

WASHINGTON'S PAPERS.

An Edition of these Papers is preparing for publication under the following title ;

THE
WORKS
OF
GEORGE WASHINGTON :
WITH
NOTES AND HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY JARED SPARKS.

The character and value of these papers, and the plan proposed for publishing them, may be understood from the following letters to the Hon. JOSEPH STORY.

LETTER I.

Mount Vernon, May 4, 1827.

DEAR SIR,

Since I have been at this place, engaged in examining General Washington's papers, I have thought it advisable to defer replying to your kind inquiries, respecting the progress and probable results of my investigations, till I should be able to speak with some degree of certainty and confidence. After two months of assiduous application to the task, I am now prepared to state such particulars as will give you an outline of the subject, both in regard to the extent and character of the papers, and to my own plan for bringing them before the public. You are already apprised of my arrangement with Judge Washington, by which I am to have access to all the papers in the archives at Mount Vernon, that belonged to General Washington, and to select and prepare for the press such parts as shall be best suited for that purpose. With this view I have been employed in a general

survey of the materials, and in arranging them for future examination and use. It was a habit, adopted by General Washington at an early stage of his life, to preserve copies of all his important letters, as well those of a private, as of a public nature. Before the Revolution this was a troublesome labor to him, as the copies were usually taken by his own hand, and this even during the active years of his military command on the Virginia frontier; but, after the Revolution, he was seldom without a secretary, who transcribed his letters into letter books as they were written. For several of the latter years of his life he used a copying press, and the impressions thus taken are still preserved, although these letters also are, for the most part recorded in volumes, so that, in many cases, duplicate copies are retained. Such having been his habit during a long life of extraordinary activity, a large portion of which was devoted to pursuits various in their character, and of the highest moment, it may reasonably be supposed, that his papers accumulated rapidly under his hands, and that amongst them are many materials worthy of a better fate, than that of being shut out from the eyes of the world, and of a more lasting preservation, than can be secured to them in the condition of perishable manuscripts.

The earliest written document of much importance from the hand of Washington, was the journal of his tour to the Western country, performed by the order of Governor Dinwiddie. This was printed at the time, both in this country and England, and was much applauded, as indicating a discretion, and a spirit of uncommon enterprise in so young a man, he being then hardly twentyone years old. For several years previously to this period, he had followed the profession of a practical surveyor, in the employment of Lord Fairfax, and had surveyed numerous tracts of wild lands in the upper counties of Virginia, on both sides of the Blue Ridge. In this occupation he seemed to have peculiar pleasure, and in the end it proved of essential service, as it opened to him a knowledge of the country, which was afterwards to be the theatre of his early military career; and it inured him to hardships and privations. There are now remaining journals, and fragments of journals, in his own handwriting, of some of these surveying expeditions. A small volume, in particular, re-

records the events of a tour of this kind among the Allegany mountains, when he was but sixteen years old. In addition to a diary of the principal incidents of each day, this volume contains his field book, or minutes of surveys, and original drafts of letters to his friends.

But the time at which his papers begin to assume an importance worthy of special notice, as claiming a rank in history, is when he engaged in the campaign with General Braddock. He had already returned from the affair of the Great Meadows, and been appointed, by the governor of Virginia, to command a body of new forces immediately to be raised, and despatched to the frontier. But as the Assembly broke up without appropriating any money to carry the scheme into effect, Washington resigned the command, and went back to his farm. Braddock shortly after landed in Virginia, and invited him to join his family as volunteer and aid-de-camp. From this date his papers have been preserved in detail, to the last day of his military services under the Virginia authorities.

These papers were recorded in letter books, and copied out by himself when written. They consist of his correspondence with Governor Dinwiddie, the Speaker of the Virginia Assembly, the Earl of Loudon, General Forbes, Governor Sharpe, Colonel Stanwix, Lord Fairfax, and with the subordinate officers under his command; also with his mother, brothers, and other private friends. There is, moreover, in Washington's handwriting, an entire copy of Braddock's General Orders, as they were issued daily, from the time he entered Virginia till the fatal defeat, except a few days, while Washington was confined with a fever, and unable to be on duty. After his return from that expedition, and appointment to the command of the Virginia forces, his letters, orders, and instructions, are minutely and fully recorded. The whole collection extends through four volumes, embracing not only his public but private letters; and exhibiting a complete history of the operations in which he was engaged. The value set by Washington on these papers may be inferred from the circumstance that, several years afterwards, he corrected the

language by erasures and interlineations, and had them all transcribed anew. Both the originals, thus corrected, and the transcripts are preserved.

From the end of these military services, till the first movements of the Revolution, Washington lived in retirement, at Mount Vernon, not otherwise mingling in public affairs than as an occasional member of the House of Burgesses, in Virginia. He was devoted to the cultivation of his farms. During this space of fifteen years, therefore, few papers are found of much general interest or value, except as showing the nature of his pursuits, and the traits of mind and character that marked his private life. There are several volumes pertaining to this period, chiefly in his own handwriting, which contain letters to his mercantile correspondents in London, invoices of articles shipped and ordered, journals of daily accounts, ledgers, letters to tenants and agents, and entrances of all the minute details of business, incident to a personal management of his large plantations. In those days it was the custom of the Southern planters to ship their produce directly to the London market, and receive from that place, once or twice a year, by special order, all the articles of importation necessary for family use, thus acting in the double capacity of merchant and farmer. This practice was followed many years by Washington, and his papers will show, that he pursued it with a skill and attention, that proved him not less acquainted with the various branches of business, than prompt and diligent in prosecuting them.

We are now arrived at the opening scenes of the Revolution, after which, almost every day of Washington's life affords matter for history; and, happily, from that date, the records of the great events in which he bore so conspicuous a part, the testimonials of his acts, opinions, and motives, are numerous, well preserved, and attested by the sanction of his own hand. Being actuated by a single aim, to public good, which left him nothing to conceal, and apparently anticipating the eagerness with which posterity would trace his footsteps, and search into his deeds, his habitual caution to preserve every document that could in any

manner help to lay open his conduct to the broad inspection of the world, seemed to increase with the responsibility of his station, and the wider sphere of his duties. There was probably no important public act, either performed by himself, or with his counsel or approbation, for which his motives and purposes may not be easily gathered from some of his papers; and so regardless was he of any discoveries, which the prying eye of curiosity might make in this respect, that he seems to have taken no pains to separate private, from what might be more properly called public papers, any further than circumstances might suggest to him the prudence of such a measure, for a temporary period. In whatever station he was placed by Providence, listening to no other monitor than his conscience, and obeying no other guide than the rectitude of his own heart, he never sought to shield his conduct from the most rigid scrutiny of mankind, nor to withhold or disguise any testimony that might be used in a faithful narrative of his actions. This brilliant gem in the crown of Washington's glory, this stern virtue, and unmingled purity of motive, at the same time it exalts his name above every other that has been called great, communicates to his historical character a reality peculiar to him alone, and stamps the records he has left behind him with indelible marks of truth. As no country has been so fortunate as our own, in the hero that achieved its national existence and greatness, so none could rely with such assurance, on the facts which narrate the story of its early struggles and growing renown.

Washington's Revolutionary Papers have all been transcribed into large folio volumes, amounting to fortyfour in number, and arranged according to the following classification.

1. Letters to the Congress of the United States; to Committees of Congress; to the American Ministers Plenipotentiary at Foreign Courts; to individual Members of Congress in their public character. This class contains seven volumes.

2. Letters to Officers of the Line, of every rank; to Officers of the Staff; and to all other military characters of every denomination. Sixteen volumes.

3. Letters to Conventions and Committees of Safety and Correspondence ; to Governors, Presidents, and other Executives of States, to Civil Magistrates, and citizens of every denomination. Five volumes.

4. Letters to Foreign Ministers ; to subjects of foreign nations in the immediate service of the United States, but not in virtue of commissions from Congress ; to foreign Officers of all other description. Two volumes.

5. Letters to Officers of every rank and denomination in the service of the enemy ; to British subjects of every character, with the enemy ; to persons applying for permission to go to the enemy. One volume.

6. Proceedings and opinions of Councils of War, and opinions of the General Officers respecting the various points on which they were consulted from time to time, by the Commander in Chief. Three volumes.

7. Private Correspondence during the Revolution, being letters written to persons both in private and public stations, but on subjects of a private nature. Three volumes.

8. Orderly Books, containing all the orders to the Army, entered in detail from the day he took command of it at Cambridge, till he left it at Newburgh at the end of the War. Seven volumes.

These volumes are arranged with a remarkable exactness of method, copied with elegance and care, and written throughout in a uniform and neat style of penmanship. Each class of subjects is brought together in a strict chronological order, and a copious index is added to every volume. The whole was executed under the immediate direction of Mr Richard Varick, who was appointed, towards the close of the war, Recording Secretary to the Commander in Chief. He was employed nearly two years and a half, with the aid of three assistant Clerks, in arranging and transcribing these Papers. It hence appears that there are two distinct copies of every letter, and other paper, from the beginning to the end of the Revolution. The originals, or copies of first drafts, which were preserved by Washington for occasional reference in camp, and from which the above volumes were

transcribed, are mostly on separate sheets of paper ; they are now filed in perfect order, with such labels and directions on each, that any one, in the whole series, can be immediately consulted.

When the revolution had terminated, and Washington was settled on his farm, although relieved from public duties, his correspondence continued to be very extensive with eminent persons in this country and Europe, and frequently on subjects of much interest and moment. From this period, till the time of his accepting the Presidency, his copied letters fill six folio volumes. Scarcely any of them have been printed, and on many accounts they may be considered among the most valuable of his written remains. Notwithstanding he was closely occupied with his agricultural pursuits, and visited by crowds of company from all parts of the United States, and from the old world, yet he claimed to himself hours of seclusion, and evidently bestowed no little pains on the letters he wrote to a large circle of friends, and to a few eminent strangers, who had courted his correspondence. To the prominent statesmen of this country, he repeatedly pointed out the defects of the old confederation, lamenting the evils that were daily undermining the body politic, and which were to be ascribed to a badly organized system of government, calling loudly on all to suggest and apply a remedy, to rouse the people to a sense of their danger, and to bring the reflecting part of the community to unite in energetic measures to stop the tide of ill fortune, that threatened to sweep away the fair fabric of liberty, which has been erected at so dear a sacrifice of blood and treasure. These were perpetual themes with him in his letters to those, who, from their weight of character, or public station, exercised a commanding influence ; and when these letters shall be published, it will be seen, that the agency of Washington, in preparing the way for the new constitution, was much more efficient, than has generally been supposed. Another subject, upon which he often dwelt with apparent fondness, was the internal improvement of the country, and particularly the importance of water communications between the East and the West. His correspondence with Mr Jefferson and other gentlemen, on this subject, is full of information, combined with

sound views of policy, that have since been successfully acted upon by the wisest men of the nation. Soon after the war was closed, he visited the internal lakes of New York, and in one of his letters, he emphatically predicts, that a water communication would at no distant day be opened through the western parts of that state, and enlarges on the benefits that would be derived from such a work. In short there were few topics of much interest at that time, on which he was not led more or less to touch in his letters, and especially such as related to the political condition and prospects of the country.

By his foreign correspondents he was made acquainted with the impressions entertained in Europe of the American States, and he was thus enabled to render some service by communicating intelligence and correcting errors. His numerous letters to Lafayette, are fraught with a warmth of friendly feeling and kind recollection, which impart to them an uncommon charm; and his correspondence with Rochambeau, Count d'Estaing, Count de Grasse, and other French officers, with whom he had shared the toils of war and the triumphs of victory, is highly honorable to the parties, and replete with incidents that may be perused with pleasure at the present day.

The following are the names of a very small number only of the persons, with whom he habitually corresponded during the period to which I have been alluding. In this country, Franklin, Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton, Richard Henry Lee, Edmund Randolph, Patrick Henry, Jay, Knox, Lincoln, Moultrie, Clinton, Charles Carroll, Benjamin Harrison, Humphreys, Gouverneur Morris, Grayson, George Mason, Arthur Lee, Boudinot, Robert Morris, Trumbull, Henry Lee, Marshall, Pinckney, Rutledge, Hopkinson, Thomas Johnson, Dr Ramsay, General St Clair, Baron Steuben. In Europe, Lafayette, Rochambeau, Count d'Estaing, Count de Grasse, Duke de Lauzun, Chevalier de Chastellux, Chevalier de la Luzerne, Count de Noailles, Marquis de la Rouière, Count de Moustier, Dumas, Don Diego Gardoqui, Count de Florida Blanca, Paul Jones, Countess of Huntington,

Mrs Macaulay Graham, Arthur Young, Lord Fairfax, Dr Gordon, Sir Edward Newingham, and numerous others.

When Washington entered upon the arduous office of the Presidency, he was of course obliged to relinquish a portion of his private correspondence ; yet his early formed and long continued habits of industry, procured him leisure from his public duties, and within the years of his Presidential labors are seven volumes of recorded private letters, besides many others of which press copies were taken, and which were not entered in books. A long letter he regularly wrote, once a week, and sometimes oftener, to the manager of his plantation, press copies of which he retained ; and he kept up a spirited correspondence on agricultural subjects with Sir John Sinclair, Arthur Young, Mr Anderson, and other persons. His European correspondents rather increased than diminished, but his answers became brief and formal. Many, indeed, were turned over to his secretary. It appears to have been a fixed principle with him, all his life, never to receive a letter of any description, respectful in its language, without replying to it, and, commonly, with great promptness.

The number of letters which came to him from all quarters, on subjects having no relation to his own concerns, would hardly be credited, without ocular proof. Letters from persons in distress, asking charity ; letters from old soldiers and soldiers' widows, making claims on the government ; letters suggesting projects of improvement ; letters innumerable from Europe, desiring information as to the inducements for emigrating to America, and inquiring about lost relatives or friends, supposed to be in this country, or about lands or other property in some of the states ; these are but a few of the topics upon which he received almost daily communications. All the world seemed to think, that, if they wished to know anything concerning America, or what was in America, they had only to write to Washington. In no instance did he treat such applications, obtrusive as they were, with harshness or neglect. In acts of charity, he was open-handed, to an extreme ; where information was desired, he frequently submitted to a good deal of trouble in collecting it ;

where claims were presented, over which he had no control, he would put the petitioner into the proper channel for having them examined and adjusted. To all letters of this sort, whether he could return a favorable answer or not, and however humble a rank in life the writer might sustain, he never failed to reply in a condescending and friendly manner.

Among the letters demanding particular attention, while he was President, are those of a private and confidential nature, to our ministers abroad—Gouverneur Morris, Pinckney, Jay, Monroe, King; and those to the members of the cabinet, Jefferson, Hamilton, Randolph, Pickering, Knox, during his absences at Mount Vernon, and while he was on the western expedition, caused by the insurrection in Pennsylvania. Morris was in France at the first movements of the revolution, and the correspondence with him goes largely into a discussion of principles and events then showing themselves in that country. But in all the papers left by Washington, there is nothing which can be read with more satisfaction than his private correspondence with Mr Jay, while the British treaty was in agitation and progress. Such a flame did that instrument kindle in the nation, when it was promulgated, that, even at the present day, it is almost impossible to touch upon it, without stirring up some of the slumbering embers of party. Could the private letters of Washington and Jay have been exhibited in broad daylight to the public, when the treaty was laid before the senate, there would have been but one loud and undivided voice, as to the motives of these men, their unsullied patriotism and ardent efforts for the best interests of the country, whatever might have been thought of any features in the treaty itself. In fine, I take it upon me to say, without qualification, that, among the mass of Washington's private and confidential papers, pertaining to the stormy seasons of his administration, there is no record that dreads the light, none that would, in the smallest degree, detract from the brightness of his character, by being exposed. The early dissensions between Hamilton and Jefferson, he endeavored to soothe and quell; for he was a sincere friend to them both. He gave every facility to Randolph that he could possibly claim or desire, for making a full and fair

vindication; and in all times of trial and excitement, he maintained a dignity, firmness, and composure, which, at the same time they proved the integrity of his heart, calmed the troubled elements of party, and reared the pillars of government on a solid and durable foundation.

In addition to the volumes of letters just mentioned, as pertaining to the period of the Presidency, there are fourteen other volumes, in which are recorded the transactions of the President with Congress, and the heads of the departments, and which consist of letters that passed between him and the secretaries, on special subjects; also, opinions, reports, and intelligence, from the secretaries. Among other records, is a private journal kept by the President, in which his official acts and intercourse with the departments are daily noted down.

After Washington had again retired from the scenes of a public station, his letters were still numerous and important to the end of his life, especially those written to President Adams, Pickering, Hamilton, Pinckney, Knox, and McHenry, on the concerns of the provisional army. Nor were his old correspondents forgotten or neglected. At this period, also, he wrote on agricultural subjects, and gave minute instructions in writing to his managers for the cultivation of his farms.

I have only to add, that, besides the papers hitherto mentioned, there are three volumes of Addresses received by him at different times from states, cities, towns, religious societies, colleges, academies, masonic lodges, benevolent institutions, civil, political, and military associations, and other corporate bodies without number. Some of these were sent from Europe. They are all methodically recorded, together with the answers to them, and the originals are for the most part preserved.

Having thus presented you with a brief sketch of General Washington's papers, as they are now found at Mount Vernon, I shall defer to another letter an exposition of the method, by which I propose to arrange and prepare them for the press.

LETTER II.

Mount Vernon, May 7, 1827.

DEAR SIR,

In compliance with a promise in my former letter, I now proceed to explain the manner in which it is contemplated to prepare Washington's papers for the press, and send them out to the public. You will recollect, that it was stated to have been his custom from early life to retain copies of his letters and other papers. These copies amount to more than *sixty manuscript folio volumes*, besides others on file, which were never transcribed, the whole embracing his public and private letters, nearly all he wrote, in fact, on military, political, civil, agricultural, and miscellaneous subjects.

It is obvious, that it would be quite inexpedient to print, in detail, such a mass of papers, which the public can neither spare money to purchase, nor time to read; yet, every American will desire to have preserved, in a durable form, such portions of the writings of Washington, as illustrate his own great deeds and character, and reflect honor on the country, whose national existence and prosperity his services contributed so much to create and establish. A judicious selection from the whole, therefore, is all that can, with propriety, be attempted. Limits should be fixed, which will not be so narrow as to exclude anything of essential value, nor yet so broad as to incumber the work with materials that will add more to its bulk and expense, than to its interest and utility. At this medium it is my intention to aim. Amidst such a multitude of papers, treating on topics so various, and relating to events of the first magnitude, as well as to the innumerable incidents of private life, the task of selection and classification will not be without its embarrassments. How far these may be effectually overcome, must remain to be proved by the experiment.

Notes and historical additions will be inserted throughout the work, tending to elucidate the text, and to place in the clearest

view the motives, opinions, and actions of Washington. In discharging this duty, however, special care will be taken to avoid prolixity, and to introduce nothing which shall not have a direct bearing on the subject in hand, for it is not my purpose to connect with the writings of Washington a history of the times, any farther than that history may be developed by the writings themselves, and by the introduction of such facts as have an intimate alliance with them. But to lead you to a more exact understanding of my plan, I shall descend somewhat to particulars, and draw out the scheme which, upon mature reflection, I have concluded to follow. A general method, by which the materials may be thrown into proper classes, is the first requisite; and the next is a skilful arrangement of these materials in their respective divisions, accompanied by appropriate notes and historical elucidations. To compass both these ends, the work will be divided into six parts, in each of which, papers of a similar description will be included, according to the order now to be specified.

PART I.—LETTERS AND OTHER PAPERS RELATING TO WASHINGTON'S EARLY MILITARY CAREER, IN THE FRENCH WAR, AND AS COMMANDER OF THE VIRGINIA FORCES.

This period will occupy a comparatively small portion of the work; yet it will by no means be the least valuable. When it is recollected, that Washington was then a mere youth, engaged in hazardous enterprises, to which he was led by his native ardor and spirit; that, from the age of twentytwo to twentyseven, he held a very responsible command over the united forces of the largest colony on the continent, and was required to defend a dangerous frontier, where he was exposed to the perpetual incursions of the French and Indians; that he acquitted himself honorably on all occasions, and received the public thanks of his government, and the unanimous applause of his fellow citizens, for his good conduct; when these circumstances are brought to mind, the conviction cannot be resisted, that an account of such a train of occurrences, written by his own hand, while these were taking place, must have much in it worthy to

be treasured up among the permanent records of the country, for the inspection of the present and of future generations. Neither should it be forgotten, that this was the theatre in which he gained the knowledge and experience, that carried him successfully through the great revolutionary contest. In conducting these early campaigns, he rested mainly on the resources of his own mind, and was driven by necessity, as well as inclination, to familiarize himself, not more with the tactics and skill of military science, than with the intricate and embarrassing duties of providing supplies for an army. Hence it was, that, sixteen years afterwards, when he took command of the continental forces at Cambridge, he was prepared to enter at once upon the charge of a station beset with difficulties, which, it is probable, no other man in the country had experience to surmount, however well armed he might have been with prudence and fortitude. Regarded in this light, as affording the best history of the events to which they refer, and of the formation of Washington's military character, these papers come to us with high claims. But they have other qualities in their own merits, not less to be esteemed; they are written in a plain, but perspicuous and energetic style, replete with sound observations, and everywhere showing the same elevation of mind, the same insight into human nature, the same undeviating sense of justice, and stern regard for moral principle, the same perseverance in the discharge of duty, which marked his future years. Some of the distinguished persons, with whom he corresponded at this period, were mentioned in my former letter.

In making the selection for this part, regard will be had to the substance and historical character of the papers, so as to exhibit the intellectual habits, moral feelings, and special views, of the writer, together with as regular a narrative of occurrences, as can be attained by such a method. The notes will be designed chiefly to explain allusions in the text to particulars necessarily omitted, to fill out breaks in the narrative, and occasionally to trace the connexion between the proceedings on the Virginia frontier, and operations in other colonies, with remarks on the colonial policy of the English government then prevailing.

PART II.—LETTERS AND OTHER PAPERS RELATING TO THE
AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

Here is opened a wide field, but the papers are so admirably classified, accordingly to Washington's directions, that little difficulty will be felt in exploring it. All the letters, whether private or public, the orders, instructions, addresses, and other documents, which may find a place under this division, will be printed in strict chronological order. In some respects a classification by subjects and campaigns would be preferable, but, taking the whole together, this would create a confusion and transposition of dates, that would overbalance any advantage that might be derived from such an arrangement. By keeping in the order of time, the thread of history will be preserved entire, although sometimes obscured by extraneous matter. Letters to the president, members, and committees of Congress, to the governors of states, officers of the army, and private individuals, will be inserted collectively in the exact order of their dates. Subjects, particular trains of events, distinct military operations, the doings of the states in relation to the army, proceedings of committees of Congress while visiting the army, defence of fortifications and military posts, correspondence of the Commander in Chief with the French officers, accounts of detachments and of the separate lines of the army; all these and similar subjects, which extend through a considerable space of time, may be easily examined by the aid of an Index, which will be added at the end of the work.

To make a choice of the best materials, from so voluminous a mass as fortyfour volumes of manuscripts, is the main difficulty to be encountered in preparing this part. The two volumes of Washington's official letters, which have been printed, embrace those only to the president of Congress, for about three years and a half of the war. Some of the others to the same officer were also printed in the newspapers. Yet, all these together constitute a very small part of the revolutionary letters, and hardly any of the remainder were ever made public. In selecting papers under this large division, I shall be guided by one rule only, that of choosing such as shall seem most worthy of lasting

preservation in the shape of historical annals. These will not always be the letters to persons highest in office ; on the contrary, many of the private letters are more valuable than the public ones, because the writer utters his thoughts more fully and with less reserve. There is, for instance, a letter from Washington to his brother, soon after the battle of Germantown, which gives a more satisfactory account of that affair, for a reader of the present day, than his public communication to Congress. The same may be said of a similar letter, concerning the capture of Fort Washington. His private letters to the officers of the army, particularly to Green and Lafayette, and indeed to most of the Major Generals, often throw light upon his official despatches, by expressing his opinion and purposes with more freedom and confidence. No distinction will be made, therefore, between official and private letters during the Revolution, but whatever is most pertinent will claim the preference.

The notes to this division will be frequent, growing out of a fruitful stock of materials. Four abundant sources of these exist among Washington's papers ; first, the books of orders, in which the daily proceedings of the army through the whole war are entered ; secondly, the results of Councils of War, and the opinions of the general officers in writing, on important topics submitted to them by the Commander in Chief ; thirdly, the letters received by the Commander in Chief from the officers of the army, which are all preserved ; fourthly, returns of the army weekly and monthly, reports of the inspectors, the quarter masters, and other officers for superintending the various departments of the army, and minutes respecting the arrangements of the different lines. Use will also be made of a large and valuable collection of materials, which I have obtained by a personal inspection of the revolutionary papers in *the public offices of all the old States*. As these are manuscripts, and have never been printed, it may be presumed, that they will not be consulted without profit. The private papers of several of the Major Generals of the army, and members of the old Congress, have likewise been examined, and the results will be rendered subservient to the same purpose. The papers of the old Congress itself have

all been kept, and are now in the office of the Secretary of State. They are of the highest importance in connexion with this subject, and will be carefully consulted. To guard against the danger of redundance, where the theme is so fertile and matter so full, I shall endeavor to confine the notes strictly to facts, and plain deductions illustrative of the text, keeping clear of conjectures, speculations, and theories, which may safely be left to the imagination of the reader. A few incidents, which produced considerable excitement when they took place, and in which the character of Washington was concerned, will perhaps be examined anew, such as the cases of André and of Asgill, the affair of Conway and Gates, and that of General Charles Lee. The original papers, relating to these subjects, some of which were never published, are on file. The policy of Washington, in a few of his military movements, may also receive further investigation. But these are only hints, and to what extent they will be verified, it may not be wise now to predict.

PART III.—PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

You are already informed, that, after the Revolution, Washington took a deep interest in public concerns, although living and acting in retirement. His letters betray the secret workings of his mind, and the painful emotions with which he contemplated the prospects of the country under the Old Confederation. To his friends in Europe and America, he wrote much and feelingly on this subject. His letters upon the internal navigation of the states may likewise be considered of a public nature; and particularly his correspondence with several persons on the Convention for forming the new Constitution, and the progress of the State Conventions for adopting the same. To the letters of this description, which will come under this third division, may be added his private letters to our ministers in foreign countries, to the members of the cabinet, and to several of his other intimate friends, while he was President. If there were any such thing as a secret history of Washington's administration, it might be expected to be developed in this correspondence; but, in truth,

there is no such thing. The contents of these letters, it is true, have not been made known, and this is the whole amount of their secrecy; when taken in connexion with one another, no caution is required in submitting them to the public eye; and to withhold them, would be to keep out of sight some of the strongest testimonies of his singular virtue and patriotism. Another class of letters, which may be ranked under this head, are those written to President Adams, Colonel Pickering, and the other heads of departments; and, also, to Hamilton and Pinckney, during the two last years of his life.

Parts of this division will require a good many notes, especially the letters to ministers abroad and the members of the cabinet. These involve topics, that will need some farther explanation than is contained in the letters themselves; but this may often be derived from the answers, and other documents. The records of intercourse between the presidents and the departments, mentioned in my last letter, will be consulted for the same purpose, and also the official correspondence during Washington's presidency, on file in the office of the Secretary of State.

PART IV.--MESSAGES AND ADDRESSES.

In the first years of the new government, the President's communications at the opening of the sessions of Congress were called Speeches, and those transmitted afterwards, till the end of the session, were denominated Messages. All these will come into this fourth part, together with proclamations, and a selection of some of the best addresses, or rather replies to addresses, that were made to Washington at different periods of his life.

To this part free additions will be contributed by way of notes. In the character of Washington, there was not a more predominant practical trait, than his extreme care to possess himself of the views of persons, in whom he had confidence, respecting any public measure, before he proceeded to act. This was his uniform practice in the army, and one to which he adhered more

rigidly, if possible, after he was placed at the head of the government. A speech or message was rarely composed before he had consulted the members of the cabinet, and solicited their opinions separately in writing, both as to the points suitable to be introduced, and the manner of introducing them. When these opinions had been compared, deliberately examined, and weighed, he would construct his message according to the dictates of his judgment, thus enlightened, sometimes making free use of what had been furnished, at others choosing in preference the suggestions of his own mind. It was a rule with him, however, to adopt what he deemed the best thoughts, words, and expressions, from whatever quarter they might come. Several of these elements of messages are preserved, and are curious, as showing the steps by which a mind like Washington's was gradually led to results on subjects of delicacy and magnitude, and the invariable caution with which he submitted his views to the public. Among the persons, whom he appears to have consulted with special confidence, were Hamilton, Jefferson, Randolph, and Pickering of the cabinet, and also Jay and Madison. Even after Hamilton retired from the cabinet, he was applied to with scarcely less freedom and frequency, than while in a public station.

The opinions of the members of the cabinet, commonly written out with care and labor, on various important subjects brought up from time to time for discussion, possess much value as connected with the history of the events of that day. It was a period when some of the most interesting points relating to the intercourse between the United States and other countries had not been settled, and when our infant republic was not of an age to have gained wisdom and character by experience. On the question whether a minister from France, during the distracted state of that country, should be received without qualification, it is well known the cabinet were divided, Hamilton and Knox being on one side, and Jefferson and Randolph on the other. This involved another question, whether the treaty with France was binding on the United States, or whether the dissolution of the old French government had made it null. This question was argued with great ability by Hamilton, and Jefferson, on opposite

sides. Other important opinions of the respective members of the cabinet, were those relative to the ratification of the treaty with Great Britain ; also, respecting the recall of the American minister from France ; and a series of opinions on the resolution of the House of Representatives requesting papers from the President, which he refused to grant. In these subjects, and others of a similar kind, the public took a deep concern, and the papers in question afford the fullest testimony, that they were not acted upon by the President without earnest inquiry and deliberation, and the use of all the means that could be obtained for informing and guiding his judgment. These papers will be freely consulted as occasion may require.

PART V.—MISCELLANEOUS PRIVATE LETTERS.

Compared with the other materials, the number of letters strictly private, and suited for publication, is not large. It is presumed that letters of this sort, being deemed less important, were not copied with so much scrupulous care as others. Taking in the whole series, however, there will be found not a few, which are, in all respects, worthy of the writer, and will add to the value and dignity of the work. The benevolence and kindness of his nature, which could hardly be manifested in the correspondence of a public man, sent out from a camp or the highest office of state, will here be disclosed. His remarks on human life, in its connexions with retirement and the social principle, his interchange of feelings and sentiments with relations, friends, and neighbors, his advice to the young, counsels to the imprudent, consolations to the afflicted, his reflections and practical hints on the proper economy of time and means—all these have attractions, which will make his private letters highly valued. They present his character, as a private man, in an engaging light, and one which will not be eclipsed by his public virtues.

PART VI.—AGRICULTURAL PAPERS.

There was no station in which Washington took more delight, or the duties of which he discharged with more zeal and activity, than that of a practical farmer. His achievements in this walk were prodigious. It may be fairly questioned, whether any other individual in the country, not excepting the most industrious and enterprising, who has been devoted to this pursuit alone, has ever accomplished so much. He was commander of an army, and at the head of a nation, for a few years only at a time; but a day never passed, in which his farm was out of his mind. During the whole war he was planning improvements, directing them, and often writing letters of minute instructions to his manager. While President of the United States it was his standing custom to write weekly, and to receive weekly returns, in which he required great particularity and exactness in specifying occurrences, and the employment and progress of the laborers. I have before me a volume of press copies of letters, written in one year, during the presidency, to his manager and overseers. Some of them extend to several pages, and they average more than one a week. They are written in his own hand, with its usually fair and regular character, and bear every mark of having been as much studied in expression and style as any of his compositions. In some cases, and probably in most, they were written and copied out by himself before the press impressions were taken. Such was his habit for years amidst the burden of his public cares. There is also before me a curious agricultural document, dated four days before his death. It is a manuscript pamphlet of twenty four folio pages, written in a close hand, containing instructions to his manager for the cultivation of three farms, on the estate at Mount Vernon, the following year. Each farm was divided into lots, which were numbered. In the pamphlet very full instructions are given how to cultivate *every lot* in the three farms during the next year, stating the crops, with remarks on the soil, the products of former years, and the results of former experiments. Washington died, you will recollect, in the middle of December, and this pamphlet, drawn up evidently with much

labor and reflection, was already prepared to be handed to the manager at the beginning of the year, prefaced by a letter of general directions on the importance of method and forethought in farming operations, and this, notwithstanding he was himself to be on the plantation, and exercise a daily supervision.

These instances are mentioned only as examples ; they indicate the habit, and it is unnecessary to add more. For a time he kept an agricultural journal, and was engaged in experiments on a rotation of crops, noting down for a series of years the crops of each lot, with remarks on the comparative success of different rotations. He was at much pains to stock his farms with the best breeds of animals, and his grounds were adorned with rare and curious trees and shrubs, collected from various parts of the United States, and from foreign countries. His correspondence with Sir John Sinclair, Mr Anderson, and Arthur Young, on agriculture, has been printed. It is not my intention to select much for publication under this head, but such papers will be included, and such illustrations appended, as will exhibit, in their due proportions, the character of Washington on his farm, and his attention to the humbler concerns of life.

Here I bring to a close what I proposed to say in reply to your inquiries, and if your patience has carried you along with me thus far, you will possess as full and accurate an account of the present condition of the papers of General Washington, and the manner in which they are to be prepared for publication, as I have been enabled to embrace within the limits which I prescribed to myself. You will observe, that the great object is to publish such a collection of Washington's writings, as will hold a permanent place in the historical literature of the country, and transmit to posterity in one body the best memorials of his character and actions, and the best fruits of his mind, that were recorded by himself. I will add, that the letters *received* by him constitute a mass of materials more extensive and important than would be inferred from the casual manner in which I have alluded to them, and that they will afford me very essential aid throughout the work. They amount in number to more than

twenty thousand, and the literary merits of a portion of them are of a much higher order than is common in letters of the same promiscuous character; comparatively few persons wrote to Washington on trifling subjects, and few without more than ordinary care in regard to ideas and style. At no distant day it is presumed a selection from these letters will be published. Each volume of the work in contemplation will probably have an appendix, in which extracts from them will occasionally be inserted. I hardly need to repeat to you what you know already, that Chief Justice Marshall most cordially approves my undertaking, and will favor me with such assistance by his counsel and otherwise, as his intimate knowledge of the papers will make it easy for him to render.

If you ask me how large the work will be, when finished on the above plan, I cannot reply with certainty to your question. I may venture to predict however, that it will not be less than eight volumes nor more than twelve; and these bounds have suggested themselves in accordance with the principle heretofore stated, that it will not be advisable to print so much as to encroach on a proper economy of purse and time in the reader, nor so little as to leave materials of substantial value behind. If you ask again, when the publication will be closed, I am equally at a loss for a definite answer. I have nearly completed a general assortment of the papers, and prepared them for a removal to Boston, where I shall apply myself to the task with as much expedition as the nature of the undertaking and my other pursuits will admit.

As the work is of a kind to have an equal interest with readers in every part of the United States, it will be published by subscription, and every person so disposed will have an opportunity of procuring a copy with facility from the hands of agents to be employed for the purpose. Within a few weeks a prospectus will be issued and put in circulation. It is intended that the style of printing shall be handsome, and worthy of the subject, but not so expensive as to impose an unreasonable tax on the purchasers. The volumes will be published one, two, or three, at a

time, and at such periods as circumstances may render convenient.

A work thus comprising the best of Washington's writings, faithfully prepared in its literary execution, and published in the form and manner here described, will have claims, it is hoped, to general approbation, and to a liberal patronage from the American public.

I am, sir, &c.

JARED SPARKS.

HON. JOSEPH STORY.