go from home except when I am obliged by necessary avocations, and as I meddle as little as possible with politics that my interference may not give occasion

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for impertinent imputations, so I am less likely than almost any person to have been informed of the circumstance to which you allude.²⁹ That some of the leading characters among the Opponents of the proposed government have not laid aside their ideas of obtaining great and essential changes, through a constitutional opposition (as they term it) may be collected from their public speeches. That others will use more secret and perhaps insidious means to prevent its organization, may be presumed from their previous conduct on the subject. In addition to this probability, the casual information received from Visitants at my house, would lead me to expect that a considerable effort will be made to procure the election of Antifederalists to the first Congress; in order to bring the subject immediately before the State legislatures, to open an extensive correspondence between the minorities for obtaining alterations, and in short to undo all that has been done.

It is reported that

29. McHenry had written (July 27): "It is whispered here that some leading characters among you have by no means dropped their resentment to the new constitution, but have determined on some secret plan to suspend the proper organization of the government or to defeat it altogether." McHenry's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

a respectable Neighbour of mine has said, the Constitution cannot be carried into execution, without great amendments. But I will freely do the opposition with us the justice to declare, that I have heard of no cabals or canvassings respecting the elections. It is said to be otherwise on your side of the river. By letters from the eastern States I am induced to believe the Minorities have acquiesced not only with a good grace, but also with a serious design to give the government a fair chance to discover its operation by being carried into effect. I hope and trust that the same liberal disposition prevails with a large proportion of the same description of men in this State. Still, I think there will be great reason, for those who are well-affected to the government, to use their utmost exertions that the worthiest Citizens may be appointed to the two houses of the first Congress and where State Elections take place previous to this choice that the same principle [may] govern in

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these also. For much will doubtless depend on their prudence in conducting business at the beginning; and reconciling discordant dispositions to a reasonable acquiescence with candid and honest measures. At the same time it will be a point of no common delicacy to make provision for effecting such

explanations and amendments as might be really proper and generally satisfactory; without producing or at least fostering such a spirit of innovation as will overturn the whole system.

I earnestly pray that the Omnipotent Being who has not deserted the cause of America in the hour of its extremest hazard, will never yield so fair a heritage of freedom a prey to *Anarchy* or *Despotism* . With sentiments of real regard, &c.30

***To JAMES GIBBONS**

Mount Vernon, August 1, 1788.

Sir: I received your letter of the 16th. Ult., and can only advise you (respecting the subject to which it refers) that, upon a recurrence to the General Orders, I find your Brevet promotion announced to the Army in the words of the Resolve of Congress; and, that, by farther researches among the memorandums of resignations, I can discover nothing more on the Subject. What was the understanding at the time when you resigned your Regimental Commission, I

30. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

cannot, at this distant period, undertake to say: but I do not think it was absolutely necessary that the resignation of a Corn mission in the line should have involved the resignation of one held by the same person, by Brevet.³² Congress or their Commissioner for settling the accounts of the Army must be the discretionary Judges of right and propriety, in these intricate cases.

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Your conjecture is but too well founded, that the applications to me on similar questions are extremely numerous and perplexing. Whensoever I am possessed of data which can be of any avail in settling disputes, I submit to the trouble with the less reluctance, as I am ever desirous justice should be done. With due regard I am, etc.³³

32. Gibbons had been a lieutenant in the Sixth Pennsylvania Regiment, and brevetted a captain by Congress for gallantry in the storming of Stony Point.

33. From a photostat of the original in Duke University.

To THOMAS NEWTON, JUNIOR

Mount Vernon, August 1, 1788.

Sir: Your letters of the 14th. and 17th Ult^o. came duly to hand, as did the sample of Shingles by Captn. Slocum. I did not conceive that under the present dearth of Cash that the price of this article would have been so high as you mentioned.

Capt. Slocum, with whom I have conversed on this subject, thinks as you do, that Juniper Shingles would answer my purpose as well as any other would, and suggested farther, the propriety (their covering being intended for a Barn) of making it of 3 feet shingles instead of 18 Inches which (according to his account) are of sufficient thickness and run from 7 to 10 Inches broad; suppose 8 Inches on an average, the price he says is 7 or 8 Dollars pr. M, but whether he meant delivered here, or that it was the price at the place of Exportation it did not *at the time* occur to me to ask him. If the former, and he is right as to the width &c. tho' the original cost of them would amount to about the same as 18 Inch shingles, yet as I should save in the Articles of Nails, laths &c. they would be preferable.

Under this statement, if you could send me 25,000, the money (except for the freight which I would pay on delivery) to be

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paid in 3 or 4 Months (which is as soon as I could Raise it from my Wheat or Barley) I should be very glad to have them forwarded to me without delay; and shall depend on your doing the whole on the best terms for me; pray let me hear from you immediately as the Walls of my building will soon require a Roof. If these cannot be had or do not come up to Captn. Slocums description, I must in that case request you to send me 100,000 18 Inch Shingles (if to be had on the above credit) of Juniper, agreeably to your own account of them. I am, etc.³¹

To JAMES MADISON

Mount Vernon, August 3, 1788.

My dear Sir: Your favors of the 21st and 27th of last month came duly to hand. The last, contained the pleasing, and I may add (tho' I could not reconcile it to any ideas I entertained of common policy) unexpected account of the unconditional ratification of the Constitution

31. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

by the State of New York. That No. Carolina will hesitate long in its choice I can scarcely believe; but what Rhode Island will do is more difficult to say, though not worth a conjecture; as the conduct of the Majority there has, hitherto, baffled all calculation.

The place proper for the New Congress to meet at, will unquestionably, undergo (if it has not already done it) much investigation; but there are certain things which are so self evident in their nature as to speak for themselves. this, possibly, may be one; where the true point lays I will not undertake to decide, but there can be no hesitation I conceive in pronouncing one thing, that in all Societies, if the bond or cement is strong and interesting enough to hold the body together, the several parts should submit to the inconveniences for the benefits which they derive from the conveniences of the compact.

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We have nothing in these parts worth communicating. Towards New York we look for whatever is interesting, untill the States begin to act under the New form, which will be an important epoch in the annals of this Country. With sentiments of sincere friendship etc.³⁴

34. From the printed text in the sales catalogue of the *Washington-Madison Papers* (McGuire Collection, 1892).

To THOMAS NELSON

Mount Vernon, August 3, 1788.

My dear Sir: Your letter of the 17th. Ultmo came duly to hand and could I have been of any service in the affair, to which it refers, no apology would have been necessary for requesting it. I have no white ditcher with me at present but a Dutch redemptioner. Nor has there *ever* lived with me one, to the best of my recollection, of the name of Clarke. *Last year* I employed a man who called himself James Lawson. He worked for me about nine Months as a Ditcher and left my employment in very bad health in the month of September since which I have not heard from him. Two or three years before that one William Shilling died in my Service as a Ditcher; these are all the white persons I have employed in that way since my return to private life.

Far, very far indeed was it from my intention to embarrass you by the letter which enclosed the proceedings of the Genl. Convention, and still farther was it from my wish that the communication should be received in any other light than as an instance of my attention and Friendship. I was

well aware that the adoption or rejection of the Constitution would, as it ought to be, decided upon according to its merits and agreeably to the circumstances to which our public affairs had arriven. That all questions of this kind are, ever will, and perhaps ought to be (to accomplish the designs of infinite wisdom) viewed through different mediums by different men is as certain as that they have existence, all that can be expected in such

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cases therefore is charity, mutual forbearance and acquiescence in the Genl. voice; which, though it may be wrong is presumably right.

Mrs. Washington unites with me in every good wish for Mrs. Nelson, yourself and family, and with sentiments of the highest esteem etc.³⁵

To THE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mount Vernon, August 3, 1788.

Dear Sir: The letters which you did me the favor of writing to me on the 17th. and 23d of last month from Poughkeepsie came duly to hand, and claim my particular acknowledgments.

35. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

With peculiar pleasure, I now congratulate you on the success of your labours to obtain an unconditional ratification of the proposed Constitution in the Convention of your State; the acct. of which was brought to us by the Mail of yesterday.

Although I could scarcely conceive it possible, after ten States had adopted the Constitution that New York, separated as it is from the other three and peculiarly divided in sentiments as it is, would withdraw from the Union, yet considering the great majority, which appeared to cling together in the Convention and the decided temper of the leaders, I did not I confess, see the means by which it was to be avoided. The exertion of those, who were able to effect this great work, must have been equally arduous and meritorious. It is to be hoped that the State of North Carolina will not spend much time in deciding upon it; but as to Rhode Island its conduct has so far baffled all calculation that few are disposed to hazard a conjecture thereon. With sentiments of sincere esteem, &c.³⁶

36. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, August 4, 1788.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 30th. Ult. came to my hands by the last mail.

Let me request that those articles which you propose to send me by Captn. Ellwood may be accompanied by 200 lbs. of *Sheet* Iron from the Trenton Works (proper for plating the Mould boards of Plows), and a Jarr of best Spirmaceti Oil for House Lamps. That is a clear fine Oil which does not foul them. The Velvet Ribbon came safe and was just the kind I wanted, and for your care in forwarding it so expeditiously I beg you to accept my thanks.

As the price of Porter according to your Account has not been enhanced and is good in quality, I beg, if this letter gets to hand in time, that you would add another gross to the one ordered in my former letter.

I want a pump for a well on a farm yard which is 13½ feet deep; how much it will require to be above the ground I certainly, know not, but say six feet, no cap is necessary because it will be under cover. What would such an one, made fit for use cost in Philadelphia and what would [be] the freight of it round? Your answer will determine whether I shall import one from that place or get

one made in Alexandria where the price asked is, I think, unreasonable. I am, etc.36

To DOCTOR JAMES CRAIK

Mount Vernon, August 4, 1788.

Dear Sir: With this letter you will receive the Horse I promised you; And which I now beg your acceptance of. He is not in such good order as I could wish, but as good as my means would place him.

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I also send you Thirty pounds Cash for one years allowance for the Schooling of your Son G.W.³⁷ I wish it was in my power to send the like sum for the other year, which is now about, or near due; and that could discharge your account for attendance and ministrans to the Sick of my family; but it really is not; for with much truth I can say, I never felt the want of money so sensibly since I was a boy of 15 years old as I have done for the last 12

36. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

37. George Washington Craik.

months and probably shall do for 12 Months more to come. Sincerely and affectly. etc.³⁸

To SAMUEL HANSON

Mount Vernon, August 6, 1788.

Sir: On my return home last night I found my Nephew Lawrence here, who said he was afraid to remain at your house, and offered to show me some bruises he had received. Being prepared for it, I was going this morning to correct him; but he begged so earnestly and promised so faithfully that there should be no cause of complaint against him for the future that I have suspended the Punishment.

The letter which I have written to his Brother on the subject, is under this cover and open for your perusal. He is arrived at such an *age* and *size* now as to be a fitter subject to be reasoned with than to receive corporal punishment. As my primary object in placing these boys with you *last*, was that they (at least George) should be treated more on the footing of

38. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

Friendship, and as companions, than as *mere* School-boys. This I hoped would draw George's attention to objects, and conversations, that would improve, and might contribute

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in a *degree* to wean him from boyish amusements, the influence of which would extend to Lawrence.

Necessary and decent Clothes they shall have no cause to complain for the want of; and if you, Sir, once a month, or oftener, would be so obliging as to inspect them, and let me know what they need I will take care that they shall be provided. A line from one of them, lodged at the Post, signifying their desire of sending things to my Taylor to repair will induce the occasional call of a servant who may be sent to Town on other business. With esteem, I am, &c.39

39. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To GEORGE STEPTOE WASHINGTON

Mount Vernon, August 6, 1788.

Dear George: It was with equal pain and surprise that I was informed by Colo. Hanson on Monday last, of your unjustifiable behaviour in rescuing your brother from that chastisement, which was due to his improper conduct; and which you know, because you have been told it in explicit language, he was authorized to administer whensoever he should deserve it. Such refractory behaviour on your part, I consider as an insult equally offered to myself after the above communications and I shall continue to view it in that light, till you have made satisfactory acknowledgments to Colo. Hanson for the offence given him.

It is as much my wish and intention to see justice done to you and your Brother as it is to punish either when it is merited; but there are proper modes by which this is to be obtained, and it is to be sought by a fair and candid representation of facts which can be supported, and not by vague complaints, disobedience, perverseness, or disobliging conduct, which make enemies without producing the smallest good. So often, and strenuously have I endeavored to inculcate this advice, and to

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shew you the advantages, which are to be expected from close application to your studies, that it is unnecessary to repeat it. If the admonitions of friendship are lost other methods must be tried which cannot be more disagreeable to you than it would be to one, who wishes to avoid it, who is solicitous to see you and your Brother (the only remaining Sons of your father) turn out well, and who is very desirous of continuing your affectionate uncle.⁴⁰

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, August 10, 1788.

Dr. Sir: Should this letter get to your hands in time for the Sailing of Captn. Ellwood, and you can readily procure 25 bushls. of the *best* kind of *Winter* Barley I beg you to send it by him that I may try the success of it. The continual rains destroyed my Crop of spring Barley this year, but, if it had been otherwise, the Barley

40. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

which you sent me the year before was so mixed with Oats (a circumstances I did not know till this Summer, as it was harvested while I was in Philadelphia) that it would no longer do to sow it. Could I be supplied with a quantity of that (spring Barley) which is really good from your City? Could I get it upon better terms from Rhode Island? and at what price (delivered here) might it be received from either place?

If you send the 25 bushels of Winter Barley, let it be put in good 4 bushel Sacks marked G. W. and they will be useful thereafter. With esteem, etc.⁴¹

To — CAVERLY

Mount Vernon, August 14, 1788.

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Sir: I have not yet been able to examine the drifted wood on my shores; but as I am informed you have been a considerable sufferer by the Storm, you shall be welcome to all that *now* lays from the Gut

41. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

which formerly divided Simpsons plantation and Johnsons, to the point of the Pocason opposite to the mouth of Piscataway Creek, excepting Walnut logs, or such pieces as will do for the framing of a wharf. These I reserve for my own use, in that district. and above it, my Nephew, Major Washington, has occasion for the wood for purposes of his own. It will be necessary for you to acquaint his Overseer and mine that this priviledge is allowed you, as orders have been given them to stop all encroachments of this kind and your own interest will prevent them from doing it till you shall have taken of the Drift Wood which at *present* (for I do not mean this as a general privilege) lies on that shore which is here described. I am, etc.41

41. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOHN MARSHALL

Mount Vernon, August 15, 1788.

Sir: Your letter of the 10th. Ulto. to Doctr. Smart enclosing a Summons for L. Washington &c. did not come to my hand till last Night.

I am at a loss what step to take in this matter, and should be glad of your advice. Luther Martin is the Attorney Genl. of Maryland and lives in Baltimore. Elizabeth and Sarah Cresap I have always understood live with one Jacobs who Married their Mother, and is said to be a resident of Hampshire County; but two or three summons having been already Sent to the Sheriff thereof and no return of them made, the presumption I think is that there must have been either a Miscarriage, or that *these* Daughters of Michl. Cresap are

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not residents of that County. Possibly they are Married, and living in Maryland where their Father did.

I should be glad to know whether, the issuing of the Patent, if the summons now sent is not executed and returned; or good reason assigned for the non execution, is *merely* an *Officis* action, will be in consequence of application from the heirs of Michael Cresap or any person in their behalf and who? My reason for it is, I have been informed and I believe from good authority that Jacobs *was*

so well convinced of the legality and *equity* of my Title as to declare he should cease all further prosecution of the claim in behalf of the Children to whom. I have heard he was guardian. This however may not be true, nor may it be the case with Mr. Martin. The dismissal of the Caveat will not invalidate my title to the land but may involve me in a more letigious and expensive prosecution, or defence of it, and on this principle it was that Mr. Randolph advised the Caveat. Under this relation of the matter I shall be very glad to hear from you, with very great esteem and regard I am, etc.⁴²

42. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JAMES MERCER

Mount Vernon, August 17, 1788.

Dear Sir: By the last Post I received the enclosed letter from Mr. McCoull⁴⁴ to which I have given the answer that accompanies it. I pray your direction for my conduct, as there can be little doubt, of Mr. McCoulls intention to prosecute the Bond, since he has made application for payment of it after what has passed between you and him on the subject. I am, etc.⁴⁵

***To JOHN BEALE BORDLEY⁴⁸**

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Mount Vernon, August 17, 1788.

Sir: The letter with which you honor me, dated the 31st. Ult; together with the Wheat, Barley and Madder came safe to hand. For your kindness in presenting them, I pray you to accept my best acknowledgments and thanks.

Agriculture being my favourite amusement I am always pleased with

44. Neil McCoull. McCoull's letter is not now found in the *Washington Papers*. Washington's reply to it, dated August 17, in the "Letter Book," referred him to Judge Mercer.

45. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

48. Of Wye, Md.

communications that relate to it. To these the great improvements. in Husbandry, of late years, in England, may be attributed; and to a liberal communication of experiments must this Country be indebted for those profitable courses of Crops which are best adapted to our climate, our soil, and our circumstances. Experiments must be made, and the practice (of such of them as are useful) must be introduced by Gentlemen who have leisure and abilities to devise and wherewithal to hazard something. The common farmer will not depart from the *old* road 'till the *new* one is made so plain and easy that he is sure it cannot be mistaken, and that it will lead him directly to his object. It is right perhaps it shd. be so, for new ways are thorny and require time for amelioration.

No Wheat that has ever yet fallen under my observation exceeds the *White* which some years ago I cultivated extensively; but which, from inattention during my absence from home of almost nine years has got so mixed or degenerated as scarcely to retain any of its original characteristic properties. But if the march of the Hessian Fly, southerly, cannot be arrested; and Colo.

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Morgans experiments are corroborated by others of equal skill and attention, *this White Wheat* must yield the palm to the *yellow bearded*, which alone, it seems, is able to resist the depredations of that destructive insect. This makes your present of it to me more valuable. It shall be cultivated with care.

The Cape Wheat I have cultivated three years successively. The frost of the last, almost destroyed it. In neither, did it produce a full grain, though a large one. I have just harvested a little of two sorts of wheat sent me by Arthur Young Esquire of England; one of which he says is called the Harrison Wheat and is in high estimation in that Country; the other is a large white wheat to which I do not recollect his having given a name. The seed being injured in its passage came up badly, and with difficulty was preserved from weeds &ca. No conclusive opinion therefore can be formed of either from the trial of this year; but should any thing indicate a superior quality in them next, I will reserve some of the Seed for you.

That the system (if it deserves the appellation of one) of Corn, Wheat, hay; has been injurious, and if continued would prove ruinous to our lands, I believe no one who has attended to the ravages which have been produced by it in our fields, is at a loss to

decide. But with deference let me ask if the substitute you propose is the best that can be devised? Wheat follows Corn: here are not only two corn crops, but those of the most exhausting nature following each other without the intervention of a restorative; when, by the approved courses now practiced in England, *Grain* and (what are called) *fallow* Crops, succeed each other alternately. Though I am not *strongly* attached to a particular course (being open to conviction) yet, that which has obtained most in my mind, and which I have been endeavouring (for it is not easy to go fully into any system which produces a *material* change, at once) to carry into execution, is the following; which for the better understanding of it, shall have dates to the growth of the respective Crops. By the usual mode (it is scarcely necessary to observe) we have *three* fields—viz—one in Corn, one in wheat, and one in hay. By my plan these three fields are divided into Six. In 1788 for

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instance, one of them (say No. 1) is planted with Corn 8 feet by 2, single stalks; with Irish Potatoes or Carrots, or partly both between. That Corn planted in this manner will yield as much to the Acre as in any other. That the quantity of Potatoes will at least

quadruple the quantity of Corn, and that the Potatoes do not exhaust the Soil, are facts well established in my mind. In April 1789 it is sown with Buck wheat for manure, which is plowed in before Harvest when the Seed begins to ripen and there is a sufficiency of it to seed the ground a second time. In July it is again plowed; which gives two dressings to the land at the expence of a bushl. of B. Wheat and the plowings which would otherwise be essential for a summer fallow. In August, after the putrefaction and fermentation is over, wheat is sown, and in 1790 harvested. In 1791 the best, and earliest kind of Indian Pease are sown broadcast, to be mowed when generally ripe. Since the adoptn. of this course, and progress that has been made to carry it into effect, I have had too much cause to be convinced, that Pease harvested in this manr. is a considerable exhaustion of the Soil. I have some thoughts therefore of substituting a medley, of Pease, Buck Wheat for seed, Turnips, Pompions &ca. in such parts of the field as best suit them, they will be useful, and serve as preparatives. In 1792 Spring Barley or Oats, or equal quantities of each, will be sown with red clover; the latter to be fed with light Stock the first year after harvest. In 1793, the field remains in Clover for Hay, or grazing according to circumstances, and in 1794 comes into Corn again, and goes on as before.

It may be remarked here, as an objection to this System; that Wheat, in the best farming Counties in England follows the Clover hay. Is sown on a single ploughing, and has been found profitable from practice. My reasons for departing from that mode are: 1. our ploughing is not equal to theirs, of course the clover is not so welt buried, nor the ensuing crop (of Wheat) so free from grass as theirs. and 2. If we sow Wheat at an early and

proper period, we loose a valuable part of the clover crop. Whereas the ground for Corn need not be broken till the season for grazing is over, and the Beasts in their Stalls. By the

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tillage too which the Corn Crop *ought* to receive, followed by Buck Wheat twice ploughed in, Weeds and grass, one would think, must be entirely subdued.

To contrast the probable yield of this system with the old course of Corn, Wheat and hay, suppose a farm of 300 acres of arable Land.

Old System⁴⁹ 100. acs. of Corn, 12½ bushels is 1250 a 3/ £187.10 100.do. Wheat, 6 600 5/ 150 100.do. Pasture 337.10 In favr. of the New 116.5 453.15.0 New System 50 acs. Corn a 12½ is 625 a 3/ £93.15 Potatoes betwn. the Corn Rows, will quadruple the quantity of Corn; but allowing for Seed, accidts. &ca, only dble., that gives 1250. bushl. 1/ 62.10 50 acs. Wheat a 9 bl. is 450 5/ 112.10 50. do. Barley 10 500 3/6 87.10 50 do. Pease 4. 200 3/6 35 50. do. Clover Hay 25 Tons 50/ 62.10 50. do. Pasture £453.15.0

49. In the manuscript file old and new systems are paralleled.

In the above statement, as much I conceive is allowed to the old, and taken from the New System, as can be done with justice. The Pastures of the latter will be fine, and improving. Those of the former, bad, declining, and running into gullies. The hand-machine spoken of by you for sowing clover seed, I have wished to see, but never yet have seen one; but I cannot conceive that by *this*, or *any other* contrivance, a bushel of Clover seed can be made to subserve 20 acrs. of Land without a considerable mixture of other grass Seeds; which would, in a manner, be wasted in so short a Lay as is proposed by either of our systems.

I have been informed that you have in possession one of Winlaws machines for threshing wheat: Pray how do you approve of it on trial? Many of these newly invented things meet the approbation of the moment, but will not stand the test of constant use, or the usage of common labourers. I have requested Mr. Young, if this machine has supported its reputation either in his opinion (if he has attended to the use of it) or the judgment of those on whom he can confide, to send me one.

I wish, notwithstanding, to receive your acct. of it. With sentiments of esteem etc.

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[MS.H.S.]

To ELÉONOR FRANÇOIS ÉLIE, COMTE DE MOUSTIER

Mount Vernon, August 17, 1788.

Sir: In the letter I did myself the honor to address to your Excellency on the 26th of last March, I intimated that as soon as I should have obtained more particular information concerning the commercial intercourse between France and the United States, I would most willingly communicate the result. Ill prepared as I still am to treat of a subject so complicated in its Nature, and so extensive in its consequences, I will now hazard a few facts and general observations; without confining myself strictly to your questions, to which, however, you may find there will be a constant allusion.

Respecting the utility or hurtfulness of the Tobacco Contract between Mr. Morris and the Farmers General,⁴⁶

46. Of France.

I have heard so many specious arguments on one side and the other, that I find myself embarrassed in making a fair judgment. In ordinary cases I know that all exclusive privileges and even partial monopolies are pernicious. How far in this instance, the contract has been only a transference of the business from the foreign Agents (English or Scottish) who used to conduct it, into other hands; and whether the same exportations, in quantity, would have been made directly to France through more advantageous channels, I cannot pretend to determine. A free competition in the purchase of that article here, as well as in the sale at the place of market, it seems reasonable to conclude, would be mutually beneficial to both Nations, however, it might be inconvenient to Individuals. Though the present Contract will soon expire of course and leave an equal field of speculation on this side the Atlantic; I have been taught to believe that the Farmers

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General will not so readily give up their share in the Monopoly, on the other. So the business must, in all probability, revert to its original channel.

In reply to your second, third and fourth questions, I would only briefly observe, that we are yet scarcely sufficiently acquainted with the coarse French woollens and their lowest price, to determine how far they can come in rivalry with those of Britain. The prevailing opinion is in [favor of] the latter: but I see no reason why the former, when calculated for the particular purpose may

not be made equally cheap and good. As to other articles of importation, directly from France, they might consist in superfine Broad Cloths (particularly blue, which can be imported cheaper and better than from England) Glass, Gloves, Ribbons, Silks, Cambricks, plain Lawns, Linens, Printed Goods, Wine, Brandy, Oyl, Fruit, and in general every thing necessary for carrying on the Indian Trade: from the Islands, Sugar and Coffee, in addition to the Molasses and Rum which alone are permitted to be exported to the United States at present. Our produce in Return to Europe might comprehend Tobacco (as the staple from this State) and from the States aggregately wheat, Rice, other Grain, Bread, Flour, Fish, Fish Oyl, Pot ashes, Pearl Ashes, Skins, Furs, Peltry, Indigo, Madder, different dyeing Woods, Lumber, Naval Stores, Iron, Coals, and Ships ready-built: to the Islands, Lumber, Bar-iron, Coals, Live stock and Provisions of all kinds.

It may be mentioned here as a first principle of extending the intercourse, and as a theory which will be found incontestably true in experiment, *That in proportion as France shall increase the facility of our making remittance, in the same ratio shall we encrease the consumption of her produce and manufactures* . Common Sense and sound Policy speak thus

on our part: "We can furnish new materials of great value and our ability to do it will augment with our population everyday: we want no money for them and we desire no credit may be given to us: we cannot manufacture fine articles so cheaply as we can

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import them and must while we continue an agricultural People, be supplied from some quarter: we offer you the preference, and will take in different Goods, to the amount received from us in our staple Commodities.”

This Doctrine has been already verified so far as an opportunity has been afforded to observe the effect. The use of French Brandy, in common Taverns, as well as private Houses, has been substituted, for two or three years past, very much in the room of Jamaica Rum. Probably not less than 24,000 gallons have been imported into this State, in one year. The consumption of French wines is also much greater than it has formerly been; and may by a moderate calculation amount to between one half and one third of all that is imported. The demand for both these articles might still be extended with the means of making remittance. Not much French salt is made use of for curing provisions in Virginia. The opinion is, that it is not so clean as that imported from other parts of Europe. If it was properly purified it might and certainly would be brought out as ballast in great quantities, and find a ready market.

About half the exports from Virginia are carried in American bottoms, the remainder principally in British bottoms. There are, however, a number of other foreign vessels employed in the trade.

I know not of any other equivalent, than those to be derived by France from the extension of her commerce, which we can give for any new favours in your Islands. Under the present rigorous restrictions it is thought that trade is unprofitable for us and will decay or be disused as soon as other avenues for receiving our produce shall be gradually opened. The Maritime Genius of this Country is now steering our Vessels in every ocean; to the East Indies, the North-west Coasts of America and the extremities of the Globe. I have the best evidence, that the scale of commerce, so long against us, is beginning to turn in our favour, and that (as a new thing in our new world) the amount of exports from one State, last year, exceeded that of the imports, more than 230,000 Pounds.

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What change in systems and amelioration in the general complexion of our affairs, are likely to be produced in consequence of the national government, which is on the eve of being established, I will not undertake to predict, I hope and trust the ties which connect this Nation with France, will be strengthened and made durable by it. In the mean time, there

are three things, which I flatter myself will counterbalance, on the side of the French commerce, the three advantages, of which I conceive the British Merchants to be possessed. The circumstances to which I allude are, 1st, The encreasing prejudices of this country against a commercial intercourse with England, occasioned by provocations and augmented by impositions on her part; 2ndly. The facility given in many instances by the French government for our making remittances in the staple commodities of this Country; and 3dly. the change of taste in favor of articles, produced or manufactured in France, which may indeed in a great degree be attributed to the affection and gratitude still felt for her generous interposition in our favor.

I should be truly happy to learn that this Country and Inhabitants have become agreeable to your Excellency upon acquaintance. For you may be assured, Sir, no one can be more zealous than myself in promoting a friendly connection between our Nations, or in rendering your situation perfectly satisfactory, while the United States shall enjoy the benefit of your residence in them. With the highest consideration &c.47

47. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JAMES MADISON

Mount Vernon, August 17, 1788.

My dear Sir: Although the letter of Mr Pleasants and its enclosure will appear under date of the 25th of July, is never got to my hand till friday last; Tomorrow is the first Post by which I

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could forward it. It is now with thanks for the perusal. I shall write to the Count de Moustier but in pretty general terms giving the substance rather than the detail of this business.

That the circular letter from the Convention of New York should be handed to the public as the unanimous sense of that body is, to me, surprizing. It will, I fear, be attended with pernicious consequences. The derision of North Carolina, unaccountable as it is, is not, in my opinion, more to be regretted. With sentiments of the highest esteem etc.

Augt. 18th

I had written this letter, but had not sent it to the Post Office, when your favor of the 11th was brought to me. I am clearly in sentiment with you that the

longer the question respecting the permanent Seat of Congress remains unagitated, the greater certainty there will be of its fixture in a central spot. But not having the same means of information and judging that you have, it would have been a moot point with me, whether a *temporary* residence of that body at New York would not have been a less likely means of keeping it *ultimately* from the center (being farther removed from it) than if it was to be at Philada; because, in proportion as you draw to the center, you lessen the inconveniences and of course the solicitude of the Southern and Western extremities;⁵⁰ and when to these are super-added the acquaintances and connections which, naturally will be formed, the expences which more than probably will be incurred for the accomodation of the public officers, with a long train of etceteras, it might be found an arduous task to approach nearer to the Axis thereafter.

These however, are first thoughts; and many not go to the true principles of policy which governs the case.⁵¹

50. The "Letter Book" reads: "of the Union will be lessened, and of course their anxieties."

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51. The text is from the printed copy in the sales catalogue of the *Washington-Madison Papers* (McGuire Collection), 1892. Careful comparison of the printed texts in the McGuire catalogue and the Washington "Letter Books," with photostats of the originals, where available, has shown the catalogue is more accurate textually than the "Letter Books."

To AUGUSTIN, COMTE DE GRASSE

Mount Vernon, August 18, 1788.

Sir: The letter which you did me the honor to write on the 11th. of March⁵² last is before me, and affords an occasion of testifying the sincerity of my regrets for the distressing event announced in it. Be persuaded, Sir, I should do injustice to my feelings, if my disinterested friendship did not sympathize with your filial duty, in expressions of the most genuine grief, for the death of your father. Indeed the merits of the Count de Grasse and the services which he had the happiness of rendering to this country, have given a singular poignancy to the melancholly, which United America feels for his loss. You need not doubt but those merits and those services will be as long held in remembrance here, as the honorable testimony of this Nations gratitude for them shall be preserved in your family.

After these pointed assurances and expressions of real esteem for your father; the son of my gallant friend and successful associate in arms will not find it difficult to comprehend the interest I take in whatever concerns his reputation and glory. But it rests not with me to grant permission for any one to bear

the Insignia of the Cincinnati. All I can do will be to refer your request and pretentions to the Genl. meeting of that Society, who alone are competent to gratify your wishes. The General Meetings are Triennial. The next will not be untill a year from next May: Although I am the President, I do not expect to attend, because it is stipulated and understood that I shall be exempted from the trouble of the Office. For this reason, I will forward a transcript of your Letter to Genl. Knox, who is the Secretary, with a request that it may be laid before

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the General meeting and that the result may be made known to you. With sentiments of the highest regard and consideration, I am, etc.⁵³

53. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JAMES SWAN

Mount Vernon, August 18, 1788.

Sir: I have received your favor of the 5th. of June from Havre de Grace. The measure you took, in recommending to Mr. Cadran the transmission of the Marqs. de la Fayette's letters for Mr. Crevecœur through my hands, was very acceptable to me and did not stand in need of an apology.

About the time I was occupied in forwarding the Packet to New York, I had the satisfaction to hear of Mr. Warville's⁵⁴ safe arrival in Boston. From the favorable character given of that Gentleman, and the important object which has occasioned his advent, I hope his visit to America may become equally interesting and satisfactory in a personal and national point of view.⁵⁵ With sentiments of esteem etc.⁵⁶

54. J. P. Brissot de Warville.

55. Warville visited Mount Vernon. Nov. 15–17, 1788, and described his visit in his *Nouveau Voyage dans les États Unis de l'Amérique Septentrionale, fait en 1788*, which was published in Paris in 1971

56. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On August 18 Washington wrote briefly to Marquis de Lotbiniere, acknowledging his congratulations on the ratification of the Constitution by New York; and to a Monsieur Cadran, thanking him for forwarding letters. Copies of both these letters are in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

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***To WILLIAM TUDOR**

Mount Vernon, August 18, 1788.

Sir: I have just received your friendly letter of the 26th. of July, together with the History of the Insurrections in Massachusetts; and cannot delay to return you my thanks for these tokens of your regard.

Though I have not yet had time to look through the book, from the interesting nature of the subject, and the judicious manner in which it seems to be handled, I anticipate considerable amusement and information. The apology for the publication at the present time is well conceived, and forms a just discrimination between the circumstances of our own and some other Countries.

The troubles in your State, may, as you justly observe, have operated in proving to the comprehension of many minds the necessity of a more efficient general government. A Multiplicity of circumstances, scarcely yet investigated, appears to have co-operated in bringing about the great, and I trust the happy, revolution, that is on the eve of being accomplished. It will not be uncommon that those things, which were considered at the moment as real ills, should have been no inconsiderable causes in producing positive and permanent national felicity. For it is thus that Providence works in the mysterious course of events "from seeming evil still educing good."

I was happy to hear from several respectable quarters that liberal policy and foederal sentiments had been rapidly encreasing in Massachusetts for sometime past: it gives me an additional pleasure to find that labour is becoming more productive and commerce more flourishing among the Citizens.

If I have formerly approved myself inclined to subserve the public interest by fostering youthful merit, I shall now claim to be credited, when I assert that my cordial desires for the

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happiness of the Republic and the prosperity of its friends are by no means diminished: and particularly when I add that with great esteem, I am etc.

[M.H.S.]

To JOHN FITZGERALD AND GEORGE GILPIN

Mount Vernon, August 22, 1788.

Gentlemen: It is of so much consequence to the Company, that *necessary* and *legal* measures should be pursued to obtain Judgments against its delinquent members at the ensuing General Court, now little more than five weeks distant, that I beg a moment may not be lost in complying with the requisition of Mr. Lee⁶¹ for this purpose.

In the meantime if one of two things must take place which seem very likely, a stagnation in this business or another call upon the subscribers for 2½ or 5 pr. Ct. I am decidedly in favor of the latter. To advance more money for this purpose when there are such sums unpaid, cannot be more irksome, or less convenient to any one than it is to myself; but when the interest of the company, or the reputation of the undertaking is at stake, I will cheerfully submit to it: When the subscribers see and are satisfied that we are pursuing rigorous measures to recover the unsatisfied calls, they ought to submit to it, but if there is the least remissness in the latter, or blunders on our side, they will, indeed, have great and just cause to complain. For this reason let Mr. Lee direct the essentials. Let us cause them to be executed without delay, precisely agreeable to his orders. I am, etc.⁶²

61. Charles Lee.

62. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To DOCTOR THOMAS THOMSON⁵⁷

Mount Vernon, August 21, 1788.

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Sir: In answer to your favor of the 12th. instant, I can assure you, if it shall be found that Doctr. Spence⁵⁸ and family are in the unhappy situation you suppose, and I can be instrumental by writing to Mr. Jefferson or to any of my friends in France in obtaining their release, I should do it with cheerfulness and pleasure. An application to the Court of that Nation from a private character would be improper, such, if made, ought to go from the Sovereignty of these States.

But, Sir, let not Mr. Thomson's hopes on this occasion be too sanguine. There are reasons to distrust the narrative of James Joshua Reynolds; to denominate him an Imposter (as you will perceive by the enclosed transcript from the Pensyla. Packet and Daily Advertiser) and other informations which your Son will probably communicate to you; and that the accounts given by this Reynolds are for time Serving purposes. To these in my opinion, may be added, as strengthening the evidence, of Doctor Spences own letter dated within a few days Sail off Sandy hook where it is believed no Cruiser from the Piratical State

57. Of Nomini, Westmoreland County, Va.

58. Dr. William Spence.

ever yet appeared none having ever yet been seen, or heard to be, in these Seas. If therefore it was his fate to fall into the hands of these pests to mankind it must have been by Re-capture which is not very probable from the accts. that are delivered.

The most eligible previous steps in this business, in my judgment, will be, to write first to Mr. Barclay,⁵⁹ who has not been long returned from the court of Morocco in a public character and particularly from Algiers, and who must have obtained the *best* information of all American Prisoners, at least of the capture of the Vessels in which they were; to know if any such information ever came before him, and at the same time to enquire more particular of some Gentlemen in Philadelphia with respect to this Reynolds, the circumstances related by him of the Vessel called the Rising Sun of Israel

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Jacobs &c. These I will do, the answers may throw light upon the subject and direct what further Measures may be necessary to pursue when I receive them, the Result shall be communicated to you, by Sir Yr. etc.60

59. Thomas Barclay.

60. "From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THOMAS HANSON MARSHALL63

Mount Vernon, August 24, 1788.

Sir: Upon receipt of your letter of the 21st. instant I sent up to Alexandria to know what the *cash* price of wheat was at *that* place; and am informed that the highest that has been offered is four Shillings and sixpence for wheat at 60 lb. to the Bushel all Cash or 4/9 part Goods. As I do not incline to exceed the *market* price I cannot give 5/ unless it should rise to that; and whether this is probable, or not, is more than I can tell. The Sale of flour being dull, and the price low, I have no thoughts at present of buying this article for Manufacturing. My chief, indeed only object in applying to you for wheat, was for the benefit of exchanging seed from light to Stiff-land; and vice versa; which every farmer would find [to] his account in doing. I therefore thought your wheat (if it grew as I expected it did on light land) would suit me as mine would do you, if the sorts were good and approved; but then as I am now seeding my ground it would not answer my purposes to wait long. I am, etc.64

63. Of Marshall Hall, Md.

64. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To GOVERNOR WILLIAM SMALLWOOD

Mount Vernon, August 25, 1788.

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Dr. Sir: Permit me to introduce to your acquaintance Doctr. Ruston,⁶⁵ the bearer of this, a gentleman who was warmly recommend to me by my deceased friend Colo. Fairfax as a Gentleman of merit and a warm friend to the American Cause during its contest with Great Britain.

The Doctr. has some business with the Assembly of your State which will cause his attendance at Annapolis and is the cause of my taking the liberty of introducing him to your civilities. I am, etc.⁶⁶

65. Dr. Thomas Ruston.

66. Practically this same letter was sent to Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, and George Plater, copies of which are in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, August 25, 1788.

Dear Sir: Your letters of the 13th. and 17th. instt. are both at hand, but the Packet is not yet arrived. The Iron written for in one of my last letters, was no other than the common sheet iron (about as thin as sheet copper) which is rolled at the Trenton Mills. The use for which I wanted it being, to cover the Mould boards of my Ploughs to prevent the Wood from wearing by the friction. If that which you have sent is not of this kind my purpose will not be answered by it. The length or width of the Sheets is immaterial because a cold Chissel will soon reduce them to Suit the parts for which they are intended to cover. Should you have mistaken me before I now request 200 weight of *this* kind, for the uses here mentioned.

Previous to the receipt of your letter of the 17th. I had been advised by Mr. Thomas Smith of his having £50 of my money ready to send to you by the first safe conveyance. I am

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glad to hear that it has reached your hands. Be so good as to discharge the enclosed acct. for Sundries brought, and ordered to this place by Mrs. Morris.

I shall rely on you for the Winter Barley agreeably to my former order, and beg it may come by the first good conveyance lest the Season should be too far advanced for the sowing it in time. As it is a grain with which I have little acquaintance I beg to be informed of the quantity of Seed which is allowed, usually, to the Acre. I hope you are perfectly recovered from yr. late

indisposition. Mrs. Washington joins me in good wishes for you and Mrs. Biddle and I am, etc.

PS. My shifting sires, or Screens that go into the Dutch Fans, on which the grain falls from the Hoppers, are so much worn as to require new ones. Be so good therefore as to send me ten, viz, five of the open kind, and five of the closer sort (both as usual). The whole to be (including the frame of wood into which the wire is worked) 16 Inches by 14 Inches, the frame #ths. thick. These are required by the first conveyance as they are much wanted for the use of GW—n.

[H.S.P.]

To GEORGE MORGAN

Mount Vernon, August 25, 1788.

Sir: The letter which you did me the favor of writing to me the 31st. of last month, with a Postscript to it on the 5th. of this, came duly to hand; as did a small parcel of wheat, forwarded some time before, by the Post Master General from New York. For your polite attention to me in these instances I pray you to accept my best acknowledgments and Thanks.

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With much concern I have heard of the ravages of the Hessian fly on the wheaten Crops in the States East of the Delaware and of the progress of this destructive insect Southerly; but I congratulate with you sincerely on your successful endeavors in the management of your measures &c. to counteract them. If the yellow bearded wheat from a continuation of experiments is found no matter from what cause, to be obnoxious to and able to withstand this all devouring insect [it] must

indeed be valuable; but I have paid too little attention to the growth of this particular kind hitherto, to inform you in what degree of cultivation it is in this State, I may venture, at a hazard, however, to add that it is rare: because it is unusual to see fields of bearded wheat of *any* kind growing with us, particularly in the Western parts of the State, which falls more immediately under my observation. I will distribute the Seed which you have sent me; make enquiry into this matter and communicate the result, begging in the meantime, if any further observations on this insect, and the means of guarding against him should be made by you that you will have the goodness to communicate them to.⁶⁷

To REVEREND JONATHAN EDWARDS⁷⁰

Mount Vernon, August 28, 1788.

Sir: I am to acknowledge the receipt of the letter and Pamphlet, which you have been pleased to forward to me by a late conveyance; and to desire you will accept of my thanks for them.

You have been rightly informed relative to the application, which had been made to me from Europe, for Documents concerning the Indian Language. It seems that a Society of *Literati* are

67. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

70. President of Union College, Schenectady, N. Y.

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endeavouring to make discoveries respecting the origin and derivation of different Languages. In the prosecution of this curious study, all Judicious philological communications must be important, yours, I conceive, will not be deficient in that quality. I have long regretted that so many Tribes of the American Aborigines should have become almost or entirely, extinct, without leaving such vestiges, as that the genius and idiom of their Language might be traced. Perhaps, from such sources, the descent or kindred of nations, whose origins are lost in remote antiquity or illiterate darkness, might be more rationally investigated, than in any other mode. The task you have imposed upon yourself, of preserving some materials for this purpose, is certainly to be commended.

I entreat you, Sir, to believe that I am duly penetrated with your friendly and pious wishes for my happiness and that I am, etc.⁷¹

71. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To BENJAMIN LINCOLN

Mount Vernon, August 28, 1788.

My dear Sir: I received with your letter of the 9th. instant, one from Mr. Minot, and also his History of the Insurrections in Massachusetts. The work seems to be executed with ingenuity, as well as to be calculated to place facts in a true point of light, obviate the prejudices of those who are unacquainted with the circumstances and answer good purposes in respect to our government in general. I have returned him my thanks for his present, by this conveyance.

The public appears to be anxiously waiting for the decision of Congress, respecting the *place* for convening the National Assembly under the new government, and the Ordinance for its organization. Methinks it is a great misfortune, that local interests should involve themselves with federal concerns at this moment.

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So far as I am able to learn, foederal principles are gaining ground considerably. The declaration of some of the most respectable characters in this state (I mean of those who were opposed to the government) is now explicit, that they will give the Constitution a fair chance, by affording it all the support in their power. Even in Pennsylvania, the Minority, who were more violent than in any other place, say they will only seek for amendments in the mode pointed out by the

Constitution itself.

I will however just mention by way of caveat, there are suggestions, that attempts will be made to procure the election of a number of antifoederal characters to the first Congress, in order to embarrass the wheels of government and produce premature alterations in its Constitution. How these hints, which have come through different channels, may be well or ill founded, I know not: but, it will be advisable, I should think, for the foederalists to be on their guard so far as not to suffer any secret machinations to prevail, without taking measures to frustrate them. That many amendments and explanations might and should take place, I have [no] difficulty in conceding; but, I will confess, my apprehension is, that the New York Circular letter⁶⁸ is intended to bring on a general Convention at too early a period, and in short, by referring the subject to the Legislatures, to set every thing afloat again. I wish I may be mistaken in imagining, that there are persons, who, upon finding they could not carry their point by an open attack against the Constitution, have some sinister designs to be silently effected, if possible. But I trust in that Providence, which has saved us in six troubles yea in seven, to rescue us again from any imminent, though unseen, dangers.

68. A circular letter from the Convention of the State of New York to the executives of the different States to be laid before their respective legislatures, Aug. 9, 1788. It is printed in *The Documentary History of the Constitution*, vol. 5, p. 62. (*Bulletin of the Bureau of Rolls and Library of the Department of State*, no. 11, pt. 2.)

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Nothing, however, on our part ought to be left undone. I conceive it to be of unspeakable importance, that whatever there be of wisdom, and prudence, and patriotism on the Continent, should be concentrated in the public Councils, at the first outset. Our habits of intimacy will render an apology unnecessary. Heaven is my witness, that an inextinguishable desire [that] the felicity of my country may be promoted is my only motive in making these observations. With sentiments of sincere attachment etc.⁶⁹

To J.P. BRISSOT DE WARVILLE

Mount Vernon, August 28, 1788.

Sir: The letter which you did me the honor to address to me on the 10th. of August accompanied by one from the Marquis de la Fayette, arrived by the last post. Whensoever you can make your Journey to Virginia convenient for yourself, I shall hope to have the pleasure of seeing you at Mount Vernon, and of testifying my regard for a gentleman who interests himself so much in the

69. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

Wellfare and reputation of America.

With sentiments of consideration and regard etc.⁸²

To GEORGE RICHARDS MINOT

Mount Vernon, August 28,⁷² 1788.

Sir: Your favor of the 7th. of this Month has been duly received; and I lose no time before I acknowledge the obligations under which you have placed me, by offering the copy of your History⁷³ as a present. Aside of [sic] the honorable testimony of my friend Genl. Lincoln,

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the intrinsic merit of the work (so far as I am able to form a judgment from its perspicuity and impartiality) carries a sufficient recommendation.

The series of events which followed from the conclusion of the War, forms a link of no ordinary magnitude, in the chain of the American Annals. That portion of domestic History, which you have selected for your narrative, deserved particularly to be discussed and set in its proper point of light, while materials for the

82. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

72. Sparks prints this letter under date of August 26 in the Appendix to vol. 12 of his *Writings of Washington*.

73. *The History of the Insurrection in Massachusetts in the Year Seventeen Hundred and Eighty Six and the Rebellion Consequent Thereon* (Worcester: 1788).

purpose were attainable. Nor was it unbecoming or unimportant to enlighten the Europeans, who seem to have been extremely ignorant with regard to these transactions. While I comprehend fully the difficulty of stating facts on the spot, amidst, the living actors and recent animosities, I approve the more cordially that candor with which you appear to have done it.

I will only add that I always feel a singular satisfaction in discovering proofs of talents and patriotism, in those who are soon to take the parts of the generation,⁷⁴ which is now hastening to leave the stage, and that, with wishes for your prosperity, I remain etc.⁷⁵

To ALEXANDER HAMILTON

Mount Vernon, August 28, 1788.

Dear Sir: I have had the pleasure to receive your letter dated the 13th.⁷⁶ accompanied by one addressed to Genl. Morgan. I will forward the letter to General Morgan by the

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first conveyance, and add my particular wishes, that he would comply with the request contained in it. Although I can scarcely

74. Minot was then 30 years of age.

75. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

76. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*, but is in the *Hamilton Papers* in the Library of Congress, having been transferred to that collection by John C. Hamilton.

imagine how the watch of a British officer, killed within their lines, should have fallen into his hands who was many miles distant from the scene of action, yet, if it so happened, I flatter myself there will be no reluctance or delay in restoring it to the family.⁷⁷

As the perusal of the political papers under the signature of Publius has afforded me great satisfaction, I shall certainly consider them as claiming a most distinguished place in my Library. I have read every performance which has been printed on one side and the other of the great question lately agitated (so far as I have been able to obtain them) and, without an unmeaning compliment, I will say, that I have seen no other so well calculated (in my judgment) to produce conviction on an unbiased Mind, as the *Production of your triumvirate*.⁷⁸ When the transient circumstances and fugitive performances which attended this Crisis shall have disappeared, That Work⁷⁹ will merit the Notice of Posterity; because in it are candidly and ably discussed the principles of freedom and the topics of government, which will be always interesting to mankind so long as they shall be connected in Civil Society.

The circular letter from your Convention, I presume, was the

77. Hamilton's letter states that Captain Cochran, of the British Navy (Hamilton later calls him Major Cochran), requested the return of his brother's watch. His brother was killed at

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Yorktown and General Morgan is stated to have purchased the watch, for a trifle, from a British soldier.

78. Madison, Hamilton, and Jay.

79. Now known as *The Federalist*.

equivalent by which you obtained an acquiescence in the proposed Constitution. Notwithstanding I am not very well satisfied with the tendency of it, yet the foederal affairs had proceeded, with few exceptions, in so good a train, that I hope the political Machine may be put in motion, without much effort or hazard of miscarrying.

On the delicate subject with which you conclude your letter, I can say nothing;⁸⁰ because the event alluded to may never happen; and because, in case it should occur, it would be a point of prudence to defer forming one's ultimate and irrevocable decision, so long as new data might be afforded for one to act with the greater wisdom and propriety. I would not wish to conceal my prevailing sentiment from you. For you know me well enough, my good Sir, to be persuaded, that I am not guilty of affectation, when I tell you, that it is my great and sole desire to live and die, in peace and retirement on my own farm. Were it even indispensable a different line of conduct should be adopted; while you and some others who are acquainted with my heart would *acquit* , the world and Posterity might probably accuse me [of] *inconsistency* and *ambition* . Still I hope I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain (what I consider the most enviable of all titles) the character of *an honest man* , as well as prove (what I desire to be considered in reality) that I am, with great sincerity and esteem, etc.⁸¹

80. Hamilton had written (August 13); "I take it for granted, Sir, you have concluded to comply with what will no doubt be the general call of your country in relation to the new government. You will permit me to say that it is indispensable you should lend yourself to its first operations. It is to little purpose to have *introduced* a system, if the weightiest

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influence is not given to its firm *establishment*, in the outset.” This letter is in the *Hamilton Papers* in the Library of Congress.

81. From the “Letter Book” copy in the *Washington Papers*.

In answer to this letter from Washington, Hamilton wrote (September —): “I should be deeply pained my Dear Sir if your scruples in regard to a certain station should be matured into a resolution to decline It; though I am neither surprised at their existence nor can I but agree in opinion that the caution you observe in deferring an ultimate determination is prudent. I have however reflected maturely on the subject and have come to a conclusion, (in which I feel no hesitation) that every public and personal consideration will demand from you an acquiescence in what will *certainly* be the unanimous wish of your country.” Hamilton's letter is in the *Hamilton Papers* in the Library of Congress.

To JOHN MARY

Mount Vernon, August 29, 1788.

Sir: Agreeably to your desire I am sitting down to acknowledge the receipt of the letter, which you was pleased to address to me on the 18th. of this Month.⁸³ In the multitude of persons, public and private, of whom I may have had some knowledge, it will not be thought strange, that I should retain no recollection of you. I am only sorry for the losses which you say you have sustained, without being able to remedy them.

You are doubtless informed, Sir, that I lead altogether a private life. It would hardly be expected then that I should go abroad in search of employment for a gentleman with whose talents and character, I have not the honor of being acquainted. Not having any agency with the College that bears my name, or knowledge of any family that, at present, wants an Instructor in the French language, you will excuse me for giving this laconic reply, with my wishes for your success. I am, etc.⁸²

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83. Mary stated that he had been secretary to the Consulate General of France during the Revolutionary War. He had been, also, French instructor at the University of Cambridge, and was then teaching French in New York.

82. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOSEPH MANDRILLON

Mount Vernon, August 29, 1788.

Sir: I have lately received, with a grateful sensibility the Miscellaneous Collection in verse and prose, which you have had the goodness to send to me, accompanied by your letter under date of May 24th; for both of which I pray you to accept my warmest thanks.

But, Sir, I consider you as a patriot of the world, earnestly solicitous for the freedom and prosperity of all nations. And I should do injustice to my feelings, not to go beyond common expressions of personal civility, in testifying my sense of the uniform and able exertions you have made in favor of the cause and reputation of the United States of America. Your honest endeavours to confute the erroneous reports that had been scattered in Europe, respecting the partial commotions in Massachusetts, were truly laudable, and merit the applause of every patriot. As I know of no European Character better calculated or more disposed to make good use of an authentic History of the Insurrections in Massachusetts,⁸⁴ It possesses the merit of being written with simplicity and impartiality, and will tend to destroy the idle opinions that were propagated in the English News Papers on the subject. All the accounts of our being in great jeopardy from a war with the savages are equally groundless, and seem principally designed to deter People from migrating

84. Another of the many careless omissions of the "Letter Book" copyist. The volume sent was, probably, Minor's *History of the Insurrection*.

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to America.

We flatter ourselves your patriotic wishes and sanguine hopes respecting the political felicity of this Country, will not prove abortive. We hope, from the general acquiescence of the States so far, with small exceptions, in the proposed Constitution, that the foundation is laid for the enjoyment of much purer civil liberty and greater public happiness than have hitherto been the portion of Mankind. And we trust the western World will yet verify the predictions of its friends and prove an Asylum for the persecuted of all Nations. With sentiments of great esteem &c.⁸⁵

85. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To WILLIAM STEPHENS SMITH

Mount Vernon, August 30, 1788.

Dear Sir: I was favoured, a few days ago, with your letter, dated the first day of this Month, in which you obligingly acknowledge the receipt of mine of a former date.

In the dearth of News and Politics at this moment, and especially in my distance from the sources of intelligence, and retirement from the scenes of public life; I should have scarcely any topic of importance enough to trouble you with a letter, but for a *single consideration*. I hope your mind will, upon reading this, have been employed in doing me the justice to anticipate, that my principal object in writing was to assure Mrs. Smith and yourself, Mrs. Washington and I shall be very happy to receive you at Mount Vernon, whensoever you can make your Journey convenient. In the meantime, our United Compliments are cordially offered to both: and I will hasten to conclude myself, with much regard etc.⁸⁹

89. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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To DANIEL MORGAN

Mount Vernon, August 30, 1788.

Dear Sir: The enclosed came open (in the manner you will receive it) under cover to me, with request that I would add my mite towards the accomplishment of Captn. Cochran's wishes. As it is a *family* watch valued more I presume on that account than for any intrinsic merit it possesses I have no doubt of your disposition to oblige him on the footing the matter is placed provided it is now in your possession, or in the power of your good Offices to recover, if in the hands of any other.

I have only to add that, in either of the above cases, if I can be made useful in the conveyance, or otherwise, it will give me pleasure and that I am Dear Sir etc.⁹⁰

90. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*. (See Washington's letter to Alexander Hamilton, Oct. 18, 1788, *post.*)

*To ANNIS BOUDINOT STOCKTON

Mount Vernon, August 31, 1788.

I have received and thank you very sincerely, My dear Madam, for your kind letter of the 3d. instant. It would be in vain for me to think of acknowledging in adequate terms the delicate compliments, which, though expressed in plain prose, are evidently inspired by the elegant Muse of Morvan. I know not by what fatality it happens that even Philosophical sentiments come so much more gracefully (forcibly I might add) from your Sex, than my own. Otherwise I should be strongly disposed to dispute your Epicurean position concerning the œconomy of pleasures. Perhaps, indeed, upon a self-interested principle, because I should be conscious of becoming a gainer by a different practice. For, to tell you the truth, I find myself altogether interested in establishing in theory, what I feel in effect, that we can never be cloyed with the pleasing compositions of our female friends. You

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see how selfish I am, and that I am too much delighted with the result to perplex my head much in seeking for the cause. But, with Cicero in speaking respecting his belief of the immortality of the Soul, I will say, if I am in a grateful delusion, it is an innocent one, and I am willing to remain under its influence. Let me only annex one hint to this part of the subject, while you may be in danger of appreciating the qualities of your friend too highly, you will run

no hazard in calculating upon his sincerity or in counting implicitly on the reciprocal esteem and friendship which he entertains for yourself.

The felicitations you offer on the present prospect of our public affairs are highly acceptable to me, and I entreat you to receive a reciprocation from my part. I can never trace the concatenation of causes, which led to these events, without acknowledging the mystery and admiring the goodness of Providence. To that superintending Power alone is our retraction from the brink of ruin to be attributed. A spirit of accommodation was happily infused into the leading characters of the Continent, and the minds of men were gradually prepared, by disappointment, for the reception of a good government. Nor would I rob the fairer sex of their share in the glory of a revolution so honorable to human nature, for, indeed, I think you Ladies are in the number of the best Patriots America can boast.

And now that I am speaking of your Sex, I will ask whether they are not capable of doing something towards introducing foederal fashions and national manners? A good general government, without good morals and good habits, will not make us a happy People; and we shall deceive ourselves if we think it will. A good government

will, unquestionably, tend to foster and confirm those qualities, on which public happiness must be engrafted. Is it not shameful that we should be the sport of European whims and caprices? Should we not blush to discourage our own industry and ingenuity; by purchasing foreign superfluities and adopting fantastic fashions, which are, at best, ill suited to our stage of Society? But I will preach no longer on so unpleasant a subject;

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because I am persuaded that you and I are both of a Sentiment, and because I fear the promulgation of it would work no reformation.

You know me well enough, my dear Madam, to believe me sufficiently happy at home, to be intent upon spending the residue of my days there. I hope that you and yours may have the enjoyment of your health, as well as Mrs. Washington and myself: that enjoyment, by the divine benediction, adds much to our temporal felicity. She joins with me in desiring our compliments may be made acceptable to yourself and Children. It is with the purest sentiment of regard and esteem I have always the pleasure to subscribe myself Dear Madam, Your etc.⁹¹

91. From a facsimile of the original kindly furnished by Frederick S. Peck, of Providence, R. I.

To DOCTOR THOMAS RUSTON

Mount Vernon, August 31, 1788.

Sir: I have been regularly favored with your letter of the 17th. instant, and am much obliged by your polite congratulations on the ratification of the Constitution by eleven States. Your remark seems to be well founded, that it is much more wonderful so many States should have adopted, than that two only should not as yet have accepted the government. It remains for us to hope [for] the best; and I would fain persuade myself that the same Power, which hath hitherto kept us from Disunion and Anarchy, will not suffer us to be disappointed.

Although I am not personally acquainted with many of the gentlemen who compose the Senate of Maryland, I will, according to your desire, give you introductory letters to some of them. As a new House of Delegates is to be elected before the next Session of Assembly, it might not be so easy for me to know and address any of them, in time.

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Ever disposed to testify my regard and esteem for you, I remain, etc.⁹⁵

95. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To THOMAS JEFFERSON**

Mount Vernon, August 31, 1788.

Dear Sir: I was very much gratified by the receipt of your letter, dated the 3d. of May. You have my best thanks for the political information contained in it, as well as for the satisfactory account of the Canal of Languedoc. It gives me pleasure to be made acquainted with the particulars of that stupendous Work, tho' I do not expect to derive any but speculative advantages from it.

When America will be able to embark in projects of such pecuniary extent, I know not; probably not for very many years to come; but it will be a good example and not without its use, if we can carry our present undertakings happily into effect. Of this we have now the fairest prospect. Notwithstanding the real scarcity of money, and the difficulty of collecting it, the labourers employed by the Potomack Company have made very great progress in removing the obstructions at the Shenandoah, Seneca and Great Falls. Insomuch that, if this Summer had not proved unusually rainy and if we could have had a favourable autumn, the Navigation might have been sufficiently opened (though not completed) for Boats to have passed from Fort Cumberland to within nine miles of a Shipping port by the first of January next. There remains now no doubt of the practicability of the Plan, or that, upon the ulterior operations being performed, this will become the great avenue into the Western Country; a country which is now settg. in

an extraordinarily rapid manner, under uncommonly favorable circumstances, and which promises to afford a capacious asylum for the poor and persecuted of the Earth.

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I do not pretend to judge how far the flames of war, which are kindled in the North of Europe, may be scattered; or how soon they will be extinguished. The European politics have taken so strange a turn, and the Nations formerly allied have become so curiously severed, that there are fewer sure premises for calculation, than are usually afforded, even on that precarious and doubtful subject. But it appears probable to me, that peace will either take place this year, or hostility be greatly extended in the course of the next. The want of a hearty cooperation between the two Imperial Powers against the Porte; or the failure of success from any other cause, may accelerate the first contingency; the irritable state into wch. several of the other Potentates seem to have been drawn, may open the way to the secd. Hitherto the event of the contest has proved different from the general expectation. If, in our speculations, we might count upon discipline, system and resource, and certainly these are the articles which generally give decisive advantages in War, I had thought full-surely the Turks must, at least, have been driven out of Europe.

Is it not

unaccountable that the Russians and Germans combined, are not able to effect so much, as the former did alone in the late War? But perhaps these things are all for the best and may afford room for pacification. I am glad our Commodore Paul Jones has got employment,⁹⁶ and heartily wish him success. His new situation may possibly render his talents and services more useful to us at some future day. I was unapprised of the circumstances which you mention, that Congress had once in contemplation to give him promotion. They will judge now how far it may be expedient.⁹⁷

By what we can learn from the late foreign Gazettes, affairs seem to have come to a crisis in France; and I hope they are beginning to meliorate. Should the contest between the King and the Parliaments result in a well constituted National Assembly, it might ultimately be a happy event for the kingdom. But I fear that Kingdom will not recover its reputation and influence with the Dutch for a long time to come. Combinations appear also to be forming in other quarters. It is reported by the last European accounts that England

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has actually entered into a Treaty with Prussia; and that the French Ambassador at the Court of London has asked to be informed of its tenor. In whatever manner the Nations of Europe shall endeavor to keep up their prowess in war and their ballance of power in peace, it will be obviously our policy to cultivate tranquility at home and abroad; and extend our agriculture and commerce as far as possible.

96. With the Empress of Russia.

97. Jefferson had written (May 3): "I believe Congress had it in contemplation to give him the grade of Admiral from the date of his taking the *Serapis*. Such a measure now would gratefully gratify him, second the efforts of fortune in his favor and better the opportunities of improving him for our service whenever the moment shall come in which we may want him." Jefferson's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

I am much obliged by the information you give respecting the credit of different Nations among the Dutch Money-holders; and fully accord with you with regard to the manner in which our own ought to be used. I am strongly impressed with the expediency of establishing our National faith beyond imputation, and of having recourse to loans only on critical occasions. Your proposal for transferring the whole foreign debt to Holland is highly worthy of consideration. I feel mortified that there should have been any just grd. for the clamour of the foreign Officers who served with us; but, after having received a quarter of their whole debt in specie and their interest in the same for sometime, they have infinitely less reason for complaint than our native Officers, of whom the suffering and neglect have only been equalled by their patience and patriotism. A great proportion of the Officers and Soldiers of the American Army have been compelled by indigence to part with their securities for one eighth of the nominal value. Yet their conduct is very different from what you represented that of the French Officers to have been.

The merits and defects of the proposed Constitution have been largely and ably discussed. For myself, I was ready to have embraced any tolerable

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compromise that was competent to save us from impending ruin; and I can say, there are scarcely any of the amendments which have been suggested, to which I have *much* objection, except that which goes to the prevention of direct taxation; and that, I presume, will be more strenuously advocated and insisted upon hereafter, than any other. I had indulged the expectation, that the New Government would enable those entrusted with its Administration to do justice to the public creditors and retrieve the National character. But if no means are to be employed but requisitions, that expectation was vain and we may as well recur to the old Confœderation. If the system can be put in operation without touching much the Pockets of the People, perhaps, it may be done; but, in my judgment, infinite circumspection and prudence are yet necessary in the experiment. It is nearly impossible for anybody who has not been on the spot to conceive (from any description) what the delicacy and danger of our situation have been. Though the peril is not past entirely; thank God! the prospect is somewhat brightening.

You will probably have heard before the receipt of this letter, that the general government has been adopted by eleven States; and that the actual Congress have been prevented from issuing their ordinance for carrying it into execution, in consequence of a dispute about the place at which the future Congress shall meet. It is probable that Philadelphia or New York will soon be agreed upon.

I will just touch on the bright

side of our national State, before I conclude: and we may perhaps rejoice that the People have been ripened by misfortune for the reception of a good government. They are emerging from the gulf of dissipation and debt into which they had precipitated themselves at the close of the war. Œconomy and industry are evidently gaining ground. Not only Agriculture; but even Manufactures are much more attended to than formerly. Notwithstanding the shackles under which our trade in general labours; commerce to the East Indies is prosecuted with considerable success: Salted provisions and other produce (particularly from Massachusetts) have found an advantageous market there. The

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Voyages are so much shorter and the vessels are navigated at so much less expence, that we hope to rival and supply (at least through the West Indies) some part of Europe, with commodities from thence. This year the exports from Massachusetts have amounted to a great deal more than their exports [*sic*]. I wish this was the case everywhere.

On the subject of our Commerce with France, I have received several quæries from the Count de Moustiers; besides the information he desired relative to articles of importation from and exportation to France, he wished to know my opinion

of the advantage or detriment of the Contract between Mr. Morris and the Farm;⁹⁸ as also what emoluments we had to give in return for the favors we solicited in our intercourse with the Islands. As I knew that these topics were also in agitation in France, I gave him the most faithful and satisfactory advice I could: but in such a cautious manner as might not be likely to contradict your assertions or impede your negotiations in Europe. With sentiments of the highest regard etc.⁹⁹

To THOMAS BARCLAY

Mount Vernon, August 31, 1788.

Sir: I have received a letter from a Doctr. Thomas [Thomson], of Westmoreland in this State, requesting me to make enquiries respecting Dr. Spence and his Lady, who were supposed to be lost at sea, several years ago, and who are now reported to be in slavery among the piratical States of Barbary.

As I know of no person more likely to give information on the subject than yourself, I have taken the liberty of enclosing to you the Abstract of a narrative made by James Joshua

98. Farmers General.

99. From the original in the *Jefferson Papers* in the Library of Congress.

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Reynolds at Greenock, and sent to me by Doctr. Thomson.

Now, Sir, it will be conferring a great obligation upon a distressed family (for Doctr. Thomson married the mother of Dr. Spence) if you can give any certain advice, whether such a ship as described ever sailed from Philadelphia and was captured by Pirates, or missing; whether there is any such man as Israel Jacobs in Philadelphia, who has negotiated the ransom of any person in captivity; whether Doctr. Spence or any of the crew or Passengers in question were ever heard of by you while on your public Mission; and, in fine, whether, in your knowledge or Judgement, any credit is to be given to the report; for myself, I am apprehensive, from the circumstances, the story is only calculated to sport with the feelings of the Unhappy. I heartily wish it may not be so.

An early and full answer from you will not only be extremely grateful to the persons on whose account I write; but also very acceptable to Sir Yrs. etc.1

1. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To THOMAS JOHNSON**

Mount Vernon, August 31, 1788.

Dear Sir: I shall be obliged to you for informing me, what foundation there is for so much of the following extract of a letter from Doctr. Brooke at Fredericksburgh, to Doctr. Smart of this County, as relates to the officious light in which my conduct was viewed for havg. written the letter alluded to.

Since then, I was informed by the Honourable James Mercer, that his Brother Colo. John Mercer, who was at that time (July 10th.) in this town, was furnished with documents to prove, that General Washington had wrote a letter upon the present Constitution, to Governor Johnson of Maryland; and that Governor Johnson was so much displeased

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with the officiousness of General Washington, as to induce him to take an active part in bringing about the amendments proposed by a Committee of the Convention of Maryland.

If the letter⁹² which I wrote to you at Annapolis, while the Convention of your State was in Session, was so considered, I have only to regret that it ever escaped me. My motives were declared. Having such proofs as were satisfactory to me, that, the intention of the leaders of opposition was to effect an adjournment of your Convention (if a direct attack should be found unlikely to succeed) I conceived that a hint of it could not be displeasing to the Supporters of the proposed Constitution, in which light, as well from

92. See Washington's letter to Thomas Johnson, Apr. 20, 1788, *ante*.

a letter I had received from you, as from universal report and belief, I had placed [in] you, for I defy any anti-fœderalist to say, with truth, that I ever wrote to, or exchanged a word with him on the subject of the New Constitution if (the latter) was not forced upon me in a manner not to be avoided. Nothing therefore could be more foreign from my design than to attempt to make proselytes, or to obtrude my opinions with a view to influence the judgment of any one. The first wish of my heart, from the beginning of the business, was, that a dispassionate enquiry, free from sinister and local considerations might, under the existing and impending circumstances of this Country, (which could not be unknown to any Man of observation and reflexion) take place; and an impartial judgment formed of it.

I have no other object, Sir, for making this enquiry than merely to satisfy myself whether the information (for information was all I had in view) was considered by you as an improper interference on my part, or, that the *documents*, and *interpretation* of this matter, by Colo. Mercer, is the effect of one of those mistakes, which he is so apt to fall into.⁹³ With very great esteem etc.⁹⁴

93. Johnson's reply is in the *Washington Papers*. The report was without the slightest foundation.

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94. From a photostat of the original in the *Washington Papers*.

To WILLIAM PIERCE²

Mount Vernon, September 1, 1788.

Sir: I am happy to find that the same patriotic sentiments have been displayed, though[out] the Union, by the Citizens of America and particularly by those who were formerly members of the Army, on the XII Anniversary of Independence.

That you might not apprehend your letter of the 1st. of August, had miscarried through the great distance of the way, or that I had received your agreeable Present without feeling a due sense of the layout; I have concluded to take an early opportunity of rendering my best acknowledgments for your Oration and of assuring you that. I am, etc.³

2. Of Savannah, Ga. He was formerly aide-de-camp to General Greene.

3. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOHN SULLIVAN

Mount Vernon, September 1, 1788.

Sir: It is with great personal satisfaction, I receive the Congratulations of the Society of the Cincinnati in New Hampshire, on the present State of our public Affairs. I shall take care to convey the Instrument expressive of their sentiments to the Secretary of the general Meeting, that, being deposited in the Archives, the purport may be made known accordingly.⁴

The prevalence of so good dispositions, from one extremity of the Continent to the other (with few exceptions) seems indeed to afford a subject of mutual felicitations, to all who delight in their Country's prosperity. But the idea, that my former gallant Associates in the

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field are now about to receive, in a good national government, some compensation for the toils and dangers which they experienced in the course of a long and perilous war, is particularly consolatory to me.

I entreat that the Members of your State Society will believe that I interest myself much in their prosperity, and that you will accept the

4. On September 10 Washington forwarded this congratulatory address to Henry Knox, in a brief note, which is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*. The present whereabouts of the address is unknown, but the text is printed in the *Historical Magazine*, second series, vol. 9, p. 116. The originals of this letter to Sullivan and the brief note to Knox are in the possession of the New Hampshire Society of the Cincinnati.

professions of sincere regard and esteem, with which I have the honor, etc.³

3. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THOMAS SMITH

Mount Vernon, September 15, 1788.

Sir: Your favour of the 6th. Ult. came duly to hand and I beg you to accept my thanks for the trouble you have had in collecting my money and for the punctuality and dispatch with which you have transacted my business. The Sum of £50.0.2 sent to Colo Biddle got safe; and the receipt of it is acknowledged by him in a letter to me. It is far, very far indeed, Sir, from my wish that you should make good the Counterfeit money which you received on my account; the Act of receiving it in the manner you do is conferring a favour on me; to be made liable for the accidents which may attend the doing it, would, if I could do it, be worse than ungenerous, it would be unjust. I therefore request that you would deduct the Sum of £7...6...8 from your next Account. Colo. Biddle could do no less than refuse it, but in doing so he has done more than I wished.

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I would thank you for giving the enclosed a safe conveyance. Colo Cannon is vested with the care of my Landed property in the Counties of Fayette and Washington but owing to miscarriages of letters, or other causes, I have heard nothing from him for more than 15 Months, and am ignorant of the Situation in which my tenements are. Letters sent by way of Philadelphia

will always come safe, it is somewhat strange therefore to be so long without one from him. with very great esteem etc.⁷

To SAMUEL POWEL

Mount Vernon, September 15, 1788.

Dear Sir: It was many days after the recd. of your obliging favour of the 9th. Ult. by the Post, that Capt. Ellwood arrived in the Packet. He brought the Chair⁸ very safe, and you and Mrs. Powel have the thanks of Mrs. Washington and myself for the trouble you have had in procuring it. I think it neat and handsome, and with some additions which I will take the liberty sometime hence of proposing (such as can easily be inserted) they may be made to suit the colour and furniture of the Room for which they are intended, as well as a chair of quadruple their cost. In the meantime I have requested Colo. Biddle, who does business for me in Philadelphia to pay the cost of the one which you have sent me.

I have not been more lucky in my Sainfoin Seed than you were. Though one would not judge so from the appearance, it is a tender seed; of my first sown last Autumn, a few

7. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

8. An arm chair which Washington wanted for a model.

vegetated and came up, but were destroyed by the frost; of those reserved till the spring seeding not one ever appeared above ground, and *now* I have not a single plant of this

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grass growing. I have never seen Winlaws threshing Machine, but as the acct. of its utility is contained in Youngs Annals of Agriculture, I have requested that Gentleman, if from his *own* experience, or that of others in whose judgment he can *entirely* confide, it is not (as most of these things are) too complicated for common and unskilful labourers, or the mere vision of the hour, and pass away like it, to send me one.

The present Congress, by its great indecision in fixing on a place at which the New Congress is to convene, have hung the expectations, and patience of the Union on tenter hooks, and thereby (if further evidence has been necessary) given a fresh instance of the unfitness of a body so constituted to regulate with energy and precision the Affairs of such an extensive Empire. In every good wish for Mr. Powel and yourself I am joined by Mrs. Washington and with great esteem, etc.⁹

9. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOHN CANNON

Mount Vernon, September 15, 1788.

Sir: As I have not received a line from you for more than fifteen months, and am altogether in the dark respecting the business which was committed to your care. I would thank you for information respecting the tenements, the Rents &ca. of my Lands in Fayette and Washington Counties. And, as the latter, that is the Rents, may have been received in specific articles I should be glad to know they are disposed off. Letters Lodged at the Post Office (and I believe one is now established from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh) will come safe, by private hands they rarely do, and any money which may have arisen from the Rents or the produce of them, Mr. Smith, I am certain, will undertake if committed to his care, to forward to me.

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If any proposals have been made to you for purchasing either, or part of the above tracts, I should be glad to know on what terms. As also to whom they are now tenanted and what the Rents are. I am, etc.⁷

7. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To WILLIAM BEAN¹⁰

Mount Vernon, September 15, 1788.

Sir: Your letter of the 28th. of August came safe to my hands.

A Colo. Cannon of Washington County, the county adjoining to that in which the land you express a desire to purchase lays, is authorised to sell the whole tract; which consists, of between 16 and 1700 Acres. The price fixed upon it is 40/pr. Acre estimating dollars at 7/6. One fourth to be paid down, the other $\frac{3}{4}$ in annual Payments with Interest. The whole tract is good, but some parts better than others; and near the Mill indeed within 30 yards of the House there is, in my opinion, the greatest appearance of a valuable Mine bank I have ever seen. If the price, and terms of payment are approved, it would be better for you and your Brother in law, and others if you chose to admit more, to take the whole tract; for if I divide it the price of the parts will be proportioned to the quality of the Soil, and value of the improvements. I am, etc.¹¹

10. Of Nottingham, Cecil County, Md.

11. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THOMAS PETERS

Mount Vernon, September 16, 1788.

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Sir: I have some Spring Barley for sale, and if you incline to buy it, would be glad to know what you will give delivered at my landing; or if this is not convenient for you what your price at Baltimore.

It is raised from seed which Colo. Biddle of Philadelphia procured for me from a Mr. Haynes a Brewer of that City; who had it (I am informed) from Rhode Island. It is, which I did not discover till growing, mixed, in a small degree, with oats. I mention it for the sake of plain dealing, and not because I am told it is a common case, and because it is generally so this year in the Eastern¹⁴ States.

Your answer by the first post will much oblige, Sir, Yr. etc.¹⁵

14. Mutilated. The word "Eastern" is supplied from the "Letter Book."

15. In the writing of Tobias Lear. From the original in the possession of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union.

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, September 16, 1788.

Dear Sir: I have your letters of the 24th. Ult. and the 5th. inst. now before me. The articles sent by Capt. Ellwood rived safe and agreeable to the invoice. If you have not already purchased the Winter Barley I would not wish you to do it, for I think it is very probable that I may be able to get the quantity which I shall want of the Brewer in Alexandria in exchange for Spring Barley, or if I should be disappointed there, that I can obtain it upon better terms and perhaps of a better quality upon James River than at Philadelphia, as you observe that the crops of it have generally failed, and none has yet been seen that is fit for seed.

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I should be glad to have the Herrings and Shad which are in your hands disposed of if it can be done without making an unreasonable sacrifice of them, that you may receive the Balance which is due upon your acct. and have money of mine in your hands to procure any articles that I may have occasion for from Philadelphia; should you not be able to dispose of them immediately I will remit you a Bank note.

I will thank you to pay Samuel Powell Esqr. for a chair which

he was so good as to procure for me as a pattern. With great esteem, I am etc.

P.S. You will oblige me by forwarding the inclosed letter to Mr. Smith.¹²

[H.S.P.]

To JOHN LEWIS

Mount Vernon, September 16, 1788.

Dear Sir: I have to acknowledge the reception of your letter of the 15th. of December 1787 together with the copy of my account inclosed therein, since which time I have received the two inclosed letters from Mr. John Cowper expressing a desire to purchase the tract of Land in No. Carolina which was the joint property of your father Colo. Fielding Lewis and myself. These two letters, together with my answer to the first (a copy of which is also inclosed) will shew you upon what footing the matter now stands with respect to me. I will thank you to let me know, as soon as is convenient, your determination respecting the sale of this land that I may give Mr. Cowper a decided answer.

I will be much oblige to you if you will look among your fathers papers for a protested Bill of Exchange drawn by the Execurs. of William Armisted Esqr. I am almost certain it was among

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12. In the writing of Tobias Lear.

other matters committed to his care to transact for me at the General Court of May 1775, when I was called off to the northward.

I will likewise thank you for the amount of those charges in my Acct. which are not extended that I may see how the Balance stands.

Mrs. Washington joins her best wishes for you, and those of your Family. I am, etc.¹³

To DOCTOR THOMAS THOMSON

Mount Vernon, September 18, 1788.

Sir: The enclosed, which I have just received, is so full on the subject of your enquiry that I shall add nothing thereto.¹⁶ Although I am sorry, and feel for the disappointed hopes of your Lady to recover her lost Son, yet I am glad that it is in my power to remove, as soon as possible the painful suspence which the Impositions of Reynolds must have thrown her and the family into. I am, etc.¹⁷

13. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

16. September 18 Washington acknowledged briefly to Thomas Barclay the information which he sent to Doctor Thomson as stated in this letter.

17. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To HENRY LEE

Mount Vernon, September 22, 1788.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 13th. instant was of so friendly and confidential a complexion, as to merit my early attention and cordial acknowledgments. I am glad Congress have

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at last decided upon an Ordinance for carrying the new government into execution. In my mind the place for the meeting of the new Congress was not an object of such very important consequence; but I greatly fear that the question entailed upon that

body, respecting their permanent residence, will be pregnant with difficulty and danger. God grant that true patriotism and a spirit of moderation may exclude a narrow locality, and all ideas unfriendly to the Union, from every quarter.

Your observations on the solemnity of the crisis and its application to myself, bring before me subjects of the most momentous and interesting nature. In our endeavors to establish a new general government, the contest nationally considered, seems not to have been so much for glory, as existence. It was for a long time doubtful whether we were to survive as an independent Republic, or decline from our fœderal dignity into insignificant and wretched Fragments of Empire. The adoption of the Constitution so extensively, and with so liberal an acquiescence on the part of the Minorities in general, promised the former; until lately the circular letter of New York carried, in my apprehension, an unfavorable if not an insidious tendency to a contrary policy. I still hope for the best; but before you mentioned it, I could not help fearing it would serve as a Standard to which the disaffected might resort. It is now evidently the part of all honest men, who are friends to the new Constitution, to endeavor to give it a chance to disclose its merits and defects,

by carrying it fairly into effect, in the first instance. For it is to be apprehended, that by an attempt, to obtain amendments before the experiment has been candidly made, "more is meant than meets the ear" that an intention is concealed, to accomplish slyly, what could not have been done openly, to undo all that has been done.

If the fact so exists, that a kind of combination is forming to stifle the government in embryo; it is a happy circumstance that the design has become suspected. Preparations should be the sure attendant upon forewarning. Probably, prudence, wisdom, and patriotism were never more essentially necessary than at the present moment; and so far

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as it can be done in an irreproachably direct manner, no effort ought to be left unessayed to procure the election of the best possible characters to the new Congress. On their harmony, deliberation and decision every thing will depend. I heartily wish Mr. Madison was in our Assembly, as I think, with you, it is of unspeakable importance Virginia should set out in her fœderal measures under right auspices.

The principal topic of your letter is, to me, a point of great delicacy indeed; insomuch that I can scarcely, without some impropriety touch upon it. In the first place, the event to which you allude may never happen; among other reasons because, if the partiality of my fellow citizens conceive it to be a means by which the sinews of the new government would be strengthened, it will of consequence be obnoxious to those who are in opposition

to it, many of whom, unquestionably will be placed among the Electors.

This consideration alone would supersede the expediency of announcing any definite and irrevocable resolution. You are among the small number of those who know my invincible attachment to domestic life, and that my sincerest wish is to continue in the enjoyment of it, solely, until my final hour. But the world would be neither so well instructed, nor so candidly disposed as to believe me uninfluenced by sinister motives, in case any circumstance should render a deviation from the line of conduct I had prescribed to myself indispensable.

Should the contingency you suggest take place, and (for argument sake alone let me say it) should my unfeigned reluctance to accept the office be overcome by a deference for the reasons and opinions of my friends; might I not, after the Declarations I have made (and Heaven knows they were made in the sincerity of my heart) in the judgment of the impartial World and of Posterity, be chargeable with levity and inconsistency; if not with rashness and ambition? Nay farther would there not even be some apparent foundation for the two former charges? Now justice to myself and tranquillity of conscience require that I should act a part, if not above imputation, at least

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capable of vindication. Nor will you conceive me to be too solicitous for reputation. Though I prize, as I ought, the good opinion of my fellow citizens; yet, if I know myself, I would not seek Or retain popularity at the expense of one social duty or moral virtue.

While doing what my conscience informed me was right, as it respected my God, my Country and myself, I could despise all the party clamor and unjust censure, which must be expected from some, whose personal enmity might be occasioned by their hostility to the government. I am conscious, that I fear alone to give any real occasion for obloquy, and that I do not dread to meet with unmerited reproach. And certain I am, whensoever I shall be convinced the good of my country requires my reputation to be put in risque; regard for my own fame will not come in competition with an object of so much magnitude. If I declined the task, it would lie upon quite another principle. Notwithstanding my advanced season of life, my encreasing fondness for agricultural amusements and my growing love of retirement augment and confirm my decided predilection for the character of a private citizen: yet it would be no one of these motives, nor the hazard to which my former reputation might be exposed, or the terror of encountering new fatigues and troubles that would deter me from an acceptance; but a belief that some other person, who had less pretence and less inclination to be excused, could execute all the duties full as satisfactorily as myself. To say more would be indiscreet; as a disclosure of a refusal beforehand, might

incur the application of the Fable, in which the Fox is represented as undervaluing the grapes he could not reach. You will perceive, my dear Sir, by what is here observed (and which you will be pleased to consider in the light of a confidential communication) that my inclinations will dispose and decide me to remain as I am; unless a clear and insurmountable conviction should be impressed on my mind that some very disagreeable consequences must in all human probability result from the indulgence of my wishes.

If you return by land, I shall expect without failure the pleasure of your company. I am much indebted to you for your obliging offer of forwarding such articles as I might want

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from New York; though I shall not have occasion at this moment to avail myself of your goodness. Mrs. Washington offers her best Complts. to Mrs. Lee, with ardent wishes for the re-establishment of her health which, joined with my own, will conclude me. With great regard etc.18

18. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To SAMUEL POWEL**

Mount Vernon, September 23, 1788.

Dear Sir: Although I had not forgot the promise I made you, respecting the Spanish Chestnuts, yet I am glad you have reminded me of it as we have the pleasure of knowing, from your letter, that Mrs. Powell and yourself were well. I am sorry to add, however, that though the prospect of an abundant crop of these Nuts was once great, appearances are now against it. Whether to the uncommonly wet Summer or to what other cause to attribute it I know not; but the fact is that as fast as the Burs get to a certain size they drop immaturely from the trees. Whether this will continue to be the case now the weather has grown drier I am unable to decide; but this you may be assured of: Participation.

The Proclamation of His Britanic Majesty and the publication of the Executive Council of your State, I have seen. The former seem unwilling to receive any part of their own bounty, whilst the latter are encouraging them not to be affraid of it.

I am glad Congress have at *last* , decided upon an Ordinance for carrying the New government into execution. The patience of the Union was too long tried on a question of so temporary a nature.

Mrs. Washington and all under this roof unite with me in every good wish for

Mrs. Powell and yourself; and with sentiments of great esteem I am etc.

Library of Congress

[H.S.P.]

To JAMES MADISON

Mount Vernon, September 23, 1788.

My dear Sir: I duly received your letter of the 24th of last Month, but as we had no intelligence or circumstance in this quarter worthy of your acceptance, I postponed even the acknowledgement until I was gratified by the receipt of your subsequent favor of the 14th instant. Indeed I have now little more to give you in return, than this information to prevent your apprehension of miscarriage; and my thanks for your illustration of the subject which has lately engaged the attention of Congress. Upon mature reflection, I think the reasons you offer in favor of Philadelphia as the place for the first Meeting of Congress are conclusive: especially when the farther agitation of the question respecting its permanent

residence is taken into consideration. But I cannot, however, avoid being satisfied that the Minority should have acquiesced in any place, rather than to have prevented the system from being carried into effect. The delay had already become the source of clamours and might have given advantages to the Anti-fœderalists. Their expedient will now probably be an attempt to procure the Election of so many of their own Junto under the New government, as, by the introduction of local and embarrassing disputes, to impede or frustrate its operations.

In the mean time it behoves all the advocates of the Constitution, forgetting partial and smaller considerations, to combine their exertions for collecting the wisdom and virtue of the Continent to one centre; in order that the Republic may avail itself of the opportunity for escaping from Anarchy, Division, and the other great national calamities that impended. To be shipwrecked in sight of the Port would be the severest of all possible aggravations to our Misery; and I assure you I am under painful apprehensions from the

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single circumstance of Mr. H—'s¹⁹ having the whole game to play in the Assembly of this State, and the effect it may have on others, it should be counteracted if possible. With sentiments of highest esteem etc.

P. S. Permit me to request the favor of you to forward the Letters under cover with this by a favourable conveyance.²⁰

19. Patrick Henry.

20. From the text printed in the sales catalogue of the *Washington-Madison Papers* (McGuire Collection, 1892).

To REVEREND FRANCIS ADRIAN VANDERKEMP

Mount Vernon, September 27, 1788.

Sir. The letter with which you was pleased to favor me dated the 29th. of Augt. came duly to hand, and afforded me the pleasure of hearing that you had made a purchase agreeable to your wishes in the vicinity of Esopus. I sincerely hope that it may prove an agreeable retreat, and a happy Asylum from your late troubles in Holland.

The Mangal Root which you saw growing in my Garden is not, I believe, of the best sort, it was as you have observed red. That which is marbled, I am told, is the best. If of this kind the Revd. Dr. Doll could spare a little seed it would oblige me, and when you shall be stocked with such other sorts of seed as are not usual in this Country, I would gladly participate in your sparings.

Mrs. Washington joins me in best wishes for you Mrs. Vanderkemp family, and I am etc.²¹

21. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To N— DU BEY

Library of Congress

Mount Vernon, September 27, 1788.

Sir: The letter which you were pleased to write to me from Philadelphia the 11th. of this instt. came duly to hand. I wish it was in my power to answer your queries satisfactorily but the little connection I have of late had with the affairs of the western Country does not enable me to give in detail an account of the settlements in the vicinity of your Lands (between the Great and little Kanhawa), or to point out the best mode by which you could seat and improve them.

In general I have understood that a capitol establishment of very respectable people is now making with great rapidity under uncommonly favourable auspices at the mouth of the Muskingham (west of the Ohio) about 10 Miles above the little Kanhawa, and that at the mouth of the great Kanhawa a town is laid off and Settlements forming; but to what extent, or under what circumstances it is not in my power to inform you. The lands between the two Kanhawas (East side) on the River Ohio are (though exceedingly fine) almost entirely unimproved being the property of Officers who do not incline to live on them themselves and who have taken no pains to obtain others to do it. This, hitherto, has been the case with my own. My wish, if my price could be obtained, is to sell and knowing that to encumber the Land with

Leases might be a bar to it, and without giving them I could not expect reputable characters would improve them, are the causes of their laying dormant so long. I have lately however empowered a Gentleman who lives at the mouth of the Great Kanhawa (Colo Thomas Lewis) to Lease them to such as may apply, being informed that many were desirous of settling on them with this security. With respect to the mode which would be best for you, and your associates to adopt to effect the settlement of your Land, which you say adjoins mine, I know not, the hazard and the cost of importing Emigrants, and the terms on which they are to be engaged, depend upon calculation, and other circumstances with which I am not acquainted, and which falls more within the reach of your own investigation than mine and however easy and expedient it may be for Foreigners to

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accomplish this with their country men by their attentions, personal influence &c. it might prove a precarious and expensive mode for me to pursue and is such an one as I have had no inclination to adopt. The only advice I would presume to give you on this occasion, is, if settlers are brought from Switzerland or any foreign Country, to make your contracts with them certain before the expence of

Transportation is incurred. If the question respecting "The kind of Lands" is confined to your own purchase, I can make no answer because I never saw them. The interval lands on the River, is equal to any in the world.

I do not conceive that any danger is to be apprehended from the Savages by Settlers on these Lands. 1st. because they are on the East side of the Ohio to which they have no pretensions. 2d. because very formidable settlements will soon be made on the west side of it above, below, and opposite to them which will form a barrier, and 3dly because a general treaty with the several tribes of Indians in that country is now about to be holden, by which it is to be presumed matters will be so fixed as to prevent hostilities in future. I am, etc.²¹

21. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To SAMUEL MILFORD

Mount Vernon, September 29, 1788.

Sir: The letter which you wrote to me from Richmond on the 24th. Instr. came duly to hand. Was it in my power to give you information with respect to the circumstances attending Major Polson's²² Land, or satisfactory answers to the quæries he has propounded on this subject, I would do it with pleasure. But the truth is, I know not a little more of the matter than you are already made acquainted with by his own letter dated in London the 26th. of July which you enclosed to me and is now returned.

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I was, I believe, the principal cause of his, and others getting the Lands which were granted to the officers and Solders of the Virginia Regiment raised in 1754 agreeably to a Proclamation of the then Governor of this State but after the proportions were assigned to each individual and the Patents were obtained, in the year 1772, I had no further agency in the business; and know no more what the Attorney of Major Polson did with his dividend of the Land than you do.

The readiest, indeed the only means that occurs to me, by which

22. John Polson.

you can get certain information on this head, is to apply to the *Executors* , or *administrators* of Mr. Craig. A Clue may thereby be found for tracing this business fully. Who his Executors are I know not; but as Mr. Craig lived in Williamsburg and moved in a small circle, it is highly probable they are residents of that place also.

Being in company with a Gentleman eminent in the Law when your letter, enclosing Mr. Polson's to me came to hand I asked his opinion of property belonging to persons under the description Major Polson gives of himself; his answer was; that as that Gentleman was not a Citizen of this State, did not leave it in consequence of the dispute with great Britain, nor bore Arms in America against the *United States* during the contest, it is not likely that his property is comprehended in any Confiscation Law of this Commonwealth. I am of the same opinion, but one mode by which the matter can be ascertained if there is no office of Registry to resort to at Richmond is for you or some person who is acquainted with these *Laws* , the spirit, and tendency of them to read them attentively compare them with case of Major Polson and see whether by name, or description he is included or excluded. I never read one of them, nor have them by me, nor moreover am I acquainted with any of the proceedings respecting this business.

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There is another predicament, however, under which Major Polsons Lands may have fallen. It is common to every one, and the

Public Gazettes announce the frequency of it. I mean the disposal of the Land, or part of it, for payment of the Taxes to which it is subject. Scores of these Sales are advertised weekly in Dixons Virginia Gazette and Independt. Chronicle, agreeably to Law, that the proprietors of the Land may be notified thereof; and prevent by timely payment, if they are able, and incline so to do, the *actual* Sale. Whether this has been the case with Major Polsons Land or not, can only be known by a recurrence to and research of those papers. I have never attended to the matter myself and therefore can give neither you, nor him any information respecting it. The Land lays, I believe in the County of Greenbrier (or Botetourt) and will be found if in this predicament, advertised by the Sheriff thereof.

Major Polson in his letter to me, requests that I would point out a proper Attorney to transact the business for him. This I am unable to do. The lands (by the common routs to it) lays at least 500 hundred [*sic*] miles from me. I have Lands in the vicinity of his, and have not, as yet found, a settler convenient to them, able, or willing to take the management. The only person who was recommended to me for this purpose

(Colo. Thomas Lewis) has given me no answer to my applications on this head though the first was made near twelve months ago to him. I mention this circumstance to shew the difficulty of procuring, and the danger of recommending a proper character to Major Polson. To me it would seem best for the Major to appoint some person in Richmond (being the residence of the public officers and the resort of People from all parts of the State) as his Attorney; empowering him (if the Property is unalienated) to sell, Seat, or in any other manner (agreeable to his wishes) dispose of the Land. Who are of his acquaintance at that place or who would be a proper person there for this business I really know not as I rarely go there. Men and things in this State are greatly changed since my acquaintance with them (now almost 15 years ago), for I have been very little from

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home since my retreat from public life, the beginning of the year 1784, to acquire fresh knowledge of them.

I have been thus particular to you because such information and advice as this letter contains, going *through* you to the Major, with the short letter herewith enclosed to himself²³ will answer the purpose of a repetition of the same sentiments in a second letter. I therefore pray you to accompany my letter to him with a copy of this to you. I am, etc.²⁴

23. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

24. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE MARQUIS DE BOUILLÉ²⁵

Mount Vernon, October 1, 1788.

Sir: The letter introductory of Mr. Chastel de la Vallee, which you did me the honor to write to me on the 6th. of May,²⁶ has been forwarded by him since his arrival in America; with information that his affairs would detain him some little time in Philadelphia, I have written to him in return, that I shall be very happy to receive him, with marks of regard, at Mount Vernon; whensoever he can make his journey commodiously for himself.

In the meantime I would not delay to acknowledge the receipt of your letter and to assure you that your recommendation will ever have the force of a command with me: being always desirous of demonstrating with how high consideration and esteem, I have the honor, etc.²⁷

25. François Claude Amour, Marquis de Bouillé.

26. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

27. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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On October 1 Washington wrote briefly to La Vallee, inviting him to Mount Vernon. A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the Washington Papers. La Vallee is not mentioned in Washington "Diaries."

To THOMAS LEWIS

Mount Vernon, October 2, 1788.

Sir: I wrote to you in December last requesting that you would be so good as to assist me in procuring tenants for, and settling of my lands on the Great Kanhawa and Ohio, and at the same time vested you with full power for that purpose upon the terms which I mentioned, and which I had understood was the custom of that Country. This letter was, at Richmond, committed to the Care of a Mr. Clandenning who lives in Greenbrier County and who promised to have it safely conveyed to you. In June last the Gentleman who delivered it to Mr. Clandenning was informed by him that you had received it. A Duplicate of it was likewise committed to the care of your Brother Colo. Andrew Lewis in May, to be forwarded to you; and as I have never received an answer from you I cannot but impute it to the miscarriage of your letters; I must therefore beg that you will, without fail and as soon as possible, let me know your determination with respect to your accepting the trust, and if you incline to act for me, give me some information respecting the: circumstances and situations of my Lands in your neighbourhood, for I am at present totally in the dark with regard to them, except

so far as relates to the payment of taxes which the Sheriff has not failed to apply for, and as these are pretty considerable I find myself under the necessity either of disposing of the land or putting it in such a condition as will at least enable me to pay the taxes with the produce of it.

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Since my writing to you I have had applications for purchasing or leasing a part of those lands but could give no decided answer to them, as I did not know (if you have accepted the trust) what steps you might have taken towards tenanting them.

Letters sent to Pittsburg or Richmond and put into the Post office at either of those places will come more directly to me than by any other means. I am, etc.²⁸

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, October 2, 1788.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 17th. Ult. came duly to hand, and the one enclosed therein from Mr. Dubey has received an answer. In my last letter to you I requested that you would not put yourself to any trouble in procuring Winter barley for me as I expected to get a supply from the brewer in Alexandria.

28. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

You will oblige me by forwarding the enclosed letter to Pittsburg; and also by informing me, in your next, at what rate I could procure a large quantity of red Clover Seed, say 3000 lb of the best quality, to be delivered here before the River closes, or upon its first opening in the spring. If Mr. Peters has got a Riddle (I believe it is) for cleaning Potatoes ready for me, you will be so good as to send it in the next packet that sails for Alexandria, and likewise the articles mentioned in the enclosed memorandum. With very great esteem I am etc.²⁹

[H.S.P.]

To EMBREE & SHOTWELL

Mount Vernon, October 3, 1788.

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Gentn: I hope and expect you have received payment for the Clover and Timothy seeds which you forwarded to me last winter. It was ordered long ago.

Pray on what terms could you supply me with 3000 lb of fresh and good red clover Seed of the present years growth to be shipped from New York before the

29. In the writings of Tobias Lear.

Rivers are closed with Ice, or at any rate to be had immediately after they open. Your answer *soon* will much oblige Gentleman Yours etc.³⁰

To THOMAS SNOWDEN

Mount Vernon, October 3, 1788.

Sir: The cost of the Plough which you were so obliging as to have made and sent to me has never yet been presented. I am ready to pay it to you, or your order on demand.

Will you permit me again to request the favor of you to procure me another exactly like the former and as perfectly made, both Iron and wood, as it can be by your best workmen? I like the other so well that I mean to get into the use of them generally; and want the one which I have now requested as a model, in my workshop to make others by. With the compleat plough be pleased to send me two dozen shears, from your Forge, of the proper sort and size to be manufactured with as little labour as may be into Ploughs of the above Sort, the sooner the whole is forwarded the more convenient and agreeable it will be to Yours etc.³³

30. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

33. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To ALEXANDER HAMILTON

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Mount Vernon, October 3, 1788.

Dear Sir: In acknowledging the receipt of your candid and kind letter by the last Post; little more is incumbent upon me, than to thank you sincerely for the frankness with which you communicated your sentiments, and to assure you that the same manly tone of intercourse will always be more than barely welcome, indeed it will be highly acceptable to me. I am particularly glad in the present instance, that you have dealt thus freely and like a friend.³¹

Although I could not help observing, from several publications and letters that my name had been sometimes spoken of, and that it was possible the *Contingency* which is the subject of your letter might happen; yet I thought it best to maintain a guarded silence and to seek the counsel of my best friends (which I certainly hold in the highest estimation) rather than to hazard an imputation unfriendly to the delicacy of my feelings. For, situated as I am, I could hardly bring the question into the slightest discussion, or ask an opinion even in the most confidential manner, without betraying, in my judgment, some impropriety of conduct, or without feeling an apprehension, that a premature display of anxiety might be construed into

31. Hamilton had written (September —): “It cannot be considered as a compliment to say that on your acceptance of the office of President the success of the new government in its commencement may materially depend. Your agency and influence will be not less important in preserving it from the future attacks of its enemies than they have been in recommending it in the first instance to the adoption of the people....Your signature to the proposed system pledges your judgment for its being such an one as upon the whole was worthy of the public approbation. If he should miscarry (as men commonly decide from success or the want of it) the blame will in all probability be laid on the system itself. And the framers of it will have to encounter the disrepute of having brought about a revolution in government, without substituting any thing that was worthy of the effort; they pulled down one Utopia, it will be said, to build up another. This view of the subject, if I mistake

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not my dear Sir will suggest to your mind greater hazard to that fame, which must be and ought to be dear to you, in refusing your future aid to the system than in affording it. I will only add, that in my estimate of the matter, that aid is indispensable." This letter is now in the *Hamilton Papers* in the Library of Congress, having been removed from the *Washington Papers* by John C. Hamilton.

a vain-glorious desire of pushing myself into notice as a candidate. Now, if I am not grossly deceived in myself, I should unfeignedly rejoice, in case the Electors, by giving their votes in favor of some other person, would save me from the dreaded Dilemma of being forced to accept or refuse.

If that may not be, I am, in the next place, earnestly desirous of searching out the truth, and of knowing whether there does not exist a probability that the government would be just as happily and effectually carried into execution without my aid, as with it. I am *truly* solicitous to obtain all the previous information which the circumstances will afford, and to determine (when the determination can with propriety be no longer postponed) according to the principles of right reason, and the dictates of a clear conscience; without too great a reference to the unforeseen consequences, which may affect my person or reputation. Untill that period, I may fairly hold myself open to conviction; though I allow your sentiments to have weight in them; and I shall not pass by your arguments without giving them as dispassionate a consideration, as I can possibly bestow upon them.

In taking a survey of the subject, in whatever point of light I have been able to place it, I will not suppress the acknowledgment, my Dr. Sir that I have always felt a kind of gloom upon my mind, as often as I have been taught to expect, I might, and perhaps must ere long, be called to make a decision. You will, I am well assured, believe the assertion (though I have little expectation it would gain

credit from those who are less acquainted with me) that if I should receive the appointment and if I should be prevailed upon to accept it, the acceptance would be attended with more

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diffidence and reluctance that I ever experienced before in my life. It would be, however, with a fixed and sole determination of lending whatever assistance might be in my power to promote the public weal, in hopes that at a convenient and early period my services might be dispensed with, and that I might be permitted once more to retire, to pass an unclouded evening after the stormy day of life, in the bosom of domestic tranquility.

But why these anticipations? if the friends to the Constitution conceive that my administering the government will be a means of its acceleration and strength, is it not probable that the adversaries of it may entertain the same ideas, and of course make it an object of opposition? That many of this description will become Electors, I can have no doubt of, any more than that their opposition will extend to any character who (from whatever cause) would be likely to thwart their measures. It might be impolitic in them to make this declaration *previous* to the Election; but I shall be out in my conjectures if they do not act conformably thereto, and that the seeming moderation by which they

appear to be actuated at present is neither more or less than a finesse to lull and deceive. Their plan of opposition is systematized, and a regular intercourse, I have much reason to believe between the Leaders of it in the several States is formed to render it more effectual. With sentiments of sincere regard &c.32

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, October 6, 1788.

Dear Sir: It was intended, tho' omitted in my last, to have requested you to ask the Brewers in your City what they will give for spring Barley delivered at my Landing, or in Philadelphia, and in the latter case for you to have known what the freight would be. My Barley is raised from the Seed you obtained for me from Mr. Haynes, and is, as I mentioned to you in a former letter, mixed in some degree with Oats. This I am, told is no disadvantage to the Malt tho' it is an objection to my sowing it again. I mention it that the

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purchaser may be acquainted therewith before hand. What the quantity may be that I shall have to dispose of I am unable to say, but it will not be great, not more than a few hundred

32. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

bushels, the season being miserable bad for it, the grain is good, your answer soon will oblige Dear Sir Yrs. etc.³³

To THOMAS NEWTON, JUNIOR

Mount Vernon, October 10, 1788.

Sir: Your letter of the 23d. Ulto. was handed to me by Capt. Justice who deld, at my landing 35,962 Shingles agreeable to his receipt.

Your letter of the 8th. of August mentions that, by contract, payment was to be made for the shingles three months after the delivery of the first parcel, and in consequence thereof I did not make provision for the payment sooner, but as you have been disappointed in that contract and was obliged to advance the money for those which were delivered, I enclose a Bill drawn by Colo. Fitzgerald upon Messrs. Brent and Co in my favor for £14.8 the amount of 36,000 at 8/. The residue of the Shingles will, I hope, be sent up as soon as possible, for my delay for want of them would, at this season, be a material injury to me in my building.

You informed me in your

33. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

letter of August that the Price of super fine flour was 32/ and Fine 28/ Pr. bbl. I would thank you to let me know what it will fetch quick in Cash at this time. I am, etc.³⁴

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

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Mount Vernon, October 13, 1788.

Dear Sir: I was duly favored with your letter of the 2d. inst. and am much obliged by your attention to the letter which I requested you to forward to Mr. Smith.

I will thank you to procure for me and send by the first opportunity 175 lb of Seine twine as near the sample herewith sent as you can get it, and likewise two pieces of Linen not coarser than the enclosed pattern, for the payment of which and the discharge of the balance due to you on my account, I have enclosed a Bank Note of one hundred Dollars, as it is uncertain whether you have yet disposed of my herrings or not. I must beg you to inform me in your next if Interest is drawn upon those bank notes or not. I am, etc.³⁴

34. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On October 15 Washington wrote to Biddle inclosing what was omitted in his last letter (probably the samples of twine and linen mentioned in the above of October 13): "If the Black India Paduasoy's are strong and lasting, Mrs. Washington begs you will send her as much (of that which is good) as will make her a Gown without a Petticoat." This letter is in the Huntington Library.

To MRS. ELIZA HARRIOT O'CONNOR

Mount Vernon, October 17, 1788.

Madam: The letter with which you favored me, on the 7th. inst. did not get to my hand till the 15th. or it should have received an earlier acknowledgment. Whenever you can make it convenient and agreeable to visit Mount Vernon, Mrs. Washington and myself will take pleasure in shewing you every civility in our power.

Governor Johnston³⁵ of No. Carolina is a Gentleman with whom I have not the honor of an acquaintance, nor one with whom I have had any intercourse by letter, therefore,

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consistently with rules of propriety, I should find myself at a loss to address him on the subject of your request. To me, it would seem, that the evidence of those characters whose children have been under your tuition would be the best recommendation you could obtain (and is indeed necessary) without any *particular* address. At the foot of which I would readily add my concurrence, as far as I have knowledge or can be warranted. I am, etc.³⁶

35. Gov. Samuel Johnston.

36. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To ELÉONOR FRANÇOIS ÉLIE, COMTE DE MOUSTIER

Mount Vernon, October 18, 1788.

Sir: It was not until the last evening, that I had the pleasure of receiving the letter which your Excellency did me the honor to write to me, on the 5th. of this month, from Boston. So that I could not have an opportunity of returning my acknowledgement, before the Post which will depart the 21st. from Alexandria, to the Northward. I hope, however, it will be in time to meet you at New York, or on the road; with assurances, that I shall be at home at the period proposed and that I anticipate very great happiness from your intended visit. The Lady,³⁷ who has taken so much interest in the New World as to honor it with her presence, may be assured that I shall cordially rejoice in an occasion of demonstrating how welcome she is I shall also expect that your Nephew and M. dupont³⁸ will not fail to lay me under additional obligations, by being of your Party.

As I now promise myself in so few days, to have the felicity of a personal acquaintance and oral communication with your Excellency I will not enlarge at this time, any farther than to express an earnest hope, that you will, by travelling, have found repeated circumstances to convince you of the general good will of the Americans for your Nation. Be persuaded, Sir, the slightest suggestion, or the very suspicion

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37. The Marchioness de Brehan.

38. Victor Marie du Pont.

that a few individuals had been wanting in respect to the representative of your Sovereign, would have excited an universal indignation against them. Of the sincere desire which prevails throughout the United States to promote and extend the most liberal intercourse with France, on a footing of reciprocal advantage, I flatter myself, it would not be more difficult to adduce demonstrations; than of the profound respect and real esteem, with which I have the honor etc.³⁹

To ALEXANDER HAMILTON

Mount Vernon, October 18, 1788.

Dear Sir: A day or two ago the enclosed letters came to my hands. The watch of Genl. Morgan you have for what it cost him, what he expects for it is also signified. It is a repeater with a chased *outer* case with open work in parts. The inner case is open, nearly in the whole. It is of an *old fraction* make, and appears to have

39. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

seen better days; perhaps its chief merits lay in being a family piece. Perhaps I am mistaken, it may possess intrinsic merit unknown to me; for silent it came to my hands; and silent it shall depart; having made no attempt to wind it up.

If a safe and direct conveyance presents itself I will forward it without waiting your orders.⁴⁰ If not, say what shall be done with it. With very great esteem etc.⁴¹

To PHILIP FENDALL

Mount Vernon, October 22, 1788.

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Dear Sir: If my Ears did not deceive me the day I dined with you, a difficulty was mentioned in obtaining asses Milk for Mrs. Fendall. One of my imported Jennies suckles a colt got by the Spanish Jack which I would wean and send the mother of it up if you have any place in which she can be securely kept, being valuable and again with foal. The use of this Ass shall be much at the service of Mrs. Fendall and I shall feel happy in having it in my power to oblige her with the milk of it. I am, etc.⁴¹

40. On November 6 Washington forwarded the Cochran watch by Comte Moustier, with a brief note, which is in the *Hamilton Papers* in the Library of Congress.

41. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To BENJAMIN LINCOLN

Mount Vernon, October 26, 1788.

My dear Sir: I have been lately favored with the receipt of your letters of the 24th and 30th of September, with their enclosures, and thank you sincerely for your free and friendly communications. As the period is now rapidly approaching which must decide the fate of the new Constitution, as to the manner of its being carried into execution, and probably as to its usefulness, it is not wonderful that we should all feel an unusual degree of anxiety on the occasion. I must acknowledge my fears have been greatly alarmed, but still I am not without hopes. From the good beginning that has been made in Pennsylvania, a State from which much was to be feared, I cannot help foreboding well of the others. That is to say, I flatter myself a majority of them will appoint federal members to the several branches of the new government. I hardly should think that Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, South Carolina, and Georgia, would be for attempting premature amendments. Some of the rest may, also, in all probability be apprehensive of throwing our affairs into confusion, by such ill-timed expedients.

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There will

however, be no room for the advocates of the Constitution to relax in their exertions; for if they should be lulled into security, appointments of Antifœderal men may probably take place, and the consequences, which you so justly dread, be realized. Our Assembly is now in session; it is represented to be rather antifederalœderal, but we have heard nothing of its doings. Mr. Patrick Henry, R. H. Lee and Madison are talked of for the Senate. Perhaps as much opposition, or, in other words, as great an effort for early amendments, is to be apprehended from this State, as from any but New York. The constant report is, that North Carolina will soon accede to the new Union. A. new Assembly is just elected in Maryland, in which it is asserted the number of Fœderalists greatly predominates; and that being the case, we may look for favorable appointments, in spite of the rancour and activity of a few discontented, and I may say *apparently* unprincipled men.

I would willingly pass over in silence that part of your letter, in which you mention the persons who are Candidates for the two first Offices in the Executive, if I did not fear the omission might seem to betray a want of confidence. Motives of delicacy have prevented me hitherto from conversing or writing on this subject, whenever I could avoid it with decency. I may, however with great sincerity and I believe without offending against modesty or propriety say to *you* , that I most heartily wish the choice to which you

allude may not fall upon me: and that, if it should, I must reserve to myself the right of making up my final decision, at the last moment when it can be brought into one view, and when the expediency inexpediency of a *refusal* can be more judiciously determined than at present. But be assured, my dear Sir, if from any inducement I shall be persuaded ultimately to accept, it will not be (so far as I know my own heart) from any of a private or personal nature. Every personal consideration conspires to rivet me (if I may use the expression) to retirement. At my time of life, and under my circumstances, nothing in this world can ever draw me from it, unless it be a *conviction* that the partiality of my Countrymen had made my services absolutely necessary, joined to a *fear* that my

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refusal might induce a belief that I preferred the conservation of my own reputation and private ease, to the good of my Country. After all, if I should conceive myself in a manner constrained to accept, I call Heaven to witness, that this very act would be the greatest sacrifice of my personal feelings and wishes that ever I have been called upon to make. It would be to forego repose and domestic enjoyment, for trouble, perhaps for public obloquy: for I should consider myself as entering upon an unexplored field, enveloped on every side

with clouds and darkness.

From this embarrassing situation I had naturally supposed that my declarations at the close of the war would have saved me; and that my sincere intentions, then publicly made known, would have effectually precluded me for ever afterwards from being looked upon as a Candidate for any office. This hope, as a last anchor of worldly happiness in old age, I had still carefully preserved; until the public papers and private letters from my Correspondents in almost every quarter, taught me to apprehend that I might soon be obliged to answer the question, whether I would go again into public life or not.

You will see, my dear Sir, from this train of reflections, that I have lately had enough of my own perplexities to think of, without adverting much to the affairs of others. So much have I been otherwise occupied, and so little agency did I wish to have in electioneering, that I have never entered into a single discussion with any person nor to the best of my recollection expressed a single sentiment orally or in writing respecting the appointment of a Vice President. From the extent and respectability of Massachusetts it might reasonably be expected, that he would be chosen from that State. But having taken it for granted, that the person selected for that important place would be a true Fœderalist; in that case, I was altogether disposed to acquiesce in the prevailing sentiments of the Electors,

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without giving any unbecoming preference or incurring any unnecessary ill-will. Since it here seems proper to touch a little more fully upon that point, I will frankly give you my manner of thinking, and what, under certain circumstances, would be my manner of acting.

For this purpose I must speak again hypothetically for argument's sake, and say, supposing I should be appointed to the Administration and supposing I should accept it, I most solemnly declare, that whosoever shall be found to enjoy the confidence of the States so far as to be elected Vice President, cannot be disagreeable to me in that office. And even if I had any predilection, I flatter myself, I possess patriotism enough to sacrifice it at the shrine of my Country; where, it will be unavoidably necessary for me to have made infinitely greater sacrifices, before I can find myself in the supposed predicament: that is to say, before I can be connected with others, in any possible political relation. In truth, I believe that I have no prejudices on the subject, and that it would not be in the power of any evil-minded persons, who wished to disturb the harmony of those concerned in the government, to infuse them into my mind. For, to continue the same hypothesis one step farther, supposing myself to be connected in office with

any gentleman of character, I would most certainly treat him with perfect sincerity and the greatest candour in every respect. I would give him my full confidence, and use my utmost endeavours to co-operate with him, in promoting and rendering permanent the national prosperity; this should be my great, my only aim, under the fixed and irrevocable resolution of leaving to other hands the helm of the State, as soon as my services could possibly with propriety be dispensed with.

I have thus, my dear Sir, insensibly been led into a longer detail than I intended; and have used more egotism than I could have wished; for which I urge no other apology, than but my opinion of your friendship, discretion and candour. With sentiments of real esteem etc.⁴²

42. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THOMAS MONTGOMERIE

Mount Vernon, October 27, 1788.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 24th. came duly to hand. The day appointed for the Revision of the Settlement between the Assignees of Mr. Temple and the Executors of Colo Colvill would have been perfectly agreeable to me had I not just received a letter from the French Minister, the Count de Moustiers, informing me that he, the Marchioness de Brehan, the Marquis her son, and another French Gentleman propose being at Mount Vernon the latter end of this week. As this circumstance might render my attendance in Alexandria the Monday following inconvenient I am constrained to postpone it, and as you have been so obliging as to say that you would conform to any day of my appointing, I will name one so soon as the Minister shall have left this. Mr. Wilson⁴³ being in town can be in, formed thereof in time. With sentiments of great esteem etc.⁴⁴

43. William Wilson.

44. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To MATHEW CAREY

Mount Vernon, October 27, 1788.

Sir: In reply to yours of the 20th of this month, I have to observe, that the fragment of the letter in question, supposed to be written by me, is spurious, and that there was a Pamphlet containing a great many letters of the same description, published in New York at the same time. It should farther be observed, that this publication was made soon after several of my letters were really intercepted with the mail and that the pretended copies of them not only blended many truths with many falsehoods, but were evidently written by some person exceedingly well acquainted with my domestic and general

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concerns. Advantage was adroitly taken of this knowledge to give the greater appearance of probability to the fiction.

From these circumstances you will perceive, Sir, how prudently you have acted in making an application to me previous to your meditated republication. Otherwise I might have found myself under the necessity of denying that they were genuine; from any apprehension, that, being thus preserved in a manner under my eye and with my acquiescence, they must have assumed the seal of veracity in the estimation of Posterity. For whatever credit some of those letters might be thought to have done to my literary or political talents, I certainly cannot choose

to avail myself of the imposition.

With due regard &c.45

To WILLIAM IRVINE

Mount Vernon, October 31, 1788.

Dear Sir: The letter with which you favored me, dated the 6th. instt: enclosing a sketch of the Waters near the line which separates your State from that of New York came duly to hand for which I offer you my acknowledgments and thanks.46

The extensive inland Navigation with which this Country abounds, and the easy communications which many of them afford with the amazing Territory to the westward of us, will, certainly be productive of infinite advantage to the Atlantic States if the Legislatures of those through which they pass have liberality and public spirit enough to improve them. For my part, I wish sincerely that every door to that Country may be set wide open that the commercial intercourse with it may be rendered as free and as easy as possible. This in my judgment is the *best* , if not the

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45. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

46. Irvine's letter has been abstracted from the *Washington Papers* by W. B. Sprague; his sketch map, however, is in those papers.

only cement that can bind those people to us for any length of time and we shall, I think, be deficient in foresight and wisdom, if we neglect the means to effect it. Our *interest* is so much in unison with the policy of the measure that nothing but that ill timed and misapplied parsimony and contracted way of thinking, which intermingles so much in all our public Councils can counteract it.

If the Chataughque Lake, at the head of Canewango River, approximates Lake Erie as nearly as is laid down in the draught you have sent me it presents a very short Portage indeed between the two and an access to all those above the latter. I am &c.47

47. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To PHILIP JOSEPH DE L'ETOMBE

Mount Vernon, November 5, 1788.

Sir: The Comte de Moustier did me the honor to hand me your letter of the 5 Ulto together with the two Volumes on Hydrolicks which you were so polite as to forward me from M. le Comte de Buat.⁴⁸ I must beg you, Sir, to accept my best thanks for your attention to those books and likewise for your polite expressions to me in your letter. I have not yet had liesure to peruse the Books and can therefore give you no opinion upon them as you request me to do, but I have not a doubt but I shall find much pleasure and satisfaction

48. Chevalier Du Buat's *Principles d'Hydraulique* (Paris: 1786).

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in their contents. Enclosed is a letter to M. le Comte de Buat which you will be so obliging as to forward to him.⁴⁹ With due respect I am, etc.⁴⁷

To BATAILE MUSE

Mount Vernon, November 7, 1788.

Sir: Altho' it is my wish and desire that the Papers belonging to the Estate of the deceased Colo Fairfax were in the hands of the Executors, or in those of any other whom they may think proper to appoint to receive them, yet, prudence dictates to me the propriety of an order from them for their delivery. This, as I have never seen your power of Attorney and as you decline sending your Waggon *now*, can, without much difficulty (I should suppose) be obtained before you apply again. In the meanwhile I shall have no difficulty in furnishing papers, or Accts. for particular purposes, as heretofore. Mr Hartshorn's feet. for £33.6.8. will be satisfactory to me, and when you send it your acct. shall be credited for that sum. I am, etc.⁵⁰

49. A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

On November 6 Washington wrote a brief note to Otho Holland Williams, introducing Comte de Moustier and Marchioness de Brehan. This note is in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

47. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

50. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To BENJAMIN LINCOLN

Mount Vernon, November 14, 1788.

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My dear Sir: Your letter of the 25th of last month, accompanying the political letters of Mr. Adams, came safely to hand; and I have to acknowledge my obligations for both those favours.

There is good sense in the answers given by Mr. Adams to the questions of Dr. Calkoen,⁵¹ combined with an extensive knowledge of the interests and resources of this Country. If there be in some instances an exaggeration of our force, it is not a matter of wonder; but the tenor of the whole performance rather affords a subject for admiration that so much accuracy should have been discovered in representations, mostly drawn from recollection. Indeed I was very much pleased with the perusal, and doubt not but the work must have been well calculated to answer the good purposes for which it was intended.

I wrote to you on the [26th]⁵² day of October pretty fully, and therefore shall be more concise at present. Our Assembly (according to different reports) has proved itself to be, as was apprehended, very much under the influence of Mr. Henry. The choice of Delegates for the Senate

51. These questions are contained in a privately printed pamphlet (1786).

52. The date is blank in the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

in Congress has fallen upon two Gentlemen, who are considered to be rather opposed to the new Constitution, viz, Mr. Richd. H. Lee and Colo Grayson. But notwithstanding they have been both of them solicitous to obtain previous amendments, Colo Henry Lee told me lately that Mr. R. H. Lee had declared to him, a few days since, that he wished to see the Government fairly carried into execution and that such alterations only should be adopted, as might be found necessary from its errors or defects; if these were not the very words the observations, I think, were to that import.

A similar sentiment, I have been credibly informed, has been expressed to more than one person by Colo Grayson. But the Fœderalists in the Assembly, as I am given to

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understand, were exceedingly mortified that Mr. Madison should have lost his election by eight or nine Votes. It is now much dreaded by the same characters, that the State (which is to be divided into districts for the appointment of Representatives to Congress) will be so arranged as to place a large proportion of those who are called Antifœderalists in that Station.

I will not add any of my own speculations and conjectures to these facts; but hasten to conclude, as usual, with the strongest protestations of esteem and regard. I am, &c.

P.S. As my last contained some very confidential observations, I hope it has been duly conveyed to you.⁵³

53. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.