The Philadelphia Sojourn
of Samuel Vaughan

Samuel Vaughan was one of that group of English Whigs who felt, during the latter part of the eighteenth century, the most compelling, lively, and whole-hearted interest in human freedom. Unlike Price, who put his pen at America’s service, and Priestley, who finally found asylum in the new country, Vaughan neither wrote, made scientific experiments, nor played a deep political part. A wealthy West Indian merchant with a taste for science and the polite arts, his aid was unobtrusive, his role more that of an observer. "He cannot help being interested in the liberties of mankind," his wife wrote to her girlhood friend, Mercy Warren.

As a Whig and a supporter of John Wilkes in his parliamentary struggle, Vaughan had acquired a deep distaste for the ministry in power during the sixties, a distaste heightened by several personal experiences; America seemed early to him a very happy refuge. But it was not until after the American Revolution that he finally left England to attempt a new mode of life for himself and the younger members of the family. The two eldest sons were well established in London, but there were numerous younger sons to be provided for.

As early as 1775 he had meditated at least a visit to the colonies, and was in Jamaica when trouble broke out on the Continent. But much as he longed to rush into the war on the side of the Americans, he had thought it better to wait until spring to "throw in his small

2 Joseph Priestley, 1733-1804, noncomformist minister and scientist.
3 Sarah Hallowell Vaughan to Mercy Warren, May 11, 1792, Chamberlain Collection, Boston Public Library.
4 Benjamin Vaughan, 1751-1835, West Indian merchant and secret service agent during the peace negotiations after the Revolution, who settled in America in 1796.
William Vaughan, 1752-1850, merchant and author of several treatises on London docks.
mite.”

Spring found matters much worse; it was not until eight years later that it was possible to make a final move. His son John was sent ahead to make the arrangements, secure a home, and safeguard the Vaughan interests until it was feasible for Samuel himself to come.

John Vaughan was as anxious as his father to become an American. He had registered himself as “American” in August, 1778, while in France learning the wine business, and had tried unsuccessfully to become a citizen at long range. After many attempts, he set sail from Spain in 1782, armed with letters and papers, for what proved to be a very boring trip across the Atlantic. There was nothing boring, however, about the finish of the voyage—the Quebec frigate captured the ship, and Vaughan, along with Colonel Livingston, was taken a prisoner to New York. He was soon released, and made his way to Philadelphia.

This city had been selected as their headquarters by the family ostensibly because it appeared to be a spot destined to become the heart of America, the seat of arts and government. But their decision was undoubtedly influenced by the fact that it was also the home of Benjamin Franklin, their patron saint, “that good old man,” the long-time friend and intimate of their family. It was a lucky intimacy for John Vaughan when he arrived with only the clothes he wore, his letters torn up and thrown into the sea to avoid capture. The Baches immediately took him under their wing; he was introduced to the city from that comfortable vantage point, Robert Morris gave him the necessary credit, and he finally got himself established.

At the very first he was disappointed; Philadelphia was far from what he had anticipated. There was not the slightest trace of republicanism in the mode of life he saw; he sought in vain for Quaker simplicity. Instead there was luxury in everything, a pronounced copying of the French,—French ideas, French manners, French fashions, “Gay and extravagant rather beyond our capacity.” Congress gave

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6 Henry Brockholst Livingston, 1757-1823, private secretary to his brother-in-law, John Jay, in Spain prior to 1782.

7 John Vaughan to Samuel Vaughan, September 10, 1775, Peabody Institute Library.

8 John Vaughan to William Temple Franklin, October, 1782. Franklin Calendar, IV, 86.
a fête in honor of the Dauphin, and the young merchant was shocked at the cost—the amount spent on fireworks and display was a sum sufficient to make a man feel wealthy, if it were in his own pocket. And instead of solidly debating the issues of the day, the town was divided into two camps to argue the rival merits of two Parisian hairdressers.9

John Vaughan was uneasy; his father had worked his imagination to such a height that he would undoubtedly be disillusioned in what he actually found. But as Samuel was set on coming, his son resigned himself to the fact that it would soon be apparent that “Americans were men, not angels.”10

The family arrived on September 8, 1783, to be welcomed by John in Philadelphia, and they immediately lodged with the Baches. The arrival would have been more completely joyous on Samuel’s part if he had suffered less from the gout, but the ladies of the family were all pleasure. They took an instant liking to Mrs. Bache, who reminded them so very much of their friend Mrs. Priestley back in England.11 As Mrs. Priestley was, by her husband’s own statement, not only strong-minded, educated, and affectionate, but a good housekeeper as well,12 the likeness could only be construed as an especial compliment—the doctor might, they declared, be hard put to distinguish which sentiments were his wife’s,13 were the conversations of both ladies put on paper. Mrs. Bache was equally interested in her new friends; in fact, she was so much occupied with them that she was obliged to leave the letter-writing, the announcement of their arrival, for her husband to communicate to Franklin.14

The relationship of the Vaughans to Franklin had many facets. Samuel Vaughan was a member of the “Club of Honest Whigs,” Franklin’s London Coffee House club, of which he spoke so affectionately. Benjamin, the eldest son, himself vitally interested in many of Franklin’s pursuits, had published the first collected works of Franklin15 and had much and varied correspondence with him. While in

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9 May 18, 1782. Ibid., IV, 77-78.
10 October, 1782. Ibid., IV, 86.
11 William Vaughan to Benjamin Franklin, October 31, 1783. Ibid., III, 121.
13 William Vaughan to Benjamin Franklin, October 31, 1783. Franklin Calendar, III, 121.
14 Richard Bache to Benjamin Franklin, September 9, 1783. Ibid., III, 105.
15 Benjamin Vaughan, ed., Political, Miscellaneous and Philosophical Pieces . . . written by Benjamin Franklin, now first collected (London, 1779).
London, Franklin was always welcome at Wanstead, the Vaughan country place, or at the town house, for dinner or the week end; he brought American friends to their attention and their table, sure of their welcome. And when he went to Paris, he became a sort of father confessor and financial aid to those young Vaughans who happened to be on the Continent from time to time. He was always ready to do what he could for the distressed people the Vaughans sent him—Americans had ready access to Samuel and his sons.

Before long the Vaughan family were established in quarters of their own, not suitable, but serving for the present; they soon fell into the ways of the city. The first and most elaborate plan had been for the purchase of an estate in the country. That of General Charles Lee, in western Virginia, had actually been bought, but before the transaction was completed, Lee died on his way to make the final arrangements in Philadelphia. The whole matter fell into so much confusion that the idea was given up. Samuel did take out lottery tickets for the family in the Northumberland lottery of 1785, but there was no settlement in that part of the country. During their American stay, Philadelphia remained their headquarters.

The colonial acquaintances they had made in England took pains to call upon them. Visitors to Philadelphia who had known the sons in Europe paid their compliments while in the city—John Jay, for instance, "cultivated their acquaintance" as a gesture to his friend Benjamin Vaughan. The society of the city welcomed them, noting the great attention and politeness displayed by the English ladies whenever tea was taken with Mrs. Vaughan and her daughters. They entertained, they made excursions, taking along various Philadelphia young ladies on their short trips by wagon, making long, leisurely journeys in their carriage to more distant regions. Mrs. Vaughan, a member of the Hallowell family, was Boston born, and old friendships were renewed in that city. The Livingstons were visited at their Hudson manor. It was after that particular trip that they gave especial pleasure to Molly Livingston, who was stopping disconsolately in Philadelphia, for they could give her the latest news of her

16 Northumberland lottery warrants issued May 17, 1785; 500 acres each to Barbara, Sarah, Charles, Rebecca and Samuel Vaughan, Jr. Pennsylvania Archives, Third Series, XXV, 373.
daughter, left at the Manor with the family of Molly's estranged husband.\textsuperscript{18}

Vaughan himself found plenty to occupy him. There were military reviews, to which the gentlemen flocked in great numbers, reviews followed by tea-drinking with the officers and distinguished citizens; there were all the oddities, the customs, the events of a new country to be noted and remembered. Everything was of interest to him—the "large cow" which Jacob Hiltzheimer sold for sixty-five guineas, the oxen whose quarters weighed over 1,200 pounds—facts which he duly noted down to send back in letters to England. Then there was the great project he had planned: he wished to visit all the battlefields of the Revolution which had any connection with General George Washington, for Washington, as the symbol of the successful Revolution, was his particular admiration. Vaughan had not been long in Philadelphia before he met Washington, and from that time on, his gifts to the General were many—a marble mantelpiece from Italy, vases, pictures, pamphlets. "The obligations which you are continually laying me under, are so great I am quite overwhelmed and perfectly ashamed of myself for receiving them, notwithstanding your politeness leaves me without a choice," Washington wrote him.\textsuperscript{19}

But these summer excursions, small interests, and daily amusements could not provide total employment for an active man. In spite of "the gout and other avocations" which he reported,\textsuperscript{20} he was restless. "I think he possesses many qualities that might render him a useful member of society in this country," Thomas Parke wrote to Humphry Marshall.\textsuperscript{21} It was not long before this usefulness was put to the test. On January 16, 1784, Samuel and John Vaughan were elected members of the American Philosophical Society, a membership which proved for both of them entirely to their liking, an outlet for their energies. John later merged himself almost totally with the organization, serving as its secretary for many years. Samuel, all


during his Philadelphia stay, was much absorbed in the Society's activities.

There were nineteen members present at the February 20 meeting when Samuel presented a number of scientific instruments secured for the purpose, a gift which caused his name to be enrolled among the benefactors. A month later the two gentlemen presented books, prints, and a number of fine works, and at the same time read and donated a manuscript copy of Priestley's *Experiments of Philologisten*. In May, Samuel Vaughan was duly elected one of the vice-presidents; thereafter his name is to be found on committee after committee.

Shortly after his election, the American Philosophical Society had taken steps to erect a proper building for its meetings, a project to be "vigorously attempted without delay," and subscriptions were opened to finance it. When the subscription list was begun, Vaughan was a zealous collector from family, family connections, and friends. He had known Henry Laurens (related to his eldest son by marriage) when Laurens was a prisoner of war in London; on his election to the Society Vaughan had written to him. Laurens, in ill-health, felt that he could be only a dead letter as far as correspondence was concerned, although he later did send some notes on Indian arrowheads. But, observing that a building was about to be erected, he sent a draft of £50 to help matters along. With this and his other collections—one hundred and fifty in all—Samuel Vaughan was able to show $3,500, "raised by his disinterested exertions."

It was some years before the "neat, convenient and spacious edifice" was begun and built. Vaughan was early active in the discussions concerning it, soliciting the advice of Franklin, pleading that any word from that source would carry extreme weight in the final decisions. He was identified with the building literally from the ground up, being one of the committee to secure stones and other necessary materials for laying the foundations. With Rittenhouse, he "employed proper persons to shear the cellar wall against the im-

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23 Henry Laurens of South Carolina, 1724-1792, President of the Continental Congress, 1777-1778; prisoner in the Tower of London, 1780-1781. His son, John, married the sister of Benjamin Vaughan's wife.
pression of white frost,” and when, in October, 1786, the committee to carry on the building politely reported itself “not able to concur,” Vaughan, in company with Thomas Clifford and Thomas Parke, was appointed to carry on the project. Rittenhouse gives Vaughan credit for the direction and the superintendence of the building; his plan for it was approved on June 17, 1785.

Other affairs of the Society interested him as well. He helped invest its monies, aided in various other financial matters, and, when it was decided to print Volume Two of the Transactions, threw all his effort into making it a success.

It is, however, for the laying out and ornamentation of the State House Yard that Vaughan is best remembered. This mall had been intended originally as an open space, which accounted for some of the reluctance of the authorities to allow the erection of buildings there. Vaughan wished to lay out the area in the Romantic style, and, within the limited space at his command, succeeded in making of it a novel and much-admired adjunct to the building. He himself, while not a practitioner of landscape art, must have seen many examples in England. He had taste, he could draw; the result was entirely pleasing. While Robert Hunter, who looked at it during a stroll about the city in 1785, said that it did “infinite honor to Mr. Vaughan’s taste and ingenuity in laying it out,” it remained for Manasseh Cutler to leave a more detailed account of the charms of this small park.

It is small, nearly square, and I believe does not contain more than one acre. As you enter the Mall through the State House, which is the only avenue to it, it appears to be nothing more than a large inner court-yard to the State House, ornamented with trees and walks. But here is a fine display of rural fancy and elegance. It was so lately laid out in its present form that it has not yet assumed that air of grandeur which time will give it. The trees are small, but most judiciously arranged.

There were trees, shrubs, serpentine walks, mounds, depressions, curves—all the necessary elements of the Romantic style of landscaping. No two parts were alike; there was an equal diversity in the

27 Ibid. Entry for October 20, 1786.
28 L. B. Wright and Marion Timling, eds., Quebec to Carolina in 1785-1786, being the Travel Diary and Observations of Robert Hunter, Jr., a Young Merchant of London (San Marino, Calif., 1943), 169.
29 William P. and Julia P. Cutler, Life, Journals and Correspondence of Rev. Manasseh Cutler (Cincinnati, 1888), I, 262.
planting. At first Vaughan had the idea of using a specimen of every tree and shrub representative of the different sections of America. He finally settled for a smaller number, and in spite of the limited space, did have an excellent collection. Colonel George Morgan presented one hundred elm trees in 1785, and these were augmented by “a number from different places.” A gardener and his assistant were kept busy, but the money dribbled out for their expenses. It was necessary to appeal to the Supreme Executive Council for such small items as a sum needed to buy stakes “to secure the trees when planted,” but in spite of these handicaps, the work went on. Vaughan was constantly busy about the Yard. As late as 1790, he petitioned Secretary Biddle for approval of William Bartram’s assistance with trees and shrubs.

It... should be quickly & well executed by him, as he is fully competent to the business, which I conceive not to be the case of the English Gardener proposed, who not being acquainted with the productions of this Country & who hath neither ability to judge or means to procure the variety necessary to supply those destroyed or dead.

Unfortunately, the elms did not do well; the caterpillars, “an accidental foreign importation,” ate up the leaves, and, as Watson says plaintively, “much annoyed the visitors, as well as the trees.” The importation of style, while intentionally foreign, did not fare well either. The Windsor settees and garden chairs, which had been placed at intervals as an inducement for the socially prominent to linger (comfortably observing the promenaders and being themselves observed), proved a mistake. The seats attracted so many of the “idle people and tavern resorters” and became such a “rendezvous for profligate persons” that the charms for “the better part of society” were completely lost.

There was one other piece of landscape planning done by Vaughan during this period,—the grounds at Gray’s Ferry. There had been an inn at this ferry for many years, but no great attempt at beautifying the grounds had been attempted. Vaughan, always fond of natural, picturesque beauty, was charmed with the possibilities there, and made a bargain with the young man who had recently purchased it. The location itself was excellent; properly “embellished,” he suggested, the grounds would be such a drawing card that all Philadelphia would flock there. The patronage at the inn would pay in a very short time for any money spent on trees and shrubs. He himself, he promised, would make the plan, and would secure a gardener to do the work.

Everything went as anticipated. The gardener arrived, the place was laid out, ten laborers spent their time in making the effects and in caring for the plantings of this Romantic park. The aim was “the bounty of Nature without the aid of human care,” although the very employment of ten laborers hardly justified the phrase. Delighted visitors called it fairyland, enchanted grounds; Manasseh Cutler’s very complete account mentioned that “there is every variety that imagination can conceive, but the whole improved and embellished by art, and yet the art so blended with nature as hardly to be distinguished, and seems to be only an handmaid to her operations.” This definition of art seems rather of artifice than of inspiration, for further along in his description he mentions benches and tables designed for hundreds of people as the “only works of art” present in that particular spot.

There was a steep, rocky bank behind the tavern; here steps were cut into the rock itself, steps leading to an open grassplot at the top. Nearby was a greenhouse filled with pineapples, oranges, lemons and a variety of striking tropical flowers. From this point the garden proper began, with a series of steeply winding paths, flower-edged, shrub-lined, no two alike—all as designedly crooked as it was possible to construct, although most carefully intended to appear absolutely natural. On every side flowers were strewed “in a most artless manner,” the winding took every advantage of a naturally steep

37 Cutler, I, 276.
38 Ibid., I, 278.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., I, 276.
slope to twist and turn in studiously "unstudied" fashion. Even the views, at certain well-chosen spots, were made to appear casually introduced. One in particular which showed in the far distance three high-arched Chinese bridges, carved and painted most romantically, could be seen only through a pattern of leaves and branches in a nearby tree.

The visitor was guided along these seemingly aimless wanderings down into a thickly wooded valley crossed by a tiny brook. Full advantage was taken of this cover to make a regular maze of the area, the path twisting and turning until all sense of distance and direction was lost. There was, however, a very definite objective: the path was blocked at last by a low, peculiarly shaped building, a building which no well-informed eighteenth century visitor could possibly have taken for anything but a hermitage. It stood directly over the brook, a location which might well rouse doubts as to the healthfulness of the site for even the most retiring and misanthropic of hermits. But according to the dictates of Romantic gardening, the location was entirely appropriate. No "inhabitant" was present except one of wax or plaster—an effigy—placed there merely to carry out the effect.

The fantastic idea responsible for the erection of such anachronistic structures was "picturesqueness"—the hermitage made a fitting climax for a wild scene, it emphasized the solitude of the place, and directed the attention of the passer-by to the desirability of meditation and the contemplation of nature. This particular building was also put tidily to a more practical use. When the door, a door purposely large and heavy and provided with rusty hinges, opened with the proper dismal squeak, a prosaic bathhouse was disclosed. The peculiarity of the site was then evident; the nearness of the stream was necessary.

The same sham wildness and remoteness was carried out in the rest of the grounds as well. There were grottoes in the rocky cliff, grottoes half-concealed by shrubs and branches, entered only after a kind of labyrinth of planting had been followed. These were but convenient resting places, necessary for the fatigue which might well follow both the distance covered and a mind worn out with so plentiful a dose of undiluted Romanticism.
Vaughan was completely right in his prophecies; curious visitors flocked to Gray's Ferry. It became the fashion, and Philadelphians came not only to note the progress in the work, but to gaze at such dignitaries as Washington and the Federal Convention members who went to see the "great improvements."\(^{41}\) While a few might complain that the grottoes were unfinished and the hermitage not properly aged, all admired the style and were comfortably impressed.

It was only to be expected that, with his taste for organization and for gardening, Samuel Vaughan's name should be among the list of twenty-three gentlemen who met in 1785 to organize an Agricultural Society. On February 11 of that year, the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture was born, most appropriately, at the Sign of the Cock, Patrick Byrne's tavern on Front Street. Although this newly created Society could not compare with the older American Philosophical Society in size or in scope, it received the same enthusiastic support from Vaughan, and he was faithful in his attendance of the meetings. It must have given him great pleasure when Washington was made a member on June 6 of that same year.

It was as a member of both organizations that he sponsored Marshall's botanical catalogue,\(^{42}\) introducing it to each Society at meetings during April, 1785. This small, modest work interested him greatly; desiring to see it in print, he began negotiations in his usual prompt fashion. The Societies, although expressing polite wishes that it might be published, and the lists it contained thus put before the public, had no funds for such a purpose. Vaughan, therefore, undertook the responsibility himself. He visited Crukshank, the printer, who computed the cost of the work which would be sewn into pamphlets, and after some bargaining, agreed to do the work for seventy pounds. This included an alphabetical index in English, an addition which Vaughan thought an absolute necessity, and a task which he set about doing at once, himself.

Although eager to see the publication date of a book which would give "much original botanical information of the new world, be of public utility, also reputable and serviceable to you [Marshall] by

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\(^{42}\) Humphry Marshall, *Arbustrum Americanum; the American Grove, or, an Alphabetical Catalogue of Forest Trees and Shrubs, natives of the American United States* (Philadelphia, 1785).
collecting for the curious," Vaughan realized that the sale would not be great in America. Certain that he could dispose of copies in Europe, he was also perfectly willing to push the sales here himself, doing so by an advertisement in the papers. He did not want the book published in Europe. America should, in his estimation, have the credit for promoting botanical knowledge, a subject hitherto but little regarded here. Indeed, American works on botany or ornamental plants were exceedingly rare; there had been a few indigenous books on husbandry, a scattered ephemeris of gardening pamphlets, the many reports of plant and seed collectors, and such volumes as *Flora Virginica*, for which John Clayton of Virginia had supplied much information, Mark Catesby’s *Natural History of Carolina*, and a few others, but no such compact, careful compilation by an American author had as yet been offered.

Marshall decided to have *The Grove* printed, and he approved of Crukshank to do the work. Vaughan, disapproving of the old type Crukshank used, had discovered another printer. Cist, the new printer, not only had equally as good a character as Crukshank, but new, clean type as well. Moreover, he had a liberal education and a knowledge of botany which might more than balance the extra two pounds asked for the printing—an extra two pounds which might, with some bargaining, be eliminated. But Marshall would neither permit the job to be rushed, nor accept Cist as the printer. Crukshank did the work, and by 1786 had it complete, with a bound copy delivered to Vaughan.

The book did not sell well. "They sell but slow," Crukshank reported. It might be more in accord with the facts to say that the books scarcely sold at all; except to the subscribers, not a dozen had been disposed of by February, 1786. Trenton and New York were equally unimpressed, for there was not a single subscriber in either place. By September of that year, only two copies had sold in New York, and the sale in Philadelphia was entirely over. America was quite unready for botanical instruction. The author and the printer of one of the earliest, most careful, and now, the rarest of American horticultural books considered their venture a poor and ill-paid risk.

With all these activities, the Vaughans led their accustomed social life. They entertained their friends—Washington dined there; Franklin expressed himself as "never happier than with a family I love," and they saw him often after his return to America. They took tea with the neighbors, received callers, and on Twelfth Night, 1786, gave a "large and brilliant party" with over fifty people in attendance, a party at which everyone was in the highest of spirits.

But in spite of these satisfactions, every anticipation was not completely fulfilled. John was comfortably settled in Philadelphia, Charles was later on to settle first in Boston, then on family lands in Maine. But Samuel, Jr., fresh from his European travels, was unable to find employment suitable to his talents. A political post in diplomacy or, perhaps, the mint was his father's especial wish for him, and he applied to his friends, Jay, Franklin, and Washington, to that effect. Jay was noncommittal, but Washington regretfully assured him that anyone so recently arrived from Europe and unknown in America as the young Samuel would stand no chance at all of such an appointment.

Although this was a keen disappointment to father Samuel, a more serious concern was the matter of the family's health. Mrs. Vaughan and one daughter had fallen ill, and it seemed advisable to send them back to Europe. He himself would follow as soon as certain business matters had been completed. By July, 1786, arrangements had been made for the return. Dr. Benjamin Rush, sending a letter to Dr. Price through Mrs. Vaughan's conveyance, wrote that "they will leave many friends behind them, and carry with them the good wishes of all who have ever known them. I consider our city and society impoverished by their leaving us, but taking every consideration into question, I cannot help approving of their preferring the highly cultivated society of old friends in England to the less cultivated society of new ones," a statement which may have reflected the sentiments of Rush himself at the time.

46 Benjamin Franklin to Mrs. Vaughan, April 9, 1786, Peabody Institute Library.  
47 Armes, 242.  
48 Samuel Vaughan to Benjamin Franklin, October 10, 1788. Franklin Calendar, III, 380.  
50 John Jay to Samuel Vaughan, May 6, 1787, Peabody Institute Library.  
The ladies sailed in September, but the removal at first accomplished little. Mrs. Vaughan improved but slowly, and was ill for three months after her return; not until her son William finally sent her to Hackney for a change of air, and exercise, did she recover.

Samuel continued in Philadelphia, busy with unfinished concerns of the American Philosophical Society, making preparations for a trip to the West Indies to see to his Jamaican property, which was in bad condition. He found time to send to John Jay in New York a plan for a watering cart for the streets, a plan Jay thought better adapted to the Philadelphia Mall, where, if displayed, it would no doubt attract favorable attention. In New York, he said, the streets were not only still full of lumber for rebuilding after the recent fire, but not one single public walk was as yet laid out and prepared, and a watering cart would be of doubtful use.  

There was one last thing to be accomplished before leaving for Jamaica. One trip still remained of the series he had mapped out for his visits to the Revolutionary battlefields. He had gone east and north to Lake George and Ticonderoga, according to the plan laid out for him by General Schuyler. Now he determined to go west and south. With another West Indian merchant then living in Philadelphia, he set out for Fort Pitt. He traveled from there to Virginia alone, coming back by way of Mount Vernon, where he drew up a map for the General, a map still displayed there.  

On December 21, the American Philosophical Society voted him thanks for his endeavors; on the 26th he was at Fort Penn, ready to sail, but still interested in his Philadelphia activities.

Fort Penn 26th Decr 1787

My dear Sons,  

We arrived here last evening about 6 o’Clock, the Ship came down the day before, & all well.  

My affectionate love to the good Reverend Doctor Franklin, Mr. Baches Family & all friends—Recommend to the former to have American Elms planted at proper distances between the posts from the South end of the Phila. Building to the end of Walnut Street, which will be highly ornamental, as also an agreeable shady walk for the Inhabitants. Mr. Penn I doubt not will spare the number necessary out of

53 John Jay to Samuel Vaughan, January 17, 1787, Peabody Institute Library.  
54 Michael Morgan O’Brien.  
100 lately received from Col Morgan—also recommend to Dr Andrews & Mr Swanneck (to whom had often urged & offered to have it done my self) the taking up those planted before the Accademy, the road having been lowered some feet & have them planted a proper depth, a few have been destroyed by carts, for which I kept a reserve, which will be found the S° West corner in the state house square. The posts should be also fixed as before. Should the ground be free from frost they had better be planted as early as possible, if not, early next spring, any person may plant them, only diging & pulverizing the earth round for the fibers of the roots to shoot, the roots near a foot, below the surface, & the surface well trod to prevent the frost taking them—

Should any Vessel shortly sail from Philadelphia for Montege Bay & that you can conveniently take the plan of that town out of the Book, I wish it to be sent, as can add the improvements & send you a copy if wanted. Pray let me know the result of the several States respecting the Constitution or other interesting News. That God may bless & direct you, in the pursuit of your true interest, is the constant & ardent petition of my dear Sons

Your ever affectionate father
Sam' Vaughan

P. S. My most affect' Love to my D' Charles appologize for my not writing, as you well know how fully I was employed & the sudden & unexpected setting off at an hours notice. I am now going on board where all is in confusion & my desk & other things yet remaining on Deck, we sail in the evening or tomorrow morning. Should W'n alter his mind & choose to go to Jamaica, pay his passage & on the terms agreed on—It is the regard I have for him that induced me to make the proposal.—the other Serv' is on board, he had not time to call to sign his Indentures.

NB. S. V. Jun' wrote to Dr Andrews about the Contents concerning him. [In Samuel Vaughan, Jr.'s hand.]

Jamaica kept Vaughan longer than he expected. When at last he came back to Philadelphia, it was for a short stay only. Visits, the finishing touch to various plans, and, as final honor, the presiding (by special appointment) over the meeting of the American Philosophical Society on May 21, 1790—all these filled his time. Franklin had died, John and Charles were established, the rest of his family were on the other side of the water. There was nothing to keep him longer in America. He sailed back to England, to, in his own words, "Set down at my fireside with the approbation of my own mind on the transactions of my life, however unsuccessful they have lately been." He was unmindful of the fact that Rush had written of him that the time of his leaving was looked forward to with pain. "He has been the principal cause of the resurrection of our Philosophical society, he has done even more, he has laid the foundations of a

56 Samuel Vaughan to Benjamin Franklin, October 10, 1788. Franklin Calendar, III, 380.
Philosophical hall, which will preserve his name and the name of his family among us for many many years to come."\(^{57}\)

In England, ill-health plagued him. Vaughan was obliged to spend much of his time at Bath, but he managed to go to France, excited as he was by the Revolution there. The progress of Liberty throughout the world was still his dream. "Even Poland has taken fire," he wrote to Washington in May, 1791. Washington continued to be his chief admiration. He ordered a portrait painted of him from Stuart, he toasted his name in wild enthusiasm when John Quincy Adams dined in his company, he wrote to him in delight when Benjamin finally settled in America with his family. He expressed his hopes to Washington that the family would "prove an acquisition to America," as "the indefatigable industry and ability of Mrs. Vaughan in the instructions of Her children in Ethicks, the Arts, Sciences, Philosophy, and general knowledge I believe to have been but seldom exceeded."\(^{58}\)

The settlement in America of so many of his children—three sons and a daughter—was a source of comfort to Samuel Vaughan. America was still free. He would thoroughly have disagreed with his obituary in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which, writing briefly of his death in 1802, spoke of "his retreat to America for Freedom, whence he was glad to return to find it in Old England."\(^{59}\)

*Williamsburg, Va.*

**Sarah P. Stetson**


\(^{59}\) *Gentleman's Magazine*, Volume 72, Second Part, 1169.