

## Letter from John Laurens to Henry Laurens, August 14, 1775

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My last Letters to My Dear Father, were by MrGrimke, who took charge of a Couple for me, with Newspapers and two Numbers of Remembrancers – Mr Head’s Determination to send out a ship to Georgia with Goods that have been sometime bought, notwithstanding the Report that she has enter’d into the same Resolutions with the other provinces, gives me one more Conveyance of a Letter to you, safe from Governmental Interception under the Care of Mr Johnson – perhaps I may shortly have another by Cap<sup>t</sup>. M<sup>c</sup>Gillurray, who it is said will likewise go for Georgia, as there have been no certain Accounts received of her having honourably joined the American League, and adopted the Resolutions of the rest of the Continent – If you are gaining strength, and Courage from a Consciousness of it – the obstinate Desire of Revenge seems to increase in the Junto – Reinforcements and further Military preparations leave us little Room to hope for that Accommodation, which is so earnestly and frequently wish’d for by every Friend to his Country at large – there does not seem to me, to be Virtue enough in this Country to save it. – the Ambition of a few, and their deep laid schemes for establishing arbitrary power, will cut her off from her Strength and Support, and effect a total Separation of the Colonies from the Mother Country – What form then, will the provinces take? Shall we profit by the Example of the Grecian Republics, or will curs’d Ambition repeat their bloody History, in America, and after a Glorious League form’d by Virtue and Patriotism against a Common Enemy, shall have triumphed over Tyranny and Power, shall we be torn by perpetual Contests to place this or that Republic at the Head? This does not appear to me in our present Circumstances – to be looking too far forward – I must confess that I have no hopes from such a King and such Counsellors as are at present at the head of this Nation – and firmly believe that nothing <text loss> absolute want of Power, will prevent them from humbling America, with all the unsparing Rigour of Despotism – if we were weaker than we are, in Discipline, and every thing else necessary for our Defence, I should not despair of Victory in such a Cause: it <text loss> us at the same time that we are providing for our present [illegible], to look forward to our future Establishment. that we may not precipitately take a Vicious form of Government which will be the Source of perpetual Mischiefs, and leave the people at the Mercy of every

haranguing Reformer – these Things I am induced to say from my solicitude for the Welfare of my Country – they have undoubtedly employed your Thoughts in Retirement, unless the continued Hopes of an Accommodation, have made you think the Event I allude to, improbable, and Preparation for it unnecessary. I repeat that I do not, sometimes I am even in doubt whether I wish it, unless I could see a total Change of Affairs in Great Britain. A Monarch educated and daily confirm'd in Arbitrary Principles, a Tyrannical Ministry with a venal Majority of Parliament at their Command, are unworthy to preside over free Americans – & I had almost said that the English deserve to feel the galling yoke of slavery – but Americans will I hope transmit inviolate through many Generations, that Liberty which degenerate Britons I am afraid will insensibly lose.

I have read a second time Your Letters to the two little Boys, not without shedding Tears at the affecting manner in which my dear Friend and Father expresses himself upon his present situation, nor without repeated Wishes that I could be near you, & lessen the weight of your Troubles in any degree by sharing them. it is my opinion that we shall have the farther Troubles consequent upon a Separation from the Mother Country, to encounter – the People here will not be roused in time to prevent it – there may indeed be one powerful Barrier to oppose the progress of Tyranny in Great Britain after that Event, (which did not occur to me before,) I mean the Body of Dissenters; for in an Attempt to introduce Arbitrary Power, which is the deep laid scheme of the execrable Junto, High Church will undoubtedly be cherished – this it's Consequences the Dissenters know, and will zealously strive to prevent, and in the struggle may perhaps bring about some great Revolution – I know my Dear Father's Indulgence, and therefore write without reserve, upon Matters as they happen to strike me –

Both the little Boys write to you by this opportunity I wish James could be fixed at once as much to the Satisfaction of his Friends as Harry is – the latter is just come home for his Bartholy Tide Vacation, which is to be a Month – 'till Mr Manning, my Uncle and myself can agree upon a Proper school for James, I shall devote every leisure Moment to his Improvement – his Arithmetic has not been taken Care of at Mr Howel's – we shall endeavour to place him, for the best upon weighing all Circumstances – and that as soon as possible My Uncle is gaining every day I think in point of Health, tho he seems uneasy at

times about his Side – my Aunt partly from Anxiety for her Servant and partly from Confinement in the House, is not in such good health and Spirits as I could wish – for spirits little Polly surpasses every thing that I have known, her Face is perfectly clear of the Small Pox, and James by having been constantly with her from the time of her Innoculation 'till now, affords good Proof that he has been innoculated to effect.

M<sup>r</sup> Deans entreats me not to forget her most humble Duty, and infinite Thanks to you for the Rice; the Old Man I think is some what better for a Jaunt to Margate – tho' still very low spirited because he is not building Machines in Carolina – His Wife says that Lord W<sup>m</sup> is not a Gentleman.

The dye of a few days ago was that the Regulars had been totally defeated, that the remains of them had taken Shelter on board the Men of War, and were returning to England – the Report that now prevails as you see by to days Paper, is of quite a different Nature – In this Land of Fiction, one is almost inclined to become a Skeptic – this puts me in mind that I send you a very neatly engraved Sketch of the late Action near CharlesTown, but I have found since that it is a very false Representation –

I can't reflect upon My Dear Father's present Circumstances, deprived of all Domestic Comfort, and involved in a dangerous Scene of Politics, without feeling very much for him – and nothing for his Leave to return to my own Country – The Confidence I have in his Virtues is very great, it is my chief Desire to imitate them and ever approve myself his most Dutiful

and affectionate Son  
John Laurens.

P.S. I have just been informed at my Uncle's, that Jenny expired peaceably last night – this will be a great Relief to the Family, and hasten my Uncle's Journey to Bristol.

August 14th 1775.

Transcript Source: The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History