

William Ramsey to George Washington, September 22, 1756, Letters to Washington and Accompanying Papers. Published by the Society of the Colonial Dames of America. Edited by Stanislaus Murray Hamilton.

FROM WILLIAM RAMSAY, ESQ. ¹

ALEXANDRIA Septr. 22d. 1756

DEAR SIR

Yours to Mr. Kirkpatrick I have just perused, of my truth yo. may depend on, & that I wish my Capacity was equal to my inclination of advising you for the best.

Know sir, that ev'ry Gentr. in an exalted Station raises envy, & ev'ry person takes the Liberty of judging, or rather determining [with judging] from Appearances, [or information] without weighing circumstances, or the proper causes, on wch their judgmt. ought to be founded. When the most rash attempts are attended with success, they generally meet Applause; but the best plan'd & executed schemes to all human Appearance, are branded & loaded with ev'ry odious Epithet.d if they fail Our Author seems to reflect more on the Governor & the Gent. recommending many officers to Comission, [you are not culpable in at all] than you as Commander in Chief. "When Men are advanced according to Seniority, the Interest & influence of Friends &c, and not according to merit," has no meaning [in my Oppinion] to you, if the Scribler intended it, he mistakes greatly; for at the time yo. were call'd, you had given signal proofs of your regard to your Country, of your disinterestedness in exposing your self witht. any Commission, & of your courage & bravery both in that & many other actions, wch your Friends think of with pleasure, &

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was no doubt, the sole cause of your being Appointed to so important a trust—"When the common Soldiers are abused in a fit of humor or passion & thro' an ostentation of authority; &c" the Scribler must take things on trust with regard to you, your humane disposition will clear yo. in One part, & your not calling the Offenders to justice, if such there were, your ignorance of such treatmt. must at all events acquit you of ev'ry other. Upon the whole, Sr., triumph in your innocency, your disinterestedness, your unwearied Application & Zeal for your Country's good, determine you to continue in its service at a time there may be the greatest call for you, & when probably some signal Day, may mark you the bravest (as hitherto you have been) of persons —

Shew your contempt of the Scribler by your Silence, your watchfulness & care, and thereby disappoint him. I have just snatch'd a few Moments from a thin Court to thro[w] these few tho'ts together, but they & any services I can do you are offer'd by your sincere friend & welwisher

WM. RAMSAY.

¹ William Ramsay, of Alexandria, Va., was born in Scotland in 1716. He came to America, and settled in Alexandria as a merchant, of the firm of Ramsay & Carlyle, in 1744. He was appointed commissary, through Washington's recommendation, November, 1756. He married Ann McCarty, a relative of the mother of Washington. His son, Dr. William, was surgeon throughout the Revolutionary War, and another son, Dennis, mayor of Alexandria, in 1793. In Washington's diary, February 12, 1785, is entered. "Received an invitation to the funeral of Wm. Ramsay Esqr of Alexandria—the oldest inhabitant of the town: & went up—walked in procession as a free-mason—Mr. Ramsay in his lifetime being one & now buried with the ceremony & honours due to one."