

II

1777–1838

Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee

AMERICA was born and began to grow up during these tumultuous years as the descendants of the early settlers created a new nation. From Accomac, Virginia, a young John Cropper went to Valley Forge and wrote letters home to his wife and newborn child. From Readington, New Jersey, a young surgeon, Jacob Jennings, went to war and was wounded at the Battle of Trenton. A son of his was born in 1778. It would not be until 1828 when, in Nashville, Tennessee, Cropper's grandson would marry Jennings' granddaughter and the grandson would embark on a career that would make him a political power and household name in Virginia.

America experienced great growing pains during these years. Uncertain of the form of government that the new nation would have, its founders first wrote the Articles of Confederation whose lack of success caused them to convene again and write the Constitution which was ratified in 1788. During these formative years, the nation's capital would move from New York to Philadelphia and then finally to the District of Columbia. The census of 1790 showed that this was a nation of four million people and that Philadelphia was the largest city in the country. Ten years later the census would report a population of 5.3 million people, including half a million slaves. In 1808 Congress prohibited the importation of slaves from Africa, and in 1810 the census reported a population of 7.2 million, including 1.2 million slaves.

There were other things happening in America and around the world during these years. In 1793 Eli Whitney patented the cotton gin and in that same year yellow fever killed an estimated five thousand people in Philadelphia. Elsewhere, Merino sheep were first imported to the United States from Spain in 1802, establishing the sheep raising industry in America, and the 1802 purchase of the Louisiana Territory doubled the size of the new nation.

Letters and writings by:

George Corbin

John Cropper

Sarah Corbin Cropper, daughter of John Cropper

S. Ellis

Obadiah Jennings

Samuel Jennings

John Wise 5th, father of Henry A. Wise

Letters written from: Morristown, New Jersey; Valley Forge, Steubenville, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Accomac and Richmond, Virginia.



The Birth of a Nation — Valley Forge

John Cropper's letters to his wife are addressed in three ways: Margaret, Marget, and Peggy.

a great Battle in the Jersys Washington defeated British troops at Princeton on January 3, 1777.

Mr. Abbot George Abbot and his wife had raised Margaret Pettit after the deaths of her parents. When Margaret married John Cropper, the reception was at the Abbot home.

January 12, 1777, Philadelphia

Dear Peggy— This Day I am leaving Philadelphia with the Regiment to go to Camp. Last night we heard the king's seventh regiment was intirely taken. To Day we hear by a Major who comes from Camp that there has been a great Battle in the Jersys, and that Howe's army is half taken Prisoners and Kill'd. Soldiers are flocking from every part, which I hope will put an End to the War this Winter, if our People behave as well as they have. Within three Weeks two thousand Hessians and Englishmen have been brought to this City. Inclosed I send you a Saturday's Paper. Give my love to all Relations and Compliments to Friends, and write by the first opportunity direct your Letters to be left at the [illegible], in Philadelphia, and I shall get them. I expect to be home in about 3 months. beg Mr. Abbot to write to me. Our Soldiers are all dressed in Regimentals at the Expense of the Continent, and have received all their Wages. God bless You and my Brothers. I am your most Affectionate Husband where ever I goe, —*John Cropper*.

(From a photo facsimile of the letter. The letter was also published in Barton Haxall Wise's *Memoir of General John Cropper* first published in 1892 and reprinted in 1974 by the Eastern Shore of Virginia Historical Society.)

Addressed to: Mrs. Marget Cropper, Accomack County, Virginia
Fav'd by Doct. Fousher

Philada. Jan. 16th 1777

Dear Peggy— Twas my intention to write to you by every opportunity; therefore I now write by Doctr. Fousher. Thank God, I am yet tollerable hearty & hope you are the same, however do let me hear from you by first opportunity.

Our Regimt. has never marchd before today. [torn page] are this minute setting of for camp. Last Monday I sent of my horse & chair; please take the best care of Bearer. I now send you three yards of narrow lace which cost me 3 dollars, such is the dearness.

It would give me great pleasure to hear from my Brothers, Mr. & Mrs. Abbot, but much more to hear particularly from my dear Peggy. I shall leave all my things at the Tavern call'd the Conesstougou Waggon where I have left every thing prepared in the best manner I cou'd, if Fate shou'd snatch me out of the World. If you write or shou'd want any thing of mine, the Conesstougou Waggon is the place.

I am you'rs 'till Death, *John Cropper*. (*John Cropper Correspondence*, Mortimer Rare Book Room, Smith College Library.)

Addressed to— Mr. Geo. Abbot, Accomack County, Virginia

From— Jno Cropper's Camp, Morris T. April 1, 1777.

Headquarters, Morristown. Apl 1st, 1777.

Dear Sir: Just now, Wm. Widgon, from Accomack arrived at my lodgings, and informed me of something that gives me the greatest anxiety & pain, unless I am better informed: He tells me that on Monday 23rd of March he came by Assawaiman & that Mrs. Cutler told him that my dear Peggy was deliv'd of a Girl, that the child was expect'd to die & that my Peggy was not very bad; I am afraid he does not tell me the worst. I beg'd Mr. Joynes to call

Assawaiman probably Assawaiman woman on a modern map

at your house & deliver this letter. Be so good as to send John Cropper up immediately. tell him I will pay his asking, I will allow him one week to get ready. Send up my summer clothes by him.

I shall be impatient to hear from your house. Dear Friend— &c, *John Cropper*. (Smith College Library)

Addressed to— Major John Cropper, Head Quarters, Morris Town, New Jersey.
From— George Corbin.

Dr. Jack: Yours of [torn page] was duely handed me, and afforded me great satisfaction as it gave me information of your health and convinced me that some reports propagated by your Enimies were false and malitious. It was reported but the author I could not found out, that you was returned to the *General* as a deserter, and that you was sure to be broke when ever you reached Head Quarters. I suspect your friend Capt I. Snead to have been the Reporter, from what other people told me, but when I asked him myself about the matter he told me that some report of the kind had prevailed, but he believed it to be groundless. —You have heard before that I expect that Captn. Joine has lost his cause with Ingram.

Our Election was yesterday, —Simpson Senator— Fr. Henry & I. Arbuckle Delegates— & In. Teackle offered as Delegates no other candidates. Many people have been much alarmed with us expecting the seat of War would be here, but their fears begin to vanish. Sunday last came into Chingoteague a schooner in ballast commanded by a Frenchman, the hands on board appeared to be all men belonging to the King's ships of War from which with other circumstances a guard is ordered to bring them tomorrow to the Ct. House for further examination.

Your wife is well after being delivered of a daughter said to be a fine child. Tom. continues at school— Coventon is at my house at present but is going to live with his G. Father & to go to school— Purnel is at the Plantation, cannot as yet get a master for him. Mr. Scott's family and my own are all well. Should be glad to hear from you by every opportunity.

I am with affection, Yours' *Geo. Corbin*, April 30, 1777. (Smith College Library)

Addressed to— Mr. George Abbot, Acco. County, Virginia
From— Jno Cropper, Camp at Short Hills, May 24, 1777.

Dear Friend— I have recd. your kind letters from time to time, for which I sincerely thank you, & am exceeding glad to have hear'd by I. Cropper of the welfare of all your family, in particular I thank almighty God for his kind benevience to my dear *Wife & child*; may the same almighty God never fail dispensing his blessings to them, to you & your family.

I observe in many of your letters you address me as if you desir'd I shou'd come home, & am informed by I. Cropper that many of my friends blame me for not coming & that my dear Peggy thinks *my love for her* in some measure degenerat'd because I do not come; which rather makes me uneasy under my *absence* from home.— In answer to which, let me tell you my reasons for not returning & then do you judge of them: My first motive in interceeding for a commission was a love for *liberty* and the *rights of mankind*; agreeable to, indeed above my expectations I was honour'd by my countrymen with a Captaincy, then by the affection & thro' the means

Peggy was deliv'd of a Girl This is the first reference to John Cropper's oldest child, Sarah Corbin Cropper, 1777–1813. In later years she would marry John Wise 5th, 1765–1812, and be the mother of Henry Alexander Wise, 1806–1876.

Geo. Corbin John Cropper's mother's maiden name was Sarah Corbin. Therefore, George Corbin was her brother and John Cropper's uncle.

Snead and Joine John Cropper, Thomas Snead, and Levin Joynes were the three captains in the regiment from Accomack County that marched north to join with the Revolutionary army. The spelling of the names sometimes varies.

Tom and Coventon John Cropper's brothers.

of a people I shar'd a greater honour, that of getting the first company in my regimt. march'd to actual [hole in paper] had I given up my commission, then, what wou'd have been the suggestions & language of the people; upon my going to [hole in paper] I immediately found myself promoted; if I had resign'd then & left my men (who would certainly have desert'd if I'd left them) before there was an opportunity of action, wou'd not my men exclaim'd ag. me for bringing them into a business that I myself was afraid of; yes! & justly might have call'd me a coward; again consider the advantage of experience that a young man in my station may reap at camp, consider also that 'tis the duty a man owes to almighty God & his dear posterity, to contribute every means in his power to the defence & protection of his Country. Believe me sir, to be sensible of the pleasure I should enjoy with my dear Peggy & the rest of my friends, also that I well consider the disadvantage my estate must be under in my absence, & that my mind & heart are frequently with her though the Jersey contains my person; but I can get over it for one year for the sake of my posterity forever. I suppose my Peggy will think me exceeding unlucky not to come down recruiting the other time nor now— either, this is the reason, before, I was sick in Philada. at the time of sending the recruiting officers & now I cannot as no field officer goes a recruiting.

I am shure to get leave to come home in the fall; I expect to go to my own Regimt. in a few days, which will be the 1st or 4th Virg. Regimt. I have the pleasure to inform that I'm at present very healthy and don't fear but I shall continue so. & am as happy as I can be 300 mile from.....

Lieut. Waples this minute arriv'd, & Geo Barnes from Virga. We are just informed by a packet from England taken by one of our privateers that the king depends upon the force now in America to subdue it, & tells Genl. Carlton to reinforce Genl. How with part of his army from Canada, as he supposes that half Carlton's force is sufficient to maintain his ground there, but the devil is, that Carlton has sent all his troops here before, to reinforce after their loss of the Hessians at Trentown & P. Town; some deserters from the Enemy today inform that they are moving out of the Jerseys now, into N. York for [hole in paper] of our troops that come in so fast; whether that is true or false, we dont much depend, but we are sure they'll be forc'd to leave the Jerseys in a month or two, as our force is by far greater than ever it was, & the troops flock in daily.

The Jersey people begin to be all Whigs now, before they were mostly Tories; our troops are in the highest spirits, live very well, & every thing seems to go easy;— [hole in paper] from one Regimt. frequently skirmish with the enemy; but they have not yet learnt bush dodging. Shou'd be glad if you'd inform by your next letter how my plantation goes on & how my little brothers & cousin are & give whatever news you have in your quarter.

To Mrs. Cropper:

Old woman, what makes you uneasy about your husband, I'm shure he's not worth having as he keeps two women here, and wou'd get married if he cou'd get any body to have him; he's as corkey as can be; A'nt you asham'd to be afraid of your husband doing amiss when you know how modest I am & ever was, why I'm not afraid of you.

Genl. Carlton Sir Guy Carleton, commander of British soldiers near Lake Champlain and Canada.

Genl. How Sir William Howe, a Major General in the British army, who defeated Washington at Brandywine in September 1777 and at Germantown in October 1777.

The Jersey people Some residents of New Jersey were slow to support the American Revolution and waited to see who might win the war before committing themselves.

But to be serious, I'm surpris'd the lies of any person about me shou'd make you uneasy, especially such as you must have been sure were the most atrocious ones; you certainly know me.

Come cheer up, I'd not give you for two Jersey girls— Tell my little daughter I give my love to her & shou'd be glad to see her. Farwell my dear.....

Mr. Abbot will please to give my love to Mrs. Abbot & children. Mrs. Wilkins— oh! I'm glad to hear Mr. Wilkins has turn'd a Whig, I hope he'll not turn Tory again before I come home, give my love to Wm. Pettit & every friend, particularly Sakor Parker, Jas. Berry & wife, In. Abbot, widow, nay every body.

Tell little Polly to nurse her little cousin & I'll fetch her some pretty thing.—I told Mrs. Cropper by I. Cropper that if she continu'd to be so unhappy in my absence I wou'd resign & come home immediately & so I will if you'll only inform it by next letter.

Cap. Parraman, Cap. Poulson & many other officers give their love to you & your family.

J. Cropper Jun.

My horse ever must be kept fat. (Smith College Library)

Addressed to— Major John Cropper at New.Ark, New Jersey per. Captn. J. Snead.

From— George Corbin

Accomack, June 8th, 1777.

Dear Jack— Being closely confined to Mr. Scott's family which is now in the small pox with my children, but not so far advanced in the disorder as to enable me to give you an account what will be the event.— Have just time to inform you, that since my last to you have been agreeably entertained by the receipt of two of your favours, the last of which was dated the 31st of April [*sic*], in which you request me to give you a detail of your affairs. As to your private affairs they are nothing changed, save what you must expect from the change of the season, your crop of wheat, oats, corn &c— are promising for the time of year, you stock of Negroes &c well and thriving— The children continue as when I wrote you, Thos. at Eden School & Coventon at his G. Father's goes to English school. Purnell your wife has removed from the Plantation a few days ago to Geo. Abbotts to send to school as I am informed.

As to your publick affairs little has or can be done I am afraid, Rinold has not returned from the Northward, therefore could not call on him, for your acct. agt. the State, thought proper to send it pr. Collin. Simpson who is now on the Assembly, who promised to procure payment if in his power. Cannot inform you what our Assembly are doing as nothing has transpired since their siting, therefore must be excused for private news; and as to public news you are at the fountain head; we have little but flying reports not worth relating; pardon me, there is one piece of great news here, but with you I expect is is a trifling— last week a cannonading began at Tynepuren by a number of small vessels of the Enimy's at five armed vessels of ours in that harbour, the fire was returned

by our Vessels but little, if any damage was done on either side. — Our Capes are well watched by Frigates & tenders, which occasions Chingoteague to have a considerable share of trade. — Should be oblig'd to you in your next to give me a small plan of the situation of our Army and the Enemy's— their numbers, &c. The price of Commodities & Salt very scarce with us, has been sold with us for 20 3/4 pr. Bushl.

Am glad to hear of your preferment, hope you will endeavour to merit *Honour* more than wear it. —And I must repeat my satisfaction at your advancement as it affords you the pleasure of [torn page]ing your private enemies, beneath you who have taken not a little pains to blast your character, both as a soldier and Christian. *God save you.* Hope to hear from you by first opportunity.

I am with affection, Your uncle, Geo. Corbin. (Smith College Library)

Addressed to— Major John Cropper of the 7th Regt. Virga. Regulars, Pennsylvania

From— George Corbin, Onancock, October 20, 1777.

Fav'd. By Mr. Geo Parker.

Dear Nephew— Yours of the 17th Inst. came duely to hand, and as it gave me the most positive proof of your being in the land of the living, afforded me great satisfaction. I lament the fate of the unhappy tho' brave 9th Regt. which I am inform'd suffered by being too eager.—

Should have been glad to have recd. from you a list of the prisoners of the 9th Regt. as I could much better have complied with your request in their favour; which I should still be oblig'd to you for together with an account of the wounded and dead of the same.

Your request to me for 100 Dollars in specie to relieve the necessities of your friends, this convinces me that you profess a heart capable of true friendship, which alone exists with the virtuous. Your feeling & affection for your friends has made you forget that tomorrow the fortune of war may place you in their situation; should this happen you will stand in need of more hard money than I at present have. By the next safe opportunity however you may expect to receive 40 or 50 or more hard dollars if I can purchase them, should have sent them now, but knew not of this opportunity when I left home. Your friends are all well nothing has happened remarkable in your private affairs— the account you sent me agt. the state of Virga I delivered to Col. Simpson, but he could do nothing for you he told me. Mr. Scott is poorly. Mrs. Scott and the children have had bad colds but are recruiting. Dr. Jack I should be exceeding glad to see you as soon as your honour and the duty you owe to your country will permit you, and in the mean time may God of his infinite mercy & goodness keep you in the ways of virtue, and may he cover your head in the day of battle— this my dear Nephew is the constant prayer of, Your Affectionate Uncle, *Geo. Corbin.* October 28, 1777.

N.B. Should time & opportunity permit, inform me fully of the German-town affair and how matters stand in yr. opinion by Mr. Parker. (Smith College Library)

October 29th, 1777

Dear Jack: Since writing the within we have recd. per Mr. Tyson and Tompkins of Northampton the agreeable news of How's evacuating Philada.

and retreating to his shipping and it is also reported that by that Retreat a number of our Soldiers their prisoners obtained their liberty, and that Genl. Lee was taken by a party of our light Horse.— I am afraid this information, like a castle in the air, has no foundation to support it, and you will be surprised that I at a distance should hear ten times as much news as you who are on the spot, and indeed it would be strange if the facts were true; and I can account for it no other way (should the news be false) than by supposing the Tories who are deeply indebted to the United States for lies told to their disadvantage, now intend to prove themselves friends and repay their debt by lying in their favour, however I hope the States will not receive such trash in discharge of a debt *bona fide* due, but will insist on the penalty.

Methink, I heard you say, I am tyred of hearing the name *Tory*. I would rather hear something of the Whigs. Well I can inform you with trust that all the Tories, Tories did I say, I mean *Whigs*, in Accomack have taken the Oath of fidelity to the state, and that no one person in the County from sixteen to fifty have refused I mean whites.

On Friday last arrived at Hampton 2 Transports under convoy of a Ship of War, have not heard their design, the Western shore militia are called upon to watch them. If you were to see our militia parade you would at least suppose, Genl. Washing had passed through the County and left some of his military knowledge behind him.

You begin to look as if you was frightened at so long a letter from me, but I have many good reasons for it, two of which shall give you. Since writing the within your favor of the 1st Octr. came to hand, in which it was your last request and you will remember it has been a long time since you recd. one from me. Therefore make no doubt but will readily excuse my taking up your time with trifles.

I am, affectionately Yours, *Geo. Corbin*. (Smith College Library. Included in the files is a typed transcript of this letter with a note, “Original not included in the collection.”)

Addressed to— Mr. George Abbott, Accomack County.

From— Jn. Cropper

Bethlehem, 10th November 1777.

D. Sir, I rec'd your two several letters by Major Johnstone & Teakle— You desire an acct. of the different actions; all I know or can tell is that we had pretty hard work both at Brandewine and Germantown, at the latter the 9th V. Regiment made a considerable mistake, and indeed a great many Continentals slipped their winds; you know nought is never in danger, therefore I escap'd.

To give you no more news than a quire of paper wou'd hold, only'd serve to raise your curiosity. The Enemy have drubb'd us, & we have paid them with interest; 600 were killed on 5th inst. & 200 taken at the Fort; the brave fellows had fix'd their ladders to scale the fort & were cut down to a man almost; which you know we cant help, if they attempt to climb over, we shoud crack their knuckles— Since Mr. Teakle left me I've had a very dangerous illness at this place, which has been the consequence of cathing much cold; I now am perfectly recover'd, and had my horse come up shou'd have set of for home by this time; please send him up as soon as possible, I shall wait for him 'till 13th Decem. Give all the love, Esteem & every thing else for me. I'll come & cure all. I am &c, &c *J. Cropper*.

Brandewine and Germantown... a considerable mistake Over 1,000 Americans were killed at Brandywine, Pennsylvania on September 9, 1777. On October 5, 1777, American troops attacked the British encampment at Germantown, Pennsylvania where over 1,000 Americans were killed in part because American soldiers accidentally fired on each other.

N.B. I'd almost forgot to inform that they call me L. Colo., 'tis a great thing but must not carry it home, I suppose.— Tell any of your family that shou'd enquire for me, I begin to be full of home. J.C. (Smith College Library)

Addressed to— Mrs. Margaret Cropper, Accomack County, Virginia. Favored by Mr. Snead.

From— John Cropper, Camp Valley Forge, 13th March 1778.

Dear Peggy— At the receipt of this letter I feel your trouble and disappointment, but am in some degree comforted, from a consciousness of its being occasion'd by an over fondness in Me to ofset & in saving my distress'd Country, tottering at this time on the brink of ruin: My dear! Excuse your husband for doing what he thinks is right! Excuse in him an overfondness for his Country's cause! Don't think him insensible of a *husband's* affection or the distress of an absent wife. I know the whole, but the interest of my Country, my wife, my angel inphat (than the two latter nothing except the former can be more dear), united & jointly call upon Me, to struggle in this cause of Virtue, Justice, millions & Posterity.— After the actions of Brandewine and Germantown, I thought nothing upon earth shou'd keep Me 2 weeks from the arms of my *dear wife*, and from taking in my arms the dear delightful *sweet daughter* (I think I see it in the mama's arms!) but unfortunately was taken sick and retir'd to Bethlehem abt. 50 miles North of Philada. where I continu'd ill 'till the latter end of Novem. at which time his Excellency was pleas'd to order Me upon Duty to relieve Col. Wood who had the comm'd of the troops, and care of the hospitals at & abt. Bethlehem, from which duty could never get reliev'd untill February, when I immediately set off & came to Camp; upon my arrival, apply'd to Genl. Woodford for a recommendation to his Excellency for permission to visit my friends, upon which he gave me the most repeated assurances of his willingness to serve Me, but at the same time, delar'd that 'twas impossible for Me to be spar'd, as so many officers in the Virga. line had either resign'd, or teaz'd his Excellency so as to gain leave of absence, at the expence of their reputation; upon seeing the brigade found out the truth of G. Woodford's assertions, for there were not but two field officers, and myself commdr. of the brigade, therefore concluded to stay a few weeks; When Mr. Lyon came, I was determin'd to go home wt. him & Major Snead, & accordingly went again to the Genl. & inform'd that fond as I was of the service of my Country must resign or get leave of absence; at hearing that he expressed his sorrow, and said he'd go next morning, (which was this morning) and himself apply to his Excellency to get me a permission, which he did and rec'd for answer that his Excellency was sensible of my necessitous situation, but begged that I wou'd endeavour to content myself 2 or 3 Weeks, and farther directed Genl. Woodford to send immediately to Virginia for the absent field-officer. Inconsistent with the interests of this Country and my honor, I know my dear Peggy has too much virtue & esteem for her husband to desire him from the Army, and so soon as he can, will come to his dear wife. The letter I rec'd from your own hand gave me a great pleasure, yet I hope to see you before another reaches Me. I have a piece of fine holld. that I intend to send by Major Snead, but can't get it time enough from a country house where it is. I have several other things but can't send them but hope to bring them myself within a month from now.

his Excellency George Washington.

holld holland, heavy cotton or linen fabric.

My Dear give love to all our friends. I am your most loving Husband, *John Cropper*.

N.B. I have try'd to purchase a chaise, but am afraid I can't get one.— please have my watch taken care of, also my horse. *J. C.*

Major Snead will hand you this, who notwithstanding report is mine & your good friend. *Mr. Cropper.* (Smith College Library)

Addressed to— Mrs. Margaret Cropper, Accomack County, Virginia.

From— John Cropper, Camp Valley Forge, 10th May 1778.

My Dear Peggy— My not coming home agreeable to the times promised in my two last letters had been occasion'd by my promising at the time of getting leave, to stay untill an officer of my rank shou'd come, to take care of Genl. Woodford's Brigade, which I have commanded since his absence 'till within these few days, when the officer before mention'd came, but yet 'tis necessary for me to stay a few days tho shall be home by the first of June, or at any rate (by God's permission) before the beggining of the campain.

My Dear Peggy, I beg You'll have patience to go thro my absence with the same virtue and heroism, you have done. I think it too ridiculous to endeavour to convince you of my persevering in the same love I left you with, for I am sure my *Angel* cou'd never doubt my sincerity,— I now anticipate the pleasure I shall shortly have in the company of my little daughter & its mama, how I will caress & fondle upon the sweet infant; But no more of that, the thoughts only make me unhappy, at the distance of 250 miles.

My most fervent prayer is that this may meet you & the dear daughter in the enjoyment of health, peace & prosperity— My esteem to our good sister, our mother & all other friends.

I am, dear Peggy, Yours untill time shall be no more, *John Cropper*.

N.B. The 6th Instant was a day of rejoicing with our army, in which all the artillery & musketry of our army was discharged, and the three following toasts drank—

Long live the King of France—
Success to the friendly European powers—
Success to the United States of America.

and many patriotick songs; the whole was upon the court of France's declaring us independant. —*J. C.*

N.B. Enclos'd I send you a pair of clasps for my little girl, and a newspaper. I send you a plain gold ring, an exact fellow to which I have on my finger. I send it you mark'd wt. the first letters of my name; please receive it as a sincere pledge of my faith & constancy. —*J. C.* (Smith College Library)

France's declaring us independant Treaties with France were signed on February 2, 1778, and news of this alliance reached New York and America on May 2, 1778, only eight days before the date of this letter.

Addressed to— Mrs. Margaret Cropper, Accomack County, Virginia.

From— John Cropper, Camp Valley Forge, 29th May 1778.

My Dear Peggy— Having a favorable opportunity I do myself the pleasure of writing you as fully as possible, and must beg your patience and attention.— You are much surprised, and I'm afraid unhappy, that I've disappointed in my several promises to come home from time to time; nor do I wonder at your surprise, neither shou'd I think strange if you believ'd it my intention never to come home; for I have deceiv'd myself, and wou'd not have believ'd an angel, if he'd told me that I shou'd have stay'd so long

from the arms of my *dear wife*, my *darling infant*, and the management of my unsettled estate at home— but, so it is, —and as sure as there is a god in heaven, or that you and I exist, my motives are laudible, and my intentions innocent.— Let it be sufficient for the present to say, that the exigency of my country's cause, my over fondness for a military profession, and the advice of those I esteem my friends, have so long kept me from the enjoyment of domestick happiness, with an *amiable wife*, *delightful little daughter*, and *social friends*. It is with the greatest reluctance I stay in camp, when I consider what you suffer in my absence— but, my country's call, the greatest of all calls, demands my presence with the army for a time, to pay for the blessings I have enjoy'd, and expect to enjoy under the auspices of *liberty*.— My dear, when you consider my conduct since our first acquaintance— when you consider I was faithful & constant at a time when I might have ruin'd your reputation forever— when you consider I marry'd you ags. the will & consent of not only my father & mother, but ags. the advice and persuasion of all those who call'd themselves my friends— when you reflect upon those considerations for which I don't pretend to claim the smallest merit, I hope; I beg you by the remembrance of the pleasures we have enjoy'd together, to content yourself untill next fall; as the spouse of him who is serving in the cause of his country, himself, and every thing that can be near & dear: But, if you think you cannot wait 'till that time, that it will destroy your happiness, inform me by Lieut. Curtis, and I will (however disagreeable it may be) resign immediately upon his return—

The campain is now begun, and I am desirous to see the end of it— By those who came last from Virginia, indeed I was inform'd before, that there was a misunderstanding between you & Uncle Corbin, for which I am excessive sorry.— I am afraid you've been mis inform'd, or misled by some of your friends— I'm afraid Mr. Abbot is to blame for this— be it as it will, I beseech you to loose no time in making it up, for I cannot be happy while there is any difference between you & him— I have wrote to him very fully on the subject, & positively insisted to have it made up, and said I was shure you'd not be against it.— I beg you to be satisfy'd my dear, that I never promised you to come home, or indeed made you any other promise, but what at the time I intended to perform, and be satisfy'd that however strange my conduct may have appear'd, that it has ever been for the honor & happiness of my family. Lieutn. Curtis who has stay'd with me several days, since his escape from the Enemy, waits upon you with this, who is & has been my good friend. From him you may learn my situation & my intentions.— I send you one piece of linen abt. 20 yds. coarse, also one half piece and 2 1/2 yds of superfine, abt. 13 yds wrapped up in two new shirts, which I drew from the Continental store; but they are so badly made, as you will see, that they are not fit to wear till made over again— Also 3 pr. stockings, two of which I had made at Bethlehem, & send them home to be whitened; the other pair are yours, which I dont want as I have stockings enough to last me 'till next winter— Also 1 pr. of leather shoes made at Bethlehem, I am afraid they are too small, and am certain they are very homely ones— One pr. of black shammy flower'd, done at Bethlehem— I send you a plain gold ring which if you please present to our good sister, & request her to wear it until I return— it is like yours sent by Lieut. Kindale. The fine linen sent down is for yourself— I want the two shirts

made over again & ruffled, also 6 shirts made of the coarse linen & ruffled wt. fine cambrick if possible to be got.— When Lieut. Curtis returns to camp, you will please send me two or three shirts & stocks, and if you've any stuff for summer waistcoats & breeches— Lieut. Curtis will also bring up my horse & watch.

I shou'd be extreemly glad to see our brother Wm. Pettit at camp; if he will come up he will be at no expense while he stays in camp— at any rate I shou'd be glad to see any one that cou'd give an acct. of my affairs.— I particularly request you to write me by next opportunity with your own hand— and recommend you to practice reading & writing 'till I return home.

My Dear Peggy, I am, your sincere & ever faithfull husband, *John Cropper*.
(Smith College Library)

Addressed to— John Cropper, Valley Forge

From— George Corbin, Onancock, July 18, 1778.

My dear Nephew— Your very kind and affectionate favor of the 28th of May last, came duely to hand, than which, nothing could have afforded me more real satisfaction, except a personal interview with yourself.— It gave me the greatest pleasure to find that you still (after representation to my disadvantage as I conjecture) view me in the character of an *affectionate sincere Friend*. God grant me grace to deserve the sacred Epithet. I am sorry to inform you that your suspicions of a misunderstanding between Mrs. Cropper and myself are not without some foundation, this information I have carefully avoided giving you, as I thought it very imprudent to mention it untill all parties were face to face, and as I was very certain it would render you very unhappy; nor can I now enter into the particulars with the approbation of my Judgment, but hope you will at present be contented with my conduct, when I inform you— that at the sale of your father's Estate I had purchased every necessary towards housekeeping that you stood in need of to support your wife genteelly, and at the same time I informed her that whatever she stood in need of at any time for the use of her family I would willingly provide, and desired she might apply to me for that purpose. This I did under an expectation that your wife would settle on your plantation, and as far as the province of a wife extended take care of your Interest: and I was confirmed in this Expectation from her own declaration and other circumstances: but you have long since known my disappointment, the reasons for which I have never yet learned; but supposed they were made known to you, and were satisfactory: under this supposition I have taken the same care of your Estate, as I did of my own in like circumstances, both of which you may reasonably conclude suffered from my multiplicity of business, to which you are not a stranger. I shall conclude this disagreeable subject after informing that Peggy has never been at my house since I saw you, nor ever spoke to me but once, which was to clear herself to me of a report which prevailed of her having spoke disrespectful of some one of our family; it being at a public place, I observed to her that it was very improper to say any thing about the matter then, but told her I should be exceeding glad to talk the matter over privately when none were present but friends; thus the conversation ended, this happened a 12 Month or upwards ago; but I hope when it pleases God to restore you to us (as you are our mutual friend,) it will be in your power

to reconcile all misunderstandings between us, and excite a *firm disinterested Esteem* which only can be a proper and lasting foundation for Friendship. I leave it to the searcher of Hearts to determine who is right and who is wrong, and hope I shall never be so lost to myself, as not to acknowledge and ask pardon for my offences when sensible of them, and wish on all occasion to hold myself open to conviction. My dear Johnny, Do not infer from any thing I have said that I have the most distant wish to lessen your exalted affection for *her* who *is*, and I hope always will be to you: as *your dearer Self*— Believe me your fervent love to your Wife, Infant, and Orphan Brothers, which so agreeably filled the whole of your last favour to me, if possible, brightened my affection for you.

As to information concerning your Brothers, I can with pleasure and truth inform you, they are false. Thomas Cropper I have kept constant at Eden School where he now is, even at the extravagant price of £60 per annum for board, determined if it stripped him of every shilling of his property, to keep him at School; the profits of his Estate you know does not equal his expense, yet I have not, nor do not intend to brake upon his Principle. And I do with greater pleasure inform you that his progress in learning is very rapid, and he is become as I am informed by Mr. Adams with whom he boards, a very good boy.— Coventon is still with his Grandfather, sometimes at school and sometimes not, as schools with us you know are very precarious.

Your poor old G. Father is very poorly— I much doubt if you ever see him again in this World. Mr. Scott is also in a very poor state of health. Mrs. Scott and the children are well and join in Compliments to you.—

Such cloth as you deserved me to procure for you is not to be had with us. I made inquiry and found one piece of the colour you mentioned but was not fine, it was such as we used to buy for 28 or 30 per Yard for which they now ask £15 pr Yard—the price and coarse quality of the cloth prevented me from buying. All kind of merchandise is very dear with us. Sugar 8/ per lb. Rum 45/ pr Galn. Mollasses 30/. Country produce also high except Wheat— Indian Corn 6/ Oats 3/ Wheat from 6/ to 10/ agreeable to quality by retail— at Wholesale no price— Your crop of Wheat on the Plantation last year's unsold, the I. Corn chiefly sold, Lambs 8 dollars— We are just informed that the English Fleet with all their Troops sailed from N. York the day before the French Fleet arrived there, and that all our prisoners were set at liberty— should this important piece of Intelligence be true, I shall expect to see you in Acomack shortly.

The Sloop *Supply* commanded by William Selby and owned by myself and others is in the French Fleet laden with Tobo. They took our Captn. for a Pilot— A 26 Gun ship fell into the hands of the Fleet opposite Chingstraper Inlett— The frigate of 28 Guns run ashore, and the crew delivered themselves up prisoners at Snow Hill.— We are all Whigs now, those who not long since were suspected of Torism are now violent Whigs, Good God what a change! but not to be wondered at, for those who could for the prospect of Interest spill their Country's blood will now, as their Interest is more obvious on the side of their Country take part with it, or wish to take part with it.

Give my kind compliment to my worthy friends and old living acquaintance Mrs. B. Bush and Brother if in the land of the living, also Mr. John Haley & Family, the two Mr. Finleys and any other Gentn. of my former acquaintance. If they should desire to know what part I am acting on the

stage of Life, you may inform them I have been advocate for the good and I am afraid sometimes for the bad: but am not about to curtail my public business, and live more retired.— Danl. Rodgers, whom you mentioned in your last, was taken upon suspicion of Treason; but for want of Testimony has been acquitted of that charge; and is now under a prosecution of which I expect will deprive him of his liberty for 5 years or during the War, and all his property; Esau Kellom, his associate, made his escape to the West Indies as soon as he found he was to answer for his Conduct.— God grant that America may earnestly endeavor to merit the Blessings now conferred on her, and may we as virtuous as we are like to be free. Farewell, —G. C. (Smith College Library)

1779

☞ John Cropper's Diary:

January 1st, 1779— Pretty day. Wm. Pettit and myself divided our negroes.

January 2nd— Peggy and I went from Mr. Wilkin's to Accomac Courthouse. I bought old Jacob, and hired three of my brother Tom's negro's.

January 17th—Deep snow on the earth. I went down the Creek to see in what situation Major Simpson's boat lay in the marsh.

Sunday, 4th July— Anniversary of Independency. An eligant ball at the courthouse tomorrow evening.

Monday, 5th— An eligant ball and entertainment at courthouse.

Friday, 16th— Peggy and I set off for camp. Went to Mr. Abbot's.

Monday, August 2nd— Arrived at the Virginia camp, a place called Suffering's. The troops are healthy and in high spirits, and are commanded by Lord Stirling. Drank tea wt. Gen. Woodford.

Saturday, September 21st— I set off for Virginia; lodged at Chester...

Friday, September 27th— Peggy and I went to Bowman's Folly— lodged at Latin House.

Saturday, 28th August— Nothing, only that I moved my furniture from Latin House to Bowman's Folly.

Thursday, 16th— I amused myself during the excessive high tides, occasioned by the N. Easter) shooting curlews, willets, and other birds.

Friday, December 25th— Christmas. Mr. Abbott and myself went to Assawaman Church. Snowy day.

1797

Published in Barton Haxall Wise's *The Life of Henry A Wise* is the following exchange of letters between Major John Wise and General John Cropper from early in 1797:

John Wise 5th to John Cropper: Feeling myself irresistibly impelled by inclination, and prompted by a sense of propriety, I have presumed now to address

William Pettit was his wife's brother.

When Barton Haxall Wise wrote the *Memoir of General John Cropper* he noted that he had in his possession Cropper's diary from 1779 and described it as follows: "The entries contained in it exhibit the exposed condition of the Accomack people and the numerous conflicts they had with the enemy. However, despite the trying ordeals to which they were subjected, John Cropper and his wife appear to have dined out frequently, and enjoyed social intercourse with their neighbors." Wise quotes extensively from the diary in his piece and some of that material is quoted here. Wise's papers were given to the Virginia Historical Society but the original copy of Cropper's diary is not in that collection.

you upon a subject of importance and delicacy. Having conceived an affection for your daughter (Miss Sally) I beg leave to solicit your permission to make my addresses to her, and at the same time, let me express a hope that should I be so fortunate as to succeed in obtaining her affections, my first wishes may not be frustrated by your disapprobation, I have thought proper to make the application to you on the subject in this manner, rather than in person, because my character, (if I have acquired any,) my condition and my situation in life are not altogether unknown to you, and if objections are to be made they can be more freely communicated in this than in any other way. I have hitherto proceeded no further with the lady than merely to obtain her permission to make this application, and Sir, I now pledge you the honor of a Gentleman, that in case you have objections, of an insuperable nature, to the proposed union, whatever may be the chagrin, regret and mortification which I may feel upon the occasion, I will not disturb the quiet of a parent anxiously solicitous, no doubt, for the happiness of a beloved daughter, by persisting any further with her. Permit me to assure you that I am with much consideration and respect, your obedient servant, *John Wise*.

Bowman's Folly, 11 of May 1797.

Sir: Although the application made by letter of this day was unexpected, yet my reflections heretofore on that subject have prepared me to answer: That however solicitous I may be for the temporal felicity of my daughter and future respectability of my daughter and future respectability of my child, she is the only proper Judge of the person best calculated to make her happy. Respect and impartiality ought to be shown by me to you or any gentleman that might make his address to my daughter, and I confide in your candor and justice. I am, sir, with due respect, Your obedient servant, *John Cropper*.

Sarah Cropper and John Wise were married in 1799.

1798

☞ Sarah Cropper writes to her father:

Philadelphia, February 27, 1798

To: Col John Cropper Accomac county Eastern Shore, Virginia

Nothing here has a greater affect upon the mind than good spirits; with them we are more agreeable to our friends and still more so to ourselves, nothing has a greater tendency to raise mine... I need not say to you how much pleasure your affectionate letter gave me; your advice was perfectly just, and truly good, human nature is fallable [*sic*], could I always do right I should be happy, but as I often err, I hate my own depravity, and am induced to think myself the most abject wretch on earth. Again reason comes to aide me and tell me to value myself more highly. Experience is good: such things try the mind: and *virtue* alone can understand temptations. Do I possess that? No: Can I not endeavor to gain it: shurely I can, then my first concern shall be to possess that invaluable gem. I have said so much to you about myself you will think I have forgotten my sister. I can tell you she is well, and continues to learn. She says, sister tell papa I will

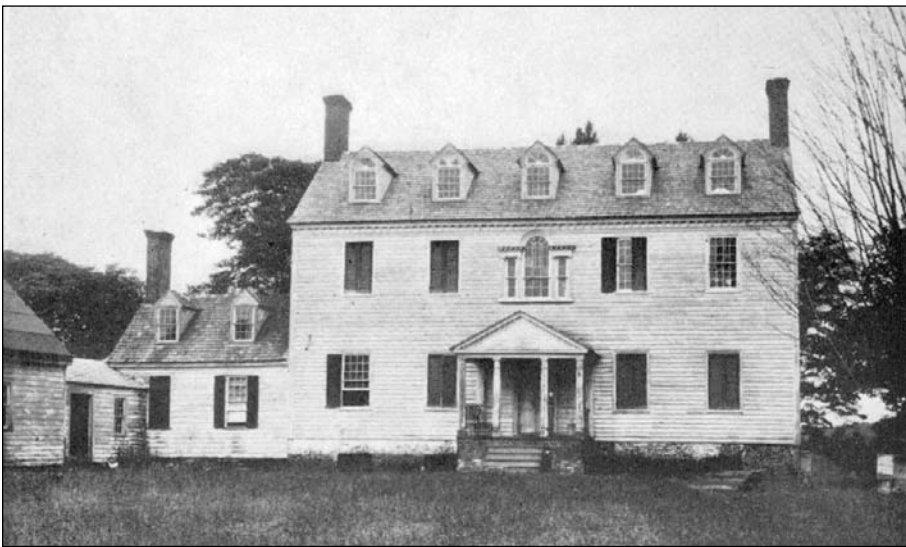
write to him very soon, so that you may expect a letter. We are sorry to hear of our little sister's indisposition, though children of her age are subject to complaints more or less, she has been a very remarkable healthy child. Our friend Mr. Evans is very kind, he calls often to see me and I believe enjoys a good state of health. We have now fine sleighing. I was out yesterday with a party on Schuykill where we had an elegant supper. I had the pleasure of seeing a Mr. Fist, who was just going to Mr. Jefferson's and was so polite as to take my commands. I have lately been at a party at Doctor P—', was much pleased particularly with his *Daughter*, who is an accomplished woman. I have not been to the assembly yet though design going the next. Your friends are all well here. I know of nothing particularly interesting to communicate except my sister's and my love to Mama, Anna, Aunt Betsy, Uncle and all our Friends. Give my love to Johnny and Louisa. Remember us to John Cropper and Mr. A— . believe me my dear Papa with every sentiment of love, Your Daughter, *Sally Cropper*. (Virginia Historical Society)

1799

☞ A letter from John Cropper's son-in-law:

Addressed to—Colo. John Cropper, Accomack
Richmond. Dec. 11th, 1799

Dr. Sir— I last evening, by mere accident, recd. information that your Kentucky lands had been advertised in the papers of that state to be sold for the taxes due on them. Supposing it to be a matter of moment to you, I this morning waited upon Mr. Jas. Heron, to whom I was referred for particulars, & from whom I recd. an account, that while he was in Kentucky during the last summer he saw in the papers of that state an advertisement containing a list of lands to be sold for payt. of taxes (one of which papers he showed me) and among others contained in that list was 6666 $\frac{2}{3}$ acres in your name to be



Bowman's Folly, Eastern Shore, Virginia. Original house built on this site in 1653 by Edward Bowman. John Cropper, a descendant of Bowman, tore down the original house and had slaves haul earth to build a mound on which he had the present house built. Photo from Tidewater Virginia by Paul Wiltach.



John Cropper, 1755–1821, by Charles Wilson Peale. Peale was a friend of Cropper's, and they had served together during the Revolution. The portrait was painted in 1792–1793, when Cropper was in his mid-thirties. Cropper is shown in his uniform of the Continental army, with scarlet facings representing the Corps of Engineers. Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.



Catherine Cropper, John Cropper's second wife, by Charles Wilson Peale. Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

sold for the tax of 1798 amounting to 50/. —He also informed me that he had offered to pay for you as well as for several of his friends in this state, but the Auditor do's not receive the taxes after sending out the advertisements & lists. —He informs me that you have every thing to apprehend from the villainy of those concerned in those sales, it frequently happening that large & valuable tracts are sold for the payment of small and inconsiderable sum due for taxes; & that it is made so much a jobbing business that persons were going down with money to Christian Court House (the place where these lands were to be sold) to buy them in at a small price.

Mr. Heron says that the place ofrd. was 250 miles from that where he was & that he could not provide a mean of making a remittance so as to save the rights of his friends.

The foregoing is all I am able to collect abt. it, save only that the sale was to have been, by the advertisements in Octo. last.— The paper in which it is, is dated in Augt.— If I can glean any further information relative to it, I will communicate it instantly, & should you wish any thing done here which I can do, you will take the liberty to command me.

I have just snatched time enough to give you this information, which I fear I have scarcely made intelligible, & can only now say that I am with sincerity, Your Fr. Jr. Wise. (Smith College Library)

In later years, John Cropper tore down Bowman's Folly, the ancestral home that Edmund Bowman had built and he had a new home, described by one historian as "the most pretentious house in Virginia on this side (the Eastern shore side) of the bay," constructed on an artificial mound that had been built up by the slaves. The "new home" still stands today. An unidentified newspaper clipping in the family papers reads as follows:

After the Revolution Colonel Cropper passed the remaining years of his life on his estate. The stately old mansion was pleasantly situated about one hundred yards from the bank of a creek running up from the ocean, and was surrounded by venerable trees, smooth green lawns, gardens and the deer park. Near it was the family cemetery, where the dead of two centuries rested. Across the creek were the remains of an old fortification, and beside it was planted a piece of old artillery to mark the height of an unusual tide. From the beach to the blue horizon stretched the broad Atlantic, and in the nearer distance were the islands of Chincoteague and Assateague, lively with their herds of wild ponies, and silver—framed in the waves that dashed on their shores. In this quiet retreat the veteran delighted to imitate the virtues and to cherish the memory of his former illustrious commander. Mr. Custis, in his "Recollections," says that Colonel Cropper had but one toast, which he gave every day to all companies; it was "God bless General Washington!" John Cropper died in 1821.

☞ A military pension:

Addressed to: Mrs. Catherine Cropper, Accomack C.H. VA.
Washington City, Nov. 15, 1838

Madam, I have the pleasure of saying to you, that yr. pension claim is allowed, & I have recd. the certificate. Upon averaging the terms of Col. Croppers services in his different grades, whilst in *actual* service, it was found that you were entitled to \$570.83 cts. per year, commencing on the 4th of March

1831, & payable half yearly. The 1st payment will be made in January & will amount to the sum of \$1427.07 cts. for 2 1/2 years in arrears, & there will be 2 1/2 years more to be recd. if you live so long, payable \$285.41 cts. every half year. I shall return to Accomack before going to Richmond, in time to prepare the necessary powers of attorney to receive the money.

I remain, Madam, most respectfully your ob. Servant, *Vr. S. Ellis*.
(Smith College Library)

☞ Another side of the family: Obadiah Jennings, A lawyer and minister from Pennsylvania and Tennessee.

The following Memoir has been prepared at the request of the friends of the deceased [Obadiah Jennings], especially his bereaved partner... it is hoped, the narrative will be read with interest, especially by friends and acquaintances. It presents a bright example of Christian character, which may be profitable for instruction and reproof, as well as for encouragement and animation to the people of God, amidst the conflicts of life, and the agonies of death...

Rev. Obadiah Jennings, D. D., was born 13th December, 1778, near Baskingridge, in the state of New Jersey. He was the fourth son of the Rev. Jacob Jennings, a minister of the Presbyterian Church, who united the character of Clergyman and Physician. Not long after his birth, his father removed to Virginia... Of the youthful years of Mr. Jennings little is known... Having enjoyed a strictly religious education, under the care and direction of eminently pious parents, impressions were made on his mind which were never entirely obliterated, and had an influence in forming correct moral habits, and restraining him from vicious excesses... Having given early indication of genius, his father determined to afford him a liberal education. He was according sent to Canonsburg, at that time the seat of a flourishing Academy, which was afterwards, in 1802, organized into a College, called "Jefferson College." Here he pursued with diligence and success the study of the classics, mathematic, and sciences. Having acquired the best education which the Western Country could then afford, he commenced the study of the law, with John Simonson, Esq., of Washington, where he was first admitted to the bar in the fall of 1800. He immediately removed to Steubenville... soon after his removal to Steubenville, he was united in marriage with Miss Becket, the daughter of Col. Becket of Westmoreland county, Pa. This amiable lady was early removed by death, leaving an only daughter... He was again married, to Miss Ann Wilson, daughter of a respectable clergyman of the state of Delaware... At the bar, he ever maintained a high standing, and fully realized the expectations excited by his first efforts... In the language of one who knew him well, "his *forté* lay in addressing a jury: in this he had no superior. In an argument to the court on a point of law, when the occasion called for preparation, and required him to put forth all his strength, he was surpassed by few." He was much esteemed by his brethren of the bar, and greatly confided in by the community at large...

...In the year 1810, Mr. Jennings connected himself with the Presbyterian church, by a profession of his faith, and not long after, as already stated, removed to the town of Washington, Pa. Here he was elected to the office of Ruling Elder... Upon his first attaching himself to the church, and for some time afterwards, it does not appear that he had any intention of relinquishing the profession of the law. His first serious thoughts on this subject, were occasioned by a visit from an obscure Christian, who happened to tarry at his house all night... To himself, the practice of the bar had



The Reverend Obadiah Jennings, 1778–1832, (father of Ann Elizabeth Jennings Wise). Photograph courtesy of the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

become, in many respects, irksome, and contrary to his renovated taste and habits. Of the two professions, he had no difficulty in determining which would best accord his own taste and feelings. The courts of God's house, he greatly preferred to the courts of earthly litigation... While his mind was vibrating on the great question of his duty, he was laid on a bed of sickness, and brought to a decision in the light of eternity. The disease with which he was attacked was violent, and he was brought down to the very verge of the grave... Agonizing prayers were offered up in his behalf, which were graciously answered. A physician of eminence, from Steubenville, who attended him constantly, scarcely entertained a hope of his recovery, and when he opened a vein to bleed him, he remarked that it might possibly be favorable, but that it was done more with a view of lessening the pains of dying, than with a hope of restoring him. Soon afterwards a change was visible, and he was restored in a manner almost miraculous. He was also cheered with the returning light of God's countenance. The cloud was dispelled, and he was enabled to rejoice in God his Saviour. "The question," said he, "is decided. If God spare my life, it shall be devoted to his service in preaching the gospel of Christ." ...in the fall of 1816, he was licensed by the Presbytery of Ohio to preach the gospel... Having accepted of the call, he removed to Steubenville in the spring of 1817, and was ordained and installed pastor... Having received a call from Nashville, Tennessee, his mind was again in great perplexity as to the path of duty... In April, 1828, he removed to Nashville, where he remained until his decease.

The closing scene was such as might have been anticipated from a life so devoted to the service of the Redeemer. "Precious in the sight of God is the death of his saints." Precious too, in the recollection of pious friends, is the "death-bed of the just." With a mind calm and composed, in full view of death and judgment, he called his family around him, to bid them a final farewell. With his dying benediction and prayer, he gave to each of his children that were present, his last counsel, in a manner most tender, solemn, and beautifully appropriate. He left his blessing, also, to those who were absent. Silver and gold he had none to leave them. The riches of the world he had renounced for the gospel's sake: but he had that to leave them which was of more value than all the riches of the world. In faith on the divine promises, he cheerfully committed his family to God, expressing a strong confidence the *He* would provide. When reminded of the promise made to the fatherless and the widow; "that," said he, with emphasis and animation, "is the legacy, that is the legacy."

When his son Thomas, who had been his constant nurse and physician, said to him, "Father you are dying"—he immediately replied, "Bless the Lord, O my soul."

In a moment of great suffering, he remarked with characteristic energy of thought, "If this be the way to heaven, what must be the way to hell?" His mind however was calm and resigned, and even triumphant, in the near prospect of death. As a draught of water was presented to his dying lips, he said, "I shall soon drink from the river of life, which issues from the throne of God and the Lamb."

He asked his wife to repeat to him the answer to the question in the Shorter Catechism, "What benefits do believers receive from Christ at their death? and several times afterwards repeated with great delight, "the souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory." Thus while his mind was absorbed in the contemplation of those glorious prospects which were opening upon him, he sunk, with peaceful serenity, into the slumber of death—resting, with unshaken confidence, in the merits of the Redeemer, *for an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of God—"animated with a hope full of IMMORTALITY."*

After his death, every suitable mark of respect was shown by the people of Nashville. His funeral was one of the largest ever seen in that place...

As to his *private* life, it may be truly said, he was exemplary in all its relations. Few men have passed through life more generally beloved and esteemed, and more completely without reproach.

He was peculiarly interesting and engaging as a companion, and in his social intercourse... There was a captivating urbanity of manners, which spread an irresistible charm over all his intercourse with society. These amiable qualities, which belonged to him as a man, became doubly interesting, when consecrated by religion. In him were combined the gentleman and the Christian... ..As a testimony of the estimation in which he was held, it may be mentioned, that a short time before his decease, the college of New Jersey conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. During his practice at the bar, accustomed to write only in haste and on business, he had given little attention to *style*, and when he commenced the composition of sermons, he labored under no small difficulty, which however, he was enabled to surmount, so as to write with great facility, though his style is characterized more by perspicuity and force, than by ornament and elegance...

...His *style of preaching*, as has been justly described, “was characterized by strength, rather than polish; by solid sense, rather than elegance of language; by clearness of exposition, rather than ornament; by force of argument, rather than beauty of illustration.” His eloquence was the eloquence of thought, rather than delivery. Few persons could sit under his ministry with indifference. The serious and pious heard him with interest and delight, while the more careless could not fail to be impressed with the solemnity and force of his addresses, and whatever opinion they formed of the sermon or the speaker, retired with a less favorable opinion of themselves.

We have been favored with a copy of several letters, addressed to Doctor Samuel K. Jennings of Baltimore, the eldest brother, a highly respectable physician, and a minister of the gospel of the Methodist church...

Steubenville, Jan 23, 1810.

Dear Brother—

...The day you wrote your letter, I spent with our father at his house. He, with all his parental anxiety and pious solicitude for my eternal welfare, urged me, as he had frequently done before, to begin the worship of God in my family. I did not, at that time, comply. I thought I saw so many difficulties in the way, it would be impossible for me to attempt it. Since my return home, however, and since the commencement of this year, I have been enabled, after the most violent struggle, which you can better conceive than I can describe, to attempt to acknowledge God in my family. My Ann is rejoiced, and renders praise to God for bringing me to see, in some measure, the necessity and importance of religion. But alas! I fear her joy will be very short lived! My performances of all religious duties which I attempt, especially family worship, is so wretched, I have been frequently ready to conclude I must give it up... Thus, my dear brother, I have endeavored to let you know something of the state of my mind. What will be the event, God only knows. Whether these dry bones can live, “O Lord thou knowest,” Pray for me, my brother, pray without ceasing.
Yours, O. J.

—Excerpted from *Debate on Campbellism; Held at Nashville, Tennessee*, by Obadiah Jennings, D. D. published in 1832.

