

LETTERS FROM CONTINENTAL OFFICERS TO
DOCTOR READING BEATTY, 1781-1788

With an Introduction by Joseph M. Beatty, Jr., Ph.D.(Harvard),
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The following letters were written, with one exception, to Reading Beatty, M.D., by a group of his friends and fellow-officers between the years 1781 and 1788. Some were written from the hastily pitched tents of Revolutionary officers; some tell the latest bit of camp gossip; some reveal long-forgotten romances; some give a picture of heroism in the face of overwhelming odds. They are not the letters of great generals; they give the reactions of men who left the plough for the musket, and Cincinnatus-like returned to the plough when the war was over. In most instances the letters need very little explanation; they speak for themselves.

The recipient of the letters, Reading Beatty, was only eighteen years of age at the outbreak of the Revolution. He was born in 1757, in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, son of the Reverend Charles Beatty, that "zealous young Presbyterian minister" of whom Benjamin Franklin tells an amusing incident in his *Autobiography*. Franklin while visiting the colonial troops in western Pennsylvania during the French and Indian War, learned from Charles Beatty, then a chaplain, that the men were not attending his services with the

¹ Dr. Joseph M. Beatty, Jr., contributed to *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, in the years 1914 and 1920, the "Letters of Judge Henry Wynkoop, Representative from Pennsylvania to the first Congress of the United States" (XXXVIII., 39-64), and "Letters of the Four Beatty Brothers of the Continental Army, 1774-1794" (XLIV., 193-263). The letters published in this number are addressed to the contributor's great-great-grandfather.

regularity that he thought fitting. Franklin suggested with his usual combination of humor and shrewd common sense that if Mr. Beatty did not think it beneath his dignity to serve the gin at the end of his services, perhaps the men would attend in greater numbers. The young clergyman did not object; thereafter his sermons were delivered to a larger assemblage.

Maternally, Reading Beatty was the grandson of John Reading, President of His Majesty's Council for New Jersey. His mother, Ann Reading (1723-1768), after bearing eleven children, died at the age of forty-four. Three of her sons, in addition to Reading, were officers in the War for Independence: Colonel John, M.D., Major Erkuries, and Lieutenant Charles Clinton Beatty.

The Reverend Charles Beatty having died, in 1772, in Barbadoes of yellow fever contracted there while collecting funds for Princeton College, Reading was left fatherless when only sixteen years of age. Although he had at first intended to enter Princeton where his eldest brother, John, had graduated in 1769, he decided to study medicine under the direction of competent physicians of the time. He had already begun his studies when they were interrupted by the outbreak of the war.

Though a mere youth, Reading enlisted at once and was straightway appointed Sergeant. On January 5, 1776, he was commissioned Ensign in the Fifth Pennsylvania Battalion², and Second Lieutenant, August 10, 1776. He was among the unfortunates captured at Fort Washington, on November 16 of that year, and after being marched through the streets of New York with great indignities, was confined in the Myrtle Prison Ship. Both he and his brother John, who was with him,

² The army records of Reading Beatty and other officers mentioned will be found in Heitman's *Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army during the War of the Revolution*.

were permitted to live on parole in Flatbush until both were exchanged, May 8, 1778. For a time he studied medicine under Doctor Shippen in Philadelphia, and on May 1, 1780, was commissioned Surgeon to the Eleventh Pennsylvania. In 1781, he was transferred to the Fourth Continental Artillery in which he served until June, 1783. After the war he practised medicine for many years in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

In the letters there are frequent references to Reading Beatty's romance with Christina Wynkoop (1763-1841), daughter of Judge Henry Wynkoop (1737-1816), a distinguished Pennsylvania jurist and member of the first Congress of the United States. The Wynkoops lived in considerable state at *Vredens Hof*, near Newtown, Pennsylvania. It was here that Judge Wynkoop entertained Washington and Lafayette and that James Monroe, then a youth of eighteen, recuperated from his wounds received at the Battle of Trenton. Tradition says that after the war, the future President (Monroe) returned to ask for Christina's hand; but she was already promised to Reading Beatty.

The letters are from a group of young officers, friends who write very fully and frankly. Apparently Reading Beatty was a man of discretion as well as genial nature. He could be trusted not to blurt out the secrets confided to him, whether they were Jemmy McMichael's sentimental effusions or Bob Wharry's invectives against Mad Anthony. The writers were Pennsylvanians, young, amorous, intelligent, and zealous for the cause of freedom. Isaac Van Horne had been made an Ensign in January, 1776, together with Reading Beatty, in the Fifth Pennsylvania Battalion. They were taken prisoners at Fort Washington. He was commissioned First Lieutenant in the Sixth Pennsylvania, February 15, 1777, and Captain-Lieutenant, July 1, 1779. On January 17, 1781, Van Horne was transferred to the Second Pennsylvania, and was made Cap-

tain, June 10, 1781. Robert Wharry (Wherry) was made Surgeon's Mate in Malcom's Additional Continental Regiment, June 20, 1778; transferred to the Eleventh Pennsylvania on December 16, 1778; on January 17, 1781, he was transferred to the Third Pennsylvania; and, on January 1, 1783, he was again transferred; this time to the First Pennsylvania. He served to the close of the war.

Captain William Sproat and Lieutenant James McMichael, like Reading Beatty and Isaac Van Horne, had both enlisted in 1776. Sproat in that year was commissioned Ensign in the Pennsylvania Associators; on January 3, 1777, he became First Lieutenant in the Fourth Pennsylvania, and Regimental Adjutant, June 30, until December 17, 1777. Nearly two years later, on April 17, 1779, he became Captain-Lieutenant, and on May 11, 1779, Captain. He was transferred to the Third Pennsylvania, January 17, 1781, and served until November 3, 1783. McMichael, whose letters smack more of love than of war, served in several regiments. On April 22, 1776, he had been made Sergeant in the Second Battalion of Miles' Pennsylvania Regiment. In the following year, on April 18, he had been commissioned Second Lieutenant in the Pennsylvania State Regiment, and First Lieutenant, June 20. His regiment was designated the Thirteenth Pennsylvania, November 12, 1772. On July 1, 1778, he was transferred to the Seventh Pennsylvania, and again, on January 17, 1781, to the Fourth Pennsylvania. In 1783, on January 1, he was finally transferred to the First Pennsylvania.

Lieutenant Story was the only member of the group who died during the course of the war. His death took place on October 4, 1782. He had served as Second Lieutenant in the Fourth Continental Artillery, as First Lieutenant, as Regiment Adjutant, and as Captain-Lieutenant. Joel Fithian who writes from Co-

hansey, New Jersey, had married Reading Beatty's sister Elizabeth, the widow of Philip Vicars Fithian.³

Our main interest, however, is in the letters themselves and in the personalities and events depicted in them, rather than in the army records of the writers. These informal records of the crucial years of the Revolution give interesting side-lights on the point of view of the army as it moved from north to south and back again.

CAPTAIN VAN HORNE TO DOCTOR READING BEATTY

Near Bottoms Bridge Virginia, June 24th 1781.

Dear Reading

The Enemy have Retreated. I believe about 60 or 70 Miles down the James River. We have pursued them about 17 Miles below Richmond where we now lye, we arrived here yesterday—The Enemy lye a few Miles below us & Made some faints, seeming as if they meant to attack us—we were form'd in a position to receive them but they chose not to hazard an Attack. They have a pretty formidable Body of Horse, which are exceeding trouble some & which distress the Country much, commanded by Tarlton—

The Enemy have taken with them a great Number of Negroes, some say 2000. Have destroyed as much as possible all the Stores & Valuable property in Richmond.

I expect we shall have a brush with them very soon, & if we do, I expect there will be a great stink among the negroes—

This is a D—n Barran disagreeable Country— I don't like it at all. Indeed you may be glad you have not come. I think you must live very happy there now—

Give my best Comp^{ts} to every body of my Acquaintance

And believe me yours sincerely

IVHorne.

CAPTAIN VAN HORNE TO DOCTOR READING BEATTY

Camp Near Williamsburg July 9th 81.

D^r. Reading

I have Just time to inform you that we pick'd a Quarrel with the British last Friday—our three Batt^{as} & a few more were only engaged & that with the whole British Army, at their own Encampment— I can-

³ Cf. *The Journal and Letters of Philip Vicars Fithian, 1767-1774*. Edited by John R. Williams. Princeton University Press, 1900.

not particularize the whole, but refer you to what I imagine will be published. Our Batt^a. was Captains Doyle, Finney & Montgomery Wounded & L^t. Herbert Wounded & Prisoner— L^t. Crossley of your Reg^t. is Wounded also— We had 4 or 5 men killed & 20 Wounded. 1st Batt^a is Captains Staker [?] & McClelland and L^{ts} Piercy, White & Feltman— And Cap^t. Van Lear of the 2^d—we were obliged to retire but again next day they were all got over James River, and I believe are about to Embark; if so, we either go to Carolina or New York— I hope it may be the latter—for I am tired of this Country—

Doct^r. Downey was Drowned unfortunately the 1st of this Inst a Bathing, in Pamunkey River—

Yours sincerely

I V Horne.

Capt. Doyle was first *Wounded in the Leg*. Cap^t. Van Lear dismounted & was helping Doyle on his Horse, when another Ball Broke his left Arm & Wounded Van Lear through the Shoulder— the two that are the most dangerous.

Cap^t. Finney is in the Head but not dangerous— Crosley's is in the *Groin* & Also back—

DOCTOR ROBERT WHARRY TO DOCTOR READING BEATTY, THEN STATIONED AT LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA

Cox's Mills Virginia,
July 27th. 1781.

D^r. Beatty

Your's by M^r. Ashton came safe to hand, for which I thank you, and am always happy to hear from you— I must confess that I have been rather dilatory or neglectful of my correspondent, & promise amendment for the future— I cannot help remarking that I am highly pleased with you being my accuser for I find that you are likewise my defender; I mean with regard to your accusation of my neglect in epistolary conversation. You, now, probably expect a Gazette, instead of which I only send you a supplement, I call it, for want of a better word. I make no doubt, but, you have heard of the Brush we had with the whole British Army; I was brought to bed with a Disappointment, another blockhouse affair— *Madness*—Mad- A—y, by G— I never such a peice of work heard of— about eight hundred troops opposed to five or six thousand Veterans upon their own ground— you may gain more intelligence from the retiring Officers— we had six Capt^{ns}. wounded, viz; Doyle, Finney, Montgomery, Stake[?], McClellen, and Van Lear; four Subalterns, Feltman, White, Herbert & another whose name I forget at present; and about one hundred Rank & file killed & wounded.

I dare say you will have a flaming account of it in the papers; our troops behaved with such firmness & resolution which it is impossible for my pen to describe, they only wanted an opportunity of distinguishing themselves with an equal number— I was not in the action—therefore I speak from hearsay & perhaps a little prejudiced in their behalf,

but, be that as it will, it matters not. I have reason to bless my lot & to curse it likewise, being left at this place with the sick, women, & Baggage & am now ordered to pursue them in their Route to S. Carolina— a Country as hot as the Antichambers of Hell— no pure water for to drink, but, sand, mud & water; no bread, but Indian corn chopt fine with a broadax and worked into a sort of Bread— this is only the beginning of Sorrows— when will there be an end. I think if I can stand the warmth of the climate, as it is described to me, I need not fear Pluto's clime much. Lord Rawdon who commands at Charles Town, has received a reinforcement and obliged Green to raise the seige at Ninty-six & retire into the country, In consequence of which, I imagine our line is ordered there— We hear Gen'. Washington has beseiged N. York, & is actually upon the Island— whether true or no, remains in doubt with us.

I believe this all the news I can muster & suppose that it is not much news to you— but, what can a man do, he must do as well as he can. Now, for the Inhabitants and the part of Virginia I have been in, tho small. The Land is tolerable, the people generally genteel & hospitable, the Ladies handsome & witty & what is still better they have fortunes— very great loadstones— I have a mind to pay my adresses to eight hundred acres of good Land and twenty or thirty *black* Negro's— what would you think of that? Mr Hovenden is our commander; he is enamoured with a handful of a woman, about an armful. He gives his compliments to you. See my paper is done. Adieu!

R. Wharry.

God bless you, do not forget me, let not the heavenly charm of some earthly angel tempt you to forget me, but always let me hear from you.

CAPTAIN VAN HORNE TO DOCTOR READING BEATTY

Camp Bottoms Bridge Aug^t. 13th 81.

My Dear Doct^r.

You never was in Amelia County in this State, where the Society of the *Patriotic Fair* have form'd *Resolves* so much in favour of those who have step'd forth in *the service* of their Country I presume— Ah, Reading, can you guess what this Resolve is— Why it was that they will not receive the Addresses of any but those who I have above Mentioned— Could you believe me, an Elderly Lady of a very respectable Family (When in Company with a number of our Gen^{tn} & a number of Young Ladies of the first Rank), observ'd was *She* young & to be Married She would have none but of those who had persevered to the *end of the War*, during which time she would wish to be under engagements to him, & all the *Scars & Defects* even to the *loss of a Limb* She would esteem as *Beauty Spots* & prize him the more for it. What think you of this & two Amiable Daughters present, will not they imbibe the same good principles— will this not do for our business? Ay, and Invitations dayly to Dine out, by the Gentⁿ—

But cruel Fortune! We must be remov'd from that Paradise before we had an Opportunity of cultivating their Friendship— & ordered to the North side of James River again, where it is almost the reverse.

M^r. Hovenden has Just Joined us from Coxe's Mill— the Gen^l that were Wounded are recovering fast— & some of them coming to Pennsylvania.

I beg the favour of you to send up as soon as possible a *Resolve of Congress* respecting the *Subalterns rising* in the line of each State.

Myn wardlike Vriendt Ick ben eu zeer Ootmoodige Deinaar

IVHorne.

DOCTOR ROBERT WHARRY TO DOCTOR READING BEATTY

Camp Roundo Jan^y 5th 1782.

D^r. Reading—

Yesterday we put an end to our long & fatiguing march. Joy and gladness now appears in every face; Gen^l. Green's Army to see us, and we rejoice that we have put an end to our pilgrimage. It would be needless for me to relate the Hardships and Severities we have undergone since the commencement of the March, it will be enough to say, they were *superlatively Bad*. I wrote you, from Salisbury in North Carolina, since when, I have been silent, with regard to my pen, but still bear our friendship in remembrance. I expect this will be a spur to your negligence in writing. Your silence surprizes me, I am sure, you want not for opportunities. Several letters have come to camp since we left Virginia. I think it must be owing to neglect in you, or else a relaxation in our former friendship. I am loth to attribute it to either, but far more to the latter. But, stop! no more— I pardon you— Since our junction I have not been able to collect any news. It is whispered by some that there is a French Fleet off Charles Town but, I believe there has been no official accounts of the certainty of it. I only mention it as a mere matter of conjecture by some; & if it is the case, I expect we will have it in our power to reduce Charles Town soon.

Charles Town is about forty miles distant from us. It is thought we will move down nearer the Town & perhaps invest it, but by what authority they think so I am an entire stranger to, & in consequence, will be silent upon the occasion, & leave it to the wiser heads of the *great*; to speak and to think: it is enough for me to hear; & to hear with propriety. Whilst you, now are enduring the northern Blasts & toasting your feet over your Stove drinking your Cyder, your wine and perhaps your Butter toddy; we are enjoying the pleasantness of a Summer & taking large draughts of cold water, no; that's a slip of the pen, it is rather warm water. I am now sitting in my Tent, without a stove, Fire, or any thing else to create heat, except the natural heat of the Sun, nay, more I am writing without my coat: you now may be able to picture to yourself the Heat of the climate. I read the approach of Summer.

At present this country abounds with water, being almost a continued

pond of water. I am told that it is difficult to go to the Inhabitants' Houses for water, (for you must know by the bye) that I have not been but in three houses in the State). Their Rice fields are all covered with water, which is the riches of their country— But, the deuce take the country, I would not live in it for a million a year— I am sorry I listed— I wish myself back to the Flesh Pots, the Onions and Garlick of Pennsylvania.

But, as Sterne said of the Starling, I can't get out, I can't get out, so may I say, I can't get home, I can't get Home— I now must summon all my patience, all my philosophy and all my fortitude to reflect on the ensuing Summer. I now would relate to you all our wants but, the thought gives me pain: I will only mention a few capital ones— We are without money and consequentially without friends— without Wheat Bread and without *Strong Drink* the Soldiers Balsam pro omnibus. Now, reflect a moment upon our situation! But, lest the reflection should give you pain, I wish you a happy new year— may you have one continued round of pleasure throughout every period of it: and to add to your happiness may you be blessed with a sweet, kind, good natured wife and enjoy all the happiness of a domestic or rural life; is the sincere wish of your unfeigned friend, and humble

Serv^t.

Wharry.

DOCTOR ROBERT WHARRY TO DOCTOR READING BEATTY

Colo^l. Thompson's Feb^y. 6th '82.

D^r Beatty

I am now 70 Miles from Camp, I came here three weeks ago to wait upon Lieut. E. Butler, who took sick here on our march to join Gen^l. Green. I have fine *times* here, plenty to eat & drink, plenty of Ladies, both fair, black & brown; (but, by the bye) few fair *ones*. I do not mean to affront the ladies. They are very sociable— Now for news. By a Gentleman from Camp, we have received the following important *intelligence*, that the Enemy are expected out daily, that they have armed all their Waggoners, Artificers, and Waiters and that Gen^l. Greene has issued an order for the Troops to hold themselves in perfect readiness for an action, so that we expect in a few [days] there will be something done— Gen^l. Wayne has taken the command in Georgia; we hear that he has drove in all their outposts & taken a number of prisoners— I am in Raptures with this country or at least its Inhabitants, they are so polite & generous, our officers are frequently insulted by invitations to dine out of Camp & obliged to drink of different sorts of wine. Now, you know I will suffer amazingly; as I am no lover of wine nor strong drink— I could wish to hear from the North; but I believe you have forgot to write or at least you have lost the art of writing. Say, has some *fair* taken away the use of your hand or your heart. I am afraid of both: if so tell me, I will both pity & excuse you— I am as usual

R. Wharry.

JOEL FITHIAN TO DOCTOR READING BEATTY

Feb^y. 27th. 1782.

Sir,

I Received a letter from you dated at Philadelphia. was very glad to hear of your welfare, we were very uneasy upon hearing of the Mutiny of the Pennsylvania line and that some of the Officers were killed by the mutineers for fear yourself or Erkuries might be amongst the unhappy number,

Such Commotions either in Camp or City must give every friend to his country a great degree of Anxiety altho I trust it will never cause them to abandon so glorious a cause. M^{rs}. Fithian hath for this Six months past been very much troubled with the fever and ague, a part of the time she was Dangerously ill but is now much better and I am in hopes that in a short time she will be entirely well,

We have been Expecting to see you at Cohansie this some time past and yet hope if Opertunity offers you will not fail to come.

This day we have Intelligence from Philadelphia that that Traitor Arnold with all his forces are Block'd up in James's River, Virginia, by some French Shipping from Rhode Island, that a considerable number of his troops have deserted and left him; if true I hope he will meet with his *Fate*. Mrs. Fithian sends her kind Love to you and Erkuries. Accept the same from your Affectionate Brother

Joel Fithian.

LIEUTENANT SAMUEL STORY TO DOCTOR
READING BEATTYCamp— Banks of Savannah, March [6]th -82.

Letter after Letter, and no answer, my patience— Reading— is almost worn out, indeed it would scarce have lasted so long but for probability of miscarriages, and a desire of doing justice should that have been the case.

Our lives since parting with you have been a series of rather pleasing variety tho' some disagreeable circumstances have introduced themselves— we remain'd at the Southern Head Quarters only four days till we (viz Bryce's Comp^y) were dispatch'd with Gen^l Wayne to Georgia, since which, the politeness of the Inhabitants has made time pass merrily and the Ladies society sweetly improv'd it, those dear Angels here are profess'd Whigs, figure then to yourself how agreeable the situation of a few (as there are only eight of us) in such a circle— no request our *delicacy* can permit, has been hitherto denied, general good harmony prevails, and forms (notwithstanding the rugged face of War) a Coterie truly delightful—

The Enemy at present keep very close in their Works, both at Charlestown & Savannah— trivial skirmishes happen daily but nothing worth relating— Fauntleroy has retir'd to Virginia— rather too soon— as Col. White proposes leaving us in a few weeks; when the command of all the Horse in Georgia would have devolved on the Major, as a Troop

of his Regiment is on the detail. Hallett is with us and hearty as ever, at present I believe the only one of the cavalry here with whom you're acquainted— Capt. Brice & Douglass join him in compliments—

Mr. James the gentleman who honors this, has been on a frolic to Georgia, he has in his power to give you a good Idea of our situation, and the Country— you'll meet in him an acquaintance worth cultivating— his disposition is amiable and Knowledge extensive.

Please to lay at the feet of the dear Girls my cordial wishes of happiness, assure them time appears long till the happy moment shall arrive which gives me to tell them how warmly I feel the cares of a Father— To Capt^s. Porter— Proctor— Turnbull, and the whole of our Gentlemen, with all acquaintances & friends, present my best compts^s. and be assur'd I remain, Dear Reading

Your friend Sincerely,

Sam: Story.

You'll meet with opportunities daily to the South^d— don't neglect writing.

Doctor Beatty—

DOCTOR WHARRY TO DOCTOR READING BEATTY

Camp, Poupon, South Carolina March 12th 1782.

D^r. Beatty

I expect this will be handed to you by M^r. Gilchrist, who is deranged, by the late Reduction of the Battalions. This is the third letter I have wrote you since the junction with this Army— and you are still silent— I think you are rather a lazy correspondent or that you do not think it worth your while to answer the scribbler & waster of whole sheets of paper— I told you in a former letter that you were too laconic 'tho I wished you would always write such laconic letters— I believe you have taken the hint— and rather than be thought laconic, you have adopted a new method— to write none at all— your silence will not make me silent, for I do not know, but, the next packet I send you, I will write you a whole quire— Since I left Colo^l. Thompson's I have not contracted any acquaintance with the fair, least I should receive a new wound, and perhaps a mortal one. I mean Colo^l. Thompson's of this state; at which place I wrote you a letter and I make no doubt, but you have received it before this time.

Some of our Lads have very extensive acquaintances; it is a fine place for flankers, but it will not do without you have a good horse. Now you know I have none; therefore necessarily must stay in Camp & not have in my power to pay my devoirs to the nice widows or their bands of Ethiopians.

This country abounds in riches; I mean the inhabitants have been very rich & had the means of making mony very fast untill the British came among them. The produce of the country is Rice, Indigo and cattle— The Inhabitants are lazy, proud, and haughty; this is the worst side of their character; but, let us turn the fair side & it stands thus:

They are polite, sociable, generous, hospitable & gay and very much given to dissipation and pleasure. The ladies live much longer than the men. I believe it is owing in a great measure to their intemperance, for I do not think there is so much in the climate as people imagine. The ladies living longer than the men is a glaring proof that it is not in the climate. If it was, why do they live longer? Seeing they are as liable to sickness as men & from their delicate texture perhaps more so. It may be objected they are not so much exposed as the men. I answer equally the same. For the men do nothing & the ladies do less; they are not liable to debaucheries, although it is hinted they love grog, when there is no wine in the way. But, this is nothing.

As an instance of the Generosity of the State, take this. The Assembly has voted Gen^l. Green ten thousand guineas to purchase him an independent fortune. For his activity and assiduity in snatching their country from the jaws of Destruction. He is thought to be the Fabius of the age & the people in this country, almost adore him. I fear if he should die they would deify him. It is reported this day that the enemy are burying their outworks & are embarking. If this should be the case I expect I shall have the pleasure of seeing you this summer. We are within twenty-five miles of their outposts. They do not seem inclined to give us battle. We are very good neighbours and carry on an extensive trade with them. Our Army is very healthy at present, although we have nothing but Rice & Beef, and no strong drink; I am told there is little keeping, for S^t Patricks day you know we must honor the *God*—I suppose you are basking in plenty and enjoying all the sweets of a rural life: I envy you not. I only wish to partake; May Heaven continue to load you with its Bounties, and may you still enjoy health and Prosperity. In the mean time I am as usual

R Wharry.

CAPTAIN SPROAT TO DOCTOR READING BEATTY

New Windsor

22 March 1782.

My Dear Reading

I have closed a letter fro your brother in which I sent an excuse to you, but finding M^r Gamble does not goe as soon as expected— I can not let so good an opportunity pass without writing to you. I think it a pitty that an intimacy that has been of so long a standing as ours has Should be so shamefully neglected as it is— by so trifling a distance as Carlile. I should not have been so long silent had I have had opportunities and have been sure of your being at Carlile— Head Quarters can easily be found— let it be any where in the United States; Be assured that I should be very happy to hear from you. The Grand topic is peace. I had much rather see it than hear talk of it— we have no other news— We expect to take the Field in a few days, what to do I can't tell. Farewell, My dear Reading, in haste

I am sincerely Yours

Sproat.

CAPTAIN VAN HORNE TO DOCTOR
READING BEATTY

Phila^{da} May 18th 1782.

My Dear Sir,

In my last I told you I was going to New Town—I went. Such a Reformation you never saw in a place; the Dancing School was carried on with the greatest decorum. Ah, Reading, I would give the world almost that you & I were there— to a Court Martial I am call'd this moment—4 o'clock P. M. The Party is gone— Capt. Wily promises to carry this tomorrow. I was there two or three days, Nothing but Galanting the Girls & dancing the whole time— I presented your Comp^{ts} to them all. Ned was with me. We took Wynkoops in the way— was introduced to the new Mrs. Wynkoop. She is a plain Woman, not so polite as the last— However, we Din'd there. Afternoon: Conducted the Ladies to the School— then to Mrs. Harris's &c,&c, As soon as they had taken their Lessons, into the School I tumbles— Danced Country Dances, and so on as long as I continued there. They want some Beaus there badly, are very Scarce of Gallants. Indeed I wish to be there again. You'll say I'm in love. I acknowledge it, but it is with all of them I believe; the Miss Tates and Miss Wynkoops I esteem very much I do assure you— There is no better Girls— I told somebody that She was a favourite of yours. Believe me I can Court much better for my Friend than for myself. I have not assurance enough to say much in my own favour to recommend my self— I will only add (on this Subject) that your company will always be *very* agreeable to the Ladies at New Town; in my Humble opinion. They desired me to present their kind respects to you, & Miss P. T. enquired why you had not wrote.

The Ladys at Maidens Hall are very well, seem to take pleasure in enquiring after you & have authorised me to present you with their best Comp^{ts}—

I hear a report your Brother is about to Wed a Carlisle Girl; is there any thing of it—

Comp^{ts} to all my friends, & believe me your assured Friend,

Isaac.

Reading Beatty Esq^r.

Surgⁿ 4th Reg^t Artill^y

Carlisle.

MAJOR WILLIAM VAN LEAR TO DOCTOR
READING BEATTY

Carlisle 9th June 1782.

Dear Reading

Since my return to this place from Conocheague which was on Wednesday last, have had the pleasure of receiving your two last favours; for which accept the grateful thanks of your Brother. Why did you Judge me for acting with duplicity, what Mighty interest could I promise myself by "deceiving you"? You say, I must have either deceived you or cannot have that affection for Sally I've so often profess'd— The 3^d

of this Month you intended Leaving the City, and in two weeks return (a visit to Miss Crissy 'tis rational to suppose) then expect my sentiments on that subject, a Small request indeed, but 'tis made by a friend, and one to whom I wou'd open my very heart without reserve, therefore,

The very truth I'll undisguised declare,

For what's so easy as to be sincere.

From my first acquaintance with that Worthy Girl, there was a Certain Something (call it what you please) prejudiced me in her favor, I believe it was the sweet passion of love, but acted with every degree of Caution, well knowing the heavy hand of poverty w^d. be a barrier to any Union, but that of Friendship. You advise me to declare Myself, suppose I w^d., and meet with what the world might with propriety call success, (for my part w^d. esteem it inevitable misery) when poverty environs me, take to my arms that image of the Inhabitants of heaven, that has hitherto lived in affluence to partake of my indigence, no, forbid it honor— Miss Sally's friendship is all I ever expect to enjoy and I have never given her any reason to expect more from me, so that I have nothing to dread from a Competitor as you alledge— There prevails a report in this place that Miss Molly is married, pray inform me in your next. I've little news to Communicate. This place is barren at present, the only domestic occurrence that has fallen under my observation, is Miss Samples taking a tour through Conacocheague making interest for her Father against the ensuing Election, as he's a Candidate for the post of Sheriff— Miss Jane Montgomery accompanies her—

Major Alexander informs me of a Meeting of the Officers. I dread their want of Caution & Unanimity. I wish them not to enter into any measure too precipitately and to be well aware of incendiarism amongst themselves—

M^{rs}. Parker has been indisposed for some time past but has recovered. Miss J. Holmes' Compliments.

Offer my best wishes to Stricker, McConnell, Simonds, and all the Military Gentlemen that may enquire for, my Reading, your

Sincere friend &

Obt. Serv't

William.

CAPTAIN VAN HORNE TO DOCTOR READING BEATTY

Bucks County, Oct^r. 4th 1782.

My dear Reading,

I have as it were just rous'd from a state of Nonexistence Almost— My Senses are just rousing from a state of stupidity & forgetfulness, into which I was thrown during my Illness, and I begin to think of my friends.

I have received several good letters from you since I have been in a way to answer them. They lye in Philad^a. and how shall I recollect the Particulars— I will first write you what ever my flighty Imagination presents—

Well, then— they were all under Marching Orders before I left Philad^a. some time. I have been from them there Ten days, and not a word from them— I want to know if you are likely to go to the Frontiers with them— I wish you would come down & stay a while. We will go to New Town, and then we'll make parties of pleasure— what think you of this, Reading? Eh, there will be no difficulty in making agreeable parties & then you will see— see Chrissy, the incomparable— “Nothing but my friendship for that good Family induc'd me to enquire.” Very well— but here again, “Nowwithstanding all our favourite Amusem^{ts}, the Idea of that charming &c”. How is all this? It will require no great deal of penetration to observe those contradictions, and that my friend Reading has felt the power of her Charms,

Well, so be it— I do not wonder at it, I assure you. P. Cummings is there. Hovender & myself were up about two weeks ago. We drank Tea with 'em. Chrissy look'd charmingly— rather in her disabille. No gause, but her head plain & neat, her countenance Majestick & open. I sometimes stole a look, not often. Ann was indispos'd, but did us the honour to breakfast with us. She is naturally very sprightly. Miss P. C. more of dress, affable, agreeable, look'd exceeding well. Mrs. Du Bois, her daughter Sally, another neighboring old Lady, & the old Don & his lady compos'd the Circle— the squire kept us pretty well engag'd in chat, so we had very little conversation from the Girls— We danc'd in the Evening at Mr. Martin's. Those Girls did not go— we made six or 8 Cuple, all very agreeable indeed; I had for my partner the worthy Miss P. T. Having been lately sick I dane'd as little as I could help. We had several little rounds of chat about you in the course of the evening. She had been in Jersey some time. Cards &c made it late when we broke up— In the morning we push'd by the way of Mr. Wynkoop & DuBois to Philad^a. After this I got a relapse, settled my affairs so in Town that on Saturday the 21st Ultimo, I set out for the Country with Medicine &c to try if a change of Air & Suitable Diet, would not recover my health. When I got to Col. McVeaghs (Frankfort) I was taken with a violent Ague; as I had had no Ague before, it was a matter of surprise to me; a fever ensued. Next day the Col: brought me on in his Chaise. I got home with some difficulty on Monday morning— Ague & fever came on, left me again in the Mornings. I, however, had a fit every day until Friday last, when it left me— But I had taken a great quantity of Barks. I am recovering strength, but was reduced so very low that t'will be some time before I shall be able to go out much.

Believe me to be your sincere friend,
Isaac

JAMES McMICHAEL TO DOCTOR
READING BEATTY

Lancaster 16th Feb^r 1783.

Dear Reading,

In vain have I tortur'd my Brain to find out any plausible cause capable of producing an Effect equal to that of your late *long Silence*. I do not recollect the date of your last Letter— 'twas about the 5th

or 6th of Jan^r.— it came to hand at Carlisle— I have wrote you many since. Indeed, with veracity can assure you I never omitted a Single opportunity which came within the Sphere of my imperfect knowledge— But as I never form'd an attachment upon a trivial Basis, so shall never decline it on a Seeming *neglect*, therefore with almost my usual good Nature (no, quite) have sat down to ask you how you do? Are you so much engaged in the Circle of the *Beau-Monde* at Philadelphia, as to forget all your absent less fortunate friends? Do the fairest objects of the Creation engross your Sole attention, and carry you away not only from yourself but the World? Are your moments chequer'd with so many Scenes of the *Pathetic* as to eradicate every Idea which had hitherto a residence in your Peticranium? Do you *as usual* swear *Eternal Fidelity* to every pretty face you cast your Eyes on? Or does all your Ideas Centre in one object?

Variety is so much interwoven in the Composition of and so Justly admired by, the Sons of Bellona, that 'tis not matter of astonishment, that an Amourous young fellow who is a reigning favorite with the Ladies at Philadelphia shou'd so totally dedicate his services to the *Shrine of Beauty* as to neglect all considerations less important. But 'tis utterly unnecessary to tell any of the Sons of Esculapius that a little relaxation is absolutely conducive to the Strength both of the Body and Mind, consequently this will be a sufficient Apology, for my present impertinent intrusion—

I wrote you Last Week by a Mr. Cottringer, a Worthy Young Gentleman who had been at Lancaster on a Tour of Pleasure; he lives in Philad^a. If you shou'd get acquainted with him make him my most respectful Compliments and tell him the Angel of his heart at Lancaster is in perfect health, tho 'tis thought by many his absence is a little pernicious to her Repose— She is a *Sweet Girl*. In my Letter by him, sent you the particulars of our late Theatrical Entertainment; since that a Round of Dissipation has generally prevail'd. *She Stoops to Conquer* is now on the Carpet— I cannot fully give you the *Dramatis Personae*. Purcell is to play Tony Lumpkin. You shall have the particulars in my next. We are to have a Ball next Week; I am determin'd to attend— of that also you shall have a true account in Due Time— Since my Last I have enjoy'd infinitely more pleasure than ever hitherto at Lancaster. The Ladies almost in general have of their own choice studied to converse with me and have treated me with every mark of Sociability and attention—

Heaven Bless them All—

You know, my Dear Reading, I Love the whole Sex and have Long been of Opinion that the Man who had not such a General Philanthropy, was incapable of Ever Loving a Single one as he ought— Call on L^t. Jones and tell him Miss Semple begs he will comply with the Contents of my Last letter to him as Speedily as possible. Had Letters from Carlisle Dated the 7th Instant. Nothing new— Miss Stevenson is not yet Married. Every body here is Well tho— I believe no one writes you at present but the Insipid, Insignificant, Impertinent

Jemmy M^c.

JAMES McMICHAEL TO DOCTOR
READING BEATTY

Lancaster 21st June, 1783.

My Dear Reading,

I fancy both you and I are by this time ready to charge each other with mutual neglect, but without an *Ecclairecissement* there are no Judging; then hear mine, the very next day after I rec^d your last letter giving an account of your excursion to Jersey I left Lancaster and went to the River, where I remained in a Circle of Female friends 'till yesterday. This I'm sure will Justify my late Silence— Now I Shou'd suppose you have still remain'd in the City and neglected several opportunities but hope I'm wrong—

On my Return to Town found Ark had deserted and Flown to Mount Rock by way of a *Hospitium Calamitates*. The Lad has had this Journey in contemplation for sometime; Lytle accompanied him— Now, Reading, I begin to be of opinion that he has some serious designs on Sally. The Dog wrote her a tolerable long letter sometime ago and had an answer to it. I saw both— they'll raise us Grenadiers for the next War. It minds me of the Persian Custom in choosing only the handsomest of Both sexes for breeding. I fancy Ak has read Geography and is about to reduce his Theory to practice. Indeed he has lately commenc'd Gallant, nothing more common than to catch him in a Tete-a-tete, of an Evening in a Porch with some of our Belles here. I got the arrangement of pretty fellows only from a Lady in Town. I'll not tell you what number I was, tho, by the bye, 'twas a high one. Ak, I remember, was No. 3.

Last Week there was a Fair in Lancaster, the Dutch Beaux and Belles cut their usual eclat. You know their Amusements on such occasions are particularly entertaining. As I was at the River I have no Idea of the number of Deaths occasion'd by Bows, Ogles, Snuffboxes, &c, &c, tho am led to believe the execution was very considerable, on both sides. One of the Gentlemen says he got his Death by a Slap on the Left shoulder with a Lady's fan, another affected to Swoon when she knew the Young fellow on whom she had a particular design must naturally run to her assistance. Result answer'd her expectations and, at pronouncing the Words "Sir I am much indebted to your politeness," She shot him dead through a pair of Silken Eyelashes. A third was going to be forc'd into the arms of a Rustic she despis'd, but thro the Prowess of one of our invincible Sons of Bellona, was rescued at the hazzard of his Life, but mark the Consequence— she threw her snowy Arms round him for protection, a Stupor immediately siezed him, and Sappho-like he "*Fainted Sunk and died away*." But on the contrary the Belles I believe have been equally involv'd. Kinney swears he kill'd Six, Davis three, &c&c&c— at this rate few carried their lives from the Scene of Action— But in all conscience you have a Superabundance of this Stuff—

The account, my Dear Reading, of your progress thro Jersey (a place

well calculated for a fellow of your profess'd Gallantry) affords me peculiar pleasure. Your agreeable Companion was well calculated to Amuse. She possesses some Lively Sallies of imagination, an Easy address, a knowledge of the World, an agreeable person with good sentiments. Have you gone to the Lower part of it agreeable to expectation? How did you spend your time? What news about Military matters? Are Congress about to continue the uniformity of their conduct? I have been waiting to know the result of this matter for some time, that done, shall shortly visit the City— I've wrote Five Letters this morning previous to this; one of them was dictated from the Back of Pegasus, in smooth flowing Easy numbers, huzza! Do you not think I'm crazy, Reading? I wish you saw the Letter aluded to, but 'tis gone; you may swear 'tis to a Lady. I may say like Will Honeycomb, "All the little learning I am master of is on that Subject, I never look'd into a book but for their Sakes"—*Heaven Bless the whole Sewe*. You know my Maxim— Adieu, Yours Dead or alive

Jemmy.

JAMES McMICHAEL TO DOCTOR READING BEATTY

West Concocheague 1st Oct^r. 1783.

My Dear Reading

At the foot of Parnassus with a meandering stream like that of Aganippe running at my feet; a Valley truly picturesque of Arcadia on my right; and a beautiful Landskip on my left, have I sat down to tell you 'tis ten to one Homer may be consider'd as a Second Rate Poet in a few Weeks— I intend invoking Calliope in a few Days for permission to mount Pegasus; if I once get him by the Bridle he will kick and Start till he's tir'd before I'll dismount; perhaps he may prove a Hobby-Horse. E'en let him; I've long rode on Such an Animal, you well know, and indeed find it necessary at times to Amble away from the cares of the World and for a few hours together leave Melancholy, Despair, &c,&c behind nor feel that severity of thought which, Alas, is of late too natural to your unfortunate friend Jemmy, and soar into the Galaxy, take a view of the various motions of the Celestial Orbs, then return to the shade to which some fond Shepherd may have retired to Mourn the cruelty of Phillis— Then a Dash or two of the Sublime, and in taking a bold flight & 'twill be glorious e'en to meet the fate of Icarus—

But of this stuff no more now— I am and have been since last Sunday at the house of my much lov'd friend Col. Chambers. The good family are all very well and possess'd of their usual hospitality. I need not say more—

Saw Sawmy Stewart on Sunday, very well, in business more than he can perform. Spent three Days at Carlisle— the Ladies very well, all in separate parties of four's & five's who associate with none but their own Class— tell Ak [Erkuries Beatty] I see Sally as charming as ever; the Ladies say she waits his return to Mount-Rock with much im-

patience— that matter you know I thought was at least Subsided if not entirely over, but find I was in an error. If 'tis for their own good I'm satisfied, for I certainly wish them both happy. I cannot tell when I may return to Lancaster. But you'll know immediately on my arrival. Pray write in about a Week and desire who ever may carry your letter to leave it at Captⁿ Webster's and tell me all the news Public or private. My Compliments to Ak and any of the Gentlemen who may ask for me— Adieu, my Dear Reading, and rest assur'd I'm most cordially your's

Jemmy.

CAPTAIN VAN HORNE TO DOCTOR
READING BEATTY

7th March 1784.

Dear Beatty,

'Tis not often I write you without interruption but I now resume my Pen again before my last is dispatch'd. Some time has now elapsed since you have heard me say a word about Indianna; as that matter has long been in suspense, and I believe I hinted to you my doubts from the first, it may easy be accounted for. The matter is not so now, it is intirely broke off owing chiefly perhaps to some distant Relations who labour'd to disgust her of me— 'Tis the D—L to be an old Batchelor, Reading. She says she will always esteem me as a friend, but will not suffer me to hope for any thing further. As there was scarcely a probability of my succeeding from the first, I have acted cautiously, and have not suffer'd myself to be carried away with vain hope, and be (head & Ears in Love) as the saying is, but this state of suspense I could no longer bear with, and perhaps might have hurried on my fate—

There is two or three good Girls of my acquaintance; my knowledge of them is but small, yet, on account of my other affair being undetermin'd till now; nor will I untill I am pretty well satisfied of the [Letter torn. Captain Van Horne seems to say that he will continue to be cautious, and in support of his position quotes Sir Thomas More.] "May she be Learned if possible, or at least capable of being made so. A Woman thus accomplished will be always drawing sentiments & maxims out of the best Authors. She will be herself in all the changes of fortune neither blown up with prosperity, or broken down in adversity. You will find in her an even, cheerful, good humour'd friend and an agreeable companion for life." Such an one, my dear Reading, what a prize would it be? But your worthy *Laura* comes almost up to it, and you must help me a little in chusing me one.

Tell me how you come on at the Cross Roads; Is Craig gone to the Island yet? Tell him I wish to go with him. He or you must write me soon and let me know when he goes—

Adieu

IVHorne.

CAPTAIN VAN HORNE TO DOCTOR
READING BEATTYSunday June 8th 1788.

My dear friend

As you have become a little lazy about writing as well as myself, I trust you will readily excuse me for not writing so frequently as I did formerly when we were both single. The enclosed is a Copy of an Institution lately established in the neighbourhood as a feeble attempt to bring about a reformation in our Manners and Customs, tho it may be exceptionable in part & capable of much improvement yet it may serve as a ground work to introduce habits more adapted to the situation and circumstances of our Country—

We have had but two Meetings since we adopted our Constitution, consequently we have not done much yet— we have Elected our Officers & established two or three rules or resolves and some more on the minutes; to stand the debates of another Meeting before they can become binding, by the Constitution—

Doct^r. John Chapman is our President, your Humbl^e. Serv^t. Vice-President, and Saml. Johnston, Secretary.

As the Secretary is possesst of the Minutes I cannot at present particularise the rules— one however is to this purport— that we will not make use of Spiritous Liquors in our Families nor otherwise (in cases of Medicine only excepted) and that we will discourage the use of it in others—

Another is that we will respectively deliver to the President, an account of our experience, or experiments made by us in Agriculture.

Others that we will discourage the use of all articles of foreign growth and Manufacture, and by a strict Frugality lessen our expenses.

That we will promote Agriculture in general & more especially such parts as tend to promote our own Manufactures etc, etc.

If it will contribute to your amusement or satisfaction I will be more particular another time, by procuring coppies from the Secretary.

There are between 20 and 30 Members and some of them Respectable Characters.

I suppose I have by this time pretty well tired you with my scrawl; I shall therefore conclude and hope you will give me your candid sentiments relative to our *declaration of War with Passions and Prejudices of the present times.*

I am as usual

Van.