



More Letters from the American Farmer: An Edition of the Essays in English Left Unpublished by Crèvecoeur

J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur

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This is a critical edition of the essays that J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur (1735-1813) wrote in English but did not include in *Letters from an American Farmer*. First published in 1782, *Letters from an American Farmer* is an eighteenth-century cultural masterpiece. Written in English by a French-born immigrant, it is a collection of semiautobiographical writings in epistolary form that describe daily life along the northern frontier during the days leading up to the American Revolution. Conveying the attitudes, beliefs, aspirations, and conflicting loyalties of common settlers, *Letters* has helped subsequent generations to grasp the ethos of a nascent America.

More than a century after Crèvecoeur's death, three bound manuscript volumes surfaced that included not only the original handwritten texts of most of *Letters* but also the twenty-two similar writings that now make up *More Letters from the American Farmer*. Those manuscript volumes are now housed in the Library of Congress. Five of the pieces in *More Letters* are previously unpublished; the others were first published in 1925-26 but were so inconsistently and arbitrarily edited as to misrepresent the author.

This edition has been awarded the emblem of the Modern Language Association's Committee on Scholarly Editions. It is based on an examination of all available relevant textual sources and includes extensive textual and historical contextual information. Rather than modernizing Crèvecoeur's capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, Dennis D. Moore has preserved the original texts as closely as possible. Thus, *More Letters* marks the first appearance of these twenty-two writings as Crèvecoeur composed them.

In his general introduction, Moore discusses the various personae through which Crèvecoeur speaks in these essays and notes the stylistic and topical similarities and variations between these writings and those collected in *Letters*. Pointing to Crèvecoeur's evident influences and interests, Moore discusses recurrent themes and images related to medicine, law, religion, classicism, enlightenment philosophy, nationalism, agrarianism, aggression and war, and the cults of sensibility and domesticity.

Revising and expanding what we thought we knew about Crèvecoeur and his lifelong absorption in America and Americanness, *More Letters* also makes a significant contribution to the study of early American culture.

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