

Mercy Otis Warren to Catharine Macauley

Plimouth N E August 24 1775

At A time when all Europe is Interested in the state of America you will forgive me Dear Madam, if I Lay Aside the Ceremony usually observed when there is no Attachment that Arises Either from Affection or Esteem, & again, Call at your Attention when I have Not been Assured of the Welcome Reception of my Last, in that I hinted that the sword was half Drawn from the scabbard, soon after which this people were obliged to unsheath it to Repel the Violence offered to Individuals, & the Insolence of an Attempt to seize the private property of the subjects of the king of England. And thereby put it out of their power to Defend themselves against the Corrupt Ministers of His Court.

You have Doubtless, Madam been Apprized of the Consequences of this Hostile Movement which compiled the Americans to fly to arms in Defence of all that is held dear & sacred among Mankind. And the public papers as well as private accounts have Witnessed to the Bravery of the Peasants of Lexington, & the spirit of Freedom Breath'd from the Inhabitants of the surrounding Villages. You have been told of the Distresses of the people of Boston, And the shameful Violation of faith which will leave a stain on the Memory of A Certain General Officer so long as the obligations of Honour & Truth are held sacred among Men. He after sporting with the Miseries of the Wretched Sufferstill Famine & pestilence began to Rage in the City, permitted the Most of them to Depart Leaving Their Effects behind, & to quit Their Elegant & Convenient Habitations in the Capital & fly Naked into the Hospitable arms of their Brethren in the Country., And the Conflagration of Charlestown will undoubtedly Reach Each British Ear before this comes to your Hand. Such Instances of Wanton Barbarity have been seldom practiced Even among the Most Rude & uncivilized Nations, the ties of Gratitude which were Broken through by the kings troops in this Base translation Greatly Enhances their Guilt. it was the Inhabitants of that town who prompted by Humanity Generously opened their doors to the Routed Corps on the Nineteenth of April, & poured Balm into the Wound; of the Exhausted & dying Soldiers after their precipitant Retreat. Had they observed a Different Conduct on that Memorable day, Had they assisted in cutting [off] Ld percys Retreat it Might not have been in the power of General Gage to have Wraaped that town in Flames & Driven out the Miserable Inhabitants the prey of poverty & Despair. But A particular Detail of [the] sufferings of the Massachusets you will have from other Hands. I shall therefore only Give a short Account of the present situation of American affairs in the Environs of Boston.

We have a well Appointed Brave & High spirited Continental army, Consisting of About twenty-two thousand Men, Commanded by the Accomplished George Washington Eqr. A Gentleman of one of the first fortunes in America. A man whose Military Abilities, & public & private Virtues place Him in the first Class of the Good & Brave & are Really of so High a stamp as to do Honour to Human Nature this army

is to be occasionally Reunited & to be supported & paid at the Expence of the United Colonies of America. And were Britain powerful & Infatuated Enough to send out a force sufficient to cut off to A Man this little Resolute army. Less than the Compass of A week would Exhibit in the Field thrice their Numbers Ready to Avenge the stroke & to call down the justice of Heaven on the Destroyers of the peace, Liberty & Happiness of Mankind.

In Compliance with the Recommendation of the Continental Congress, the Massachusets have at Last Reassumed the power of Government. the provincial Congress sent out A writ for Calling a House of Representatives & Agreeable to the Charter of Wm & Mary they proceeded to Elect 28 Counselers. And Considering the Govr & Liet as Absent the supreme Authority of of [sic] the province was Vested in any sixteen of the Number.

Thus after living without Goverment without Law and Without any Regular Administration of justice for more than 12 Months we are just Returning from a state of Nature to the subordinations of Civil Society., The Grand Counsel of America have once more petitioned His Majesty to Revise some Methods of Reconciliation this is A final proof with what Reluctance the progeny at Britain Draw forth the sword against their unnatural parent. Both the Ministerial & the American armies seem at present to be Rather on the Defensive as if Each were wishing for some Benign Hand to Interpass & heal the Dreadful Contest without letting out the Blood from the Bosom of their Brethren.

But fond as this people are of the Restoration of that Harmony which Has Added Riches & Strength to the power of Britain, yet so tenacious are we of the Birth Rights of Nature & the fair possession of freedom which no power on Earth has a Right to Curtail, that we shall Never give up the Invaluable Claim. But with the Warm Currant which plays round the Heart & eluminates the Breast to Resist the arm of Tyrany. This disposed to Welcome the Bright Images of peace if at the same time that she

[Text written on the left margin]

Our Good Friend Mr Adams Has just left us to Return to philadelphia & with My very Good Husband Desire you would accept their Respectful Complements And Highest Esteem. Appears with the Olive Branch in the one Hand. The Other holds forth A Radical Redress of Griviances Stamped with such a signet [strikeout: that] as May not be Broken Either by the [Corrupt] practices of openly Abandoned Men or the Machinations of persidious Trayters, Who profane the Heavenly Name of Virtue, by puting on the Guize that they may more securly perpetrate Every species of Iniquity.

I fear Notwithstanding the Efforts of A Virtuous & sensible Minority, the Ministerial Hirelings will pursue their Mad Projects till the sceptre Drops from the Hands of Royalty, & the Mistress of the Flag sits solitary & Alone, till she becomes the Derision of Nations & the Contempt of Her Enemies.

But [illegible] not their confusion be inexpressable when Disappointed in Every Vissionary Scheme, when perhaps Ere long thy may see the ports of America T[h]rown open to Every foreign power & the Mart of the Whole World be fix'd in the Western Regions. What were the United provinces when the Contest began with Spain in Comparison with the United Colinies of this Wide Extended Continent.

Although I have Already Detained you longer than I Designed, I cannot Close without observing to you

Dear Madam that the protest of the Dissenting Lords And the Conduct of Several Members of Both Houses with regard to American affairs is Never Mentioned but with Every Expression of Approbation & Applause. The Noble Example of Lord Ellingham will be Remembered in the Historic pages, but at the same time that it transmits His Name with Honour to posterity it will Evince to Future ages the Corruption of the times that such an Instance of Disinterested Merit should Have Recorded Almost More, one who Has heretofore been Viewed with your Correspondence Subscribes with the Highest Esteem A Daughter of America,

Mercy Warren



Th. Jefferson
MONTICELLO