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Schulkill Falls Novem^r 14th 1780

Dear Sir

Some time has elapsed since I last wrote you owing to my having been ill with the Fever which raged in the City. I was not confined more than a week: yet it left me so enfeebled that an attention to business in Congress; and on Committees which met every morning and Evening not only prevented my writing; but reduced me so low that I was compelled to move to this Place for recovery of Health: from which I ride into the City every morning to meet Committees at nine attend Congress afterwards and return at Night. This deprives me of that Leisure which I would willingly employ in giving you every possible information respecting our publick Affairs.

I am sorry to say that they are far from affording pleasure to the Friends of America. Former Congresses undoubtedly had their Difficulties; and whether any other set of Men under their Circumstances would have done better is not easy for a Judicious mind to determine. Events have however

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proved their Errors and called aloud for a speedy reformation. Perhaps most of our difficulties have arisen from an Ignorance of Finances and the want of System in every Department.

A new Army is now arranged, the States called upon for Men and Specific Supplies. All public Departments are ~~are~~ arranging upon economical Principles. —

The several and expensive Navy Boards will be abolished. The War Office and Navy Treasury Board regulated.

A Committee is appointed for arranging our Finances. —

A Loan from France solicited in the most pressing and positive Terms. And a new System will soon take place. Perhaps it may be thought a late Hour for this reformation. But is it not better late than never? every Days experience proves that many of our Distresses arise from a want of Power in Congress to carry any of their measures into Execution. They send Requisitions to the States; some comply some do not; and the consequence of this is too obvious to need explanation. Hence it is that our Army
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is often ready to perish with Hunger and Cold. I am happy to find New Hampshire stands foremost in her Compliance with the Requisitions of Congress.

At present we have not Money in the Treasury. Some States have not yet received their new Money or called in their old. This with the Artful industry of Tories and Speculators has depreciated the Money to eighty five for one in this City. This of course more than doubles our National Debt. For as the bills of the 18th of March must be redeemed with Silver and Gold and are issued at forty for one, five Million of Silver Dollars, must be employed to redeem the two Hundred Million of Dollars emitted. When at only eighty for one two Million and a half of Silver Dollars would purchase in the whole Sum. Consequently there is a National loss of more than two Millions and a half of Silver Dollars with its Interest, without any prospect of Publick advantage. But this is not all: Speculators and Tories, who have hoarded up the Specie take every Advantage of our necessities

necessities speculate upon our foreign bills so that we loose 2 1/2 per Cent on all our Money borrowed from France.

Our Army is almost naked, yet we have had Clothing sufficient for them at Cape Francois more than eighteen Months; and Frigates employed in useless adventures.

We had also Arms for 20 thousand Men and Clothing for forty nine thousand purchased in France and sent to the Stores to be shipped in the April last. The Capt of the Alliance was to have brought them but he came off and left them. We then hoped they might come in the April but she has not arrived.

In short this Season has exhibited a Series of misfortunes scarcely to be equalled in History. Many of them have arisen from unforeseen Events and too many from our own inattention and neglect.

Measures are now taken for forwarding the Arms and Clothing.

But to prevent the other evil arising from depreciation (and

and Speculation is not so easy.

The first loss of two Millions and a half of Dollars is inevitable. For the Credit of the last money must be supported or public faith can no longer exist. To do this and to prevent the loss on our bills in the manner they were issued to which I agree but it is now too late to prevent an evil which has had all its Effects. And an attempt to remedy it would draw on Consequences still more Injurious.

I have the Honor to be one of the Committee for arranging our Finances, and flatter myself that we shall yet have them established upon a respectable footing.

Thus have I given you a true tho melancholy Picture of our Political Affairs and sincerely wish that truth would permit me to give you a more pleasing one.

With respect to our Military Affairs I can give you but little information. Lord Cornwallis since the famous Ferguson was defeated has retreated into Charles Town. Genl Greene has gone on to take the Command from Gates.

The British that landed
Sept 19

These must be introduced to circulate with the bills to redeem them and to order in all respects as an auxiliary to them perhaps it may be said that it was wrong to give these bills

at Portsmouth in Virginia remain there sending out small parties to pillage.

Gen^l Clinton is about embarking with a large Force. I suppose for the southern States to employ the Winter as he did the last though I hope not so successfully. —

I suppose you will readily conceive by the account I have given that my employment here is not of the most entertaining kind. I freely confess it and wish to be relieved as soon as is convenient. I must at all events be Home by the first of the Spring to look after my Farms which are now the only barrier between me and extreme Poverty. —

Perhaps if requested I may return again in the Summer. — I wish as soon as the Assembly meets to know what wages I am to expect (in real value) as the duty I owe to myself and Family will no longer permit me to serve the Publick in the highest and most perplexing Offices to the ruin of my Fortune when even the common Soldier receives a superior reward and commands

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superior attention.

This has ever been my misfortune since in publick Service except when I had the Honor to serve in Congress before for New Hampshire. Was it is my duty to serve the publick with fidelity I at the same time ought to know what I am to expect for those Services.

With respect to Vermont the case was several Times argued and at length Congress met to consider upon it at six in the Evening and sat till twelve it was learnedly and candidly argued. The Agents on both sides attended without speaking.

The Arguments ran so much against New York that the Agents who were ~~present~~ before pressing a decision have never mentioned it since and thus it rests at present.

I am compelled to inform you that I shall be in immediate want of Money. Articles are so dear here that you can scarce have a conception of it. Board without any thing but water to drink eight hard Dollars per Week. Then firewood and all Liquors to be paid for. Horse keeping forty Dollars per Day.

(8)
A common riding Saddle twenty one
pounds hard Money And every thing
else in proportion and daily rising in
short a Thousand Continental Dollars
will not purchase what five formerly
did. —

I have the Honor to be most
respectfully Dr Sir your
most obedient Serv^t

John Sullivan.

Hon^{ble} Mesheux Mease Esq^r D D D

A Copy. —

Letter from
Gen. Sullivan
Nov. 14. 1780

copy of
Letter from Gen. John Sullivan,
respecting the State of the Financ-
es, the Army, &c.
Nov. 14. 1780.