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Captain Samuel Shaw’s Revolutionary War Letters to Captain Winthrop Sargent

WINTHROP SARGENT was carried off by an attack of gout while on board a steamboat near New Orleans in 1820. Since old soldiers in their dying moments are apt to turn their minds back to the days of their campaigns, his thoughts may have dwelt upon the Revolutionary War. If so, memories of his old friend Samuel Shaw may have come to him. Their careers in many ways had been so similar, although Shaw had died in his fortieth year in 1794.

Sargent was a year older than Shaw and born in Gloucester rather than Boston; both came of prominent families. That extra year gave Sargent a military seniority, although Shaw joined Washington’s army as soon as he came of age in 1775. Both were commissioned in the artillery and served throughout the war, first in Knox’s Artillery Regiment and then in the 3d Continental Artillery. Service as aides-de-camp later separated them when Shaw joined Knox’s official family and Sargent accepted a similar appointment with General Howe.

The end of the war did not mean a permanent return to Boston for either. After a voyage to China, Shaw was appointed Consul of the United States at Canton and continued in that post until his death, which occurred at sea while returning home. Sargent remained in public work, chiefly in the West, saw additional army service in the Indian campaign of 1791, and was appointed Adjutant General of the Army the following year with the rank of Colonel. In 1798 he became the first governor of the Mississippi Territory with headquarters at Natchez. There he built the brick mansion “Gloster Place,” married, for the second time, and settled down after the advent of Jeffersonianism to the life of a cotton planter.

Recently The Historical Society acquired a collection of Shaw’s letters to Sargent. Eighteen of these written during the Revolutionary period are published here. They begin in August, 1779, when Shaw, still a lieutenant, had just been appointed Aide to General Knox. Sargent at this time was on detached service with his com-
pany. From the headquarters fount Shaw kept him informed not only of military affairs but of the social concerns of their interest.

These letters written in the frank manner of one friend and contemporary to another give a clearer picture of their views than do the more formalized letters the same people wrote to others. Inferentially we learn much about a little-known period of Sargent's life. From other sources we read that he was the best-dressed man in the Continental Army, and that Paul Revere furnished the silver for his army kit. St. Mémin has done an admirable portrait of him. One sees a very strong, determined face with much humor in it.

Of Shaw Washington wrote in 1783, "Throughout the whole of his service, he has greatly distinguished himself in every thing which could entitle him to the character of an intelligent, active, and brave officer." Elsewhere he is described, at a later period of his life, as tall and rather portly, "of an open countenance and benevolent heart, cheerful without levity, and sedate without reserve." But let the letters speak for themselves.

In 1847 Josiah Quincy published Shaw's journals of his voyages to Canton together with a life of their author. The various facts relating to Shaw in the paragraphs above are taken from this book. The biographical data on Sargent was found in Epes Sargent of Gloucester and His Descendants (Boston, 1923).

N. B. W.

I
West Point 14 August 1779

Dear Sargent,

I thank you for your favor of the 10th just come to hand, and for the news it contains. As I have not been in Jersey, and of course cannot touch the tender string, I shall only be able to answer your queries as far as I have been able to gain intelligence. The works at this Post go on briskly, owing to a more judicious mode of allotting the fatigue than has been heretofore practiced—there are fixed superintendents relieves a day, and the business constantly plied. Now if I could obtain the other data, such as the design of the fortification and the various and multifarious projects of the engineers for executing that

1 Washington's headquarters were at West Point at this time. Throughout the summer of 1779, some 2,500 men were on duty completing the fortifications. Edward C. Boynton, History of West Point (New York, 1863), 81, 82.
design I could give a pretty near guess how long we are to stay here. But this is impossible. I think the gentry last mentioned may adopt part of our church confession, “We have done those things which we ought not to have done, and left undone those things which we ought to have done.” Our position after we leave this must be a relative one. Should the enemy confine their operations to the east side of the river the probability will be in favor of your joining the main army, as a small force might then be sufficient to secure Jersey; and a couple of brigades (perhaps Learned’s and Pattersons) left to garrison this post and its dependencies. As to Gen. Sullivan, I know nothing more of him than that it is said he marched from Wyoming about a fortnight since.

I mentioned to the General the circumstances of your command. He thinks that yourself or one of your officers must stand in the same relation to Clark’s company while it continues with you as he did prior to its joining you.

The rank of the colonels of artillery and of the regiments was settled a few days since. Crane—Lamb, Harrison and Procter—and the regiments Harrison’s 1st—Crane & Lamb to draw lots for the 2nd—and Procters fourth. This will kick up a dust. Lamb I think will resign—many reasons induce me to believe he will—look out then there’s promotion ahead.

Will it not be scandalizing to tell you a little anecdote? I believe it is true enough however. A respectable personage not far from Chester had a penchant for a pretty woman, who happened by the 2

2 The main body of the army was posted in the general vicinity of West Point. Ibid., 81. Sargent was with Gen. John Glover’s Brigade “Commanding the Artillery,” as the addresses on the earlier letters show. Glover had recently marched from Providence, R. I., to Ridgefield on the western border of Connecticut. William P. Upham, Memoir of General John Glover (Salem, 1863), 36, 37.

3 Sullivan marched for Tioga on July 31, 1779, to commence his punitive expedition against the Six Nations and avenge the Wyoming Massacre.

4 There are other references to Clark’s company throughout these letters. It is probable that it was the company commanded by Capt. Nathaniel Clark of Baldwin’s Artillery Artificer Regiment. See Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army During The War of The Revolution (Washington, 1914), 157.

5 Col. John Lamb did tender his resignation because he was ranked junior to Col. Crane. However it was not acted upon and he remained in the service. Isaac Q. Leake, Memoir of the Life and Times of General John Lamb (Albany, 1850), 224, 225. Lamb had been junior to Crane in Knox’s Artillery Regiment according to a roster of March 16, 1776. Sargent ranked as a captain and Shaw as a second lieutenant in the same regiment. Francis S. Drake, Life and Correspondence of Henry Knox (Boston, 1873), 130, 131.

6 Chester, New York.
way to be another man's wife. He frequently had them to dine at his marquee, on which occasions his over acted civilities to his fair guest gave the husband the Alarm. He one day called at the marquee, and after taking a drink told the aforesaid personage that he was going about fifty miles on some business and should be gone three days. Flushed with expectation, our hero hies him that very evening to the hallowed dome, where after the necessary preliminaries were adjusted, the fair surrendered at discretion. Scarcely had the conqueror enjoyed the fruits of his victory, when a rude knocking and considerable threatening announced the return of the injured party. In this “choice of difficulties” our hero acted with more prudence than gallantry—and, abandoning the unfortunate lady, made a precipitate retreat with his cloathes under his arm, in which he was pursued by the foe near a mile. The affair has made a damn’d noise in that part of the Country—as the family was of some consideration. The Culprit (hero no longer for Lillies\(^7\) says he badly defended a bad piece of gro[und]\(^7\) [Phila]delphia—to The above tale love of mischief…………….. inducement for communicating it.

Is there any news from Bagaduce\(^8\)? Should our people succeed in that enterprise they will feel as big as they did after taking Cape Breton in 1745. I congratulate you on the very flattering prospect of affairs in the West Indies. Grenada is added to the French conquests. D’Estaing has indisputably beaten Byron, and has the superiority in those seas.\(^9\)

Believe me dear Sargent
Sincerely yours,
S. Shaw

P.S. The return to Col. Lamb will be sufficient—I will enquire after the Letter.

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\(^7\) Capt. John Lillie, one of Gen. Knox’s aides.

\(^8\) In June, 1779, the British established a fort near the mouth of the Penobscot River. Against this incursion Massachusetts independently directed an expedition. The location was variously called Majabagaduce, Bagaduce, Castin and Castine. C. Stedman, *The History of the Origin, Progress, and Termination of the American War* (London, 1794), II, 148; B. J. Lossing, *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution* (New York, 1850), I, 594.

\(^9\) D’Estaing’s conquest of Granada was immediately followed by his engagement with a British Fleet under Admiral Byron which left the latter unable to remain at sea.
Dear Sargent,

There is not an Horatio among the relations of the undone Calista. Her cornuted spouse has nevertheless all the forgiving tenderness of the gentle Altamont. He is reconciled to the fair offender—who as one proof of the sincerity of her repentance has laid aside her—high head dress! Our Hero (I retract the expression in my last for on a reconsideration he acted the only eligible part) is, as I told you, gone to Philadelphia, where he may probably stay till the Park moves. The pitious tale is in every old woman’s mouth within twenty miles of the place, and all commiserate the poor “deluded” creature, and in proportion as they pity her rail at her seducer. Her friends give out that they should not mind the matter so much (being fully satisfied that her chastity was impregnable) had not undue methods been used to reduce her to a compliance. “The treacherous wretch (say they) who could have thought it! presented her with a bottle of wine in which he had put near an ounce of Love Powder—and she poor unsuspecting woman, drank it, little imagining the dismal consequences it would produce.” A new—an excellent salvo this for lost reputations, and most religiously believed in by all the gossips in their circle. I thank you for the hint respecting promotions. The Major was here yesterday—its a pity he did not tarry that I might have consulted him on the subject—though its very probable we should hardly have improved it. The injured party does not deserve any diversion in his favor. Why, Sargent, he possesses more than evangelical forgiveness—not the least tincture of great revenge—destitute of sensibility—without an idea of the only attonement that can be made for the injury—he intends to obtain satisfaction, not at the point of his sword, but at—civil law!! On this principle then our Hero is justifiable in keeping aloof. I have too good an opinion of his spirit to suppose he would do it on any other; for I make no doubt he would readily allow Benedict, if that was all, to take a shot or two at him gratis.

I share in the satisfaction you express at your situation—and am particularly pleased with the account of your heteroclite commander, as well as most agreeably deceived. I fancied him too

10 Sargent was artillery officer for General John Glover.
volatile to attend to the minutia, or even essentials, of duty—but to the little etiquette of the profession merely I believed him fully adequate. But as you describe him, he is valuable—and his little extravagancies (whether original or imitative) pleasing relaxations from the fatigues and severities of application incident to a military life. I hope therefore you will cultivate an acquaintance with him, and communicate such of your observations in future as you may think proper. West Point's a solitary place—no damsells such as you speak of. . . .

Respecting Clark's company—its necessary an officer should particularly superintend it. As to the matter of pay and cloathing, there can I imagine be very little difficulty, for he will be accountable only for what he draws and the distribution of it—nor is it either just or reasonable that he should for any more. As to settling the men's accounts the officer's being with the company only a few months, and having no knowledge of them, must excuse him from being concerned any further than for his own transactions.

I expect in the course of a week to go to the Park when I will send your book. I am, Dear Sargent,

Yours,

S. Shaw

West Point, 17 August 1779

Cap't Sargent

Mr. Murray is here—and will pay you a visit in the course of a week. The mistake of the shop arose from an error in Mr. Ruddocks return.

S.S.

III

23d August 1779

Dear Sargent,

Your good friend Mr. Murray (I believe he does not affect the title Rev.) after enlivening our little circle is preparing to make you a visit. As he will be able to tell you *all* the news, I will not anticipate him by writing you any. But if one half of what is going should prove true we may look on our affairs as in a very good way. I congratulate you on the prospect. Major Lee's was a bold stroke, and could he

11 Major (Light-Horse Harry) Lee's successful pre-dawn attack of August 19, 1779, upon the British fort at Paulus Hook.
have tarried just to have fired a shot or two into the city it would have rendered the consternation of the poor rogues complete. Mr. M. has a piece of tortoise shell for you, a comb which, if you remember, was promised me; but as my locks are now pretty respectable I shall have no occasion for it, tho' I thank you as much as if I had.

I have the pleasure to inform you that Mrs. Knox has so far recovered her health as to make a visit to Mrs. Erskine\textsuperscript{12} in company with S. Ogden and wife. The Gen. set off to see her last Friday evening. Eliza W.\textsuperscript{13} is with them—Sally at Baskenridge.\textsuperscript{14} I don't know what is become of Carter,\textsuperscript{15} or how he has made out—but am told he has been very little with the dear object. Had it been convenient, I should have been fond of going with the General, as I might have got some interesting intelligence for you—and perhaps too a little for your humble servant. But as matters now stand, not a syllable has reached me from either quarter. Eliza no doubt has made her remarks and could I see her I should have the whole budget, as she promised to be very particular in them.

Yours,

S. Shaw

West Point 23 Aug\textsuperscript{t} 1779.

Capt. Sargent

IV

West Point 2 Sept. 1779

Dear Sargent,

On my return from the Park last Monday after an absence of three days, I found your letter, enclosing one for Col. Lamb which was immediately forwarded. Whenever I make a little tour from this Post it is with the utmost reluctance that I return to it. On Sunday Doughty\textsuperscript{16} and I went to Mr. Wickam's, where we dined in company

\textsuperscript{12} Mrs. Robert Erskine, wife of the geographer and surveyor general to the Continental Army.

\textsuperscript{13} Miss Betsy (Eliza) and Miss Sally Winslow of Boston. These two young ladies were visiting Mrs. Knox. Andrew D. Mellick, Jr., \emph{The Story of an Old Farm} (Somerville, N. J., 1889), 465.

\textsuperscript{14} Lord Stirling lived at Basking Ridge. His daughter Lady Kitty Stirling was married there in July, 1779. Miss Sally may have been a wedding guest. \textit{Ibid.}, 493.

\textsuperscript{15} Capt. John Champe Carter, 1st Continental Artillery.

\textsuperscript{16} Capt. John Doughty, 2d Continental Artillery.
with Ab⁷⁷ Ogden¹⁷ and his wife—Miss Doughty and Gen. Morris.¹⁸ Nothing could have been more agreeable than our entertainment. The politeness of Mr. Wickhamm and the chat of his good lady and the rest of the company, with now and then a double entendre from the old General, made it perfectly so. The family enquired after you—would have been happy to have seen you &ca. Poor Carter (I forgot to tell you he was of the party) got a rub. Miss D. who has no objection to a little of that innocent mischief which a great part of the sex are fond of, it seems had by some means or other found out the issue of his negociation with Miss W,¹⁹ and observed "that Jersey was a very unfortunate place to the Artillery officers" looking very archly at him, and instancing, not only his, but in your case too. For my part I expected a shot—and it was not long before it came tho' from another quarter—Mrs. O. had been told of my penchant for a certain lady. She informed me so—passed many encomiums on the dear Girl—recommended perseverance, and concluded with wishing me "better success than my neighbours." You can easier imagine than I describe our behavior under so sudden and powerful an attack. Miss D. tittered, the other ladies smiled, and Carter and I made our bows.

Carter says, he'll "agree to be d—d" (you know his expression) if he is any wiser now than before he saw Eliza. She treated him politely. Sam Ogden, at whose house they were, was his friend and found means of leaving them together repeatedly. Jack says he pushed the matter like a man of business—offered to resign immediately if she would give him encouragement—would wait her own time—seven years, if she pleased! but all did not do—nor could the poor fellow obtain a definitive answer and in this situation he remains. While in Jersey he was much at Neilson's and some times with Miss B, he took several rides with her in one of which she did him the honor to ride his grey horse. N. is, I think, a d—d queer fellow. Would you believe he wants Carter to pay his addresses to Miss B? It is a fact. Carter himself told me so, and delivers it as

¹⁷ Probably Capt. Abraham Ogden of the New Jersey Militia whose brother Samuel may be the Samuel Ogden mentioned elsewhere in these letters. William Ogden Wheeler, The Ogden Family (Philadelphia, 1907), 75.

¹⁸ Lewis Morris, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and Major General of the New York Militia.

¹⁹ Miss Eliza Winslow.
his own opinion that he should succeed—but says that after having seen one Eliza, he could never think of the other (a new name the Lady has assumed) in that way. For my own part I think N. intends making a market of the Fair, and by adding to the list of her admirers enhance her value and rise proportionably in his demands. His conduct in the affair of Bradford and her—and now his overtures to Carter, favor a conjecture of this sort.

The General is hesitating whether to have Mrs. K. come on—it was agreed on at their last meeting, but Arbuthnot's arrival occasions a pause for the present. If it is decided that she does, I shall be “charge des affaires” (excuse the term, for I have yesterday begun to study French) for the occasion. In this case, my dear friend, you may depend I shall be all eyes and all ears for you, and make you a faithful (and I wish a pleasing) report.

Alas! The expedition to Bagaduce—What availed “fighting like devils, and carrying impregnable works,” while their whole force was inadequate to a coup d’e main which was absolutely necessary—for dispatch was the soul of the enterprise. Our number should have been treeble[sic] to that of the enemy, and then success, provided proper measures were taken, would have been certain. Nine hundred men in a strong work, and hourly expecting succour, will never obey the summons of eleven hundred besiegers, who on the arrival of that succour would themselves be liable to become the besieged. The event has fully proved this in the destruction of the fleet—the loss of the stores, and the retreat (to say no worse) of our troops concerned in the unfortunate attempt.

Maj. Lee’s success against Powle’s hook has made him enemies—this is a tax a man must always pay for being eminent. He has been arrested upon eight charges, and this day appears at a Court Martial to answer them. I will obtain a copy of them for you. He has shewn me his Excellency’s orders, which were originally verbal, but since the arrest, His Excellency, on M. Lee’s application, has, from recollection, committed them to writing, and declared them to be the spirit of what was verbally delivered to him. This will fully justify

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21 Heitman (op. cit.) is in error in not crediting Shaw with becoming aide to Knox before June of 1782.
his conduct as Commanding officer—for no time was to be lost in making dispositions, or rather in altering such as he had made, as it was almost day when they arrived at the fort. Indeed, the whole matter was committed entirely to him, and the Commander in Chief's orders were, that if on his approaching the place and making further observations he should find the attempt too hazardous, either from the danger of the thing in itself, or from the difficulty of a retreat, he was at liberty to retire without attempting it—the object being merely to throw a lustre on our arms, by surprising the garrison and bringing off such prisoners as he could get without endangering his party by too long a continuance there. All this Major Lee has very amply executed, and in a manner, all circumstances considered, which does him great credit. As to the matter of commissions, Maj. Clark says he is himself perfectly satisfied, and acknowledges that Maj. Lee did not mention the date of either, but only observed that unless he (Clark) was the junior officer he would not have been sent there, as the command was designed for himself only—and that his being joined in the detachment was at his own (Lee's) particular request, who certainly would not have made it had he entertained the smallest idea of Clark's seniority. As to keeping the letter from Col. Gist, Lee has it from under Lord Stirling's hand, that it was wrote at 12 and delivered by his lordship to him at one o'clock, after which he had to ride eight miles when he immediately delivered Gist the letter, which was neither more nor less than to direct him to furnish Maj. Lee with 300 men properly officered under the command of Maj. Clark. From this, which I believe to be a true state, you will be able to form some idea of the nature of these extraordinary charges, which seem to have had their foundation in the envy of some and the malice of others, and the dissatisfaction of the Virginia line in general at a detachment from them being commanded by an officer of another corps.\(^\text{22}\) I have been thus particular in order to prevent your receiving any impressions to the disadvantage of an officer whose services so justly intitle him to the good opinion of his country.

\(^{22}\) Both William Woodford and Peter Muhlenberg, Brigadier Generals of the Virginia Line, felt slighted that neither one of them had had the command. Thomas Boyd, *Light-Horse Harry Lee* (New York, 1931), 53.
I thank you for the account of your amusements and beg the continuance of them, for I assure you that tho' I have none here and cannot actually partake of yours, yet it is exceedingly agreeable to me to be informed of the pleasures they afford you. I have already an affection for the Clergyman's family, and sympathise with those whose condition entitle them to the benevolence and protection of every man who possesses the least sensibility. Pray let me hear of them as often as you write, and of any new acquaintance you may make. Your reflections on the deference due to the sex coincide with those sentiments you have ever expressed, and convince me that the caution respecting Chesterfieldizing was unnecessary—indeed I was far from thinking it applicable to you—it was a transient idea, and I adopted it. If my principal was of such a cast as Burrell's I should be almost inclined to quarrel with him for supplanting me in the possession of the boon you intended—but as the regularity of the good husband is so effectual a bar to any gentleman in his suite having a connection that way, give my compliments to Burrell and tell him to keep her all to himself, till such time as he can dispose of her in the manner you intend with her sister. Really, Sargent, you are a most—shall I say? charitable young man—and if you carry your good design into effect I think you may lay claim to considerable merit. To rescue a blooming girl from the tyranny of such an old hag as you discriber—just to sip the cream, and then consign the milk, sweet and substantial enough for a common (and if well managed on your part an ignorant) palate, to some fellow who will heartily relish it, is a refinement in pleasure. I applaud the scheme and wish you sincerely an opportunity of realising it.

I began this letter on an half sheet, thinking it would suffice—but found another necessary. I dispatched that, and lest I should want room took a whole one—on which I have made tracks thus far. I must reserve the remainder for the charges against Maj. Lee—after informing you that I send the Book you desired, and that the Commissary does not recollect a syllable of the letter which Neil lost.

Adieu—Believe me sincerely your friend,

S. Shaw

Capt. Sargent
Charges preferred by Col. Nath Gist vs Maj. Lee Augt. 1779

"First—For withholding a letter sent by him from Lord Stirling to me on the morning of the 18th inst. by that means keeping me ignorant of a matter which required my immediate information.

2d After obtaining 300 men from my detachment, with which Maj. Clark was ordered, to inform him that his commission was dated in 1777, thereby assuming the command of him, when in fact it was dated in 78, and of a junior date to Maj. Clark's, which he could not be ignorant of.

3 For conducting the detachment under his command on the march to Powles Hook with so much disorder and confusion as to cause almost the whole of the 1 battalion under his immediate command to be lost.

4 For ordering Capt. Smith of Col. Gist's regiment, who was leading one of the divisions, under the command of Capt. Forsyth of his own corps of horse who was a junior officer.

5 For giving the command of the forlorn hope to Lt. McCallister for some time annexed to his corps when the rest of the subalterns solicited that it should be balloted for.

6 For ordering a retreat from the fort before a party of the enemy in a redoubt had been made prisoners, which might easily have been effected and was solicited by many of the officers, and not only leaving that undone, but suffering the stores, block houses and works to remain entire, when they might easily have been destroyed.

7 For bringing off his party in such a confused, irregular and unmilitary a manner that they might have fallen an easie prey to a very inconsiderable number of the enemy, had they attempted to have intercepted him.

8 and lastly, For behaving and acting in a manner unbecoming an officer and a gentlemen [sic].

What I have before said respects the 1–2–4–5 & 6 charges. Concerning the 3d. Maj. Lee could not certainly be chargeable with disorder &ca. As for the matter of losing part of the 1 Battn. the officer who led the platoon was responsible—more especially as Lee was obliged to reconnoitre the roads, keep a lookout upon his guides, and superintend the whole. The 7th charge, Maj. Lee says is against
the only part of his conduct on which he claims any merit. He sent all his prisoners (157) with his lame and fatigued men forward, composing a rear guard with about fifty under his own immediate command, with which he so warmly received Colonel Buskirk's party that he thought fit to return without having been able to make any impression.

The 8th charge you know is a matter of course.

Yrs.

S. S.

Bradford is here as an evidence—he was a volunteer in the attack—Carter came since I began writing—they both send their regards, as does also Gen. Greene, Gen. Knox and the gentlemen of the families.

V

1st October 79

Upon honor, dear Sargent, till you hear my apology, I think you have great reason to consider me as a very inattentive correspondent. Your letter of the 8th ult° was dated one day after I set out on my way to Jersey, and on my return the 18th I was told there was such a letter but nobody knew where it was. I d—d Carter verbally, for his carelessness—and in my heart almost cursed the G, because he did not take charge of it—but all this availed nothing—the letter in removing from West Point to this place was gone. Four or five days after I was lamenting the loss of it in the hearing of Draper, who called to pay his compliments to the Ladies—"Why (says this epitome of a man) I can tell you where it is—have you looked in the great book that used to lay on the table? I saw it there." The great book was immediately overhauled and there lay your letter. Carter swears this is the only piece of service Draper ever did in his life. For the other seven days which have elapsed, I have been constantly employed, in making out returns writing for the General &ca.


24 New Windsor.

25 Gen. Glover's Brigade as part of Gen. Howe's Division had taken to the field and was operating east of the Hudson near Verplank's Point. Upham, *op. cit.*, 60.
not so much as an hours amusement with any of the gender—cold weather—the rum all out—and to add to your vexation that poor devil Bengen\textsuperscript{26} taken to his scrapers[?]—God help you, and send better times. On a consultation the General concluded to send Capt. Barr\textsuperscript{27} to Philadelphia in search of your deserters. I accordingly wrote to him, but the letter came back, and I was informed he was at Albany by permission of Lt. Col. Stevens.\textsuperscript{28} On receipt of your letter the 23d announcing Bengen’s return (for which I dare say you rewarded him with a damnd flogging) the General was of opinion, as you had recovered \textit{him}—and as the other two would be able to keep out of the way of an officer in such a place as Philadelphia, and considering the expence that would attend sending an officer—that on the whole the first loss was the best—and has therefore given no further orders about the matter.

I did not forget you to your friends in Jersey—though I had not an opportunity of being so much at Mr. L. as I wished. There was a great deal of business for me to do at Pluckemin, accounts to settle & pay, baggage to send off, and Mrs. K. very desirous of getting on to camp, insomuch that the fag end of two afternoons was \textit{all} I could get to spend with the dear creature in whose company I should be happy to pass an eternity. At that place and at Mr. L.’s they enquired after you. I told the latter that in your last letter to me you desired your best regards to Mr. & Mrs. L.,\textsuperscript{29} the young ladies, and the rest of the good family. I thought there seemed to be something of reserve in the behavior of the little Girl who is the object of your kindest wishes, and I had not in my power to say anything but what was addressed to the ladies in general—which is by no means interesting. The circle in return sent their compliments to Capt. Sargent. From the above account I think you can gather just—nothing; but it was all I could pick up—if there was more you should be welcome to it. I

\textsuperscript{26} Sargent’s servant.

\textsuperscript{27} Capt. Thomas Barr of the 3d Continental Artillery.

\textsuperscript{28} Lt. Col. Ebenezer Stevens of the 3d Continental Artillery.

\textsuperscript{29} Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Lott "who lived in handsome style at Beaverwyck, eight miles from Morristown." Of this family General Greene wrote his wife in 1777, "Mr. Lott’s household have engaged you to spend the summer there. They are one of the finest families you ever saw. The old gentleman and his lady are as merry as boys of fourteen; there are four or five young ladies of delicate sentiments and polite education." Mellick, \textit{op. cit.}, 475. Sargent was in love with Cornelia, one of their four daughters. A. V. Phillips, \textit{The Lott Family in America} (Trenton, 1942), 30.
wish you had a few such opportunities as Carter has. Under the same roof, and, as often as he pleases, enjoying the company and conversation of Eliza, it is his own look out if he does not make himself agreeable. I think he comes on, so do we all. The Fair does not seem displeased with the assiduity and attention of her gallant—tho' nobody takes notice of it to her—and Carter himself I think begins to hope. Good heavens, Sargent, I wish you and I could say so much. I'm sensible a man never makes a more ridiculous figure than he does under the restraint which the presence of the dear girl lays him, before he has the happiness of being more intimately acquainted than is the case with either you or myself. I have laughed at Carter repeatedly for what I then termed his diffidence, but experience has convinced me that it was no fault of his, and I now think he manages tolerably.

I'll quit this subject and tell you, that there is authentic intelligence that on the 2d ult° an officer of Count D'Estaing's fleet arrived at Charlestown and informed the government there that the Count was on their coast, and desired their co-operation against the British force in Georgia—further, that the Minister of France has just received dispatches that the Count, on the 8th had blocked up the enemy in Savannah, and intended in a day or two to make a vigorous attack both by sea and land. In consequence of this intelligence M. Gerard, the late Minister has postponed his departure for France, in order that he may have the happiness of announcing the good tidings to his royal master. We are here on the tenter hook of expectation—nothing less than destroying or taking the whole will answer the ideas that are formed.\textsuperscript{30} I congratulate you on the part the Spainyard has taken\textsuperscript{31}—there is like to be pretty warm work in Europe. By the parliamentary debates the people of England are cursedly frightened; an invasion of their Island and all its concomitant horrors stare them in the face. The D—l help 'em.

Harrison has returned from Philadelphia, where he was very sick—he desires his compliments. Mrs. K. stoped at Chester on our way

\textsuperscript{30} Shaw had his information promptly, since Washington had only just received intelligence of D'Estaing's maneuver on the day Shaw forwarded the news to Sargent. Fitzpatrick, \textit{op. cit.}, XVI, 373, 377. The date of D'Estaing's arrival is variously reported by historians; such authorities as Stone, Lodge, Lossing and Fisher each assign a different day of the month for that event.

\textsuperscript{31} Spain declared war on England in June, 1779.
from Jersey—the French Ambassador put up at the same house, and
Morris, Carter, and myself went to lodge at Smiths, . . . .

The Board for settling rank having been prevented from meeting
till this day are now sitting. You shall know the result as soon as
possible. I suppose you have before this seen Maj. Lee's acquittal—
the manner of it reflects the highest honor, not only on him, but on
the Court before whom he was tried.

Believe me, dear Sargent, affectionately your friend & Servt.

S.S.

New Windsor, 1 Octo 1779

VI

10th October 1779

On my conscience, Sargent, you have no cause for applying the
old adage—but lovers are a damn'd unreasonable set of beings. I was
well aware of this, and therefore gave you every thing the shortness
of my visit allowed me to collect—a simple narration of the little
that occurred, without embellishment or comment. In compliance
with your request I have endeavored to recollect, but to no purpose—
there was no alteration in the countenance, and if the mentioning
your name caused any emotion (which it certainly must of some
kind or other—for, as you rightly observe, there can be no indiffer-
ence in such cases) in the breast of the charming girl, she managed
the matter so well that her looks were by no means indicative of
what passed there. Perhaps it was the most unapropos time possible
—candles lighted—tea going round—the ladies seated—the Father
present—and Mr. Gutihe (I believe that's his name) placed between
Getty 32 and her lovely sister—and Col. L. 33 just setting out to pass
the night at Morris with his wife who had been there for some days.
Thus circumstanced I introduced myself to the circle—and as soon
as it could be done with any grace I brought you on the carpet. My
friend has already been told what followed—I was then sorry that
it would not be in my power to pour oil and wine into your wound.
I wished to have lengthened my visit and should certainly have done
it had not little Sally, who was with me, been under a necessity of

33 Presumably Lt. Col. William Smith Livingston, formerly aide to Gen. Greene, who had
married Catherine Lott, one of Abraham Lott's daughters. Ibid., 30; Mellick, op. cit., 475.
going to Mr. Ogden's that night. These particulars, I hope, will account for the "nothing" which was the result of all the observations I could then make.

Bay Richmond \(^{34}\) dining with us yesterday afforded me an opportunity of making some enquiries—he went no farther than Ringwood and I believe if his going to B—yk depended solely on any particular penchant for the amiable cause of your anxiety the good family would have very little of his company—indeed you've nothing to apprehend from that quarter—I wish I could add or from any other. Report says, that Col. Ball\(^{35}\) is very assiduous—that he corresponds with the old gentleman—and is on a good footing with the family. Tilghman\(^{36}\) was my informant, but could not tell whether any thing particular had passed between the parties more immediately concerned. What effect will, or ought, this intelligence produce? It has been remarked by several of your friends and Col. L. among the rest that your diffidence and want of perseverance has been undoubtedly prejudicial to you in this affair—none of them suppose you her aversion—her acceptance of you as a partner at some of our parties when she might have excused herself without any difficulty, is adduced by them to prove the contrary. I had a good deal of conversation last evening with Eliza on the subject—the dear creatures had been several times together and you the topic—nothing said about Ball—Eliza seemed to be a little upon her guard, but from what I could observe I think she is of opinion that there is something yet to be done on your part. Indeed, she acknowledged that a lady might, and very probably does sometimes, entertain sentiments in favor of a person on a further acquaintance, for whom at first she had an indifference at least. She insisted however that she did not know how far this would apply in the present case, but concluded (as I did too) that you had been rather precipitate in the proposition of the matter at first, and that on a second trial you might (tho' in reality the same) be considered a very different person from him who made the first. From the time of your declaring your sentiments sufficient opportunities have been given—and I doubt not the family have

\(^{34}\) Possibly Thomas Baylies Richmond, born in Dighton, Massachusetts, in 1752. Joshua Bailey Richmond, *The Richmond Family 1594-1896* (Boston, 1897), 180.

\(^{35}\) Lt. Col. Burgess Ball of Virginia.

\(^{36}\) Tench Tilghman, Washington's Aide.
improved them in gaining a competent knowledge of your circumstances, connections and prospects. Taking these for granted, you cannot be at a loss what course to pursue, though, after what has past, I would prefer transacting the matter *viva voce* rather than by any other mode. Though I have not had an oppo. since the receipt of yours (which came to hand yesterday) of hearing Mrs. K.'s sentiments yet I have reason to believe that on this occasion they are similar to those of Eliza.

I thank you, my dear friend, for your good wishes—and wish they may be returned seven fold into your own bosom. "How do you come on?" is an opportant [sic] enquiry. Ah, Sargent, would to God I could answer it satisfactorily, my visit to the engaging Naid (and a more engaging one never frequented ancient or modern stream) has convinced me that I am gone irrecoverably. I was sensible this must be the consequence of an interview. I thought I was prepared for it. Heavens! how was I mistaken. "I love the dear girl—my views are direct—why then should I fear acquainting her that she reigns sole mistress of my heart?"—very good in theory—and as I jog'd along I thought it might easily be reduced to practice—nay, I had, *as far as a man in love is capable*, determined, absolutely determined, to try the experiment. Alas, how little—how very little, Sargent, do we know of our own hearts! I saw her, conversed with her, and all my fine spun reasoning vanished! She had been indisposed for about a week and had not, on account of the weather being unfavorable, yet ventured abroad—it added an air of tenderness to her whole deportment, a sweet sensibility that penetrated my very soul. I felt benevolence for her in the extreme, and would have given all I possess to have been able to tell her so—but that was not in my power. The infancy of our acquaintance—a fear of offending—a hope that on a nearer intimacy I might possibly render myself agreeable to her—and a thousand other hopes and fears gave me to understand then was not the time. I therefore contented myself with paying every attention my situation would allow—talked with the ladies in a general way—in the course of the evening took a lesson from Mrs. B. at Polish drafts—had the temerity to play with Her who had already won my heart, and was beaten—I hope this ill luck is not ominous—as I must trust my stars for the issue of the interesting game I have yet to play.
Not a word more of Count D'Estaing since my last. Perhaps he intends announcing his good fortune himself. If so, I wish he'd bear a hand for there's no time to be lost. You desire my dear friend, to be informed of the plan for the intended operations, as far as may be proper. I would readily gratify you, but upon my honor from your mode of treating the subject you know more of the matter than I do. I believe that should Count succeed against the enemy in Georgia and come this way in season (in the course of the present month) something of importance would be undertaken against New York. Orders are given to the different departments to make adequate provision for such an event. A sufficient force I imagine can be got together, for you know such an enterprise has long been the great hobby horse of the continent, though I believe very few have set down and counted the cost. It is very certain the enemy will struggle hard, and should we succeed it will be far from turning out a bloodless conquest. Our corps will have a considerable share in the hard knocks and I hope gain some honor. It will be a school of experience, and perhaps of promotion to some of us young fellows—what do you think of a battalion or at least of a majority? I flatter myself that (by the blessing of God, as physicians say) a company may fall to my share. How would it endear us, Sargent, to the lovely girls when they regarded us as having an agency in a transaction which would restore them in peace to the much loved city and their friends! Tis a pleasing idea—I wish to Heaven we could realise it. Sullivan has played the devil with the Indian settlements, forty odd of which it is said he has entirely destroyed. He is now on his return and will probably join the main army pretty soon. His Excellency says that he has acted up to his most sanguine expectations. His corps will be a considerable addition to our force, and as the lads seem pretty fond of fighting it is odds but they get a belly full of it. Then too we shall have the Monsieurs, perhaps six thousand, from whom, though they fight for the honor of the Nation, we may probably derive some solid advantages.

By some late proceedings of Congress things appear to wear a good aspect. John Adams Esqr. is appointed sole plenipotentiary for the purpose of negotiating a peace, and is to reside at Paris till a fit opportunity offers—and Mr. Jay goes Ambassador to the Court of Spain. Mr. Dana and Mr. Carmichael, both members of Congress,
are Secretaries to these embassies, and Col. Laurens (late Aid to the C. in Chief) to that of Paris under Doct. Franklin. From this act of Congress, and from a very recent one of the Dons, there can be no doubt of their being reckoned among our allies; but I am equally at a loss with yourself for an adjective that may suit this new, or rather future, noun. The recent act alluded to is simply this—the Dons have concerted and are now actually engaged in an enterprise against the Floridas—in which God speed them. It will all serve to distress our inveterate foe.

There has been hell to pay in Philadelphia. The Committee for regulating prices having dissolved themselves, the mobility took the matter in hand. The advanced price of every thing they said was owing to the influence of the tories, and by G–d they should be driven out of the State. Accordingly on Monday afternoon they went to the number of 150, armed with muskets, to the house of a Mr. Wilson, whom they determined should be the first sent away. Mr. W. having received an intimation of this intention got a number of his friends together, among whom were Generals Mifflin and Thompson, and other respectable characters, armed them, and barricaded his house. The mob assaulted, and Gen. Mifflin putting his head out of a window to speak to them narrowly escaped being killed, a musket ball striking within a few inches of him. Finding they could not carry the house by musketry they sent for a piece of artillery, and had almost got it to the place when a party of eight of the city dragoons galloped sword in hand, cutting and slashing among the thickest of them, and soon put the whole to the rout. The Gentlemen who gave me this information were eye witness to the whole affair and left the city the same evening. In the house one gentleman was killed and three wounded, and on the part of the mob five killed and fourteen wounded. It is hoped that a spirited interposition of the executive powers of the State will prevent a renewal of the tragedy.

Our friends here desire a remembrance with you. Farewell.

S.S.

New Windsor 10 Octo 1779

37 James Wilson’s house, which stood on the southwest corner of Third and Walnut Streets, won the name of Fort Wilson in the ensuing clash. The city dragoons were actually members of the First Troop, Philadelphia City Cavalry. About twenty participated in the charge on the mob. “At once the cry was raised ‘The Horse, the Horse,’ and as the sword was freely used, the rioters gave way in every direction.” Book of the First Troop Philadelphia City Cavalry (Philadelphia, 1915), 28.
Carrington\(^{38}\) still remains at this Place with his detachment. Harrison\(^{39}\) is returned to Phila. in the suit of Mons. Gerard who paid His Excellency a visit a few days since previous to his departure for Europe. He will be back again shortly.

VII

27th October 1779

I wish, my dear friend, it were as easy answering yours of the 19th as it is those of the 10th and 22d. Col. Popkins\(^{40}\) informed me he had wrote to you respecting cloathing—and yesterday morning I forwarded your advertisement to Philadelphia.\(^{41}\) I pray God it may have the desired effect, and that by some means or other you may get Mr. Bengen again in your clutches.

I am exceedingly glad that what followed in my letter was of so consolatory a nature as to remove the horrid ideas which the "report" had impress'd you with. With how much facility do we sometimes torment ourselves! Had not your apprehension been so quick—or rather had not fear got the better of hope—you would have read on, and soon found, to your satisfaction, that there is more room for the latter than for the former of these passions. Though I told you literally and nearly verbatim, what Tilghman said respecting Col. B. and the dear girl of your affections, yet admitting his information had been good (which by the bye we are neither of us certain of) I cannot

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\(^{38}\) Lt. Col. Edward Carrington of the 1st Continental Artillery.

\(^{39}\) Col. Charles Harrison, who commanded the 1st Continental Artillery, appears to have been one of the principals in the Chester episode narrated in the first of these letters.

\(^{40}\) Lt. Col. John Popkin of the 3d Continental Artillery.

\(^{41}\) Bengen had run off again. The Pennsylvania Packet for November 4, 1779, carried the following advertisement: "FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD, Will be given by Capt. Sargent, of the third battalion of Artillery, for apprehending and delivering to his company, Cornelius Bengen, a native of Amsterdam, very imperfect in his pronunciation of English, about five feet eight inches high, blue eyes, short and dark sandy coloured hair, with a very red complexion, well made, and soldierly in his gait. He wore when he went away a crimson light infantry coat and white overalls, a large round hat ornamented with a fox tail. It is probable he may change his dress, as he has it very amply in his power by robbing his master of a variety of clothing, money, and other matters of value, amongst which are some camp cups and spoons, silver, marked W. Sargent, Artillery, a fashionable gold watch, etc., etc.

In addition to the above reward a very generous price will be given for every article recovered with the above described fellow.

Gen. Howe's Division, east of
Hudson's River, Oct. 22"
possibly apprehend your case either desperate or dangerous. Nor can I suppose, from any thing I have as yet been able to collect, that she has any prepossession in his favor. Indeed I think his general cast and the turn he has for a dissipated life, added to the treatment he received from a Lady in Virginia in consequence of these qualifications circumstances pretty well known—will have no favorable influence with a Lady of C—'s good sense and amiable disposition. So much for your rival—or supposed one. On the other hand has not the silence of my friend since his first and only overtures given the dear creature cause to suppose he never intends to renew them? If so, it is impossible should her sentiments have changed ever so much in his favor that he can be acquainted with them, except by a second trial. The sex, my dear Sargent, you must be sensible, require a vast deal of attention, and much assiduity on the part of a lover, if not importunity—for I believe it will be readily allowed a woman seldom says yes the first time of asking. On the whole, my advice is to renew the attack. Don't write—winter quarters are at hand—with a little maneuvering you will carry the outworks—and then if you take your measures like a skillful general the citidal must surrender.

What in the name of God has become of Count D'Estaing? It is six or seven weeks since his arrival at Georgia and no authentic accounts of his operations in that quarter! I fear we shall gain no promotion by the exploits of our great allies this way. The season is too far advanced to expect any flattering consequences from his arrival at this time; and I believe the only honor we shall derive from his coming will be that of furnishing him with bread and beef for a West India Voyage. Our British friends too, by the evacuation of their posts in our neighbourhood have deprived us of some solid advantages—we could not have gone into Winter quarters without attacking, and whatever might have been the issue, promotion must have attended some of us. Appropos. You have risen one step higher on this ladder, but in a very different way from the one we've been speaking of. Capt. Lee having used some indecent language to a Capt. Williams of the Maryland line was next morning called to an

42 Circumstantially Captain Lee would appear to be Captain James Lee of the 2d Continental Artillery who resigned December 11, 1779.

43 At this time there were two captains of the Maryland Line of this name, Lilburn and Nathan. See Heitman, op. cit., 596.
account by that gentleman. They met accordingly, when Lee urging the ruin of his family, which he said would be inevitable, should he fall in the affair, Williams very generously, on a very slight conces-
sion, forgave him. After Williams was gone to his boat, Lee drew his sword, cut a few capers and boasted that he had drove him off. This being carried to Williams, who was not out of call, he returned and gave Lee a handsome drubbing with a cane, to which he submitted with the utmost resignation. An arrest of Lee was the consequence, but before the day appointed for his trial came on he beg’d leave to quit the army—his request has been granted and I have now his dis-
charge in my pocket. Lee’s conduct in this matter is really unaccount-
able. On every occasion in the field, particularly at Princeton, he has given indisputable proofs of bravery.

Duelling seems to be much in fashion. You know the manner in which D. Cutting has been treated by Archer & Fishbourn. The clamour against Him was so great that he was under a necessity of coming to camp to vindicate his character, some of his friends having told him, that unless he did do it, they would never look on him again. Maj. Morris (Jacob) came as his second—Archer would make no concessions—and they blazed away at each other. Both the first pistols missed. Cutting again offered to accept a reasonable con-
cession, but it was denied—on which he fired again and broke Archer’s right arm. The story is told much to Cutting’s advantage—
his whole behavior indicated politeness—firmness—and humanity. I am very glad for Cutting’s sake—for he had no possible alternative but fighting or infamy.

Carter desires his love to you. He has received your letters and wrote to you yesterday. Matters seem to be taking a turn in his favor. I wish, Sargent, you and I could say as much—however let us live in hope and the dear girls may yet be kind.

Adieu—believe me sincerely
your friend S. S.

New Windsor 27 Octo. 1779

VIII

31st October 1779

Alas poor Sargent! I not only condole with you on your loss, but participate of your vexation and disappointment. While there was a
hope that Mr. Bengen might be taken I flattered myself that you would soon enjoy the exquisite satisfaction of again having the villain in your power. But the measures he took, and the countenance shewn him by those civilized barbarians, the polished robbers of Britain, has destroyed all expectation of so pleasing an event. Did not I think that my friend could maledict the rascally thief, and his more rascally receivers, in the true spirit of Ernulphus himself, I would charitably contribute my mite; but as none will dispute your ability in that way—to the long string of execrations so justly their due, I devoutly subscribe an hearty amen.

We have, at last, some intelligence from the Southward. Count D'Estaing has taken the Experiment, Sr. James Wallace of 50 guns—the Ariel, and the Fowey of smaller rates (between 30 and 20 guns) with all the transports, store ships, provisions &ca to a large amount belonging to the enemy. 44 The Garrison at Beaufort under Col. Maitland 45 had just time to escape, leaving their baggage, artillery, stores and hospital, and joined Gen. Prevost 46 at Savannah where they are closely besieged by the allied army. They are strongly fortified and said to be three thousand. The Count landed 5,000 & is joined by Gen. Lincoln with 4,000 more. The besieged have been repulsed in two sallies. The Allies make regular approaches—on the 2d batteries of thirty eight heavy cannon and 8 mortars were to open on their works, and there was no doubt but in a few days the whole would be obliged to surrender. By dispatches found on board the ships it appears that Cornwallis with four thousand troops was to have gone there, which in conjunction with Prevost would have undoubtedly done the business for the Southern States—but the fortunate interposition of the Count has saved them. I forgot to mention that on board Sir James Wallace were taken General Vaughan and twenty other officers—hard cash for paying the troops in Georgia, and four thousand suits of cloathes. I hope we shall soon hear further good news from that quarter. As much as I have related you may depend on for truth.

44 The news of this action which took place at the beginning of September was not received by Washington until October 29. Shaw's letter contains in detail the information Washington received in a letter from Henry Laurens on that date. Fitzpatrick, op. cit., XVII, 39.
46 Gen. Augustine Prevost commanded the British forces in the successful defense of Savannah.
I congratulate you on the above—on the evacuation of Rhode Island—and on the capture of Col. Simcoe, your old acquaintance at Kingsbridge, who fell into the hands of the militia in the enemy’s late incursion into Jersey.

Believe me dear Sargent very sincerely your friend & servt.

S.S.

New Windsor 31 Octo. 1779

IX

10th November 1779

Although, my dear friend, I sufficiently regret missing the opportunity by Conductor Cook, of acknowledging your agreeable brace, yet as I could give you no satisfactory information respecting the principal matter contained in them, I am not altogether inconsolable. I wish I could now make amends, by communicating to you all that intelligence which you are so desirous to obtain, but the means of doing it have not been in my power, nor have I had the pleasure of seeing either the General or our epitome since your favors came to hand. As for Billy’s budget, it is something like himself, a little contradictory or so—and the authority of D—I think sufficient to invalidate the report you mention, to say nothing of Mr. L.’s letter to the General. This last is a matter of so much consequence to you, that I will leave no methods untried to come at an explanation of the affair there alluded to. Mrs. G.’s arrival in the neighbourhood of West Point gives me some hopes that my endeavors in that way will succeed. I expect to go there in a day or two, and hope my friend will derive some consolation from the issue of my visit.

You ask me two questions—one of which I can readily answer, I do go to Boston this winter. But as to the other, when or where we shall take up our quarters I can only conjecture. As I devoutly wish, so I easily believe they will be in Jersey. But I fear the etiquette observed by our magnanimous and very polite allies in their transactions with those refractory gentry at the Southward will be a means of detaining us beyond our wishes from the pleasures and entertainments of our academic exercises. Nothing has been received from that quarter since my last. It is pleasing to see with how much patience

47 General Greene’s wife. She was a close friend of Cornelia Lott for whom she named her second daughter. Mellick, op. cit., 475.
people are waiting for the arrival of the good tidings—tho' when the former news came, they would have considered the person as a fool or a madman who did not firmly believe that five days would give us ample satisfaction and confirm their most sanguine expectations. For my own part I am still willing to hope, and shall not grumble if it should be five days longer, provided it does come at last. As to the idea of a co-operation against New York I think it out of the question; my sentiments are the same as they ever have been on this subject—and to attempt an enterprise of so arduous a nature at this season of the year with such a ragged bare—army as we have, and, what's worse, shall have during the winter, would be downright quixotism.

From the bare mention of your present situation and the knowledge I have of its destitute condition I am far from envying you. Good Heavens! how shall I pity you, Sargent, should it be your lot to winter there. The very reflection chills me. There will undoubtedly be troops keep [sic] there and perhaps it will be necessary they have artillery. Pray fervently, old fellow, that it may not be your d—n'd hard fortune,—it would be a worse stroke than Bengen's desertion. Do you know, my friend, that I am most agreeably disappointed? I thought you never would have forgiven that rascal any part of his wickedness. Judge then what an exalted idea I entertain of your benevolence in forgiving him everything, but the "abuse of confidence." Charity itself could not require you should do more—and I can only wish, which I do most heartily, that you may have full opportunity for the exercise of the first mentioned virtue towards that vile catif.

Adieu, believe me sincerely your friend

S.S.

10th November  
Capt. Sargent

X  
17th Novb. 1779

Indeed, my dear friend, I join very devoutly in your prayer: for you and me to be denied the pleasures we have promised ourselves

48 Glover's Brigade was located on November 25, 1779, "in the gorge of the mountains on the east side of the river [Hudson] and Verplank's Point." Its headquarters were at Camp Peeks Kill. Upham, op. cit., 60.
in Jersey the ensuing winter would be a disappointment second to nothing but an exclusion from Heaven. As we are apt to believe what we wish I flatter myself that you will join us at our old quarters— to this end I shall prove my faith by my works, and use every argument I can devise to effect it. As the artillery under our Colonel is coming on we shall certainly have a considerable part of the battalion with us, but no arrangements are yet made—when they are, my best endeavors shall not be wanting on your behalf. The Park is to move the day after tomorrow. Carter and myself go on with the ladies tomorrow. My next will be from Pluckemin when I wish to send you good tidings. The ragged condition of your own men, but more especially those of Clark’s who are without an officer to provide for them, shall be closely urged. I spoke to the General on the matter of cloathing for them yesterday, but he can procure no relief for them at present. Knowles has a few articles in his possession which are to be proportioned to the companies, and there are some small matters, such as shoes, stockings, shirts, &ca. to be drawn from the state store in a day or two, of which you will come in for a share. Hall is acquainted with these particulars.

Our expectations of good news from the Southward are at an end. the jigg is up. Count D’Estaing and Gen. Lincoln have been repulsed with considerable loss in an assault upon Savannah on the 9th ulto—in consequence of which the siege was to be immediately raised and the Count to take his departure for the West Indies. Poor unfortunate fellow! twice have his designs in our favor been baffled. This continent is certainly hostile to the Monsieures. God send them better luck among the islands. Tis said the assailants behaved gallantly, and that the Americans were the last who gave way—nay more, that on the British making a sally on the retiring troops, our countrymen rallied and drove them with the utmost precipitation back to their works. Such behavior must impress our allies with ideas

49 At Morristown, scene of the winter encampment of 1777.
50 Knox’s artillery brigade was preparing to move to its winter camp site, about half a mile to the northwest of the Morristown Green on the Mendham road. The brigade consisted of three artillery regiments and Baldwin’s Artillery Artificer Regiment, less detachments such as Sargent’s. Andrew M. Sherman, Historic Morristown, New Jersey (Morristown, 1905), 302.
52 Lt. James Hall of the 3d Continental Artillery.
much to our advantage. The issue of this enterprise is a striking proof of the uncertainty of the events of war. At one time success appeared certain and nothing but the "interposition of the devil, 'propría persona' (the stile of letters from that quarter) could prevent it"

The next brings accounts of a disagreeable repulse—the siege raised—and our suffering allies pushing off their boat. 'Tis the fortune of war—let us make the best of it.

I have not been able to see Mrs. G. She is gone on to Morris Town—the charming C. is not at B—-yk but at Trenton on a visit at Col. Coxe's, Dr. knows nothing of the letter from Mr. L. but says he's sure B. has no intentions that way—and if he had he believes they would be of no service to him. Our intelligence from D. is pretty authentic—tis whispered he is not disagreeable to the other sister (the musical one). This is a secret I have but lately heard hinted. How should you like him, dear Sargent, for a brother? He professes a great esteem for you—swears he thinks you very clever, and to crown his benevolence wishes C and yourself were better acquainted! I will not tell you that I profess and think as he does respecting your—lest you should fancy I had accompanied our friend Jack in his late trip to Ireland. [Mss torn] rember "polite, sensible and agre[eable]—but believe me, dear Sargent, that no one really wishes you better than

Your friend,

S.S.

New Windsor 17 Nov. 1779
Capt. Sargent

XI

I thank you, dear Sargent, for your valedictory note—it was a disappointment to me that you did not call before you went off. I had much to say to you then which would be of little consequence now—some questions to ask respecting your agreeable partner at Baskenridge &ca. I am told that you behaved with becoming dignity to the

53 Daniel Coxe, III, was one of Trenton's most distinguished loyalists. His military title probably derives from his having raised the West Jersey Volunteers in 1777 and 1778. A History of Trenton 1679-1929 (Princeton, 1929), 1, 141.

54 Sargent had rejoined the main army for a brief while and then returned to Howe's Division, this time to serve as Howe's aide.
Brunette, who, if my informant was right, seemed rather piqued at the coldness and inattention of her late inamorato. So true it is that no female can endure to see another command that attention which had been once paid herself.

Our assembly opens next Wednesday— we shall be all alive—or rather dead—for modesty never were a set of rakes that some of the dear creatures in this quarter—three nights going till after two o'clock have they made us keep it up. Your friend was exceedingly happy last Monday in attending the two sisters from Raritan to Mount Hope—they came as far as our quarters with John Jacob—dined and went on that evening. As the D. would have it, we were to have a hop the ensuing evening which obliged me to come off in the morning before the sweet rogues opened their peepers—but it shall not be long before I have at them again.

Adieu—yours

S.S.

I am exceedingly busie, which must apologize for the shortness of this. Shall see you in three weeks.
Morris 19 Feby 1780

XII

3d March 1780

My dear Friend,

Some business—some amusements—and my own inclination have detained me thus long from setting out on my journey Eastward. The circle of pretty creatures is so engaging there seems to be no quitting it. Your plaintive note (it was not long enough for a letter) was handed me by Mr. Scott, last Wednesday evening at the assembly, where from my soul I wish'd you present. The d—d wilderness where you sojourn I am afraid will spoil you as a companion in any thing that is social. If I did not apprehend it would increase the "irascible melancholy" you already complain of, I would give you an account of the assembly—but I'll run the venture of it, as you think me sometimes too apt to omit, or slightly pass over, matters of such a kind. There was no detachment either from Baskenridge, Beverwyck

55 Washington and thirty-three other officers each subscribed four hundred dollars, Continental currency, to support the Morristown dancing assembly of 1780. This sum, $13,600 in all, was worth about $300 in silver. Sherman, op. cit., 348–350.
or Elizabeth Town—nor did the Ladies from Raritan favor us with their company. From this negative detail you easily see there were no observations to be made which could be of service either to my friend or myself—so I sauntered away the evening with as much vacancy of thought as any gentleman need do. But depend on it, should any opportunities offer I shall not let them slip—and I hope our next assembly will present some. Two causes very probably kept the ladies before mentioned, as well as many others, away on that night who may favor us with their company the next, bad weather, and a desire that certain of the sex have to be informed, before they venture, who and who do there assemble.

I have just returned from Mount Hope, after having passed a couple of days very agreeably with the lovely Maria and her amiable sister. I thank you, my dear friend, for your benediction, which tho’ at all times valuable, was more peculiarly so by including one of the best of her sex. Trust me, Sargent, were those whom you have so affectionately joined in it but once fairly brought together, I should think it past the power of fortune materially to injure me. By heavens, the more I know of that charming girl, the better I like her; every visit serves to confirm my attachment, and I feel myself gone past recovery. I have a great deal to say on this subject—but it must be deferred till we meet, which I hope will be in a fortnight—when as you say, we will compare notes. I wish most ardently to be able to afford you some consolation.

Nothing has turned up in the great, or rather military, world worth notice since your departure. It is supposed by many that the armament which left N. York last December are gone to see strange faces—good ridance to ’em. If so, the force remaining will scarcely be sufficient for our amusement the ensuing campaign.

Will you present me in the most respectful manner to Gen. Howe. Finley, who resides with us as a brother Aide, desires his regards to you.

Adieu, yours sincerely,
S. S.

Morris
29 Feby 1780

56 Clinton sailed from New York December 26, 1779, with an expedition of 7000 men to capture Charleston. This objective was accomplished May 12, 1780. Sydney George Fisher, *The Struggle for American Independence* (Philadelphia, 1908), 263, 264, 269.
3 March

The night before last we had another assembly. Cornelia was there—the company drew for partners, and she fell to me. I wish it had been possible to have put you in my place—but as it was not I endeavored to be servicable. She was sociable, and on her observing that the company was agreeable, I took the opportunity of remarking that there were many of our friends now absent who would be exceedingly happy to share in the present entertainment, instancing in the case of Gen. Howe and yourself. To this she assented, saying she believed the place where you now are did not afford much if any, and she supposed it must be a very disagreeable contrary to the diversions of Morris Town. This she gathered from Gen H’s letter to her Pappa, which she said seemed to indicate as much. She avoided, I thought studiously, making any mention of you, and when I did it she immediately gave the conversation another turn. In short, Sargent, from her manner, I’m sure she suspects me, and I think she will be exceedingly on her guard in future.

I rec’d a letter the day before yesterday from our friend Randall. The fates seem inclined at last to favor him. Out of debt—well clothed—and six thousand pounds Ster$ in pocket, are the fruits of his voyage. He desired his regards to you particularly.

Yrs.
S.S.

XIII

6th March 1780

I thank you, my dear Sargent, for your good news. I wish we may mutually rejoice in a confirmation of it—it will then be great indeed.

By the last Post you will find a letter from me, longer than I have time at present to write, as the Express is waiting. There is a detail of the most material occurrences since you left Morris—tho’ nothing which can be very interesting to you, as you [sic] “dear partner” has not since appeared to illumine our hemisphere. As soon as the roads become settled she will be in this quarter—but then, as my ill fortune will have it, I shall be out of it. Dunn$7 (St. Clairs Aide) gives me this information.

We seem to have abundance of good news lately. Count D’Estaing

$7 Maj. Isaac Budd Dunn.
in his passage to Europe, being separated from his company, was attacked by a British and a large frigate, both of whom after an obstinate conflict he obliged to strike. Himself was wounded—I believe there is no doubt of the truth of the above. All for the honor of the nation—he goes home covered with glory and (what with a Frenchman is tantamount) with scars. 'Tis said he is to command in the channel.

Things go on swimmingly in Ireland—in a short time Great Britain will be quite independent—of colonies—commerce and friends. The sooner the better. You and I, my dear friend, will then have an opportunity for practicing Yorick's cardinal virtues. If we do not "build houses, plant trees, write books," we shall I trust have no objection to "getting children." I leave this place next Friday week, and shall expect to see you on Sunday following. Till then—and ever—believe me affectionately

Your S.S.

6th March Morris Town
Capt. Sargent

XIV

My dear Sir,

Eight days since we left Boston and two days ride to Morris Town are (on account of my company) insuperable bars to my seeing you at this time. Be assured it is a disappointment which sits not a little heavy on me. I should have been exceedingly happy to have spent a day or two with you, but my furlough has been out three weeks. Probably the movements of our Army, or of our opponents, may facilitate an interview. After I have had time to look around I shall give you a sketch of matters and things in Jersey. Beverwyck and Elizabeth Town will not pass unnoticed. How does your heart stand affected to the dear Girl at the latter place? If Maria should frown—which Cupid forbid—I shall be a rival!!! My fellow travellers, Lillie and Mr. Winslow (Eliza's brother) desire their regards—present mine to the General, the Commodore, Langborne &ca.

Yours

S. Shaw

Peckskile 2d June 1780

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59 Maj. William Langbourne.
7 o’Clock P.M. Judge Coe’s to be our stage this night.

Col. Henly was gone to the Southward—has not returned

Major Sargent

XV

Boston

25 Jany 1781

So, my dear Sargent, that long liv’d meagre looking mortal, yclep’d Death, has, I am told, had the assurance to knock at your door. I am glad he only knocked. Three grains of reflection must have convinced him, that nothing could have been more mal apropos than his unseasonable visit, notwithstanding the unwearied endeavors of his good friends and assistants, Physic and Divinity, or rather Superstition, for his introduction. It has been said, that a soldier should be always ready when called upon. This I subscribe to, provided the word properly be inserted, and I am happy to find that your conduct on this occasion so perfectly coincided with my opinion. Your treatment of these gentry has been quite soldierly, and I think they will not have the hardiness to call again, until they are prepared to make the attack a la militaire, when I am persuaded your acquaintance with service will enable you to give them a genteel reception. To be serious—I should have been truly unhappy, had it not been in my power at this time to tell you, I most heartily rejoice in the prospects of your speedy recovery, and look forward with pleasure to the expiration of your furlough, which will give me an opportunity of taking you by the hand in camp.

As the rumor of the late revolution must have reached you, I suppose a recital of the matter will not be uninteresting to you. I shall therefore give you an exact detail of it, in as few words as the nature of the subject will allow.

The Pennsylvania line, in common with the rest of the Army, have long laboured under the want of pay, clothing and subsistence, pretty cogent reasons too, as one may say, for discontent. But they had, besides these, a grievance peculiar to themselves. Their original enlistments were “for three years, or during the war.” The soldiers say, that the term is optional with themselves, and make the distinction

60 Possibly Col. David Henly, although Heitman (op. cit.) lists him as retired April 23, 1779.
61 This is the only letter in this series addressed to Sargent as Major. Actually he was not brevetted major until August 28, 1783. Heitman, op. cit., 481.
between the words *and* & *or*, insisting that they were not to be held at any rate for more than three years, and that if the war terminated sooner, they should have their liberty. Their relative situation to the Army last winter, (the expiration of the three years) prevented any stir being made then. This winter gave them the wished for opportunity. At seventy miles distance from any opposition, but that of their officers, there was no great hazard in the attempt. Things being thus ripe, a most flagitious piece of injustice on the part of the Country gave the mutiny birth, and made it break forth with redoubled violence. You are well acquainted with the manner in which the states have furnished their levies for the past campaign, and the enormous bounties given on those occasions. At the expiration of the six months, the State of Pennsylvania sent a deputation to camp with six hundred half joes, to be given, three to each man, as a bounty to such of these levies as would then engage for the war. This was a disagreeable circumstance to veterans, who had served from the commencement of the war and had not during the whole time received so much real money. The chinking of the half joes in the ears of men in such a situation would have been too much for philosophers to bear—it certainly was for Pennsylvania soldiers. Accordingly on the night of the first instant, about eleven o’Clock, a regiment stationed on the left of the cantonments turned out, discharged their pieces, and marching down the whole line proclaimed a redress of grievances and called on their fellows to join them. The call was pretty generally attended to, and in two hours all opposition from the officers was ineffectual—many of whom were wounded, one mortally, and a captain killed. The great Wayne himself lost his influence—on cocking his pistol at one of the ringleaders, a whole platoon levelled at him and in the instant of doing it tore his clothes.62 “You may fire Sir, but you’re a dead man if you do.” Two regiments, in the first alarm, turned out under their own officers. The mutineers drew up in front and on their flank and called on them to join, when receiving no answer they commenced a fire of artillery and musketry, which laid eight of them dead on the spot and dispersed the rest in a twinkling. At two o’clock they marched off the ground with their

62 Several other extant accounts of Wayne’s encounter with the mutineers are not in complete accord with Shaw’s details. See Carl Van Doren, *Mutiny In January* (New York, 1943), 45.
artillery, six pieces, having taken all the spare ammunition &ca. two
days provision and about one hundred head of live cattle. On their
way to Veal Town a picket opposed their progress—they imme-
diately attacked it, and after a sharp conflict forced the Captain and
fifteen men to take shelter in a house, which they defended with great
bravery until it was carried by assault, when the Captain had the
good fortune to escape. The next morning they sent back a party to
bring on all stragglers and their baggage, wives, &ca. with a peremp-
tory order for the two regiments above mentioned to join them imme-
diately, under penalty of military execution. This was instantly com-
plied with, and Gen. Wayne, in addition to what provisions they had
taken, sent all that remained in the magazine, to prevent their
plundering the inhabitants on the route to Philadelphia, to which
place they declared they were marching.

At Middle Brook, Gen. Wayne, Col. W. Stewart & Col. Rd Butler had a conference with the revolters, being the only officers whom they would suffer to come near them. But, as the officers could only promise, their reply was “We can live no longer on promises” and immediately took up their line of march. When they got to Princeton the officers asked them to give their terms in writing, which was done by a committee of serjeants to this purpose—a new enlistment with the bounty given the new levies, viz 3 half joes—their arrearages of pay and clothing—and a pardon. It was answered, that their demands involved consequences of so extensive a nature as to become the objects of legislation, the officers not being competent to a decision of so important a matter; but if they would continue their march to Trenton, a committee from Congress and the State would meet them at that place and redress all their grievances. The mutineers replied, “We don’t know what could put Trenton into your heads—we had never an intention of going there. We know our strength and the predicament we are in too well to trust ourselves any farther. We are on proper ground to negociate with gentlemen of any condition; and if our terms are not fully complied with we shall take such steps as will lead to our safety.” This was the situation of matters on the 4th, which was the last information His Excellency had when we left Head Quarters the 7th.

63 Col. Walter Stewart and Col. Richard Butler were Wayne’s brigade commanders.
64 Wayne’s letter of January 4 was received by Washington on the sixth. Ibid., 78.
The enemy received the account of this revolt on the 3d, with
greater transports of joy than any event during the war has afforded
them. All the 4th was spent in making preparations for a landing in
Jersey, which was expected to take place the next morning. The
situation of the revolters was critical—the moment you took any
measures which looked like force you drove them to the enemy.
Wayne had ordered all his officers to join him and was determined as
a dernier resort (to use his own expression) to take such measures
against them as would make the fate of himself and his officers
rather to be envied than pitied.

Matters being thus situated, the Commander in Chief, dispatched
Gen. Knox to the Eastern States, to tell them that unless something
effectual was immediately done for relieving the soldiery, it was in
vain to expect their services another campaign. We have been to
New Hampshire, who with the other States have taken the alarm.
They have all agreed to give the old soldiers a gratuity of three half
joes per man *immediately*, and they promise to make it their first
concern to see that ample justice is observed in future compacts
with them. We leave Town this day on our return to camp. No other
accounts have yet come to hand. We anxiously wait the issue.

Since I parted with you, not a single particle of intelligence has
come to hand from the dear, bewitching little creatures that have
given you and me so much pleasure and so much pain. Whatever
turns up in that quarter shall be the subject of a future letter. This
is unreasonably long.

Do let me hear from you and by all means assure me of your recov-
er. God bless you, my dear friend, Believe no one is more interested
for your happiness than

Your affectionate

S. S.

Capt. Sargent

XVI

New Windsor
12 Feby 1781

Dear Sargent,

By the *excellent* arrangement of our post riders your favor of the
3d ulto got to hand only four days ago. After a few more mails shall
be taken and carried into New York perhaps the circuitous and
dangerous route which the riders take may be changed for the better.

I had not until two days previous to my leaving this place for
Boston been informed of your sickness. I sincerely condoled with
you on the misfortune, but was much relieved on my arrival in Town
to find you had got safe to those friends whose happiness will increase
in proportion as your health returns. Had I been master of my own
time I should have allotted part of it for a visit to my sick friend, but
the circumstances of the journey rendered it impossible for me to
give him that proof of my affection. I was so hurried with business
during the short time I was there that I was absolutely obliged to
steal the hour I devoted in writing my letter to you. I hope it found
its way, and that your health is so far recovered that I may expect
soon to be favored with a line in return.

A compromise has been made with the revolted Pennsylvanians—
but upon such terms as reflect no honor on those who granted them.
About one half of the line have been discharged as three years men;
and where the original enlistments could not be produced, the ipse
dixit of the soldier was admitted as an equivalent—the remainder
were furloughed for forty days.

Influenced by the abominable example of the mutinous Pennsyl-
vianians, the Jersey line undertook to try their talent at rebellion,
and accordingly discarded their officers and set up for themselves.
But the event proved them to be (as Addison expreses it) "meer
mongrells in faction." On the first notice of the affair His Excellency
the Commander in Chief came to a resolution of reducing them, at
every hazard, to unconditional submission. A detachment was made
from the Massachusetts line and the command given to Gen. Howe,
who succeeded so well after a night’s tedious marching, as to surprise
the mutineers, napping in their huts, just before day break. Five
minutes only were allowed them to parade without arms and deliver
up their ringleaders. These were pointed out by the officers, and two
of them instantly shot. This quelled the tumult—the officers resumed
their command, and every thing now goes very quietly. Thus ended
the second chapter of rebellion.

But methinks I hear my friend ask, what Sir Harry Clinton was
about all this time? That’s a question to which I think the Knight
himself will be cursedly puzzled to give a satisfactory answer. He is
really a poor devil—and if he is not superceded for want of address, in not turning the affair of the Pennsylvanians to the advantage of his master, it will be a new proof of the stupidity of his employers. Circumstanced as things were, an officer with three grains of generalship would have gained the whole line—but, fortunately for America, Sir Harry did not possess them. Instead of appearing in Jersey with a respectable force, to assist, or have it in his power to compel those fellows to join him, he contented himself with making some pimping overtures by a couple of his emissaries from Staten Island, of whose detection and execution he in a day or two after had the mortification to be informed. This is not the only instance where the folly of our enemies has been a means of saving us from impending and almost inevitable misfortunes.

Alarming soever as these tumults are in themselves, and however fatal they may be in their consequences to the discipline of our army, yet a substantial good has already been derived from them. The Country are awake, and have at last found out that an attention to their troops is the only thing which can work out their political salvation.

No material accounts have lately come to hand from the Southward. The villain Arnold, on his way to that quarter with reinforcements, put into Chesapeake, committed some depredations and then pursued his route.

On our return to this place, the General and myself made a detour to Newport, where we passed a couple of days in a most agreeable manner. Nothing could exceed the politeness and attention of our good allies—they shewed us every thing—and we on our part were pleased with every thing. This, you will say was very civil—but seriously, every thing as far as I was competent to judge appeared in the most perfect order. The flower of the British Army when in Boston did not shew a parade any way superior to what is every day exhibited in Newport. The officers are a set of the likeliest and most genteel men I ever saw. I am in love with an institution of Count Rochambeaus. He has a large room, perhaps 80 feet long and half the width, which is kept open from 9 o’clock in the morning till 11 at night. Here all the officers of the army assemble, together with such

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65 Clinton thought that an attempt to land in Jersey would endanger his effort to win over the mutineers. *Ibid.*, 141.
gentlemen of the town as please, and amuse themselves with cards, backgammon, chess, checkers and news papers, of all which articles there is an ample supply. The old Count himself passes a good deal of time with them—plays cards with one—throws the dice with another, and converses with a third. This institution, at the same time it endears the General to his officers, (for it is by no means an established custom) has a happy tendency in promoting harmony and good fellowship. By this friendly collision the asperities and acute angles, as Yorick somewhere terms them, of human nature are worn away, and make room for the mutual intercourse of politeness and good offices.

His Excellency Gen. Washington intends in a few days to set out on a visit to the French Army. Gen. Howe accompanies him. He has been long talking of going to Boston, and I don’t see how he could well have got off from going, had not this invitation from the Commander in Chief given him an excellent pretext for it. It would certainly be very uncivil in him to leave Son Excellence and go to Boston—would it not? Common politeness will require he should stick by and return with him. On the whole, it is a lucky circumstance for your quondam principal, and I think will relieve him from much embarrassment. Webb\(^{66}\) has left him, and he has now only Galvan,\(^{67}\) the companion of his hopes and fortunes.

The arrangement of our regiment has been transmitted to Head Quarters by Col. Crane—no promotion for you—Cook and Sluman\(^{68}\) retire.

I have almost as little communication at this place with any part of the female world, as father Adam had before he parted with a ribb. I think sometimes I should be willing to part with one of mine on a similar condition. To have no converse with the fair, either in camp or in quarters, is too great a hardship. A very small portion of that Society we were so happy with last winter, would at this time and in this dreary place be a real luxury. I often think of our amusements in Jersey, particularly those of a serious cast, and commonly draw this conclusion, that we are more happy, all things considered, than if

\(^{66}\) Capt. John Webb.

\(^{67}\) Maj. William Galvan.

\(^{68}\) Capts. David Cook and John Sluman both continued to serve until June, 1783, according to Heitman, \textit{op. cit.}, 168, 500. Both these officers were in the same regiment as Sargent and Shaw and were junior to the former but senior to the latter. Drake, \textit{op. cit.}, 139.
our fair ones had been propitious. It is clever to philosophize now and then, and draw consolation from those very things we once reckoned our greatest misfortunes.

Good bye to you for the present, my dear friend—let me hear from you as soon as possible—and be sure tell me you are recovered, as nothing will afford a more sincere pleasure to

Your affectionate
S.S.

Capt. Sargent.

XVII

Give me your hand, my dear Sargent, I've a piece of good news to tell you. Tarleton the British partizan has been very severly handled by Gen. Morgan, routed horse and foot. The accounts came to Head Quarters this morning. I cannot give you a better idea of this important event than by transcribing Gen. Greene's orders, which I received in a letter from honest Finley.

"Head Quarters Hub's Creek,
Tuesday Eveg 23 Jany 1781

The General is happy to congratulate the army on the glorious victory obtained by Brig. Gen. Morgan, commanding the light troops and militia, on the 17 instant, near the Cowpens, over a superior body of British troops commanded by Col. Tarleton, wherein the enemy lost upwards of 100 killed in the field, between 2 & 300 wounded, and above 500 british officers and soldiers taken prisoners, with two brass field pieces—eight hundred stand of arms, thirty five wagons and all their baggage, with the loss only of ten men killed and fifty five wounded."

Thus for the General orders. Finley adds, "It appears from letters and from Maj. Giles⁶⁹, of the extra Maryland regiment, who was a volunteer Aid to Gen. Morgan and brought the accounts here, that Gen. Morgan had retreated a considerable distance in order to draw Tarleton from the main body commanded by Cornwallis. Tarleton fell into the snare, and pursued with the 1st battalion of the 71st

⁶⁹ Major Edward Giles was brevetted Major Continental Army for his services at the Battle of Cowpens. Heitman, op. cit., 248.
regt. part of the 7th and some other regiment, with 300 of his own corps, amounting to upwards of 1100. Morgan had four companies of Maryland and one of Virginia light infantry, amounting to 300 regular troops. The remainder of his force was composed of some Georgia and South Carolina militia, under Colonels Pickens and Twiggs, and about 60 Virginia Militia under Major Triplett—in all not more than 900, exclusive of 80 horse under Lt. Col. Washington.

"The front line consisted of the Militia rifle men, who received the first attack of the enemy and retired to the second line which was composed of the regular troops. As soon as the enemy came up to this line they received such severe and well directed fires for 15 minutes as put them into disorder, which Lt. Col. Howard perceiving he ordered a charge. The troops, among which were the Virginia militia, pushed them so close that they gave them no time to form and pursued them 8 miles. Col. Washington with his 80 cavalry attacked, routed and pursued for 24 miles 280 of Tarleton's legion. He opposed himself three several times personally to Tarleton, who declined any engagement of that sort. He wounded Washington's horse with a pistol, but received a cut on the arm from one of our dragoon officers.

"Our poor fellows, who were almost naked before, have now several changes of clothes and plenty of hard money, as the British officers themselves say that column was designed to penetrate into North Carolina, and therefore they carried every thing with them they were worth."

This is the state of matters as given by my friend Finley. You will readily see that the most important consequences may be derived from this victory, and I think no man will be apt to improve them better than Gen. Greene.

Finley desires to be remembered to you. His words are, "Maj. Langborne and Capt. Sargent are often remembered by me—please to inform them so."

I could not help, dear Sargent, adding these particulars to my letter, which was before long enough in all conscience. Tell me all the

70 Tarleton would not agree in all details with Shaw's letter but there is no question about the outcome of the battle. Tarleton tends to pass it over by saying, "A diffuse comment upon this affair would be equally useless and tiresome." Lieutenant-Colonel Tarleton, A History of The Campaigns of 1780 and 1781, In the Southern Provinces of North America (London, 1787), 218.
news you can, in return. It would be too much to demand a very long letter from a person in your weak state—but every line you can bring yourself to write will be exceedingly grateful to your friend, in sincerity,

S. S.

13 Feby

XVIII

I fully intended, my dear Sargent, to have done myself the pleasure of writing to you by Mr. Knox, who brought me a letter from you without date, but I was so exceedingly indisposed at the time, that I found it impossible to gratify my inclination in that respect. Near three weeks ago I was seized with a villainous headache, which stuck to me without intermission for twelve days, attended with an entire loss of appetite. This reduced me a little, but I have been picking up for these few days past, and hope in a very few more to be in statu quo. I have now the additional pleasure of acknowledging another of your favors, by Major Clarkson.

To what can it have been owing that my last letter did not reach you? I wrote one per post, somewhere about the close of the last month, which must have been in Boston at least ten days before the date of yours by Clarkson. I hope you'll find it, for if I recollect, there was some news in it, and a small portion, I had almost said, of scandal—but as it concerned a body whose doings not-doings, and misdoings have rendered pretty notorious, it would have been a misapplication of the term.

Hold up your head, my good fellow, there's promotion in the wind. Proctor's resignation was yesterday accepted at Head Quarters—and Forrest, it is said, is seriously determined to follow the example of his principal. The reasons given by the former were, the situation of his private concerns, and some ill treatment (either supposed or real) from the president and executive of Pennsylvania, relative to the recruiting his regiment. If Forrest does resign, I think you stand fair for a majority. How matters will turn with regard to Tread-

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71 William Knox, a brother of the General. Died insane in 1797.
72 Maj. Matthew Clarkson, former aide to General Arnold.
73 Col. Thomas Proctor commanding the 4th Continental Artillery. Resigned April 18, 1781.
well's 75 long absence from duty, I am not able to determine. Daddy Frothingham's 76 constitution will not allow him to make a Southern campaign, and both the regiments affected by these resignations will be in that quarter. So that if the old codger goes there, as the Virginians say, “I'll agree to be damn'd” if ever he gets back again. You must advise the good gentleman on this head, and tell him there's a cursed epidemical distemper rages in those climates, peculiarly noxious to New England constitutions.

We have nothing from Gen. Greene later that [sic] what you will find in the public papers, before this reaches you. The detachment under the Marquis are gone forward to join him. The first division of Pennsylvanians, led by Wayne, were to begin their march yesterday, from York Town for the same quarter, about 1200 men. Another detachment is getting ready at New York. Sir Harry, by report, certainly to go with it. Its destination occasions a vast deal of speculation. Some conjecture it is a reinforcement for the army in the South—others assert, that the Knight intends establishing a post in the Delaware, somewhere about New Castle or Wilmington. For my own part, his manoeuvres in general are so mysterious, that every conjecture respecting them must be, as our Allies term it, par hazard. However if one can suppose, that for once they will be consistent, the former must indisputably be the place of destination.

Not a word of, or from, the dear creatures in Jersey since we came to Winter quarters. We could not have suffered a greater privation of social happiness, than we have at this place, had Nova Zembla 77 been our cantonment.

I remain sincerely and affectionately,

Your S. S.

New Windsor
21 April 1781

25 April

No private conveyance offering since the date of this, it takes its chance per post this day.

75 Capt. William Treadwell, senior captain of the 3d Continental Artillery. Drake, op. cit., 139.
76 Capt. Benjamin Frothingham, second ranking captain of the 3d Continental Artillery, was forty-seven years old at this time, a generation senior to Sargent and Shaw. Ibid., 139; The Frothingham Genealogy (Boston, 1916), 47.
77 Two islands in the Arctic Ocean.
By a letter from Gen. Greene dated 30th ult. we are informed that Cornwallis after having begun his retreat, three days from the action at Guilford, was followed by Gen. Greene, who was in hopes to have overtaken him at a ford (I forget its name) on his way to Cross Creek, but his Lordship passed it about two hours before the arrival of our troops, and in such haste that he left a number of men who had died at that place, of their wounds at Guilford, unburied. Gen. Greene was obliged to give over the pursuit as the times of the Virginia Militia was expired. Cornwallis it is supposed will proceed from Cross Creek to Wilmington. Gen. Greene says that if North Carolina had afforded him any tolerable assistance, he should inevitably have ruined his antagonist, who was exceedingly sore in consequence of the last battle. Ought not they not to be damned a little? But as I never curse, except in a spirit of Christian meekness, I shall take leave of that State with a quotation from sacred writ, "Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; for they came not up to the help of the Lord against the mighty.""