

E  
211  
W31  
1850



E  
211  
2.11  
1891

**Cornell University Library**

BOUGHT WITH THE INCOME  
FROM THE

SAGE ENDOWMENT FUND  
THE GIFT OF

**Henry W. Sage**  
1891

Fin. 21,730

22/10/07.

**The date shows when this volume was taken.**

### HOME USE RULES.

All Books subject to Recall.

Books not used for instruction or research are returnable within 4 weeks.

Volumes of periodicals and of pamphlets are held in the library as much as possible. For special purposes they are given out for a limited time.

Borrowers should not use their library privileges for the benefit of other persons.

Books not needed during recess periods should be returned to the library, or arrangements made for their return during borrower's absence, if wanted.

Books needed by more than one person are held on the reserve list.

Books of special value and gift books, when the giver wishes it, are not allowed to circulate.

Readers are asked to report all cases of books marked or mutilated.

**Do not deface books by marks and writing.**

Cornell University Library

E211 .W31 1890

Washington-Duche letters. Now printed.



3 1924 032 400 917

olin



THE  
WASHINGTON—DUCHÉ  
LETTERS.

---

NOW PRINTED, FOR THE FIRST TIME, FROM THE ORIGINAL,  
MANUSCRIPTS, WITH AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY

WORTHINGTON CHAUNCEY FORD.

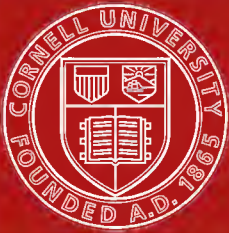
---

BROOKLYN, N. Y.:  
PRIVATELY PRINTED.  
1890.

Five hundred <sup>1</sup>copies printed.

## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY NOTE . . . . .	5
DUCHÉ TO WASHINGTON, 5 August, 1775 . . . . .	7
WASHINGTON TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS, 16 October, 1777 . . . . .	8
DUCHÉ TO WASHINGTON, 8 October, 1777 . . . . .	9
DUCHÉ TO WASHINGTON, 13 October, 1777 . . . . .	26
WASHINGTON TO FRANCIS HOPKINSON, 21 November, 1777 . . . . .	28
FRANCIS HOPKINSON TO DUCHÉ, 14 November, 1777 . . . . .	30
DUCHÉ TO WASHINGTON, 2 April, 1783 . . . . .	35
WASHINGTON TO DUCHÉ, 10 August, 1783 . . . . .	38



# Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in  
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in  
the United States on the use of the text.



## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

---

THE history of Duché's letter to Washington has been so often told, and the dramatic contrast between Duché as chaplain to the Continental Congress and as the tempter of Washington's integrity so often drawn, that it is not a little surprising to discover that the famous letter has never been known *as it was written*, but only from imperfect copies published in channels where garbling had become a recognized trade. The letter was at once turned over to Congress by Washington, although a man of less courage and high mindedness might have hesitated to submit to a body in which there was a growing faction opposed to him, such a document. In Congress it was widely copied, and the original MS. bears evidence of much handling; but it was through the loyalist press that the letter first became known to the public, and by some curious chance it is Rivington's version that is known to the historical student to-day. On November 29th, 1777, in one of the early issues of Rivington's *Gazette*, was published this letter, and soon after it was included in a pamphlet issued from the same press, appended to the "Forged Letters" of Washington.\* Whence Rivington ob-

---

\* See the "Spurious Letters attributed to Washington," in this series of publications.

tained his copy cannot be learned, but the matter had become well known in Philadelphia, and it was not unlikely that the sheets might have been obtained from the place where Congress was sitting. It again appeared with the spurious letters in 1796, but still retaining the Rivington text, of which the editor of the *Official Letters* of Washington to Congress wrote: "I regret extremely that I cannot (without openly avowing myself the author), point out to the public the prodigious incorrectness of Mr. Duché's letter. Having compared it with a correct copy which I have taken from the files, I find no less than one hundred and forty deviations from the genuine text:—in which number I do not count orthography and punctuation." When Mr. Sparks was making up his important collection of letters written to Washington during the Revolution, he used the Rivington version, and his example was followed by the compiler of "Washington at Valley Forge." Mr. Winsor states in his "Narrative and Critical History of America" that Sparks was unable to discover the original letter, but it is very curious to find the original in the only place where it could be expected, as an enclosure to Washington's letter to the President of Congress, 16 October, 1777. It is from this MS. that the present copy has been made, giving in print, for the first time, the very words that Duché wrote. A biographical sketch of Duché may be found in the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*.

WORTHINGTON CHAUNCEY FORD.

*Washington, March, 1890.*

DUCHÉ TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, AUGUST 5TH, 1775.

SIR: You will find by the inclosed, that I have taken the Liberty to inscribe to you a Sermon, which I lately preached to the First Battalion of our City commanded by Col. Dickinson; not doubting, but under the sanction of your name, it will meet with the Public Candour.

If the manner in which I have treated the Subject should have the least good Influence upon the Hearts and Actions of the Military Freemen of America, or should add one more virtuous Motive to those, by which, I trust, they are already actuated, it will be the best Return I can receive from my Fellow-Citizens, for the little Labour of Love.

I have long been an Admirer of your amiable Character, and was glad of this opportunity of paying you my little Tribute of Respect.

My Prayers are continually for you, and the brave Troops under your Command. O my dear General! Would to God a speedy and happy Reconciliation could be accomplished without the Effusion of one more Drop of valuable Blood. I know well, that your Humanity, and Christian

Meekness, would ever prompt you to form the same benevolent Wish; and that the Love of Military Glory will in your Breast always give Way to the Love of Peace, when it can be virtuously and honorably obtained.

May Heaven crown all your truly Patriotic Undertakings with success, cover your Head in the Day of Danger, and restore you unhurt to the arms of your Friends and your Country.

I am, with the sincerest Esteem and Veneration  
Your Excellency's most obedient  
Humble Servant,

JACOB DUCHÉ.

*His Excellency General Washington.*

WASHINGTON TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

[EXTRACT.]

16 OCTOBER, 1777.

I yesterday, through the hands of Mrs. Ferguson, of Graham Park, received a letter, of a very curious and extraordinary nature, from Mr. Duché, which I have thought proper to transmit to Congress. To this ridiculous, illiberal performauce, I made a short reply, by desiring the bearer of it, if she should hereafter, by any accident, meet Mr. Duché, to tell him I should have returned it unopened, if I had any idea of the contents; observing, at the same time, that I highly disapproved the inter-  
course

course she seemed to have been carrying on, and expected it would be discontinued. Notwithstanding the author's assertion, I cannot but suspect that the measure did not originate with him, and that he was induced to it by the hope of establishing his interest and peace more effectually with the enemy.

---

DUCHÉ TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 8 OCTOBER, 1777.

SIR: If this Letter should happen to find you in Council, or in the Field, before you read another sentence, I beg you to take the first opportunity of retiring, and weighing well its important contents.

You are perfectly acquainted with the Part I formerly took in the present unhappy contest. I was indeed among the first to bear my public testimony against having any recourse to threats, or even indulging a Thought of an armed opposition. The torrent, however, was too strong for my feeble efforts to resist. I wished to follow my Countrymen as far only as virtue and the righteousness of their cause would permit me. I was, however, prevailed upon, among the rest of my clerical brethren in this City to gratify the pressing Desires of my fellow-citizens, by preaching a sermon to one of the city battalions. I was pressed to publish this sermon, and reluctantly consented. From

a personal attachment of near 20 years standing, and a high respect for your character in private as well as in publick life, I took the liberty of dedicating it to you. I had your affectionate thanks for my performance, in a letter; wherein you express, in the most delicate and obliging terms, your regard for me, and your wishes for a continuance of my friendship, and approbation of your conduct.

Farther than this I intended not to proceed. My sermon speaks for itself and utterly disclaims the idea of independency. My sentiments were well known to my friends. I communicated them, without reserve, to many respectable members of Congress, who expressed their warm approbation of them. I persisted to the very last moment in using prayers for my sovereign, tho' threatened with insult from the violence of a party.

Upon the declaration of independency, I called my vestry, and solemnly put the question to them, whether they thought it best for the peace and welfare of the congregations to shunt up the churches, or to continue the service without using the petitions for the royal family. This was the sad alternative. I concluded to abide by their decision, as I could not have time to consult my spiritual superiors in England. They deemed it most expedient, under such critical circumstances, to keep open the churches, that the congregations might  
not

not be dispersed, which we had great reason to apprehend.

A very few Days after the fatal declaration of independency, I received a letter from Mr. Hancock, sent by express to Germantown, where my Family were for y<sup>e</sup> Summer Season, acquainting me that I was appointed chaplain to the Congress, and desired to attend them at 9 o'clock the next morning. Surprised and distressed by an event I was not prepared to expect, obliged to give an immediate answer, without the opportunity of consulting my friends, I rashly accepted the appointment. I could have but one motive for taking this step. I thought the churches in danger, and hoped by these means to have been instrumental in preventing the Ills I had so much reason to apprehend. I can, however with truth declare, that I then looked upon independency rather as an Expedient, and a hazardous one indeed, thrown out in terrorem, in order to procure some favourable terms, than a measure, that was seriously to be persisted in at all events. My sudden change of conduct will clearly evince this to have been my Idea of the matter.

Upon the return of the committee of Congress appointed to confer with Lord Howe, I soon discovered their real Intentions. The different accounts which each member of the Committee gave of this conference, the time they took to make up  
the

the matter for the public view, and the amazing disagreement betwixt the news-paper accounts, and the relation I myself had from the mouth of one of the Committee, convinced me, that there must have been some unfair and ungenerous Proceedure. Their Determination to treat on no other ground than that of independency, which put it out of his Lordship's Power to mention any terms at all, was a sufficient proof to me, that independency was the idol, which they had long wished to set up, and that rather than sacrifice this, they would deluge their country in blood.\*

From this moment I determined upon my resignation, and in the beginning of October 1776, sent it in form to Mr. Hancock, after having officiated only two months and three weeks. And from

---

\*Through General Sullivan, who had been taken prisoner on Long Island, Lord Howe delivered a message to Congress, that while he could not treat with Congress as such, yet he was very desirous of having a conference with some of the members, as private gentlemen, before whom he could lay the full powers he and his brother possessed to offer a compromise in the dispute between Great Britain and her colonies in rebellion. Franklin, who had before conducted a peace negotiation with Howe, Edward Rutledge and John Adams, were sent by Congress to hear what Howe could propose, and their report is printed in the Journals of Congress, 17 September, 1776. "The three gentlemen were very explicit in their opinions, that the associated colonies would not accede to any peace or alliance, but as free and independent states; and they endeavored to prove that Great Britain would derive more extensive and more durable advantages from such an alliance, than from the connexion it was the object of the commission to restore."—*Lord Howe to Lord George Germaine*, 20 September, 1776.

See also Franklin's *Works* (Bigelow's edition), VI, 23-33. John Adams, *Works*, III, 75-80, IX, 446. *Writings of Washington*, (Ford's edition) IV, 401, 402 note.

that



that Time, as far as my safety would permit, I have been opposed to all their measures. This circumstantial account of my conduct I think due to the friendship you were so obliging as to express for me, and I hope will be sufficient to justify any seeming inconsistencies in the part I have acted.

And now, my dear Sir, suffer me, in the language of truth and real affection, to address myself to you. All the world must be convinced, that you engaged in the service of your Country from motives perfectly disinterested. You risked every thing that was dear to you. You abandoned all those sweets of domestic life, of which your affluent fortune gave you an uninterrupted enjoyment. But had you? could you have had the least idea of matters being carried to such a dangerous extremity? Your most intimate friends at the time shuddered at the thought of a separation from the mother country; and I took it for granted, that your sentiments coincided with theirs. What have been the consequences of this rash and violent measure? A Degeneracy of Representation—confusion of councils—Blunders without number. The most respectable characters have withdrawn themselves, and are succeeded by a great majority of illiberal and violent men.

Take an impartial view of the present congress. What can you expect of them? Your feelings  
must

must be greatly hurt by the representation from your native province. You have no longer a Randolph,\* a Bland† or a Braxton,‡ men whose names will ever be revered, whose demands never rose above the first ground on which they set out, and whose truly generous and virtuous Sentiments, I have frequently heard with Rapture from their own lips. O my dear Sir! what a sad contrast! characters now present themselves, whose minds can never mingle with your own. Your Harrison§

---

\* Peyton Randolph was born at Williamsburg in 1721, and died of apoplexy in Philadelphia, in 1775, while President of Congress. In Virginia, he had held many high public offices—member of the House of Burgesses, King's attorney in the colony, in which capacity he was sent to England to antagonize the claim of Dinwiddie to extraordinary land fees, speaker of the Burgesses, chairman of the committee of correspondence, and chairman of the colonial convention (1774). It was Lynch who nominated Randolph as president of the first continental congress, as a gentleman "who had presided with great equity over a very respectable society, greatly to the advantage of America." Adams describes Randolph as a "large, well looking man."

† Of Richard Bland little is known. He served in the colonial legislature for thirty years, and was a man in no small repute among his colleagues. Early in 1775, reports were circulated that he had applied to the British ministry for the appointment of tax collector in America, promising to promote the designs of the ministers against America did he receive the office. After serving in the first two Continental Congresses, he declined a reelection on the ground of his advanced age, and being "almost deprived of sight." He impressed Adams as a "learned bookish man."

‡ Carter Braxton.

§ Benjamin Harrison, of Charles City, has not received favorable notice from historians, and the notes of his colleagues in the Congress are not loud in his praise. Adams, who thought he had good reason for disliking him, gives the following picture: "This was an indolent, luxurious, heavy gentleman, of no use in Congress or Committee, but a great embarrassment to both. He was represented to be a kind of *nexus utriusque mundi*, a corner stone in which the two walls of party met in Virginia. He was de-

alone

alone remains, and he disgusted with his unworthy associates.

As to those of my own province, some of them are so obscure, that their very names have never met my ears before, and others have only been distinguished for the weakness of their understandings, and the violence of their tempers. One alone I except from the general charge. A Man of virtue, dragged reluctantly into their measures, and restrained by some false ideas of honour from retracting, after having gone too far. You cannot be at a loss to discover, whose name answers to this character.\*

scended from one of the most ancient, wealthy, and respectable families in the ancient dominion, and seemed to be set up in opposition to Mr. Richard Henry Lee . . . Although Harrison was another Sir John Falstaff, excepting in his larcenies and robberies, his conversation disgusting to every man of delicacy or decorum," &c. (*Works*, II. 32, 35). This is not the only mention of the facetious talk of Harrison, and that it is probably a true description, may be judged from the following paragraph taken from a letter from him to Washington that was intercepted and published by the British. Mr. Force, in using this letter in his *American Archives, Fourth Series*, II. 1697, omitted this paragraph:—

"As I was in the pleasing task of writing to you, a little noise occasioned me to turn my head around, and who should appear but pretty little Kate, the washer-woman's daughter over the way, clean, trim and as rosy as the morning. I snatched the golden, glorious opportunity, and, but for the cursed antidote to love, Sukey, I had fitted her for my general against his return. We were obliged to part, but not till we had contrived to meet again: if she keeps the appointment, I shall relish a week's longer stay.

"I give you now and then some of these adventures to amuse you and unbind your mind from the cares of war."

For one of Harrison's electioneering manœuvres, see *Letters of Joseph Jones*, 145, *note*.

\*The delegates from Pennsylvania were Robert Morris, George Clymer, Daniel Roberdeau, James Wilson and Jonathan Smith. The member

From

From the New-England provinces, can you find one, that as a gentleman, you could wish to associate with? unless the soft and mild address of Mr. Hancock, can atone for his want of every other qualification necessary for the station he fills. Bankrupts, attorneys and men of desperate fortunes are his colleagues.

Maryland no longer sends a Tilghman,\* and a Protestant Carroll;† Carolina has lost its Lynch,‡ and the elder Middleton§ has retired.

Are the Dregs of a Congress, then, still to influence a mind like yours? These are not the men you engaged to serve. These are not the men that America has chosen to represent her. Most of them elected by a little low Faction, and the few gentlemen, that are among them now well known to be upon the Balance, and looking up to your hand alone to move the beam. 'Tis you, Sir, and you only, that support the present Congress. Of this you must be fully sensible. Long before they left Philadelphia, their Dignity and Consequence was gone.—What must it be now, since their pre-

---

singled out by Duché was probably Morris, who voted against independency, absented himself when the declaration was submitted for approval, but eventually signed the engrossed document.

\* Matthew Tilghman.

† Charles Carroll of Carrollton.

‡ Thomas Lynch, the warm friend of Washington, and a leading spirit in the first and second Congress. His son, of the same name, was the signer of the Declaration of Independence.

§ Arthur Middleton.

cipitate

cipitate Retreat?\*" I write with freedom, but without Invective. I know these things to be true; and I write to one, whose own Observation must have convinced him that they are so.

After this view of congress, turn to the Army. The whole world knows, that its very existence depends upon you, that your Death or Captivity disperses it in a moment, and that there is not a man on that side the question in America capable of succeeding you.† As to the Army itself, what have you to expect from them? Have they not frequently abandoned even yourself in the hour of extremity? Have you, can you have the least confidence in a sett of undisciplined men and officers, many of whom have been taken from the lowest of the People, without Principle, without Courage. Take away those, that surround your Person, how very few are there, that you can ask to sit at your Table?

Turn to your little Navy—of that little, what is left? Of the Delaware fleet, part are taken, the rest must soon surrender. Of those in the other Provinces, some taken, one or two at sea, and others lying unmanned, and unrigged in their harbours.

---

\* Congress was then sitting at Yorktown.

† This was hardly true, as the Cabal was at this time maturing its full strength, with a view to advancing General Gates at the expense of Washington. The history of this Cabal will be told in one of the issues of this series.

And

And now where are your Resources? O my dear Sir! How sadly have you been abused by a faction void of truth, and void of tenderness to you and your country? They have amused you with Hopes of a Declaration of War on y<sup>e</sup> Part of France. Believe me, from the best Authority, 'twas a fiction from the first. Early in the Year 1776, a French Gentleman was introduced to me, with whom I became intimately acquainted. His Business, to all appearance, was to speculate in the mercantile way. But I believe it will be found, that in his own Country, he moved in a higher Sphere. He saw your Camp. He became acquainted with all your military preparations. He was introduced to Congress, and engaged with them in a commercial contract. In the course of our Intimacy, he has frequently told me, that he hoped the Americans would never think of Independency. He gave me his Reasons. "Independency," said he, "can never be supported, unless France should declare War against England. I well know the state of her Finances. Years to come will not put them in a situation to venture upon a breach with England. At this moment, there are two parties in the court of Versailles, one enlisted under the Duke de Choiseul, the other under Count Maurepas. Choiseul has no chance of succeeding. He is violent for War. Maurepas must get the better. He is for œconomy

omy and Peace."\* This was his Information, which I mentioned to several members of Congress. They treated it as a fable, depending entirely on Dr. Franklin's Intelligence. The Truth of the Matter is this. Dr. Franklin built upon the Success of Choiseul. Upon his arrival in France, he found him out of place, his councils reprobated, and his party dwindled to an insignificant faction. This you may depend upon to be the true State of the Court of France. And further, by vast numbers of Letters found on board Prizes taken by the King's ships, it appears, that all Commerce with ye merchants, through whom alone your Supplies have been conveyed, will soon be at an End, the Letters being full of Complaints of no remittances from America, and many Individuals having greatly suffered.

From your Friends in England you have nothing to expect. Their numbers are diminished to

---

\* A Frenchman, Bonvouloir, was sent to America to sound opinion and remove any jealousy of France that might exist. In reply to a direct question from the Secret Committee of Congress, as to the attitude of France towards the colonies, he wrote: "You ask what are the intentions of France with regard to the American colonies. I do not think that I say too much in telling you that she wishes you well, and that, *it is my belief*, she has entertained for you nothing but good will. In other respects, the best way to obtain reliable assurance of anybody's disposition is to address him directly. It is a hazardous step to take, and demands a good deal of consideration; I do not advise you one way or the other. I cannot undertake it myself. The affair is too delicate." The report of Bonvouloir to his master is printed in Doniol, *Histoire de la Participation de la France à l'Établissement des États Unis d'Amérique*, I, 287; and in part in Durand, *Documents on the American Revolution*, I.

a Cypher. The Spirit of the whole nation is in full Activity against you. A few sounding names among the nobility, though perpetually rung in your Ears, are without character, without influence: Disappointed Ambition has made them desperate: and they only wish to make the deluded Americans instruments of their Revenge. All Orders and Ranks of Men in G. Britain are now unanimous, and determined to risque their All in the contest. Trade and Manufactures are found to flourish: and new channels are continually opening, that will perhaps more than supply the loss of the old. In a word, your harbours are blocked up, your cities fall one after another, fortress after fortress, battle after battle is lost. A British army, after having passed almost unmolested thro' a vast Extent of Country, have possessed themselves with ease of the Capital of America. How unequal the Contest *now!* How fruitless the expense of Blood!

Under so many discouraging circumstances, can virtue, can honour, can the love of your country prompt you to persevere? Humanity itself (and sure I am, Humanity is no stranger to your Breast) calls upon you to desist. Your army must perish for want of common necessaries; or thousands of innocent families must perish to support them. Where-ever they encamp, the country must be impoverished. Where-ever they march, the Troops  
of



of Britain will pursue, and must compleat the Devastation, which America herself had begun.

Perhaps it may be said, that it is "better to die than to be slaves." This indeed is a splendid maxim in theory: and perhaps in some instances may be found experimentally true. But when there is the least Probability of an happy accommodation, surely wisdom and Humanity call for some sacrifices to be made, to prevent inevitable Destruction. You well know, that there is but one invincible Bar to such an accommodation. Could this be removed, other obstacles might readily be overcome. 'Tis to you, and you alone your bleeding country looks, and calls aloud for this sacrifice. Your Arm alone has Strength sufficient to remove this Bar. May Heaven inspire you with the glorious Resolution of exerting this Strength at so interesting a Crisis, and thus immortalizing yourself as Friend and Guardian of your Country!

Your penetrating Eye needs not more explicit Language to discern my meaning. With that Prudence and delicacy, of which I know you to be possessed, represent to Congress the indispensable Necessity of rescinding the hasty and ill-advised declaration of Independency. Recommend (and you have an undoubted Right to recommend) an immediate cessation of hostilities. Let the Controversy be taken up, where that declaration left it, and where Lord Howe certainly expected to find

find it. Let men of clear and impartial characters, in or out of Congress, Gentlemen, liberal in their sentiments, heretofore independent in their fortunes (and some such may surely be found in America) be appointed to confer with his Majesty's Commissioners. Let them, if they please, prepare some well-digested constitutional Plan to lay before them, as the Commencement of a Negotiation. When they have gone thus far, I am confident, that the most happy consequences will ensue. Unanimity will immediately take place thro' the different Provinces. Thousands, who are now ardently wishing and praying for such a measure, will step forth and declare themselves the zealous advocates of constitutional Liberty; and millions will bless the Hero, that left the Field of War to decide this most important Contest, with the Weapons of Wisdom and Humanity.

O Sir! let no false Ideas of worldly Honour deter you from engaging in so glorious a Task. Whatever Censures may be thrown out by mean and illiberal minds, your character will rise in the Estimation of the virtuous and noble; it will appear with lustre in the Annals of History, and form a glorious Contrast to that of those, who have sought to obtain Conquests and gratify their own Ambition by the destruction of their species and the Ruin of their country.

Be assured, Sir, that I write not this under the  
Eye

Eye of any British officer, or Person connected with the British Army or Ministry. The Sentiments I have expressed are the real sentiments of my own Heart, such as I have long held, and which I should have made known to you by Letter before, had I not fully expected an Opportunity of a private Conference. When you passed through Philadelphia on your Way to Wilmington,\* I was confined by a severe Fit of the Gravel to my chamber. I have since continued so much indisposed, and Times have been so very distressing, that I had neither spirit to write a Letter, nor opportunity to convey it, when written. Nor do I yet know, by what means I shall get these sheets to your Hand.

I would fain hope, that I have said nothing, by which your Delicacy can be in the least hurt. If I have, I assure you, it has been without the least Intention, and therefore your Candour will lead you to forgive me. I have spoken freely of Congress and of the Army. But what I have said is partly from my own Knowledge, and partly from the Information of some respectable Members of the former, and some of the best officers of the latter. I would not offend the meanest Person upon Earth. What I say to you, I say in Confidence, and to answer what I cannot but deem a

---

\* August 24th.

most valuable Purpose. I love my country. I love you. But to the Love of Truth, the Love of Peace, and the Love of my God, I hope I should be enabled, if called to the Trial, to sacrifice every other inferior Love.

If the Arguments made use of in this Letter should have so much Influence, as to engage you in the glorious work, which I have so warmly recommended, I shall ever deem my Success, as the highest temporal Favor that Providence could grant me. Your Interposition and Advice, I am confident, would meet with a favorable Reception from the Authority under which you act. If it should not, you have one infallible Resource still left. Negotiate for America at the Head of your Army.

After all, it may appear Presumption in an individual to address himself to you on a Subject of such Magnitude, or to say what Measures would best secure the Interest and Welfare of an whole Continent. The friendly and favourable Opinion you have always expressed of me emboldened me to undertake it; and, (which has greatly added to the weight of this motive) I have been strongly impressed with a Sense of Duty upon the Occasion, which left my Conscience uneasy, and my Heart afflicted, 'till I had fully discharged it. I am no Enthusiast. The Case is new and singular to me. But I could not enjoy a Moment's Peace, till this  
Letter

Letter was written. With the most ardent Prayers  
for your spiritual as well as temporal welfare, I am

Your obed<sup>t</sup> and sincere Friend and Servant

JACOB DUCHÉ.

His Excellency Gen<sup>l</sup> Washington.

DUCHÉ TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, OCTOBER 13<sup>th</sup>, 1777.

Sir: My dear Friend M<sup>rs</sup> Ferguson will deliver into your Excellency's Hands a Letter, which has laid by me several Days for want of a safe Conveyance, in which I have delivered my Sentiments to you upon the present State of our unhappy Contest without Reserve, and with full Confidence in your Honor. My Mind will remain in a State of painful Anxiety, 'till I have your candid answer, and 'till I am assured under your own Hand, that I have not thereby forfeited your Esteem, and that you are not in the least offended at the Freedom, with which I have written. By this Lady, you will have the best opportunity of honoring me with an Answer. I remain with great Respect

Your Excellency's most sincere

Friend and Servant,

JACOB DUCHÉ.

*Addressed*

*To His Excellency General Washington.*

*Favoured by M<sup>rs</sup> Ferguson.\**

---

\*The story of Mrs. Ferguson, *née* Græme, has been told with such fulness by Mr. Charles P. Kieth in his valuable work *The Provincial Councillors of Pennsylvania*, as to render any further research useless. She was the daughter of Dr. Thomas Græme, who came to Pennsylvania with William

Keith in 1717, and who afterwards married Ann Diggs, a step-daughter of Keith:—

“Elizabeth [Græme] born February 3, 1736-7, baptized Christ Church, February 3, the most accomplished lady of Provincial times, and whose physical and other misfortunes caused the friend who wrote her epitaph to call her ‘the afflicted daughter of Thomas and Ann Greem.’ She has some celebrity as one of the earlier female writers of poetry in America. In about her seventeenth year, she became engaged to be married to a young gentleman about going abroad to finish his education in the law. The engagement was broken off, says the sketch of her in the *Port Folio*, reprinted in *Hazard’s Register*, ‘not without much suffering on the part of Miss Græme.’ To divert her mind, she translated *La Telemaque* into English verse; but her heart was weakened, and she was sent abroad under care of Dr. Peters the Councillor. Delavoye’s Life of Lord Lynedoch mentions her speaking of a letter from her father’s nephew, Thomas Græme of Balgowan, concerning the education of his son, afterwards Lord Lynedoch. On her return, her mother being dead, she became head of her father’s house, which she made the rendezvous of the cultivated minds of the Colony. Her paraphrase of the Book of Psalms, written from 1766 to 1768, is in MS. with the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. She married, April 21, 1772, Henry Hugh Ferguson, a native of Scotland, and related to the celebrated philosopher Dr. Adam Ferguson, says a note to *Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania*, Vol. I. He resided in Philadelphia until near the Revolutionary War, when he went to England, being styled in a deed of November 26, 1776, ‘of the City and County of Phila., Esq., now sojourning in London.’ By that deed his wife and his attorney sold 200 acres of Græme Park to John Penn. She continued to reside at the mansion house during his absence. He returned to America with the British army, holding the appointment of Commissary of Prisoners; and she obtained a pass to visit him in Philadelphia. He was summoned before the Council of Pennsylvania as a traitor to the new State, and, not appearing, was attainted. She was on good terms with the Revolutionary officers, was believed to be a sincere lover of her country. She it was who conveyed to Gen. Washington the letter of Duché urging him to return to his allegiance to the King, and she communicated to Joseph Reed the statement of Gov. Johnstone that if a reunion of the two countries were effected through Reed’s influence, that gentleman could command £10,000 or any Colonial office in the King’s gift, to which Reed replied that the King of Great Britain had nothing within his gift to tempt him. The government of Pennsylvania refused in November, 1778, to allow her to go to New York to bid her husband farewell; and she never saw him afterwards. Græme Park was seized as his property by the agents of forfeited estates, but upon her petition, the Assembly postponed the sale of it during her lifetime, and she was allowed to remain there free of rent to the State. In the latter part of her life, she was very poor, but various anecdotes are told of her benevolence even then. She died at the house of Seneca Lorkens, a Quaker, near Græme Park, February 23, 1801, without issue, buried Christ Church.”

WASHINGTON TO FRANCIS HOPKINSON.

HEAD-QUARTERS, 21 NOVEMBER, 1777.

Sir: I am favored with yours of the 14th instant, inclosing a letter for the Reverend Mr. Duché. I will endeavour to forward it to him, but I imagine it will never be permitted to reach his hands. I confess to you, that I was not more surprised than concerned, at receiving so extraordinary a letter from Mr. Duché, of whom I had entertained the most favorable opinion, and I am still willing to suppose, that it was rather dictated by his fears than by his real sentiments; but I very much doubt whether the great numbers of respectable characters, in the state and army, on whom he has bestowed the most unprovoked and unmerited abuse, will ever attribute it to the same cause, or forgive the man, who has artfully endeavoured to engage me to sacrifice them to purchase my own safety.

I never intended to make the letter more public, than by laying it before Congress. I thought this a duty, which I owed to myself; for had any accident happened to the army entrusted to my command, and it had ever afterwards appeared, that



such a letter had been written to and received by me, might it not have been said, that I had betrayed my country? And would not such a correspondence, if kept a secret, have given good grounds for the suspicion? I thank you for the favorable sentiments, which you are pleased to express of me, and I hope no act of mine will ever induce you to alter them. I am, &c.

G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON.

FRANCIS HOPKINSON TO JACOB DUCHÉ.

BORDENTOWN, 14 NOVEMBER, 1777.

Dear Brother: A letter signed with your name, dated at Philadelphia, on the 8th of October, and addressed to his Excellency General Washington, is handed about the country. Many copies are taken, and I doubt not but it will soon get into the press, and become public throughout the continent. Words cannot express the grief and consternation that wounded my soul at the sight of this fatal performance. What infatuation could influence you to offer to his Excellency an address, filled with gross misrepresentation, illiberal abuse, and sentiments unworthy of a man of character? You have endeavoured to screen your own weakness by the most artful glosses, and to apologize to the General for the instability of your temper in a manner, that I am sure cannot be satisfactory to your own conscience.

I could go through this extraordinary letter, and point out to you truth distorted in every leading part. But the world will doubtless do this with a severity, that must be daggers to the sensibilities of your heart. Read that letter over again,

(30)

and

and if possible divest yourself of the fears and influence, whatever they were, that induced you to pen it. Consider its contents with an impartial eye, and reflect on the ideas it will naturally raise in the minds of the multitude. You will then find, that by a vain and weak effort you have attempted the integrity of one, whose virtue is impregnable to the assaults of fear or flattery, whose judgment needed not your information, and who, I am sure, would have resigned his charge the moment he found it likely to lead him out of the paths of virtue and honor. You will find that you have drawn upon you the resentment of Congress, the resentment of the army, the resentment of many worthy and noble characters in England, whom you know not, and the resentment of your insulted country. You have ventured to assert many things at large of the affairs of England, France, and America, which are far from being true, and which, from your contracted knowledge in these matters, it is impossible for you to be acquainted with. In the whole of your letter, you have never once recommended yourself to those, whose favor you seem desirous of obtaining, by expatiating on the justice or humanity of their conduct; and at the same time have said every thing that can render you odious to those, on whom the happiness of your future life must depend.

You presumptuously advise our worthy General,

eral, on whom millions depend with implicit confidence, to abandon their dearest hopes, and with or without the consent of his constituents to '*negotiate for America at the head of his army.*' Would not the blood of the slain in battle rise against such perfidy? And with whom would you have him negotiate? Are they not those, who, without the sanction of any civil, moral, or religious right, have come three thousand miles to destroy our peace and property, to lay waste *your* native country with fire and sword, and cruelly murder its inhabitants? Look for their justice and honor in their several proclamations, and look for their humanity in the jails of New York and Philadelphia, and in your own Potter's Field. The whole force of the reasoning contained in your letter tends to this point; that virtue and honor require us to stand by truth, as long as it can be done with safety, but that her cause may be abandoned on the approach of danger; or, in other words, that the justice of the American cause ought to be squared by the success of her arms.

On the whole, I find it impossible to reconcile the matter and style of this letter with your general conduct, or with the virtues of your heart. I would fain hope, notwithstanding your assertion to the contrary, that you wrote it with a bayonet held to your breast, by order of the unprincipled usurpers

usurpers of your native city. But my chief motive for writing to you at this time is to assure you, that I firmly believe that our just defensive war will be crowned with success, and that we shall ere long return to our habitations in Philadelphia. I would, therefore, most earnestly warn you to evade the dismal consequences of your ill-judged address to our beloved General. Do all you can to wipe off, if possible, its unhappy effects. I tremble for you, for my good sister, and her little family. I tremble for your personal safety. Be assured I write this from true brotherly love. Our intimacy has been of a long duration, even from our early youth ; long and uninterrupted, without even a rub in the way ; and so long have the sweetness of your manners, and the integrity of your heart, fixed my affections.

I am perfectly disposed to attribute this unfortunate step to the timidity of your temper, the weakness of your nerves, and the undue influence of those about you. But will the world hold you so excused? Will the individuals you have so freely censured and characterized with contempt have this tenderness for you? I fear not. They will only judge of your conduct by its rashness, and proportion their resentment to their sensibility of the wounds you have given. I pray God to inspire you with some means of extricating yourself from this embarrassing difficulty. For my own  
part,

part, I have well considered the principles on which I took part with my country, and am determined to abide by them to the last extremity. I beg my love to my good mother, and my affectionate sisters. I often think of them with great pain and anxiety, lest they should suffer from the want of those necessary supplies, that are now cut off. May God preserve them and you in this time of trial. I am, &c.

FRANCIS HOPKINSON.

DUCHÉ TO WASHINGTON.

ASYLUM, LAMBETH, 2 APRIL, 1783.

Sir: Will your Excellency condescend to accept of a few lines from one, who ever was and wishes still to be your sincere friend, who never *intentionally* sought to give you a moment's pain, who entertains for you the highest personal respect, and would be happy to be assured under your own hand, that he does not labor under your displeasure, but that you freely forgive what a weak judgment, but a very affectionate heart, once presumed to advise? Many circumstances, at present unknown to you, conspired to make me deem it my duty to write to you. Ignorance and simplicity saw not the necessity of your divulging the letter. I am convinced, however, that you could not, in your public station, do otherwise. I cannot say a word in vindication of my conduct but this, that I had been for months before distressed with continual apprehension for you and all my friends without the British lines. I looked upon all as gone; or that nothing could save you, but rescinding the Declaration of Independency. Upon this ground alone I presumed to speak; not to advise an act of

base treachery, my soul would have recoiled from the thought; not to surrender your army, or betray the righteous cause of your country, but, at the head of the army, *supporting and supported by them*, to negotiate with Britain for our constitutional rights.

Can you then join with my country in pardoning this error of judgment? Will you yet honor me with your great interest and influence, by recommending, at least expressing your approbation of the repeal of an act, that keeps me in a state of banishment from my native country, from the arms of a dear aged father, and the embraces of a numerous circle of valuable and long-loved friends? Your liberal, generous mind, I am persuaded, will never exclude me wholly from your regard for a mere political error; especially, as you must have heard, that, since the date of that letter, I have led a life of perfect retirement, and since my arrival in England have devoted myself wholly to the duties of my profession, and confined my acquaintance to a happy circle of literary and religious friends.

I have written to my father and to many of my friends largely on this subject, requesting them to make such application to the State of Pennsylvania in my behalf, as may be judged necessary and expedient. Should this application be honored with success, I know of nothing that would more effectually satisfy my desires in a matter of such importance



ance to myself and my family, as a line or two from your Excellency, expressive of your approbation of my return. Temporal emoluments are not wanting to induce me to remain for life on this side of the Atlantic. I have been most hospitably received and kindly treated by all ranks of people, and I should be ungrateful not to acknowledge in the strongest terms my obligations to those, who have placed me in the easy and comfortable situation I now enjoy. It is not necessity, therefore, but unalterable affection to my native country, that urges my return. With every good wish and prayer for your best felicity, and my most hearty congratulations on the happy event of peace, I have the honor to be your Excellency's most obedient and humble servant,

JACOB DUCHÉ.

WASHINGTON TO DUCHÉ.

HEAD-QUARTERS, 10 AUGUST, 1783.

Sir : I have received your letter of the 2d of April, and, reflecting on its contents, I cannot but say that I am heartily sorry for the occasion which has produced it. Personal enmity I bear none to any man. So far, therefore, as your return to this country depends on my private voice, it would be given in favor of it with cheerfulness. But, removed as I am from the people and policy of the State in which you formerly resided, and to whose determination your case must be submitted, it is my duty, whatever may be my inclination, to leave its decision to its constitutional judges. Should this be agreeable to your wishes, it cannot fail to meet my entire approbation. I am, &c.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

















