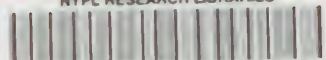


NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 08177493 1



THE COLLECTION OF  
**Theodorus Bailey Myers**  
PRESENTED BY  
HIS WIDOW  
**Catalina Juliana Mason Myers**  
HIS DAUGHTER  
**Cassie Mason Myers Julian James**  
HIS DAUGHTER-IN-LAW  
**Edmonia Taylor Phelps Mason**  
TO THE  
**New York Public Library**  
ASTOR, LENOX AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS  
IN MEMORY OF  
**Theodorus Bailey Myers**  
AND HIS SON  
**Theodorus Bailey Myers Mason**  
LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER  
UNITED STATES NAVY  
1800

10

W. O. C. E.





# HISTORY

OF THE

RISE, PROGRESS AND TERMINATION

OF THE

## AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

INTERSPERSED WITH

Biographical, Political and Moral Observations.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

---

BY MRS. MERCY WARREN,  
OF PLYMOUTH, (MASS.)

---

.....Troubled on every side.....  
perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken;  
cast down, but not destroyed. ST. PAUL.

O God! thy arm was here.....  
And not to us, but to thy arm alone,  
Ascribe we all. SHAKESPEARE.

VOL. I,

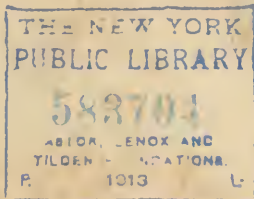
---

BOSTON :

PRINTED BY MANNING AND LORING,  
FOR E. LARKIN, No. 47, CORNHILL.

.....  
1805.

SG



*DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, to wit.*

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the eleventh day of February, in the thirtieth year of the independence of the United States of America, MERCY WARREN, of the said district, hath deposited in this office the title of a Book, the right whereof she claims as author, in the words following, *to wit*:—"HISTORY of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the AMERICAN REVOLUTION. Interspersed with Biographical, Political and Moral Observations. In Three Volumes. By Mrs. MERCY WARREN, of Plymouth, (Mass.)"

In conformity to the act of the congress of the United States, entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;" and also to an act, entitled, "An act supplementary to an act, entitled, 'An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

N. GOODALE, *Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.*

A true Copy of Record. Attest:

N. GOODALE, *Clrk.*

MERCY WARREN  
CLERK  
WARREN

# AN ADDRESS

TO THE

*INHABITANTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.*

---

AT a period when every manly arm was occupied, and every trait of talent or activity engaged, either in the cabinet or the field, apprehensive, that amidst the sudden convulsions, crowded scenes, and rapid changes, that flowed in quick succession, many circumstances might escape the more busy and active members of society, I have been induced to improve the leisure Providence had lent, to record as they passed, in the following pages, the new and unexperienced events exhibited in a land previously blessed with peace, liberty, simplicity, and virtue.

As circumstances were collected, facts related, and characters drawn, many years antecedent to any history since published, relative to the dismemberment of the colonies, and to American independence, there are few allusions to any later writers.

Connected by nature, friendship, and every social tie, with many of the first patriots, and most influential characters on the continent; in the habits of confidential and epistolary intercourse with several gentlemen employed abroad in the most distinguished stations, and with others since elevated to the highest grades of rank

and distinction, I had the best means of information, through a long period that the colonies were in suspense, waiting the operation of foreign courts, and the success of their own enterprising spirit.

The solemnity that covered every countenance, when contemplating the sword uplifted, and the horrors of civil war rushing to habitations not inured to scenes of rapine and misery; even to the quiet cottage, where only concord and affection had reigned; stimulated to observation a mind that had not yielded to the assertion, that all political attentions lay out of the road of female life.

It is true there are certain appropriate duties assigned to each sex; and doubtless it is the more peculiar province of masculine strength, not only to repel the bold invader of the rights of his country and of mankind, but in the nervous style of manly eloquence, to describe the blood-stained field, and relate the story of slaughtered armies.

Sensible of this, the trembling heart has recoiled at the magnitude of the undertaking, and the hand often shrunk back from the task; yet, recollecting that every domestic enjoyment depends on the unimpaired possession of civil and religious liberty, that a concern for the welfare of society ought equally to glow in every human breast, the work was not relinquished. The most interesting circumstances were collected, active characters portrayed, the principles of the times developed, and the changes marked; nor need it cause a blush to acknowledge, a detail was preserved with a view of transmitting it to the rising youth of my country, some of them in infancy, others in the European world, while the most interesting events lowered over their native land.

Conscious that truth has been the guide of my pen, and candor, as well as justice, the accompaniment of my wishes through every page, I can say, with an ingenious writer, "I have used my pen with the liberty  
"of one, who neither hopes nor fears, nor has any interest in the success or failure of any party, and who  
"speaks to posterity—perhaps very far remote."

The sympathizing heart has looked abroad and wept the many victims of affliction, inevitably such in consequence of civil feuds and the concomitant miseries of war, either foreign or domestic. The reverses of life, and the instability of the world, have been viewed on the point of both extremes. Their delusory nature and character, have been contemplated as becomes the philosopher and the christian: the one teaches us from the analogies of nature, the necessity of changes, decay, and death; the other strengthens the mind to meet them with the rational hope of revival and renovation.

Several years have elapsed since the historical tracts, now with diffidence submitted to the public, have been arranged in their present order. Local circumstances, the decline of health, temporary deprivations of sight, the death of the most amiable of children, "the shaft  
"flew thrice, and thrice my peace was slain," have sometimes prompted to throw by the pen in despair. I draw a veil over the woe-fraught scenes that have pierced my own heart. "While the soul was melting inwardly, it has endeavoured to support outwardly, with  
"decency and dignity, those accidents which admit of  
"no redress, and to exert that spirit that enables to get  
"the better of those that do."

Not indifferent to the opinion of the world, nor servilely courting its smiles, no further apology is offer-

ed for the attempt, though many may be necessary, for the incomplete execution of a design, that had rectitude for its basis, and a beneficent regard for the civil and religious rights of mankind, for its motive.

The liberal-minded will peruse with candor, rather than criticise with severity; nor will they think it necessary, that any apology should be offered, for sometimes introducing characters nearly connected with the author of the following annals; as they were early and zealously attached to the public cause, uniform in their principles, and constantly active in the great scenes that produced the revolution, and obtained independence for their country, truth precludes that reserve which might have been proper on less important occasions, and forbids to pass over in silence the names of such as expired before the conflict was finished, or have since retired from public scenes. The historian has never laid aside the tenderness of the sex or the friend; at the same time, she has endeavoured, on all occasions, that the strictest veracity should govern her heart, and the most exact impartiality be the guide of her pen.

If the work should be so far useful or entertaining, as to obtain the sanction of the generous and virtuous part of the community, I cannot but be highly gratified and amply rewarded for the effort, soothed at the same time with the idea, that the motives were justifiable in the eye of Omniscience. Then, if it should not escape the remarks of the critic, or the censure of party, I shall feel no wound to my sensibility, but repose on my pillow as quietly as ever,—

“While all the distant din the world can keep,  
“Rolls o'er my grotto, and but soothes my sleep.”

Before this address to my countrymen is closed, I beg leave to observe, that as a new century has dawned



upon us, the mind is naturally led to contemplate the great events that have run parallel with, and have just closed the last. From the revolutionary spirit of the times, the vast improvements in science, arts, and agriculture, the boldness of genius that marks the age, the investigation of new theories, and the changes in the political, civil, and religious characters of men, succeeding generations have reason to expect still more astonishing exhibitions in the next. In the mean time, Providence has clearly pointed out the duties of the present generation, particularly the paths which Americans ought to tread. The United States form a young republic, a confederacy which ought ever to be cemented by a union of interests and affection, under the influence of those principles which obtained their independence. These have indeed, at certain periods, appeared to be in the wane; but let them never be eradicated, by the jarring interests of parties, jealousies of the sister states, or the ambition of individuals! It has been observed, by a writer of celebrity,\* that “that people, government, and constitution is the freest, which makes the best provision for the enacting of expedient and salutary laws.” May this truth be evinced to all ages, by the wise and salutary laws that shall be enacted in the federal legislature of America!

May the hands of the executive of their own choice, be strengthened more by the unanimity and affection of the people, than by the dread of penal inflictions, or any restraints that might repress free inquiry, relative to the principles of their own government, and the conduct of its administrators! The world is now viewing America, as experimenting a new system of government, a FEDERAL REPUBLIC, including a territory to which the Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland

\* Paley's Moral Philosophy.

bear little proportion. The practicability of supporting such a system, has been doubted by some; if she succeeds, it will refute the assertion, that none but small states are adapted to republican government; if she does not, and the union should be dissolved, some ambitious son of Columbia, or some foreign adventurer, allured by the prize, may wade to empire through seas of blood, or the friends of monarchy may see a number of petty despots, stretching their sceptres over the disjointed parts of the continent. Thus by the mandate of a single sovereign, the degraded subjects of one state, under the bannerets of royalty, may be dragged to sheathe their swords in the bosoms of the inhabitants of another.

The state of the public mind, appears at present to be prepared to weigh these reflections with solemnity, and to receive with pleasure an effort to trace the origin of the American revolution, to review the characters that effected it, and to justify the principles of the defection and final separation from the parent state. With an expanded heart, beating with high hopes of the continued freedom and prosperity of America, the writer indulges a modest expectation, that the following pages will be perused with kindness and candor: this she claims, both in consideration of her sex, the uprightness of her intentions, and the fervency of her wishes for the happiness of all the human race.

MERCY WARREN.

PLYMOUTH, (MASS.) }  
MARCH, 1805. }



---

# C O N T E N T S

## OF VOLUME FIRST.

---

### CHAPTER I.

*Introductory Observations.* 1

### CHAPTER II.

The Stamp-Act.—A Congress convened at New York, One thousand seven hundred and sixty-five.—The Stamp-Act repealed.—New Grievances.—Suspension of the Legislature of New York. 27

### CHAPTER III.

Curfory Observations.—Massachusetts Circular Letter.—A new House of Representatives called.—Governor Bernard impeached.—A Riot on the Seizure of a Vessel.—Troops applied for to protect the King's Officers.—A Convention at Boston.—Troops arrive.—A Combination against all Commerce with Great Britain.—A General Assembly convened at Boston—removed to Cambridge.—Governor Bernard, after his Impeachment, repairs to England. 52

## CHAPTER IV.

Character of Mr. Hutchinson—appointed Governor of Massachusetts.—The attempted Assassination of Mr. Otis.—Transactions on the fifth of March, one thousand seven hundred and seventy.—Arrival of the East India Company's Tea-Ships.—Establishment of Committees of Correspondence.—The Right of Parliamentary Taxation without Representation, urged by Mr. Hutchinson.—Articles of Impeachment, resolved on in the House of Representatives, against Governor Hutchinson and Lieutenant Governor Oliver.—Chief Justice of the Province impeached.—Boston Port-Bill.—Governor Hutchinson leaves the Province.

78

## CHAPTER V.

General Gage appointed Governor of Massachusetts.—General Assembly meet at Salem.—A Proposal for a Congress from all the Colonies, to be convened at Philadelphia.—Mandamus Counsellors obliged to resign.—Resolutions of the General Congress.—Occasional Observations—the Massachusetts attentive to the military Discipline of their Youth.—Suffolk Resolves.—A Provincial Congress chosen in the Massachusetts.—Governor Gage summons a new House of Representatives.

127

## CHAPTER VI.

Parliamentary Divisions on American Affairs.—Curfory Observations and Events.—Measures for raising an Army of Observation by the four New England Governments of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.—Battle of Lexington.—Sketches of the Conduct and Characters of the Governors of the southern Provinces.—Ticonderoga

taken.—Arrival of Reinforcements from England.—  
 Proscription and Characters of Samuel Adams and  
 John Hancock, Esquires.—Battle of Bunker Hill.—  
 Death and Character of General Joseph Warren.—  
 Massachusetts adopt a stable Form of Government. 170

## CHAPTER VII.

A Continental Army—Mr. Washington appointed to  
 the Command.—General Gage recalled—succeeded  
 by Sir William Howe.—Depredations on the Sea  
 Coast—Falmouth burnt.—Canadian Affairs.—Death  
 and Character of General Montgomery. 229

## CHAPTER VIII.

Dissensions in the British Parliament.—Petition of  
 Governor Penn rejected.—Boston evacuated.—Sir  
 Henry Clinton sent to the Southward—followed by  
 General Lee—his Character.—Sir Peter Parker's  
 Attack on Sullivan's Island. General Howe's Ar-  
 rival at Sandy Hook.—General Washington leaves  
 Cambridge.—Observations on the Temper of some  
 of the Colonies. 272

## CHAPTER IX.

Declaration of Independence.—Lord Howe's Arrival  
 in America.—Action on Long Island.—Retreat of  
 the Americans through the Jerseys, and the Loss of  
 the Forts Washington and Lee.—Affairs in Can-  
 ada.—Surprise of the Hessians at Trenton.—Various  
 Transactions in the Jerseys.—General Howe's Re-  
 treat—Makes Head-Quarters at Brunswick—His  
 Indecision—Some Traits of his Character. 305

## CHAPTER X.

Desultory Circumstances.—Skirmishes and Events.—  
 General Howe withdraws from the Jerseys—Arrives

at the River Elk—Followed by Washington.—The Battle of Brandywine.—General Washington de- feated, retreats to Philadelphia—Obliged to draw off his Army.—Lord Cornwallis takes Possession of the City.—Action at Germantown, Red Bank, &c.— The British Army take Winter-Quarters in Phila- delphia.—The Americans encamp at Valley-Forge. —General Washington's Situation not eligible.— De Lisle's Letters.—General Conway resigns.— The Baron de Steuben appointed Inspector General of the American Army.	364
---	-----

APPENDIX.	403
-----------	-----

THE  
RISE, PROGRESS, &c.  
OF THE  
AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

---

CHAPTER I.

*Introductory Observations.*

HISTORY, the depofite of crimes, and the record of every thing difgraceful or honorary to mankind, requires a juft knowledge of character, to investigate the fources of action; a clear comprehension, to review the combination of caufes; and precision of language, to detail the events that have produced the moft remarkable revolutions.

---

CHAP. I.

---

To analyze the feeret fprings that have effected the progreflive changes in fociety; to trace the origin of the various modes of government, the confequent improvements in fci-ence, in morality, or the national tincture that

marks the manners of the people under despotic or more liberal forms, is a bold and adventurous work.

The study of the human character opens at once a beautiful and a deformed picture of the fowl. We there find a noble principle implanted in the nature of man, that pants for distinction. This principle operates in every bosom, and when kept under the control of reason, and the influence of humanity, it produces the most benevolent effects. But when the checks of conscience are thrown aside, or the moral sense weakened by the sudden acquisition of wealth or power, humanity is obscured, and if a favorable coincidence of circumstances permits, this love of distinction often exhibits the most mortifying instances of profligacy, tyranny, and the wanton exercise of arbitrary sway. Thus when we look over the theatre of human action, scrutinize the windings of the heart, and survey the transactions of man from the earliest to the present period, it must be acknowledged that ambition and avarice are the leading springs which generally actuate the restless mind. From these primary sources of corruption have arisen all the rapine and confusion, the depredation and ruin, that have spread distress over the face of the earth from the days of Nimrod to Cesar, and from Cesar to an arbitrary prince of the house of Brunfwick.



The indulgence of these turbulent passions has depopulated cities, laid waste the finest territories, and turned the beauty and harmony of the lower creation into an aceldama. Yet candor must bear honorable testimony to many signal instances of disinterested merit among the children of men; thus it is not possible to pronounce decidedly on the character of the politician or the statesman till the winding up of the drama. To evince the truth of this remark, it is needless to adduce innumerable instances of deception both in ancient and modern story. It is enough to observe, that the specious Augustus established himself in empire by the appearance of justice, clemency, and moderation, while the savage Nero shamelessly weltered in the blood of the citizens; but the sole object of each was to become the sovereign of life and property, and to govern the Roman world with a despotic hand.

Time may unlock the cabinets of princes, unfold the secret negotiations of statesmen, and hand down the immortal characters of dignified worth, or the blackened traits of finished villainy in exaggerated colours. But truth is most likely to be exhibited by the general sense of contemporaries, when the feelings of the heart can be expressed without suffering itself to be disguised by the prejudices of the man. Yet it is not easy to convey to posterity a just idea of the embarrassed situation of the western world,

previous to the rupture with Britain; the dismemberment of the empire, and the loss of the most industrious, flourishing, and perhaps virtuous colonies, ever planted by the hand of man.

The progress of the American Revolution has been so rapid, and such the alteration of manners, the blending of characters, and the new train of ideas that almost universally prevail, that the principles which animated to the noblest exertions have been nearly annihilated. Many who first stepped forth in vindication of the rights of human nature are forgotten, and the causes which involved the thirteen colonies in confusion and blood are scarcely known, amidst the rage of accumulation and the taste for expensive pleasures that have since prevailed; a taste that has abolished that mediocrity which once satisfied, and that contentment which long smiled in every countenance. Luxury, the companion of young acquired wealth, is usually the consequence of opposition to, or close connexion with, opulent commercial states. Thus the hurry of spirits, that ever attends the eager pursuit of fortune and a passion for splendid enjoyment, leads to forgetfulness; and thus the inhabitants of America cease to look back with due gratitude and respect on the fortitude and virtue of their ancestors, who, through difficulties almost insurmountable, planted them in a happy soil. But the historian and the philosopher will ever venerate the memory of those



pious and independent gentlemen, who, after suffering innumerable impositions, restrictions, and penalties, less for political, than theological opinions, left England, not as adventurers for wealth or fame, but for the quiet enjoyment of religion and liberty.

The love of domination and an uncontrolled lust of arbitrary power have prevailed among all nations, and perhaps in proportion to the degrees of civilization. They have been equally conspicuous in the decline of Roman virtue, and in the dark pages of British story. It was these principles that overturned that ancient republic. It was these principles that frequently involved England in civil feuds. It was the resistance to them that brought one of their monarchs to the block, and struck another from his throne. It was the prevalence of them that drove the first settlers of America from elegant habitations and affluent circumstances, to seek an asylum in the cold and uncultivated regions of the western world. Oppressed in Britain by despotic kings, and persecuted by prelatic fury, they fled to a distant country, where the desires of men were bounded by the wants of nature; where civilization had not created those artificial cravings which too frequently break over every moral and religious tie for their gratification.

The tyranny of the Stuart race has long been proverbial in English story: their efforts

to establish an arbitrary system of government began with the weak and bigoted reign of James the first, and were continued until the excision of his son Charles. The contests between the British parliament and this unfortunate monarch arose to such an height, as to augur an alarming defection of many of the best subjects in England. Great was their uneasiness at the state of public affairs, the arbitrary stretch of power, and the obstinacy of king Charles, who pursued his own despotic measures in spite of the opposition of a number of gentlemen in parliament attached to the liberties and privileges of Englishmen. Thus a spirit of emigration adopted in the preceding reign began to spread with great rapidity through the nation. Some gentlemen endowed with talents to defend their rights by the most cogent and resolute arguments, were among the number who had taken the alarming resolution of seeking an asylum far from their natal soil, where they might enjoy the rights and privileges they claimed, and which they considered on the eve of annihilation at home. Among these were Oliver Cromwell, afterwards protector, and a number of other gentlemen of distinguished name, who had actually engaged to embark for New-England. This was a circumstance so alarming to the court, that they were stopped by an order of government, and by royal edict all further emigration was forbidden. The spirit of colonization was not however much

impeded, nor the growth of the young plantations prevented, by the arbitrary resolutions of the court. It was but a short time after this effort to check them, before numerous English emigrants were spread along the borders of the Atlantic from Plymouth to Virginia.

The independency with which these colonists acted; the high promise of future advantage from the beauty and fertility of the country; and, as was observed soon after, "the prosperous state of their settlements, made it to be considered by the heads of the puritan party in England, many of whom were men of the first rank, fortune and abilities, as the sanctuary of liberty."\* The order above alluded to, indeed prevented the embarkation of the Lords Say and Brook, the Earl of Warwick, of Hampden, Pym, and many others, who, despairing of recovering their civil and religious liberty on their native shore, had determined to secure it by a retreat to the New World, as it was then called. Patents were purchased by others, within a short period after the present, who planted the thirteen American colonies with a successful hand. Many circumstances concurred to awaken the spirit of adventure, and to draw out men, inured to softer habits, to encounter the difficulties and dangers of planting themselves and families in the wilderness.

\* Universal History.

The spirit of party had thrown accumulated advantages into the hands of Charles the second, after his restoration. The divisions and animosities at court rendered it more easy for him to pursue the same system which his father had adopted. Amidst the rage for pleasure, and the licentious manners that prevailed in his court, the complaisance of one party, the fears of another, and the weariness of all, of the dissensions and difficulties that had arisen under the protectorship of Cromwell, facilitated the measures of the high monarchists, who continually improved their advantages to enhance the prerogatives of the crown. The weak and bigoted conduct of his brother James increased the general uneasiness of the nation, until his abdication. Thus, through every successive reign of this line of the Stuarts, the colonies gained additional strength, by continual emigrations to the young American settlements.

The first colony of Europeans, permanently planted in North America, was by an handful of roving strangers, sickly, and necessitated to debark on the first land, where there was any promise of a quiet subsistence. Amidst the despotism of the first branch of the house of Stuart, on the throne of Britain, and the ecclesiastical persecutions in England, which sent many eminent characters abroad, a small company of dissenters from the national establishment left England, under the pastoral care of

the pious and learned Mr. Robinson, and resided a short time in Holland, which they left in the beginning of autumn, one thousand six hundred and twenty.

After a long and hazardous voyage, they landed on the borders of an inhospitable wilderness, in the dreary month of December, amidst the horrors of a North American winter.\* They were at first received by the savage inhabitants of the country with a degree of simple humanity: They smoked with them the *calumet* of peace; purchased a tract of the uncultivated waste; huddled on the frozen shore, sheltered only by the lofty forest, that had been left for ages to thicken under the rude hand of time. From this small beginning was laid the stable foundations of those extensive settlements, that have since spread over the fairest quarter of the globe.

Virginia, indeed, had been earlier discovered by Sir Walter Raleigh, and a few men left there by him, to whom additions under various adventurers were afterwards made; but, by a series of misfortunes and misconduct, the plantation had fallen into such disorder and distress, that the enterprise was abandoned. The fate of those left there by this great and good man has never been known with certainty: It is

\* Appendix, Note, No. I.



probable most of them were murdered by the savages; and the remnant, if any there were, became incorporated with the barbarous nations.

There was afterwards a more successful effort for the settlement of a colony in Virginia. In the beginning of the seventeenth century Lord Delaware was appointed Governor, and with him a considerable number of emigrants arrived from England. But his health was not equal to a residence in a rude and uncultivated wilderness; he soon returned to his native country, but left his son, with Sir Thomas Gates and several other enterprising gentlemen, who pursued the project of an establishment in Virginia, and began to build a town on James-River, in the year one thousand six hundred and six. Thus was that state entitled to the prescriptive term of the Old Dominion, which it still retains. But their difficulties, misfortunes and disappointments, long prevented any permanent constitution or stable government, and they scarcely deserved the appellation of a regular colony, until a considerable time after the settlement in Plymouth, in one thousand six hundred and twenty.

The discovery of the New World had opened a wide field of enterprise, and several other previous attempts had been made by Europeans to obtain settlements therein; yet little of a per-

manent nature was effected, until the patience and perseverance of the Leyden sufferers laid the foundation of social order.

This small company of settlers, after wandering some time on the frozen shore, fixed themselves at the bottom of the Massachusetts Bay. Though dispirited by innumerable discouraging circumstances, they immediately entered into engagements with each other to form themselves into a regular society, and drew up a covenant, by which they bound themselves to submit to order and subordination.

Their jurisprudence was marked with wisdom and dignity, and their simplicity and piety were displayed equally in the regulation of their police, the nature of their contracts, and the punctuality of observance. The old Plymouth colony remained for some time a distinct government. They chose their own magistrates, independent of all foreign control; but a few years involved them with the Massachusetts, of which, Boston, more recently settled than Plymouth, was the capital.

From the local situation of a country, separated by an ocean of a thousand leagues from the parent state, and surrounded by a world of savages, an immediate compact with the King of Great Britain was thought necessary. Thus, a charter was early granted, stipulating on the

part of the crown, that the Massachusetts should have a legislative body within itself, composed of three branches, and subject to no control, except his Majesty's negative, within a limited term, to any laws formed by their assembly that might be thought to militate with the general interest of the realm of England. The Governor was appointed by the crown, the representative body, annually chosen by the people, and the council elected by the representatives from the people at large.

Though more liberal charters were granted to some of the colonies, which, after the first settlement at Plymouth, rapidly spread over the face of this new discovered country, yet modes of government nearly similar to that of Massachusetts were established in most of them, except Maryland and Pennsylvania, which were under the direction of particular proprietors. But the corrupt principles which had been fashionable in the voluptuous and bigoted courts of the Stuarts, soon followed the emigrants in their distant retreat, and interrupted the establishments of their civil police; which, it may be observed, were a mixture of Jewish theocracy, monarchic government, and the growing principles of republicanism, which had taken root in Britain as early as the days of Elizabeth.

It soon appeared that there was a strong party in England, who wished to govern the colonists



with a rigorous hand. They discovered their inclinations by repeated attempts to procure a revision, an alteration, and a resumption of charters, on the most frivolous pretences.

It is true, an indiscreet zeal, with regard to several religious sectaries, which had early introduced themselves into the young settlements, gave a pretext to some severities from the parent state. But the conduct of the first planters of the American colonies has been held up by some ingenious writers in too ludicrous a light. Yet while we admire their persevering and self-denying virtues, we must acknowledge that the illiberality and weakness of some of their municipal regulations have cast a shade over the memory of men, whose errors arose more from the fashion of the times, and the dangers which threatened them from every side, than from any deficiency either in the head or the heart. But the treatment of the Quakers in the Massachusetts can never be justified either by the principles of policy or humanity.\* The demeanor of these people was, indeed, in many instances, not only ridiculous, but disorderly and

\* However censurable the early settlers in New England were, in their severities towards the Quakers and other non-conformists, they might think their conduct in some degree sanctioned by the example of their parent state, and the rigours exercised in other parts of the European world at that time, against all denominations which differed from the religious establishments of government.

atrocious; yet an indelible stain will be left on the names of those, who adjudged to imprisonment, confiscation and death, a sect made considerable only by opposition.

In the story of the sufferings of these enthusiasts, there has never been a just discrimination between the sectaries denominated Quakers, who first visited the New England settlements, and the associates of the celebrated Penn, who, having received a patent from the crown of England, fixed his residence on the borders of the Delaware. He there reared, with astonishing rapidity, a flourishing, industrious colony, on the most benevolent principles. The equality of their condition, the mildness of their deportment, and the simplicity of their manners, encouraged the emigration of husbandmen, artizans and manufacturers from all parts of Europe. Thus was this colony soon raised to distinguished eminence, though under a proprietary government.\* But the sectaries that inhabited the more eastern territory were generally loose, idle and refractory, aiming to introduce

\* Mr. Penn published a system of government, on which it has been observed, "that the introductory piece is perhaps the most extraordinary compound that ever was published, of enthusiasm, sound policy, and good sense." The author tells us, "It was adapted to the great end of all government, viz. to support power in reverence with the people, and to secure the people from the abuse of power." Mod. Un. Hist. Vol. 41. p. 5.

confusion and licentiousness, rather than the establishment of any regular society. Excluded from Boston, and banished the Massachusetts, they repaired to a neighboring colony, less tenacious in religious opinion, by which the growth of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations was greatly facilitated.

The spirit of intolerance in the early stages of their settlements was not confined to the New England *puritans*, as they have in derision been styled. In Virginia, Maryland, and some other colonies, where the votaries of the church of England were the stronger party, the dissenters of every description were persecuted, with little less rigour than had been experienced by the Quakers from the Presbyterians of the Massachusetts. An act passed in the assembly of Virginia, in the early days of her legislation, making it penal "for any master of a vessel to bring a Quaker into the province." "The inhabitants were inhibited from entertaining any person of that denomination. They were imprisoned, banished, and treated with every mark of severity short of death."\*

It is natural to suppose a society of men who had suffered so much from a spirit of religious bigotry, would have stretched a lenient hand towards any who might differ from themselves, either in mode or opinion, with regard to the

\* History of Virginia.

worship of the Deity. But from a strange propensity in human nature to reduce every thing within the vortex of their own ideas, the same intolerant and persecuting spirit, from which they had so recently fled, discovered itself in those bold adventurers, who had braved the dangers of the ocean and planted themselves in a wilderness, for the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty.

In the cool moments of reflection, both humanity and philosophy revolt at the diabolical disposition, that has prevailed in almost every country, to persecute such as either from education or principle, from caprice or custom, refuse to subscribe to the religious creed of those, who, by various adventitious circumstances, have acquired a degree of superiority or power.

It is rational to believe that the benevolent Author of nature designed universal happiness as the basis of his works. Nor is it unphilosophical to suppose the difference in human sentiment, and the variety of opinions among mankind, may conduce to this end. They may be permitted, in order to improve the faculty of thinking, to draw out the powers of the mind, to exercise the principles of candor, and learn us to wait, in a becoming manner, the full disclosure of the system of divine government. Thus, probably, the variety in the formation of the human soul may appear to be

such, as to have rendered it impossible for mankind to think exactly in the same channel. The contemplative and liberal minded man must, therefore, blush for the weakness of his own species, when he sees any of them endeavouring to circumscribe the limits of virtue and happiness within his own contracted sphere, too often darkened by superstition and bigotry.

The modern improvements in society, and the cultivation of reason, which has spread its benign influence over both the European and the American world, have nearly eradicated this persecuting spirit; and we look back, in both countries, mortified and ashamed of the illiberality of our ancestors. Yet such is the elasticity of the human mind, that when it has been long bent beyond a certain line of propriety, it frequently flies off to the opposite extreme. Thus there may be danger, that in the enthusiasm for *toleration*, indifference to all religion may take place.\* Perhaps few will deny that religion, viewed merely in a political light, is after all the best cement of society, the great barrier of just government, and the only cer-

\* Since these annals were written this observation has been fully verified in the impious sentiments and conduct of several members of the national Convention of France, who, after the dissolution of monarchy, and the abolition of the privileged orders, were equally zealous for the destruction of the altars of God, and the annihilation of all religion.



tain restraint of the passions, those dangerous inlets to licentiousness and anarchy.

It has been observed by an ingenious writer, that there are proselytes from atheism, but none from superstition. Would it not be more just to reverse the observation? The narrowness of superstition frequently wears off, by an intercourse with the world, and the subjects become useful members of society. But the hardness of atheism sets at defiance both human and divine laws, until the man is lost to himself and to the world.

A cursory survey of the religious state of America, in the early stages of colonization, requires no apology. It is necessary to observe, the animosities which arose among themselves on external forms of worship, and different modes of thinking, were most unfortunate circumstances for the infant settlements; more especially while kept in continual alarm by the natives of the vast uncultivated wilds, who soon grew jealous of their new inmates. It is true, that Massasoit, the principal chief of the north, had received the strangers with the same mildness and hospitality that marked the conduct of Montezuma at the south, on the arrival of the Spaniards in his territories. Perhaps the different demeanor of their sons, Philip and Guatimozin, was not the result of more hostile or heroic dispositions than their fathers possessed. It more probably arose from an apprehension of

the invasion of their rights, after time had given them a more perfect knowledge of the temper of their guests.

It may be a mistake, that *man*, in a state of nature, is more disposed to cruelty than courtesy. Many instances might be adduced to prove the contrary. But when once awakened to suspicion, that either his life or his interest is in danger, all the black passions of the mind, with revenge in their rear, rise up in array.\* It is an undoubted truth, that both the rude savage and the polished citizen are equally tenacious of their pecuniary acquisitions. And however mankind may have trifled away liberty, virtue, religion, or life, yet when the first rudiments of society have been established, the right of private property has been held sacred. For an attempt to invade the possessions each one denominates *his own*, whether it is made by the rude hand of the savage, or by the refinements of ancient or modern policy, little short of the blood of the aggressor has been thought a sufficient atonement. Thus, the purchase of their commodities, the furs of the forest, and the alienation of their lands for trivial considerations; the assumed superiority of the Europeans; their knowledge of arts and war, and

\* A celebrated writer has observed, that "moral evil is foreign to man, as well as physical evil; that both the one and the other spring up out of deviations from the law of nature."

perhaps their supercilious deportment towards the aborigines might awaken in them just fears of extermination. Nor is it strange that the natural principle of self-defence operated strongly in their minds, and urged them to hostilities that often reduced the young colonies to the utmost danger and distress.

But the innumerable swarms of the wilderness, who were not driven back to the vast interior region, were soon swept off by the sword or by sickness, which remarkably raged among them about the time of the arrival of the English.\* The few who remained were quieted by treaty or by conquest: after which, the inhabitants of the American colonies lived many years perhaps as near the point of felicity as the condition of human nature will admit.

The religious bigotry of the first planters, and the temporary ferments it had occasioned, subsided, and a spirit of candor and forbearance every where took place. They seemed, previous to the rupture with Britain, to have acquired that just and happy medium between the ferocity of

\* The Plymouth settlers landed the twenty-second of December, but saw not an Indian until the thirty-first of January. This was afterwards accounted for by the information of Samoset, an Indian chief who visited them, and told them the natives on the borders had been all swept away by a pestilence that raged among them three or four years before.



a state of nature, and those high stages of civilization and refinement, that at once corrupt the heart and sap the foundation of happiness. The sobriety of their manners and the purity of their morals were exemplary; their piety and hospitality engaging; and the equal and lenient administration of their government secured authority, subordination, justice, regularity and peace. A well-informed yeomanry and an enlightened peasantry evinced the early attention of the first settlers to domestic education. Public schools were established in every town, particularly in the eastern provinces, and as early as one thousand six hundred and thirty-eight, Harvard College was founded at Cambridge.\*

In the southern colonies, it is true, there was not that general attention to early instruction; the children of the opulent planters only were educated in England, while the less affluent were neglected, and the common class of whites had little education above their slaves. Both knowledge and property were more equally divided in the colder regions of the north; consequently a spirit of more equal liberty was diffused. While the almost spontaneous harvests of the warmer latitudes, the great number of slaves thought necessary to secure their pro-

\* The elegant St. Pierre has observed, that there are three periods through which most nations pass; the first below nature, in the second they come up to her, and in the third, go beyond her.

duce, and the easy acquisition of fortune, nourished more aristocratic principles. Perhaps it may be true, that wherever slavery is encouraged, there are among the free inhabitants very high ideas of liberty; though not so much from a sense of the common rights of man, as from their own feelings of superiority.

Democratic principles are the result of equality of condition. A superfluity of wealth, and a train of domestic slaves, naturally banish a sense of general liberty, and nourish the seeds of that kind of independence that usually terminates in aristocracy. Yet all America, from the first emigrants to the present generation, felt an attachment to the inhabitants, a regard to the interest, and a reverence for the laws and government of England. Those writers who have observed, that "these principles had scarcely any existence in the colonies at the commencement of the late war," have certainly mistaken the character of their country.

But unhappily both for Great Britain and America, the encroachments of the crown had gathered strength by time; and after the successes, the glory, and the demise of George the second, the sceptre descended to a prince, bred under the auspices of a Scotch nobleman of the house of Stuart. Nurtured in all the inflated ideas of kingly prerogative, surrounded by flatterers and dependants, who always swarm in

the purlieus of a palace, this misguided sovereign, dazzled with the acquisition of empire, in the morning of youth, and in the zenith of national prosperity; more obstinate than cruel, rather weak than remarkably wicked, considered an opposition to the mandates of his ministers, as a crime of too daring a nature to hope for the pardon of royalty.

Lord Bute, who from the preceptor of the prince in the years of pupilage, had become the director of the monarch on the throne of Britain, found it not difficult, by that secret influence ever exercised by a favorite minister, to bring over a majority of the house of commons to co-operate with the designs of the crown. Thus the parliament of England became the mere creature of administration, and appeared ready to leap the boundaries of justice, and to undermine the pillars of their own constitution, by adhering steadfastly for several years to a complicated system of tyranny, that threatened the new world with a yoke unknown to their fathers.

It had ever been deemed essential to the preservation of the boasted liberties of Englishmen, that no grants of monies should be made, by tolls, talliage, excise, or any other way, without the consent of the people by their representative voice. Innovation in a point so interesting might well be expected to create a general fer-

ment through the American provinces. Numberless restrictions had been laid on the trade of the colonies previous to this period, and every method had been taken to check their enterprising spirit, and to prevent the growth of their manufactures. Nor is it surprising, that loud complaints should be made when heavy exactions were laid on the subject, who had not, and whose local situation rendered it impracticable that he should have, an equal representation in parliament.

What still heightened the resentment of the Americans, in the beginning of the great contest, was the reflection, that they had not only always supported their own internal government with little expense to Great Britain; but while a friendly union existed, they had, on all occasions, exerted their utmost ability to comply with every constitutional requisition from the parent state. We need not here revert further back than the beginning of the reign of George the third, to prove this, though earlier instances might be adduced.

The extraordinary exertions of the colonies, in co-operation with British measures, against the French, in the late war, were acknowledged by the British parliament to be more than adequate to their ability. After the successful expedition to Louisburg, in one thousand seven hundred and forty-five, the sum of two hundred

thousand pounds sterling was voted by the commons, as a compensation to some of the colonies for their vigorous efforts, which were carried beyond their proportional strength, to aid the expedition.

Not contented with the voluntary aids they had from time to time received from the colonies, and grown giddy with the lustre of their own power, in the plenitude of human grandeur, to which the nation had arrived in the long and successful reign of George the second, such weak, impolitic and unjust measures were pursued, on the accession of his grandson, as soon threw the whole empire into the most violent convulsions.

A more particular narrative of the first settlement of America; their wars with the natives; their distresses at home; their perplexities abroad; and their disputes with the parent state, relative to grants, charters, privileges and limits, may be seen in the accounts of every historical writer on the state of the colonies.\* As this is not comprehended in the design of the present work, the reader is referred to more voluminous, or more minute descriptions of the events preceding the transactions, which brought forward a revolution, that eman-

\* These researches have been satisfactorily made by several literary gentlemen, whose talents were equal to the task.



ipated the colonies from the domination of the sceptre of Britain. This is a story of so much interest to the minds of every son and daughter of America, endowed with the ability of reflecting, that they will not reluctantly hasten to the detail of transactions, that have awakened the attention and expectation of the millions among the nations beyond the Atlantic.



## CHAPTER II.

The Stamp-Act.—A Congress convened at New-York, One thousand seven hundred and sixty-five.—The Stamp-Act repealed.—New Grievances.—Suspension of the Legislature of New York.

THE project of an American taxation might have been longer meditated, but the memorable era of the stamp-act, in one thousand seven hundred and sixty-four, was the first innovation that gave a general alarm throughout the continent. By this extraordinary act, a certain duty was to be levied on all bonds, bills of lading, public papers, and writings of every kind, for the express purpose of raising a revenue to the crown. As soon as this intelligence was transmitted to America, an universal murmur succeeded; and while the judicious and penetrating thought it time to make a resolute stand against the encroachments of power, the resentment of the lower classes broke out into such excesses of riot and tumult, as prevented the operation of the favorite project.

---

 CHAP. II.
 

---

Multitudes assembled in the principal towns and cities, and the popular torrent bore down all before it. The houses of some, who were the avowed abettors of the measure, and of others, who were only suspected as inimical to the liberties of America, in Boston, in Newport,

Connecticut, and many other places, were rased to the ground. The commissioners of the stamp-office were every where compelled to renounce their employments, and to enter into the most solemn engagements to make no further attempts to act in this obnoxious business. At New York the act was printed, and cried about the streets, under the title of "*The folly of England, and the ruin of America.*" In Philadelphia the cannon were spiked up, and the bells of the city, muffled, tolled from morning to evening, and every testimony of sincere mourning was displayed, on the arrival of the stamp papers. Nor were any of the more southern colonies less opposed to the operation of this act; and the house of Burgesse, in Virginia, was the first who formally resolved against the encroachments of power, and the unwarrantable designs of the British parliament.

The novelty of their procedure, and the boldness of spirit that marked the resolutions of that assembly, at once astonished and disconcerted the officers of the crown, and the supporters of the measures of administration. These resolves\* were ushered into the house, on the thirtieth of May, one thousand, seven hundred and sixty-five, by Patrick Henry, esq, a young gentleman of the law, till then unknown in political life. He was a man, possessed of strong powers, much professional knowledge,

\* Appendix, Note, No. II.

and of such abilities as qualified him for the exigencies of the day. Fearless of the cry of 'treason,' echoed against him from several quarters, he justified the measure, and supported the resolves, in a speech, that did honor both to his understanding, and his patriotism. The governor, to check the progress of such daring principles, immediately dissolved the assembly.

But the disposition of the people was discovered, when, on a new election, those gentlemen were every where re-chosen, who had shewn the most firmness and zeal, in opposition to the stamp-act. Indeed, from New Hampshire to the Carolinas, a general aversion appeared against this experiment of administration. Nor was the flame confined to the continent; it had spread to the insular regions, whose inhabitants, constitutionally more sanguine than those born in colder climates, discovered stronger marks of resentment, and prouder tokens of disobedience to ministerial authority. Thus several of the West India islands shewed equal violence, in the destruction of the stamp papers, disgust at the act, and indignation towards the officers who were bold enough to attempt its execution. Nor did they at this period appear less determined to resist the operation of all unconstitutional mandates, than the generous planters of the southern, or the independent spirits of the northern colonies.

1764.

When the general assembly of the Massachusetts met this year, it appeared that most of the members of the house of representatives had instructions from their constituents to make every legal and spirited opposition to the distribution of the stamped papers, to the execution of the act in any form, and to every other parliamentary infringement on the rights of the people of the colonies. A specimen of the spirit of the times may be seen in a single instance of those instructions, which were given to the representative of the town of Plymouth, the capital of the old colony.\* Similar measures were adopted in most of the other provinces. In consequence of which, petitions from the respective assemblies, replete with the strongest expressions of loyalty and affection to the king, and a regard to the British nation, were presented to his majesty, through the hands of the colonial agents.

The ferment was however too general, and the spirits of the people too much agitated, to wait patiently the result of their own applications. So universal was the resentment and discontent of the people, that the more judicious and discreet characters were exceedingly apprehensive that the general clamor might terminate in the extremes of anarchy. Heavy duties had been laid on all goods imported from such of the West India islands as did not belong to Great Britain.

\* See Appendix, Note, No. III.

These duties were to be paid into the exchequer, and all penalties incurred, were to be recovered in the courts of vice-admiralty, by the determination of a single judge, without trial by jury, and the judge's salary was to be paid out of the fruits of the forfeiture.

All remonstrances against this innovating system had hitherto been without effect; and in this period of suspense, apprehension and anxiety, a general congress of delegates from the several provinces was proposed by the honorable James Otis, of Barnstable, in the Massachusetts. He was a gentleman of great probity, experience, and parliamentary abilities, whose religious adherence to the rights of his country had distinguished him through a long course of years, in which he had sustained some of the first offices in government. This proposal, from a man of his acknowledged judgment, discretion and firmness, was universally pleasing. The measure was communicated to some of the principal members of the two houses of assembly, and immediately adopted, not only by the Massachusetts, but very soon after by most of the other colonies. Thus originated the first congress ever convened in America by the united voice of the people, in order to justify their claims to the rights of Englishmen, and the privileges of the British constitution.



CHAP. II.

1764.

It has been observed that Virginia and the Massachusetts made the first opposition to parliamentary measures, on different grounds. The Virginians, in their resolves, came forward, conscious of their own independence, and at once asserted their rights as men. The Massachusetts generally founded their claims on the rights of British subjects, and the privileges of their English ancestors; but the era was not far distant, when the united colonies took the same ground, the claim of native independence, regardless of charters or foreign restrictions.

At a period when the taste and opinions of Americans were comparatively pure and simple, while they possessed that independence and dignity of mind, which is lost only by a multiplicity of wants and interests, new scenes were opening, beyond the reach of human calculation. At this important crisis, the delegates appointed from several of the colonies, to deliberate on the lowering aspect of political affairs, met at New York, on the first Tuesday of October, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-five.\*

1765.

The moderate demands of this body, and the short period of its existence, discovered at once the affectionate attachment of its members†

\* Several of the colonies were prevented sending delegates to the congress at New York, by the royal governors, who would not permit the assemblies to meet.

† See Appendix, Note, No. IV.



---

 1765.

to the parent state and their dread of a general rupture, which at that time universally prevailed. They stated their claims as subjects to the crown of Great Britain; appointed agents to enforce them in the national councils; and agreed on petitions for the repeal of the stamp-act, which had sown the seeds of discord throughout the colonies. The prayer of their constituents was, in a spirited, yet respectful manner, offered through them to the king, lords, and commons of Great Britain: they then separated, to wait the event.\*

A majority of the principal merchants of the city of London, the opulent West India proprietors who resided in England, and most of the manufacturing towns through the kingdom, accompanied with similar petitions, those offered by the congress convened at New York. In consequence of the general aversion to the stamp-act, the British ministry were changed in appearance, though the same men who had fabricated the American system, still retained their influence on the mind of the king, and in the councils of the nation. The parliamentary debates of the winter of one thousand seven hundred and sixty-six, evinced the important consequences expected from the decision of the question, relative to an American taxation.

---

 1766.
 

---

\* See their petition in the records of the congress at New York, in one thousand seven hundred and sixty-five.

CHAP. II.

1766.

Warm and spirited arguments in favor of the measure, energetic reasonings against it, with many sarcastic strokes on administration, from some of the prime orators in parliament, interested the hearers of every rank and description. Finally, in order to quiet the public mind, the execution of the *stamp-act* was pronounced *inexpedient* by a majority of the house of commons, and a bill passed for its repeal on March the eighteenth, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-six. But a clause was inserted therein, holding up a parliamentary right to make laws binding on the colonies in all cases whatsoever: and a kind of condition was tacked to the repeal, that compensation should be made to all who had suffered, either in person or property, by the late riotous proceedings.

A short-lived joy was diffused throughout America, even by this delusive appearance of lenity: the people of every description manifested the strongest desire, that harmony might be re-established between Great Britain and the colonies. Bonfires, illuminations, and all the usual expressions of popular satisfaction, were displayed on the joyful occasion: yet, amidst the demonstrations of this lively gratitude, there were some who had sagacity enough to see, that the British ministry was not so much instigated by principles of equity, as impelled by necessity. These deemed any relaxation in parliament an act of justice, rather than favor; and

felt more resentment for the manner, than obligation for the design, of this partial repeal. Their opinion was fully justified by the subsequent conduct of administration.

CHAP. II.

1766.

When the assembly of Massachusetts met the succeeding winter, there seemed to prevail a general disposition for peace: the sense of injury was checked; and such a spirit of affection and loyalty appeared, that the two houses agreed to a bill for compensation to all sufferers, in the late times of confusion and riot. But they were careful not to recognize a *right* in parliament to make such a requisition: they ordered it to be entered on the journals of the house, that “for the sake of internal peace, they waved all debate and controversy, though persuaded, the delinquent sufferers had no just claim on the province: that, influenced by a loyal regard to his majesty’s recommendation, (not considering it as a requisition;) and that, from a deference to the opinions of some illustrious patrons of America, in the house of commons, who had urged them to a compliance: They therefore acceded to the proposal; though, at the same time, they considered it a very reprehensible step in those who had suffered, to apply for relief to the parliament of Britain, instead of submitting to the justice and clemency of their own legislature.”

1767.

They made several other just and severe observations on the high-toned speech of the gov-

CHAP. II.

1767.

ernor, who had said, "that the requisition of  
 "the ministry was founded on so much justice  
 "and humanity, that it could not be contro-  
 "verted." They inquired, if the authority with  
 which he introduced the ministerial demand,  
 precluded all disputation about complying with  
 it, what freedom of choice they had left in the  
 case? They said, "With regard to the rest of  
 "your excellency's speech, we are constrained  
 "to observe, that the general air and style of it  
 "favors much more of an act of free grace and  
 "pardon, than of a parliamentary address to the  
 "two houses of assembly: and we most sincerely  
 "wish your excellency had been pleased to re-  
 "serve it, if needful, for a proclamation."

In the bill for compensation by the assembly  
 of Massachusetts, was added a very offensive  
 clause. A general pardon and oblivion was  
 granted to all offenders in the late confusion,  
 tumults and riots. An exact detail of these  
 proceedings was transmitted to England. The  
 king and council disallowed the act, as compris-  
 ing in it a bill of indemnity to the Boston riot-  
 ers; and ordered compensation made to the late  
 sufferers, without any supplementary conditions.  
 No notice was taken of this order, nor any alter-  
 ation made in the act. The money was drawn  
 from the treasury of the province to satisfy the  
 claimants for compensation; and no farther in-  
 quiries were made relative to the authors of the  
 late tumultuary proceedings of the times, when



the minds of men had been wrought up to a ferment, beyond the reach of all legal restraint.

The year one thousand seven hundred and sixty-six had passed over without any other remarkable political events. All colonial measures agitated in England, were regularly transmitted by the minister for the American department to the several plantation governors; who, on every communication, endeavoured to enforce the operation of parliamentary authority, by the most sanguine injunctions of their own, and a magnificent display of royal resentment, on the smallest token of disobedience to ministerial requisitions. But it will appear, that through a long series of resolves and messages, letters and petitions, which passed between the parties, previous to the commencement of hostilities, the watchful guardians of American freedom never lost sight of the intrigues of their enemies, or the mischievous designs of such as were under the influence of the crown, on either side the Atlantic.

It may be observed, that the tranquillity of the provinces had for some time been interrupted by the innovating spirit of the British ministry, instigated by a few prostitutes of power, nurtured in the lap of America, and bound by every tie of honor and gratitude, to be faithful to the interests of their country. The social enjoyments of life had long been disturbed, the mind

CHAP. II.

1767.

fretted, and the people rendered suspicious, when they saw some of their fellow-citizens, who did not hesitate at a junction with the accumulated swarms of hirelings, sent from Great Britain to ravish from the colonies the rights they claimed both by nature and by compact. That the hard-hearted judges of admiralty, and the crowd of revenue officers that hovered about the custom houses, should seldom be actuated by the principles of justice, is not strange. Peculation was generally the prime object of this class; and the oaths they administered, and the habits they encouraged, were favorable to every species of bribery and corruption. The rapacity which instigated these descriptions of men had little check, while they saw themselves upheld even by some governors of provinces. In this grade, which ought ever to be the protectors of the rights of the people, there were some who were total strangers to all ideas of equity, freedom, or urbanity. It was observed at this time, in a speech before the house of commons, by colonel Barre, that “to his certain knowledge, some were promoted to the highest seats of honor in America, who were glad to fly to a foreign country, to escape being brought to the bar of justice in their own.”\*

However injudicious the appointments to American departments might be, the darling

\* Parliamentary debates for 1766.



point of an American revenue was an object too consequential to be relinquished, either by the court at St. James's, the plantation governors, or their mercenary adherents dispersed through the continent. Besides these, there were several classes in America, who were at first exceedingly opposed to measures that militated with the designs of administration. Some, impressed by long connexion, were intimidated by her power, and attached by affection to Britain: others, the true disciples of passive obedience, had real scruples of conscience with regard to any resistance to the powers that be: these, whether actuated by affection or fear, by principle or interest, formed a close combination with the colonial governors, custom house officers, and all in subordinate departments, who hung on the court for subsistence. By the tenor of the writings of some of these, and the insolent behaviour of others, they became equally obnoxious in the eyes of the people, with the officers of the crown and the danglers for place; who, disappointed of their prey by the repeal of the stamp-act, and restless for some new project that might enable them to rise into importance on the spoils of America, were continually whispering malicious insinuations into the ears of the financiers and ministers of colonial departments.

They represented the mercantile body in America as a set of smugglers, forever breaking over the laws of trade and of society; the

CHAP. II.

1767.

people in general as factious, turbulent, and aiming at independence; the legislatures in the several provinces as marked with the same spirit; and government every where in so lax a state, that the civil authority was insufficient to prevent the fatal effects of popular discontent.

It is indeed true, that resentment had in several instances arisen to outrage; and that the most unwarrantable excesses had been committed on some occasions, which gave grounds for unfavorable representations. Yet it must be acknowledged, that the voice of the people seldom breathes universal murmur, but when the insolence or the oppression of their rulers extorts the bitter complaint. On the contrary, there is a certain supineness which generally overspreads the multitude, and disposes mankind to submit quietly to any form of government, rather than to be at the expense and hazard of resistance. They become attached to ancient modes by habits of obedience, though the reins of authority are sometimes held by the most rigorous hand. Thus we have seen in all ages, the many become the slaves of the few: preferring the wretched tranquillity of inglorious ease, they patiently yield to despotic masters, until awakened by multiplied wrongs to the feelings of human nature; which, when once aroused to a consciousness of the native freedom and equal rights of man, ever revolts at the idea of servitude.

Perhaps the story of political revolution never exhibited a more general enthusiasm in the cause of liberty, than that which for several years pervaded all ranks in America, and brought forward events little expected by the most sanguine spirits in the beginning of the controversy. A contest now pushed with so much vigour, that the intelligent yeomanry of the country, as well as those educated in the higher walks, became convinced that nothing less than a systematical plan of slavery was designed against them. They viewed the chains as already forged to manacle the unborn millions; and though every one seemed to dread any new interruption of public tranquillity, the impetuosity of some led them into excesses which could not be restrained by those of more cool and discreet deportment. To the most moderate and judicious it soon became apparent, that unless a timely and bold resistance prevented, the colonists must in a few years sink into the same wretched thralldom, that marks the miserable Asiatic.

Few of the executive officers employed by the king of Great Britain, and fewer of their adherents, were qualified either by education, principle, or inclination, to allay the ferment of the times, or to eradicate the suspicions of men, who, from an hereditary love of freedom, were tenderly touched by the smallest attempt, to undermine the invaluable possession. Yet, per-

haps few of the colonies, at this period, suffered equal embarrassments with the Massachusetts. The inhabitants of that province were considered as the prime leaders of faction, the disturbers of public tranquillity, and Boston the seat of sedition. Vengeance was continually denounced against that capital, and indeed the whole province, through the letters, messages, and speeches of their first magistrate.

Unhappily for both parties, governor Bernard was very illy calculated to promote the interest of the people, or support the honor of his master. He was a man of little genius, but some learning. He was by education strongly impressed with high ideas of canon and feudal law, and fond of a system of government that had been long obsolete in England, and had never had an existence in America. His disposition was choleric and sanguine, obstinate and designing, yet too open and frank to disguise his intrigues, and too precipitant to bring them to maturity. A revision of colony charters, a resumption of former privileges, and an American revenue, were the constant topics of his letters to administration.\* To prove the necessity of these measures, the most trivial disturbance was magnified to a riot; and to give a pretext to these wicked insinuations, it was

\* See his pamphlet on law and polity, and his letters to the British ministry, while he presided in the Massachusetts.

thought by many, that tumults were frequently excited by the indiscretion or malignancy of his own partizans.

The declaratory bill still hung suspended over the heads of the Americans, nor was it suffered to remain long without trying its operative effects. The clause holding up a right to tax America at pleasure, and "to bind them in all cases whatsoever," was comprehensive and alarming. Yet it was not generally expected, that the ministry would soon endeavour to avail themselves of the dangerous experiment; but, in this, the public were mistaken.

It has already been observed, that the arbitrary disposition of George the third; the absurd system of policy adopted in conformity to his principles, and a parliamentary majority at the command of the ministry, rendered it not difficult to enforce any measures that might tend to an accession to the powers of the crown. It was a just sentiment of an elegant writer, that "almost all the vices of royalty have been principally occasioned by a slavish adulation in the language of their subjects; and to the shame of the English it must be said, that none of the enslaved nations in the world have addressed the throne in a more fulsome and hyperbolic style."\*

\* Mrs. Macauley's letter to earl Stanhope.



1767.

The dignity of the crown, the supremacy of parliament, and the disloyalty of the colonies, were the theme of the court, the echo of its creatures, and of the British nation in general; nor was it thought good policy to let the high claims of government lie long in a dormant state. Accordingly not many months after the repeal of the stamp-act, the chancellor of the exchequer, Charles Townshend, Esq. came forward and pawned his character on the success of a new attempt to tax the American colonies. He was a gentleman of conspicuous abilities, and much professional knowledge; endowed with more boldness than discretion; he had “the talent of bringing together at once all that was necessary to establish, to illustrate, and to decorate the side of the question he was on.”\*

He introduced several bills in support of his sanguinary designs, which without much difficulty obtained the sanction of parliament, and the royal assent. The purport of the new project for revenue was to levy certain duties on paper, glass, painters' colors, and several other articles usually imported into America. It was also directed that the duties on India teas, which

\* A writer has more recently observed that Charles Townshend was a man of rising parliamentary reputation and brilliant talents; but capricious, insincere, intriguing, and wholly destitute of discretion or solidity.

Belfham on the reign of George the third.



had been a productive source of revenue in England, should be taken off there, and three pence per pound levied on all kinds that should in future be purchased in the colonies.

CHAP. II.

1767.

This inconsiderable duty on teas finally became an object of high importance and altercation; it was not the sum, but the principle that was contested; it manifestly appeared that this was only a financiering expedient to raise a revenue from the colonies by imperceptible taxes. The defenders of the privileges and the freedom of the colonies, denied all parliamentary right to tax them in any way whatever. They asserted that if the collection of this duty was permitted, it would establish a precedent, and strengthen the claim parliament had assumed, to tax them at pleasure. To do it by the secret modes of imposts and excises would ruin their trade, corrupt the morals of the people, and was more abhorrent in their eyes than a direct demand. The most judicious and intelligent Americans at this time considered all *imperceptible* taxes fraught with evils, that tended to enslave any country plunged in the boundless chaos of fiscal demands that this practice introduces.

In consequence of the new system, a board of customs was instituted and commissioners appointed to set in Boston to collect the duties; which were besides other purposes to supply a

---

1767.

fund for the payment of the large salaries annexed to their office. A civil list was soon after established, and the governors of the Massachusetts, judges of the superior court, and such other officers as had heretofore depended on the free grants of the representative body, were to be paid out of the revenue chest.

Thus rendered wholly independent of the general assembly, there was no check left on the wanton exercise of power in the crown officers, however disposed they might be to abuse their trust. The distance from the throne, it was said, must delay, if not wholly prevent, all relief under any oppressions the people might suffer from the servants of government; and to crown the long list of grievances, specified by the patriots of the day, the extension of the courts of vice-admiralty was none of the least. They were vested with certain powers that dispensed with the mode of trial by jury, annihilated the privileges of Englishmen, and placed the liberty of every man in the hand of a petty officer of the customs. By warrant of a writ of assistance from the governor or lieutenant governor, any officer of the revenue was authorized to enter the dwelling of the most respectable inhabitant on the smallest suspicion of a concealment of contraband goods, and to insult, search, or seize, with impunity.

An attorney\* at law, of some professional abilities and ingenuity, but without either property or principle, was, by the instigation of Mr. Bernard, appointed sole judge of admiralty in the Massachusetts. The dangerous aspect of this court, particularly when aided by writs of assistance, was opposed with peculiar energy and strength of argument, by James Otis, Esq. of Boston, who, by the exertion of his talents and the sacrifice of interest, may justly claim the honor of laying the foundation of a revolution, which has been productive of the happiest effects to the civil and political interests of mankind.

He was the first champion of American freedom, who had the courage to put his signature to the contest between Great Britain and the colonies. He had in a clear, concise, and nervous manner, stated and vindicated the rights of the American colonies, and published his observations in Boston, while the stamp-act hung suspended. This tract was written with such a spirit of liberality, loyalty, and impartiality, that though at the time some were ready to pronounce it *treasonable*, yet, when opposition run higher, many of the most judicious partizans of the crown were willing to admit it as a

\* Jonathan Sewall, a native of the province, whose pen had been employed to vindicate the measures of administration and the conduct of governor Bernard, under the signature of Philalethes, Massachusettsensis, &c. &c.

CHAP. II.

1767.

just criterion of political truth.\* But the author was abused and vilified by the scribblers of the court, and threatened with an arrest from the crown, for the boldness of his opinions. Yet he continued to advocate the rights of the people, and in the course of his argument against the iniquitous consequences of writs of assistance, he observed, that “his engaging in this cause had raised the resentment of its abettors; but that he argued it from principle, and with peculiar pleasure, as it was in favor of *British liberty*, and in opposition to the exercise of a power, that in former periods of English history, had cost one king of England his head, and another his crown.”—He added, “I can sincerely declare, that I submit myself to every opprobrious name for conscience sake, and despise all those, whom guilt, folly or malice have made my foes.”

It was on this occasion, that Mr. Otis resigned the office of judge advocate, and renounced all employment under so corrupt an administration, boldly declaring in the face of the supreme court, at this dangerous crisis, that “the only principle of public conduct, worthy a gentleman or a man, was the sacrifice of health, ease, applause, estate, or even life, to the sacred

\* See Mr. Otis's pamphlet, entitled, “The rights of the colonies stated and vindicated.”

“calls of his country; that these manly sentiments in private life made the good citizen, in public, the patriot and the hero.”—Thus was verified in his conduct the observation of a writer\* of merit and celebrity, that “it was as difficult for Great Britain to frighten as to cheat Americans into servitude; that she ought to leave them in the peaceable possession of that liberty which they received at their birth, and were resolved to retain to their death.”

When the new parliamentary regulations reached America, all the colonies in their several departments petitioned in the most strenuous manner against any American taxation, and all other recent innovations relative to the government of the British provinces. These petitions were, when received by the ministry, treated by them with the utmost contempt. But they were supported by a respectable party in the parliament of Britain, who did not neglect to warn the administration of the danger of precipitating measures, that might require before the termination of a contest thus hurried

\* Mr. Dickenfon, author of the much admired *Farmer's Letters*, the first copy of which he inclosed to his friend, Mr. Otis, and observed to him, that “the examples of public spirit in the cold regions of the north, had roused the languid latitudes of the south, to a proper vindication of their rights.” See Appendix, Note, No. V.



on, "more virtue and abilities than the ministry  
"possessed."

By some steps taken by administration previous to the present period, there was reason to suppose that they were themselves apprehensive, that their system for governing the colonies in a more arbitrary manner would give great offence, and create disturbances of so alarming a nature, that perhaps the aid of military power might become necessary to enforce the completion of their designs. Doubtless it was with a view of facilitating the new projects, that an extraordinary bill had been passed in parliament, making it lawful for the officers of the British army to quarter their troops in private houses throughout the colonies. Thus while mixed in every family, it might become more easy to awe the people into submission, and compel them by military terrors to the basest compliances. But the colony agents residing in London, and the merchants concerned in the American trade, remonstrated so warmly against the injustice and cruelty of such a procedure, that a part of the bill was dropped. Yet it was too important a point wholly to relinquish; of consequence a clause was left, obliging the several legislative assemblies to provide quarters for the king's marching regiments, and to furnish a number of specified articles at the expense of the province, wherever they might be stationed.



This act continued in full force after the stamp-act was repealed, though it equally militated with that part of the British constitution which provides that no monies should be raised on the subject without his consent. Yet rather than enter on a new dispute, the colonists in general chose to evade it for the present, and without many observations thereon had occasionally made some voluntary provisions for the support of the king's troops. It was hoped the act might be only a temporary expedient to hold up the authority of parliament, and that in a short time the claim might die of itself without any attempt to revive such an unreasonable demand. But New York, more explicit in her refusal to *obey*, was suspended from all powers of legislation until the quartering act should be complied with in the fullest extent. By this unprecedented treatment of one of the colonies, and the innumerable exactions and restrictions on all, a general apprehension prevailed, that nothing but a firm, vigorous and united resistance could shield from the attacks that threatened the total extinction of civil liberty through the continent.

## CHAPTER III.

Curfory Observations.—Maffachufetts Circular Letter.—A new Houfe of Representatives called.—Governor Bernard impeached.—A Riot on the Seizure of a Veffel.—Troops applied for to protect the King's Officers.—A Convention at Boston.—Troops arrive.—A Combination againft all Commerce with Great Britain.—A General Affembly convened at Boston—removed to Cambridge.—Governor Bernard after his Impeachment repairs to England.

---

 CHAP. III.
 

---

THE British colonies at this period through the American continent contained, exclusive of Canada and Nova Scotia, the provinces of New Hampshire, and Maffachufetts Bay, of Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jerfey, Pennsylvania, the Delaware counties, Virginia, Maryland, the two Carolinas, and Georgia, befides the Floridas, and an unbounded tract of wildernefs not yet explored. Thefe feveral provinces had been always governed by their own diftinct legislatures. It is true there was fome variety in their religious opinions, but a ftriking fimilarity in their political intitutions, except in the proprietary governments. At the fame time the colonies, afterwards the thirteen ftates, were equally marked with that manly fpirit of freedom, charaëteriftic of Americans from New Hampshire to Georgia.

Aroufed by the fame injuries from the parent ftate, threatened in the fame manner by the

common enemies to the rights of society among themselves, their petitions to the throne had been suppressed without even a reading, their remonstrances were ridiculed and their supplications rejected. They determined no longer to submit. All stood ready to unite in the same measures to obtain that redress of grievances they had so long requested, and that relief from burdens they had so long complained of, to so little purpose. Yet there was no bond of connexion by which a similarity of sentiment and concord in action might appear, whether they were again disposed to revert to the hitherto fruitless mode of petition and remonstrance, or to leave that humiliating path for a line of conduct more cogent and influential in the contests of nations.

A circular letter dated February the eleventh, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-eight, by the legislature of Massachusetts, directed to the representatives and burgesses of the people through the continent, was a measure well calculated for this salutary purpose.\* This letter painted in the strongest colors the difficulties they apprehended, the embarrassments they felt, and the steps already taken to obtain relief. It contained the full opinion of that assembly relative to the late acts of parliament; while at the same time they expatiated

\* See Appendix, Note, No. VI.

CHAP. III.

1768.

on their duty and attachment to the king, and detailed in terms of respect the representations that had been made to his ministers, they expressed the boldest determination to continue a free but a loyal people. Indeed there were few, if any, who indulged an idea of a final separation from Britain at so early a period; or that even wished for more than an equal participation of the privileges of the British constitution.

INDEPENDENCE was a plant of a later growth. Though the soil might be congenial, and the boundaries of nature pointed out the event, yet every one chose to view it at a distance, rather than wished to witness the convulsions that such a dismemberment of the empire must necessarily occasion.

After the circulation of this alarming letter,\* wherever any of the governors had permitted the legislative bodies to meet, an answer was returned by the assemblies replete with encomiums on the exertion and the zeal of the Massachusetts. They observed that the spirit that dictated that letter was but a transcript of their own feelings; and that though equally impressed with every sentiment of respect to the prince on the throne of Britain, and feeling the strongest attachment to the house of Hanover, they could not but

\* See Appendix, Note, No. VII.

reject with disdain the late measures, so repugnant to the dignity of the crown and the true interest of the realm ; and that at every hazard they were determined to resist all acts of parliament for the injurious purpose of raising a revenue in America. They also added, that they had respectively offered the most humble supplications to the king ; that they had remonstrated to both houses of parliament, and had directed their agents at the British court to leave no effort untried to obtain relief, without being compelled to what might be deemed by royalty an illegal mode of opposition.

In consequence of the spirited proceedings of the house of representatives, the general assembly of Massachusetts was dissolved, nor were they suffered to meet again until a new election. These transactions were carefully transmitted to administration by several of the plantation governors, and particularly Mr. Bernard, with inflammatory observations of his own, interlarded with the most illiberal abuse of the principal leaders of the late measures in the assembly of Massachusetts.

Their charter, which still provided for the election of the legislature, obliged the governor to summon a new assembly to meet May the twenty-fourth, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-eight. The first communication laid before the house by the governor contain-



1768.

ed a haughty requisition from the British minister of state, directing in his majesty's name that the present house should immediately *re-scind* the resolutions of a former one, which had produced the celebrated circular letter. Governor Bernard also intimated, that it was his majesty's pleasure, that on a non-compliance with this extraordinary mandate, the present assembly should be dissolved without delay.

What heightened the resentment to the manner of this singular order, signed by lord Hillsborough, secretary of state for the American department, was, that he therein intimated to the governor that he need not fear the most *unqualified obedience* on his part to the high measures of administration, assuring him that it would not operate to his disadvantage, as care would be taken in future to provide for his interest, and to support the dignity of government, without the interpositions or existence of a provincial legislature.

These messages were received by the representative body with a steadiness and resolution becoming the defenders of the rights of a free people. After appointing a committee to consider and prepare an answer to them, they proceeded with great coolness to the usual business of the session, without further notice of what had passed.

Within a day or two, they received a second message from the governor, purporting that he expected an immediate and an explicit answer to the authoritative requisition; and that if they longer postponed their resolutions, he should consider their delay as an "*oppugnation* to his majesty's authority, and a negative to the command, by an expiring faction." On this, the house desired time to consult their constituents on such an extraordinary question. This being peremptorily and petulantly refused, the house ordered the board of council to be informed, that they were entering on a debate of importance, that they should give them notice when it was over, and directed the door-keeper to call no member out, on any pretence whatever.

The committee appointed to answer the governor's several messages, were gentlemen of known attachment to the cause of their country, who on every occasion had rejected all servile compliances with ministerial requisitions. They were not long on the business. When they returned to the house, the galleries were immediately cleared, and they reported an answer, bold and determined, yet decent and loyal. In the course of their reply, they observed that it was not an "*expiring faction*," that the governor had charged with "*oppugnation to his majesty's authority*," that it was the best blood of the colony who opposed the ministerial measures,

1768.

men of reputation, fortune and rank, equal to any who enjoyed the smiles of government; that their exertions were from a conscious sense of duty to their God, to their king, to their country, and to posterity.\*

This committee at the same time reported a very spirited letter to lord Hillsborough, which they had prepared to lay before the house. In this they remonstrated on the injustice as well as absurdity of a requisition, when a compliance was impracticable, even had they the inclination to rescind the doings of a former house. This letter was approved by the house, and on a division on the question of rescinding the vote of a former assembly, it was negatived by a majority of ninety-two to seventeen.

The same committee was immediately nominated to prepare a petition to the king to remove Mr. Bernard from the government of Massachusetts. They drew up a petition for this purpose without leaving the house, and immediately reported it. They alleged a long list of accusations against the governor, and requested his majesty that one more worthy to represent so *great* and *good* a *king*, might be sent to preside in the province. Thus impeached by the house, the same

\* The principal members of this committee, were Major Joseph Hawley, of Northampton, James Otis, Esq. of Boston, Samuel Adams, James Warren, of Plymouth, John Hancock, and Thomas Cushing, Esqrs.

minority that had appeared ready to rescind the circular letter, declared themselves against the impeachment of governor Bernard.\* Their fervility was marked with peculiar odium: they were stigmatized by the appellation of the *infamous seventeen*, until their names were lost in a succession of great events and more important characters.

When the doors of the house were opened, the secretary who had been long in waiting for admission, informed the house that the governor was in the chair, and desired their attendance in the council chamber. They complied without hesitation, but were received in a most ungracious manner. With much ill humor the governor reprimanded them in the language of an angry pedagogue, instead of the manner becoming the first magistrate when addressing the representatives of a free people: he concluded his harangue by proroguing the assembly, which within a few days he dissolved by proclamation.

In the mean time by warm and virulent letters from this indiscreet governor; by others full of invective from the commissioners of the customs, and by the *secret influence* of some, who yet concealed themselves within the vizard of moderation, "who held the language of patriot-ism, but trod in the footsteps of tyranny,"

\* Journals of the house.

leave was obtained from administration to apply to the commander in chief of the king's troops, then at New York, to send several regiments to Boston, as a necessary aid to civil government, which they represented as too weak to suppress the disorders of the times. It was urged that this step was absolutely necessary, to enable the officers of the crown to carry into execution the laws of the supreme legislature.

A new pretext had been recently given to the malignant party, to urge with a shew of plausibility, the immediate necessity of the military arm, to quell the riotous proceedings of the town of Boston, to strengthen the hands of government, and restore order and tranquillity to the province. The seizure of a vessel belonging to a popular gentleman,\* under suspicion of a breach of the acts of trade, raised a sudden resentment among the citizens of Boston. The conduct of the owner was indeed reprehensible, in permitting a part of the cargo to be unladen in a clandestine manner ; but the mode of the seizure appeared like a design to raise a sudden ferment, that might be improved to corroborate the arguments for the necessity of standing troops to be stationed within the town.

On a certain signal, a number of boats, manned and armed, rowed up to the wharf, cut the

\* John Hancock, Esq. afterwards governor of the Massachusetts.



facts of the suspected vessel, carried her off, and placed her under the stern of a ship of war, as if apprehensive of a rescue. This was executed in the edge of the evening, when apprentices and the younger classes were usually in the streets. It had what was thought to be the desired effect; the inconsiderate rabble, unapprehensive of the snare, and thoughtless of consequences, pelted some of the custom-house officers with brick-bats, broke their windows, drew one of their boats before the door of the gentleman they thought injured, and set it on fire; after which they dispersed without further mischief.

CHAP. III.

1768.

This trivial disturbance was exaggerated until it wore the complexion of a riot of the first magnitude. By the insinuations of the party, and their malignant conduct, it was not strange that in England it was considered as a *London mob* collected in the streets of Boston, with some formidable desperado at their head. After this *fracas*, the custom-house officers repaired immediately to Castle William, as did the board of commissioners. This fortress was about a league from the town. From thence they expressed their apprehensions of personal danger, in strong language. Fresh applications were made to general Gage, to hasten on his forces from New York, assuring him that the lives of the officers of the crown were insecure, unless placed beyond the reach of popular resentment,

by an immediate military aid. In consequence of these representations, several detachments from Halifax, and two regiments lately from Ireland, were directed to repair to Boston, with all possible dispatch.

The experience of all ages, and the observations both of the historian and the philosopher agree, that a standing army is the most ready engine in the hand of despotism, to debase the powers of the human mind, and eradicate the manly spirit of freedom. The people have certainly every thing to fear from a government, when the springs of its authority are fortified only by a standing military force. Wherever an army is established, it introduces a revolution in manners, corrupts the morals, propagates every species of vice, and degrades the human character. Threatened with the immediate introduction of this dread calamity, deprived by the dissolution of their legislature of all power to make any legal opposition; neglected by their sovereign, and insulted by the governor he had set over them, much the largest part of the community was convinced, that they had no resource but in the strength of their virtues, the energy of their resolutions, and the justice of their cause.

In this state of general apprehension, confusion, and suspense, the inhabitants of Boston again requested governor Bernard to convoke

an assembly, and suffer the representatives of the whole people to consult and advise at this critical conjuncture. He rejected this application with an air of insult, and no time was to be lost. Letters were instantly forwarded from the capital, requesting a delegation of suitable persons to meet in convention from every town in the province before the arrival of the troops, and if possible to take some steps to prevent the fatal effects of these dangerous and unprecedented measures.

The whole country felt themselves interested, and readily complied with the proposal. The most respectable persons from an hundred and ninety-six towns were chosen delegates to assemble at Boston, on the twenty-second of September. They accordingly met at that time and place; as soon as they were convened, the governor sent them an angry message, admonishing them immediately to disperse, assuring them "the king was determined to maintain his entire sovereignty over the province,—that their present meeting might be in consequence of their ignorance,—but that if after this admonition, they continued their *usurpation*, they might repent their temerity, as he was determined to assert the authority of the crown in a more public manner, if they continued to disregard this authoritative warning."

1768.

He however found he had not men to deal with, either ignorant of law, regardless of its fancies, or terrified by the frowns of power. The convention made him a spirited but decent answer, containing the reasons of their assembling, and the line of conduct they were determined to pursue in spite of every menace. The governor refused to receive their reply; he urged the illegality of the assembly, and made use of every subterfuge to interrupt their proceedings.

Their situation was indeed truly delicate, as well as dangerous. The convention was a body not known in the constitution of their government, and in the strict sense of law it might be styled a treasonable meeting. They still professed fealty to the crown of Britain; and though the principle had been shaken by injuries, that might have justified a more sudden renunciation of loyalty, yet their's was cherished by a degree of religious scruple, amidst every species of insult. Thus while they wished to support this temper, and to cherish their former affection, they felt with poignancy the invasion of their rights, and hourly expected the arrival of an armed force, to back the threatenings of their first magistrate.

Great prudence and moderation however marked the transactions of an assembly of men

thus circumstanced ; they could in their present situation only recapitulate their sufferings, felt and feared. This they did in a pointed and nervous style, in a letter addressed to Mr. De Berdt,\* the agent of the province, residing in London. They stated the circumstances that occasioned their meeting, and a full detail of their proceedings. They inclosed him a petition to the king, and ordered their agent to deliver it with his own hand. The convention then separated, and returned to their respective towns, where they impressed on their constituents the same perseverance, forbearance and magnanimity that had marked their own resolutions.

Within a few days after their separation, the troops arrived from Halifax. This was indeed a painful era. The American war may be dated from the hostile parade of this day ; a day which marks with infamy the councils of Britain. At this period, the inhabitants of the colonies almost universally breathed an unshaken loyalty to the king of England, and the strongest attachment to a country whence they derived their origin. Thus was the astonishment of the whole province excited, when to the grief and consternation of the town of Boston several regiments were landed, and marched sword in hand through the principal streets of their city, then in profound peace.

\* See letter to Mr. De Berdt, in the journals of the house.



The disembarkation of the king's troops, which took place on the first of October, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-eight, was viewed by a vast crowd of spectators, who beheld the solemn prelude to devastation and bloodshed with a kind of sullen silence, that denoted the deepest resentment. Yet whatever might be the feelings of the citizens, not one among the gazing multitude discovered any disposition to resist by arms the power and authority of the king of Great Britain. This appearance of decent submission and order was very unexpected to some, whose guilty fears had led them to expect a violent and tumultuous resistance to the landing of a large body of armed soldiers in the town. The peaceable demeanor of the people was construed, by the party who had brought this evil on the city, as a mark of abject submission.

As they supposed from the present acquiescent deportment, that the spirit of the inhabitants was totally subdued on the first appearance of military power, they consequently rose in their demands. General Gage arrived from New York soon after the king's troops reached Boston. With the aid of the governor, the chief justice of the province, and the sheriff of the county of Suffolk, he forced quarters for his soldiers in all the unoccupied houses in the town. The council convened on this occasion opposed the measure; but to such a height

was the insolence of power pushed, by their passionate, vindictive and wrong-headed governor, that in spite of the remonstrances of several magistrates, and the importunities of the people, he suffered the state house, where the archives of the province were deposited, to be improved as barracks for the king's troops. Thus the members of council, the magistrates of the town and the courts of justice were daily interrupted, and frequently challenged in their way to their several departments in business, by military centinels posted at the doors.

CHAP. III.

---

1768.

A standing army thus placed in their capital, their commerce fettered, their characters traduced, their representative body prevented meeting, the united petitions of all ranks that they might be convened at this critical conjuncture rejected by the governor; and still threatened with a further augmentation of troops to enforce measures in every view repugnant to the principles of the British constitution; little hope remained of a peaceful accommodation.

The most rational arguments had been urged by the legislative assemblies, by corporate bodies, associations, and individual characters of eminence, to shake the arbitrary system that augured evils to both countries. But their addresses were disdainfully rejected; the king and the court of Great Britain appeared equally deaf to the cry of millions, who only asked a restoration of their rights. At the same time

every worthless incendiary, who, taking advantage of these miserable times, crossed the Atlantic with a tale of accusation against his country, was listened to with attention, and rewarded with some token of royal favor.

In this situation, no remedy appeared to be left short of an appeal to the sword, unless an entire suspension of that commercial intercourse, which had contributed so much to the glory and grandeur of Britain, could be effected throughout the colonies. As all the American continent was involved in one common danger, it was not found difficult to obtain a general combination against all further importations from England, a few articles only excepted. The mercantile body through all the provinces entered into solemn engagements, and plighted their faith and honor to each other, and to their country, that no orders should be forwarded by them for British or India goods within a limited term, except for certain specified articles of necessary use. These engagements originated in Boston, and were for a time strictly adhered to through all the colonies. Great encouragement was given to American manufactures, and if pride of apparel was at all indulged, it was in wearing the stuffs fabricated in their own looms. Harmony and union, prudence and economy, industry and virtue, were inculcated in their publications, and enforced by the example of the most respectable characters.

In consequence of these determinations, the clamors of the British manufacturers arose to tumult in many parts of the kingdom ; but no artifice was neglected to quiet the trading part of the nation. There were some Americans, who by letters encouraged administration to persevere in their measures relative to the colonies, assuring them in the strongest terms, that the interruption of commerce was but a temporary struggle, or rather an effort of despair. No one in the country urged his opinion with more indiscreet zeal than Andrew Oliver, Esq. then secretary in the Massachusetts. He suggested, “ that government should stipulate with the merchants in England to purchase large quantities of goods proper for the American market ; agreeing beforehand to allow them a premium equal to the advance of their stock in trade, if the price of their goods was not sufficiently enhanced by a tenfold demand in future, even though the goods might lay on hand, till this temporary stagnation of business should cease.” He concluded his political rhapsody with this inhuman boast to his correspondent ;\* “ *By such a step the game will be up with my countrymen.*”

The prediction on both sides the Atlantic, that this combination, which depended wholly

\* See the original letters of Mr. Oliver to Mr. Whately and others, which were afterwards published in a pamphlet ; also, in the British Remembrancer, 1773.

CHAP. III.

1768.

on the commercial part of the community, could not be of long duration, proved indeed too true. A regard to private interest ever operates more forcibly on the bulk of mankind than the ties of honor, or the principles of patriotism; and when the latter are incompatible with the former, the balance seldom hangs long in equilibrio. Thus it is not uncommon to see virtue, liberty, love of country, and regard to character, sacrificed at the shrine of wealth.

1769.

The winter following this salutary combination, a partial repeal of the act imposing duties on certain articles of British manufacture took place. On this it immediately appeared that some in New York had previously given conditional orders to their correspondents, that if the measures of parliament should in any degree be relaxed, that without farther application they should furnish them with large quantities of goods. Several in the other colonies had discovered as much avidity for an early importation as the Yorkers. They had given similar orders, and both received larger supplies than usual, of British merchandize, early in the spring one thousand seven hundred and sixty-nine. The people of course considered the agreement nullified by the conduct of the merchants, and the intercourse with England for a time went on as usual, without any check. Thus, by breaking through the agreement within the limited time of restriction, a measure was



defeated, which, had it been religiously observed, might have prevented the tragical consequences which ensued.

After this event, a series of altercation and abuse, of recrimination and suspense, was kept up on both sides the Atlantic, without much appearance of lenity on the one side, or decision on the other. There appeared little disposition in parliament to relax the reins of government, and less in the Americans to yield implicit obedience. But whether from an opinion that they had taken the lead in opposition, or whether from their having a greater proportion of British sycophants among themselves, whose artful insinuations operated against their country, or from other concurring circumstances, the Massachusetts was still the principal butt of ministerial resentment. It is therefore necessary yet to continue a more particular detail of the situation of that province.

As their charter was not yet annihilated, governor Bernard found himself under a necessity, as the period of annual election approached, to issue writs to convene a general assembly. Accordingly a new house of representatives met at Boston as usual on the thirty-first of May, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-nine. They immediately petitioned the governor to remove the military parade that surrounded the state-house, urging, that such a hostile appear-

ance might over-awe their proceedings, and prevent the freedom of election and debate.

A unanimous resolve passed, “that it was  
 “the opinion of the house, that placing an arm-  
 “ed force in the metropolis while the general  
 “assembly is there convened, is a breach of  
 “privilege, and totally inconsistent with the  
 “dignity and freedom with which they ought  
 “to deliberate and determine ;”—adding, “that  
 “they meant ever to support their constitution-  
 “al rights, that they should never voluntarily  
 “recede from their just claims, contained both  
 “in the letter and spirit of the constitution.”

After several messages both from the council and house of representatives, the governor, ever obstinate in error, declared he had no authority over the king’s troops, nor should he use any influence to have them removed.\* Thus by express acknowledgment of the first magistrate, it appeared that the military was set so far above the civil authority, that the last was totally unable to check the wanton exercise of this newly established power in the province. But the assembly peremptorily determined to do no business while thus insulted by the planting of cannon at the doors of the state-house, and interrupted in their solemn deliberations by the noisy evolutions of military discipline.

\* Journals of the house, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-nine.

The royal charter required that they should proceed to the choice of a speaker, and the election of a council, the first day of the meeting of the assembly. They had conformed to this as usual, but protested against its being considered as a precedent on any future emergency. Thus amidst the warmest expressions of resentment from all classes, for the indignity offered a free people by this haughty treatment to their legislature, the governor suffered them to sit several weeks without doing business; and at last compelled them to give way to an armed force, by adjourning the general assembly to Cambridge.

The internal state of the province required the attention of the house at this critical exigence of affairs. They therefore on their first meeting at Cambridge, resolved, “That it was  
 “ their opinion that the British constitution admits no armed force within the realm, but  
 “ for the purpose of offensive or defensive *war*.  
 “ That placing troops in the colony in the midst  
 “ of profound peace was a breach of privilege,  
 “ an infraction on the natural rights of the people, and manifestly subversive of that happy  
 “ form of government they had hitherto enjoyed. That the honor, dignity, and service  
 “ of the sovereign should be attended to by  
 “ that assembly, so far as was consistent with  
 “ the just rights of the people, their own dignity, and the freedom of debate; but that pro-

“ceding to business while an armed force was  
 “quartered in the province, was not a dereliction  
 “of the privileges legally claimed by the  
 “colony, but from necessity, and that no undue  
 “advantage should be taken from their compliance.”

After this, they had not time to do any other business, before two messages of a very extraordinary nature, in their opinion, were laid before them.\* The first was an order under the sign-manual of the king, that Mr. Bernard should repair to England to lay the state of the province before him. To this message was tacked a request from the governor, that as he attended his majesty's pleasure as commander in chief of the province, his salary might be continued, though absent. The substance of the other message was an account of general Gage's expenditures in quartering his troops in the town of Boston; accompanied by an unqualified demand for the establishment of funds for the discharge thereof. The governor added, that he was requested by general Gage to make requisition for future provision for quartering his troops within the town.

The subsequent resolves of the house on these messages were conformable to the usual spirit of that assembly. They warmly censured

\* Journals of the first session at Cambridge.

both governor Bernard and general Gage for wantonly acting against the constitution; charged them with making false and injurious representations against his majesty's faithful subjects, and discovering on all occasions a most inimical disposition towards the colonies. They observed that general Gage had rashly and impertinently intermeddled with affairs altogether out of his line, and that he had betrayed a degree of ignorance equal to his malice, when he presumed to touch on the civil police of the province. They complained heavily of the arbitrary designs of government, the introduction of a standing army, and the encroachments on civil liberty; and concluded with a declaration replete with sentiments of men conscious of their own freedom and integrity, and deeply affected with the injuries offered their country. They observed, that to the utmost of their power they should vindicate the rights of human nature and the privileges of Englishmen, and explicitly declared that duty to their constituents forbade a compliance with either of these messages. This clear, decided answer being delivered, the governor summoned the house to attend, and after a short, angry, and threatening speech, he prorogued the assembly to January, one thousand seven hundred and seventy.

Governor Bernard immediately embarked for Europe, from whence he never more re-



turned to a country, he had, by his arbitrary disposition and indiscreet conduct, inflamed to a degree, that required both judgment and prudence to cool, perhaps beyond the abilities, and certainly incompatible with the views, of the administration in being.

The province had little reason to suppose, that considerations of the interest of the people had any part in the recal or detention of this mischievous emissary. His reception at court, the summary proceedings with regard to his impeachment and trial, and the character of the man appointed to succeed him, strongly counteracted such a flattering opinion. Notwithstanding the high charges that had been alleged against governor Bernard, he was acquitted by the king and council, without allowing time to the assembly to support their accusations, honored with a title, and rewarded with a pension of one thousand pounds sterling per annum on the Irish establishment.

Governor Bernard had reason to be perfectly satisfied with the success of his appointment to the government of Massachusetts, as it related to his personal interest. His conduct there procured him the smiles of the British court, an honorary title, and a pension for life. Besides this, the legislature of that province had in the early part of his administration, in a moment of complacency, or perhaps from digested

policy, with a hope of bribing him to his duty and stimulating him to defend their invaded rights, made him a grant of a very large tract of land, the whole of the island of Mount Desert. This was afterwards reclaimed by a Madame Gregoire, in right of her ancestors, who had obtained a patent of some part of that country in the early days of European emigration. But as governor Bernard's property in America had never been confiscated, the general assembly of Massachusetts afterwards granted to his son, Sir John Bernard, who still possesses this territory, two townships of land near the river Kennebeck, in lieu of the valuable ill recovered by Madame Gregoire.

1769.

## CHAPTER IV.

Character of Mr. Hutchinson.—Appointed Governor of Massachusetts.—The attempted Assassination of Mr. Otis.—Transactions on the fifth of March, one thousand seven hundred and seventy.—Arrival of the East India Company's Tea-Ships.—Establishment of Committees of Correspondence.—The Right of Parliamentary Taxation without Representation urged by Mr. Hutchinson.—Articles of Impeachment resolved on in the House of Representatives against Governor Hutchinson and Lieutenant Governor Oliver.—Chief Justice of the Province impeached.—Boston Port-Bill.—Governor Hutchinson leaves the Province.

IT is ever painful to a candid mind to exhibit the deformed features of its own species ; yet truth requires a just portrait of the public delinquent, though he may possess such a share of private virtue as would lead us to esteem the man in his domestic character, while we detest his political, and execrate his public transactions.

The barriers of the British constitution broken over, and the ministry encouraged by their sovereign, to pursue the iniquitous system against the colonies to the most alarming extremities, they probably judged it a prudent expedient, in order to curb the refractory spirit of the Massachusetts, perhaps bolder in sentiment and earlier in opposition than some of the other colonies, to appoint a man to preside

over them who had renounced the *quondam* ideas of public virtue, and sacrificed all principle of that nature on the altar of ambition.

CHAP. IV.

1769.

Soon after the recal of Mr. Bernard, Thomas Hutchinson, Esq. a native of Boston, was appointed to the government of Massachusetts. All who yet remember his pernicious administration and the fatal consequences that ensued, agree, that few ages have produced a more fit instrument for the purposes of a corrupt court. He was dark, intriguing, insinuating, haughty and ambitious, while the extreme of avarice marked each feature of his character. His abilities were little elevated above the line of mediocrity; yet by dint of industry, exact temperance, and indefatigable labor, he became master of the accomplishments necessary to acquire popular fame. Though bred a merchant, he had looked into the origin and the principles of the British constitution, and made himself acquainted with the several forms of government established in the colonies; he had acquired some knowledge of the *common law* of England, diligently studied the intricacies of *Machiavelian* policy, and never failed to recommend the Italian master as a model to his adherents.

Raised and distinguished by every honor the people could bestow, he supported for several years the reputation of integrity, and generally

decided with equity in his judicial capacity ;\* and by the appearance of a tenacious regard to the religious institutions of his country, he courted the public *eclat* with the most profound dissimulation, while he engaged the affections of the lower classes by an amiable civility and condescension, without departing from a certain gravity of deportment mistaken by the vulgar for *sanctity*.

The inhabitants of the Massachusetts were the lineal descendants of the *puritans*, who had struggled in England for liberty as early as the reign of Edward the sixth ; and though obscured in the subsequent bloody persecutions, even Mr. Hume has acknowledged that to them England is indebted for the liberty she enjoys.† Attached to the religious forms of their ancestors, equally disgusted with the hierarchy of the church of England, and prejudiced by the severities their fathers had experienced before their emigration, they had, both by education and principle, been always led to consider the religious as well as the political characters of those they deputed to the highest trust. Thus a profession of their own religious mode of worship, and sometimes a tincture of superstition, was with many a higher recommendation than brilliant talents. This

\* Judge of probate for the county of Suffolk, and chief justice of the supreme court.

† Hume's History of England.



accounts in some measure for the unlimited confidence long placed in the specious accomplishments of Mr. Hutchinson, whose character was not thoroughly investigated until some time after governor Bernard left the province.

CHAP. IV.

1769.

But it was known at St. James's, that in proportion as Mr. Hutchinson gained the confidence of administration, he lost the esteem of the best of his countrymen; for this reason, his advancement to the chair of government was for a time postponed or concealed, lest the people should consider themselves insulted by such an appointment, and become too suddenly irritated. Appearances had for several years been strong against him, though it was not then fully known that he had seized the opportunity to undermine the happiness of the people, while he had their fullest confidence, and to barter the liberties of his country by the most shameless duplicity. This was soon after displayed beyond all contradiction, by the recovery of sundry letters to administration under his signature.

Mr. Hutchinson was one of the first in America who felt the full weight of popular resentment. His furniture was destroyed, and his house levelled to the ground, in the tumults occasioned by the news of the stamp-act. Ample compensation was indeed afterwards made

CHAP. IV.

1770.

him for the loss of property, but the strong prejudices against his political character were never eradicated.

All pretences to moderation on the part of the British government now laid aside, the full appointment of Mr. Hutchinson to the government of the Massachusetts was publicly announced at the close of the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty-nine. On his promotion the new governor uniformly observed a more high-handed and haughty tone than his predecessor. He immediately, by an explicit declaration, avowed his independence on the people, and informed the legislative that his majesty had made ample provision for his support without their aid or suffrages. The vigilant guardians of the rights of the people directly called upon him to relinquish the unconstitutional stipend, and to accept the free grants of the general assembly for his subsistence, as usually practised. He replied that an acceptance of this offer would be a breach of his instructions from the king. This was his constant apology for every arbitrary step.

Secure of the favor of his sovereign, and now regardless of the popularity he had formerly courted with such avidity, he decidedly rejected the idea of responsibility to, or dependence on, the people. With equal inflexibility he disregarded all arguments used for the removal of the troops from the capital, and permission to the

CHAP. IV.

1770.

council and house of representatives to return to the usual seat of government. He silently heard their solicitations for this purpose, and as if with a design to pour contempt on their supplications and complaints, he within a few days after withdrew a garrison, in the pay of the province, from a strong fortress in the harbour of Boston; placed two regiments of the king's troops in their stead, and delivered the keys of the castle to colonel Dalrymple, who then commanded the king's troops through the province.

These steps, which seemed to bid defiance to complaint, created new fears in the minds of the people. It required the utmost vigilance to quiet the murmurs and prevent the fatal consequences apprehended from the ebullitions of popular resentment. But cool, deliberate and persevering, the two houses continued to resolve, remonstrate, and protest, against the infractions on their charter, and every dangerous innovation on their rights and privileges. Indeed the intrepid and spirited conduct of those, who stood forth undaunted at this early crisis of hazard, will dignify their names so long as the public records shall remain to witness their patriotic firmness.

Many circumstances rendered it evident that the ministerial party wished a spirit of opposition to the designs of the court might break out into violence, even at the expense of blood. This they thought would in some degree have

1770.

functioned a measure suggested by one of the faction in America, devoted to the arbitrary system, "That some method must be devised, "to take off the original *incendiaries*\* whose "writings instilled the poison of sedition "through the vehicle of the Boston Gazette."†

Had this advice been followed, and a few gentlemen of integrity and ability, who had spirit sufficient to make an effort in favor of their country in each colony, have been seized at the same moment, and immolated early in the contest on the bloody altar of power, perhaps Great Britain might have held the continent in subjection a few years longer.

That they had measures of this nature in contemplation there is not a doubt. Several

\* See Andrew Oliver's letter to one of the ministry, dated February 13, 1769.

† This gazette was much celebrated for the freedom of its disquisitions in favor of civil liberty. It has been observed that "it will be a treasury of political intelligence "for the historians of this country. Otis, Thacher, Dexter, Adams, Warren and Quincy, Doctors Samuel Cooper and Mayhew, stars of the first magnitude in our "northern hemisphere, whose glory and brightness distant "ages will admire; these gentlemen of character and influence offered their first essays to the public through "the medium of the Boston Gazette, on which account "the paper became odious to the friends of prerogative, "but not more disgusting to the tories and high church "than it was pleasing to the whigs." See collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

instances of a less atrocious nature confirmed this opinion, and the turpitude of design which at this period actuated the court party was clearly evinced by the attempted assassination of the celebrated Mr. Otis, justly deemed the first martyr to American freedom; and truth will enrol his name among the most distinguished patriots who have expired on the "blood-stained theatre of human action."

This gentleman, whose birth and education was equal to any in the province, possessed an easy fortune, independent principles, a comprehensive genius, strong mind, retentive memory, and great penetration. To these endowments may be added that extensive professional knowledge, which at once forms the character of the complete civilian and the able statesman.

In his public speeches, the fire of eloquence, the acumen of argument, and the lively sallies of wit, at once warmed the bosom of the stoic and commanded the admiration of his enemies. To his probity and generosity in the public walks were added the charms of affability and improving converse in private life. His humanity was conspicuous, his sincerity acknowledged, his integrity unimpeached, his honor unblemished, and his patriotism marked with the disinterestedness of the Spartan. Yet he was susceptible of quick feelings and warm passions, which in the ebullitions of zeal for the interest of his country sometimes betrayed him into



unguarded epithets that gave his foes an advantage, without benefit to the cause that lay nearest his heart.

He had been affronted by the partizans of the crown, vilified in the public papers, and treated (after his resignation of office\*) in a manner too gross for a man of his spirit to pass over with impunity. Fearless of consequences, he had always given the world his opinions both in his writings and his conversation, and had recently published some severe strictures on the conduct of the commissioners of the customs and others of the ministerial party, and bidding defiance to resentment, he supported his allegations by the signature of his name.

A few days after this publication appeared, Mr. Otis with only one gentleman in company was suddenly assaulted in a public room, by a band of ruffians armed with swords and bludgeons. They were headed by John Robinson, one of the commissioners of the customs. The lights were immediately extinguished, and Mr. Otis covered with wounds was left for dead, while the assassins made their way through the crowd which began to assemble; and before their crime was discovered, fortunately for themselves, they escaped soon enough to take refuge on board one of the king's ships which then lay in the harbor.

\* Office of judge advocate in governor Bernard's administration.

In a state of nature, the savage may throw his poisoned arrow at the man, whose soul exhibits a transcript of benevolence that upbraids his own ferocity, and may boast his blood-thirsty deed among the hordes of the forest without disgrace ; but in a high stage of civilization, where humanity is cherished, and politeness is become a science, for the dark assassin then to level his blow at superior merit, and screen himself in the arms of power, reflects an odium on the government that permits it, and puts human nature to the blush.

CHAP. IV.

1770.

The party had a complete triumph in this guilty deed ; for though the wounds did not prove mortal, the consequences were tenfold worse than death. The future usefulness of this distinguished *friend* of his country was destroyed, reason was shaken from its throne, genius obscured, and the great man in ruins lived several years for his friends to weep over, and his country to lament the deprivation of talents admirably adapted to promote the highest interests of society.

This catastrophe shocked the feelings of the virtuous not less than it raised the indignation of the brave. Yet a remarkable spirit of forbearance continued for a time, owing to the respect still paid to the opinions of this unfortunate gentleman, whose voice though always opposed to the strides of despotism was ever loud against all tumultuous and illegal proceedings.

CHAP. IV.

1770.

He was after a partial recovery sensible himself of his incapacity for the exercise of talents that had shone with peculiar lustre, and often invoked the messenger of death to give him a sudden release from a life become burdensome in every view but when the calm interval of a moment permitted him the recollection of his own integrity. In one of those intervals of beclouded reason he forgave the murderous band, after the principal ruffian had asked pardon in a court of justice;\* and at the intercession of the gentleman whom he had so grossly abused, the people forebore inflicting that summary vengeance which was generally thought due to so black a crime.

Mr. Otis lived to see the independence of America, though in a state of mind incapable of enjoying fully the glorious event which his own exertions had precipitated. After several years of mental derangement, as if in consequence of his own prayers, his great soul was instantly set free by a flash of lightning, from the evils in which the love of his country had involved him. His death took place in May, one thousand seven hundred and eighty

\* On a civil process commenced against him, John Robinson was adjudged to pay five thousand pounds sterling damages; but Mr. Otis despising all pecuniary compensation, relinquished it on the culprit's asking pardon and setting his signature to a very humble acknowledgment.

three, the same year the peace was concluded between Great Britain and America.\*

CHAP. IV.

1770.

Though the parliamentary system of colonial regulations was in many instances similar, and equally aimed to curtail the privileges of each province, yet no military force had been expressly called in aid of civil authority in any of them, except the Massachusetts. From this cir-

\* A sister touched by the tenderest feelings, while she has thought it her duty to do justice to a character neglected by some, and misrepresented by other historians, can exculpate herself from all suspicion of partiality by the testimony of many of his countrymen who witnessed his private merit and public exertions. But she will however only subjoin a paragraph of a letter written to the author of these annals, on the news of Mr. Otis's death, by John Adams, Esq. then minister plenipotentiary from the United States to the court of France.

*“ Paris, September 10th, 1783.*

“ It was, Madam, with very afflicting sentiments I  
“ learned the death of Mr. Otis, my worthy master. Extra-  
“ ordinary in death as in life, he has left a character that  
“ will never die while the memory of the American revolu-  
“ tion remains; whose foundation he laid with an energy,  
“ and with those masterly abilities, which no other man pos-  
“ sessed.”

The reader also may not be displeased at an extemporary exclamation of a gentleman of poetic talents, on hearing of the death of Mr. Otis.

“ When God in anger saw the spot,  
“ On earth to Otis given,  
“ In thunder as from Sinai's mount,  
“ He snatch'd him back to heaven.”

cumstance some began to flatter themselves that more lenient dispositions were operating in the mind of the king of Great Britain, as well as in the parliament and the people towards America in general.

They had grounded these hopes on the strong assurances of several of the plantation governors, particularly lord Botetourt, who then presided in Virginia. He had in a speech to the assembly of the colony, in the winter of one thousand seven hundred and sixty-nine, declared himself so confident that full satisfaction would be given to the provinces in the future conduct of administration, that he pledged his faith to support to the last hour of his life the interest of America. He observed, that he grounded his own opinions and his assurances to them, on the intimations of the confidential servants of the king which authorized him to promise redress. He added, that to his certain knowledge his sovereign had rather part with his crown, than preserve it by deception.

The credulity of this gentleman was undoubtedly imposed upon; however, the Virginians, ever steady and systematic in opposition to tyranny, were for a time highly gratified by those assurances from their first magistrate. But their vigilance was soon called into exercise by the mal-administration of a succeeding governor, though the fortitude of this pat-



riotic colony was never shaken by the frown of any despotic master or masters. Some of the other colonies had listened to the soothing language of moderation used by their chief executive officers, and were for a short time influenced by that, and the flattering hopes held up by the governor of Virginia.

CHAP. IV.

1770.

But before the period to which we have arrived in the narration of events, these flattering appearances had evaporated with the breath of the courtier. The subsequent conduct of administration baffled the expectations of the credulous. The hand of government was more heavily felt through the continent; and from South Carolina to Virginia, and from Virginia to New Hampshire, the mandate of a minister was the signal for the dissolution of their assemblies. The people were compelled to resort to conventions and committees to transact all public business, to unite in petitions for relief, or to take the necessary preparatory steps if finally obliged to resist by arms.

In the mean time the inhabitants of the town of Boston had suffered almost every species of insult from the British soldiery; who, countenanced by the royal party, had generally found means to screen themselves from the hand of the civil officers. Thus all authority rested on the point of the sword, and the partizans of the crown triumphed for a time in the plenitude of

military power. Yet the measure and the manner of posting troops in the capital of the province, had roused such jealousy and disgust, as could not be subdued by the scourge that hung over their heads. Continual bickerings took place in the streets between the soldiers and the citizens; the insolence of the first, which had been carried so far as to excite the African slaves to murder their masters, with the promise of impunity,\* and the indiscretion of the last, was often productive of tumults and disorder that led the most cool and temperate to be apprehensive of consequences of the most serious nature.

No previous outrage had given such a general alarm, as the commotion on the fifth of March, one thousand seven hundred and seventy. Yet the accident that created a resentment which emboldened the timid, determined the wavering, and awakened an energy and decision that neither the artifices of the courtier, nor the terror of the sword could easily overcome, arose from a trivial circumstance; a circumstance which but from the consideration that these minute accidents frequently lead to

\* Capt. Wilson of the 29th regiment was detected in the infamous practice; and it was proved beyond a doubt by the testimony of some respectable citizens, who declared on oath, that they had accidentally witnessed the offer of reward to the blacks, by some subaltern officers, if they would rob and murder their masters.

the most important events, would be beneath the dignity of history to record.

CHAP. IV.

1770

A centinel posted at the door of the custom house had seized and abused a boy, for casting some opprobrious reflections on an officer of rank; his cries collected a number of other lads, who took the childish revenge of pelting the foldier with snow-balls. The main-guard stationed in the neighborhood of the custom-house, was informed by some persons from thence, of the rising tumult. They immediately turned out under the command of a captain Preston, and beat to arms. Several *fracas* of little moment had taken place between the soldiery and some of the lower class of inhabitants, and probably both were in a temper to avenge their own private wrongs. The cry of fire was raised in all parts of the town, the mob collected, and the soldiery from all quarters ran through the streets sword in hand, threatening and wounding the people, and with every appearance of hostility, they rushed furiously to the centre of the town.

The soldiers thus ready for execution, and the populace grown outrageous, the whole town was justly terrified by the unusual alarm. This naturally drew out persons of higher condition, and more peaceably disposed, to inquire the cause. Their consternation can scarcely be described, when they found orders were given to

CHAP. IV.

1770.

fire promiscuously among the unarmed multitude. Five or six persons fell at the first fire, and several more were dangerously wounded at their own doors.

These sudden popular commotions are seldom to be justified, and their consequences are ever to be dreaded. It is needless to make any observations on the assumed rights of royalty, in a time of peace to disperse by military murder the disorderly and riotous assemblage of a thoughtless multitude. The question has frequently been canvassed; and was on this occasion thoroughly discussed, by gentlemen of the first professional abilities.

The remains of loyalty to the sovereign of Britain were not yet extinguished in American bosoms, neither were the feelings of compassion, which shrunk at the idea of human carnage, obliterated. Yet this outrage enkindled a general resentment that could not be disguised; but every method that prudence could dictate, was used by a number of influential gentlemen to cool the sudden ferment, to prevent the populace from attempting immediate vengeance, and to prevail on the multitude to retire quietly to their own houses, and wait the decisions of law and equity. They effected their humane purposes; the people dispersed; and captain Preston and his party were taken into custody of the civil magistrate. A judicial inquiry was af-

terwards made into their conduct; and so far from being actuated by any partial or undue bias, some of the first counsellors at law engaged in their defence; and after a fair and legal trial they were acquitted of premeditated or wilful murder, by a jury of the county of Suffolk.

CHAP. IV.

1770.

The people, not dismayed by the blood of their neighbors thus wantonly shed, determined no longer to submit to the insolence of military power. Colonel Dalrymple, who commanded in Boston, was informed the day after the riot in King Street, "that he must withdraw his troops from the town within a limited term, or hazard the consequences."

The inhabitants of the town assembled in Faneuil Hall, where the subject was discussed with becoming spirit, and the people unanimously resolved, that no armed force should be suffered longer to reside in the capital; that if the king's troops were not immediately withdrawn by their own officers, the governor should be requested to give orders for their removal, and thereby prevent the necessity of more rigorous steps. A committee from the body was deputed to wait on the governor, and request him to exert that authority which the exigencies of the times required from the supreme magistrate. Mr. Samuel Adams, the chairman of the committee, with a pathos and address peculiar to



CHAP. IV.

1770.

himself, exposed the illegality of quartering troops in the town in the midst of peace; he urged the apprehensions of the people, and the fatal consequences that might ensue if their removal was delayed.

But no arguments could prevail on Mr. Hutchinson; who either from timidity, or some more censurable cause, evaded acting at all in the business, and grounded his refusal on a pretended want of authority.\* After which, colonel Dalrymple, wishing to compromise the matter, consented that the twenty-ninth regiment, more culpable than any other in the late tumult, should be sent to Castle Island. This concession was by no means satisfactory; the people, inflexible in their demands, insisted that not one British soldier should be left within the town; their requisition was reluctantly complied with, and within four days the whole army decamped. It is not to be supposed, that this compliance of British veterans originated in their fears of an injured and incensed people, who were not yet prepared to resist by arms. They were undoubtedly sensible they had exceeded their orders, and anticipated the designs of their master; they had rashly begun the slaughter of Americans, and enkindled the flames of civil war in a country, where allegiance had not yet been renounced.

\* See extracts of Mr. Hutchinson's letters, Appendix, No. VIII.

After the hasty retreat of the king's troops, Boston enjoyed for a time, a degree of tranquillity to which they had been strangers for many months. The commissioners of the customs and several other obnoxious characters retired with the army to Castle William, and their governor affected much moderation and tenderness to his country; at the same time he neglected no opportunity to ripen the present measures of administration, or to secure his own interest, closely interwoven therewith. The duplicity of Mr. Hutchinson was soon after laid open by the discovery of a number of letters under his signature, written to some individuals in the British cabinet. These letters detected by the vigilance of some friends in England, were procured and sent on to America.\*

Previous to this event there were many persons in the province who could not be fully convinced, that at the same period when he had put on the guise of compassion to his country, when he had promised all his influence to obtain some relaxation of the coercive system, that at that moment Mr. Hutchinson should be so lost to the ideas of sincerity, as to be artfully plotting new embarrassments to the colonies in general, and the most mischievous projects against the province he was entrusted to govern. Thus convicted as the grand incendiary

\* The original letters which detected his treachery were procured by Doct. Franklin, and published in a pam-

1770.

who had sown the seeds of discord, and cherished the dispute between Great Britain and the colonies, his friends blushed at the discovery, his enemies triumphed, and his partizans were confounded. In these letters, he had expressed his doubt of the propriety of suffering the colonies to enjoy all the privileges of the parent state: he observed, that “there must be an *abridgment of English liberties*, in colonial administration,” and urged with malignant art the necessity of the resumption of the charter of Massachusetts.

Through this and the succeeding year the British nation were much divided in opinion relative to public measures, both at home and abroad. Debates and animosities ran high in both houses of parliament. Many of their best orators had come forward in defence of America, with that eloquence and precision which

phlet at Boston. They may also be seen in the British Annual Register, and in a large collection of historical papers printed in London, entitled the Remembrancer. The agitation into which many were thrown by the transmission of these letters, produced important consequences. Doct. Franklin was shamefully vilified and abused in an outrageous *philippic* pronounced by Mr. Wedderburne, afterwards lord Loughborough. Threats, challenges, and duels took place, but it was not discovered by what means these letters fell into the hands of Doct. Franklin, who soon after repaired to America, where he was eminently serviceable in aid of the public cause of his native country.

proved their ancestry, and marked the spirit of a nation that had long boasted their own freedom. But reason and argument are feeble barriers against the will of a monarch, or the determinations of potent aristocratical bodies. Thus the system was fixed, the measures were ripening, and a minister had the boldness to declare publicly, that "America should be brought to the footstool of parliament,"\* and humbled beneath the pedestal of majesty.

The inhabitants of the whole American continent, appeared even at this period nearly ready for the last appeal, rather than longer to submit to the mandates of an overbearing minister of state, or the execution of his corrupt designs. The masterly writers of this enlightened age, had so clearly defined the nature and origin of government, the equal claims and natural rights of man, the principles of the British constitution, and the freedom the subject had a right to enjoy thereby; that it had become a prevailing opinion, that government and legislation were instituted for the benefit of society at large, and not for the emolument of a few; and that whenever prerogative began to stretch its rapacious arm beyond certain bounds, it was an indispensable duty to resist.

Strongly attached to Great Britain, not only by the impression of ancient forms, and the hab-

\* Lord North's speech in the house of commons.

CHAP. IV.

1770.

its of submission to government, but by religion, manners, language, and consanguinity, the colonies still stood suspended in the pacific hope, that a change of ministry or a new parliament, might operate in their favor, and restore tranquillity, by the removal of the causes and the instruments of their sufferings.

Not yet conscious of her own strength, and scarcely ambitious of taking an independent rank among the nations, America still cherished the flattering ideas of reconciliation. But these expectations were finally dissipated, by the repeated attempts to reduce the colonies to unlimited submission to the supreme jurisdiction of parliament, and the illegal exactions of the crown, until by degrees all parliamentary decisions became as indifferent to an American ear, as the rescripts of a Turkish divan.

The tame acquiescence of the colonies, would doubtless have given great advantages to the corrupt party on one side of the Atlantic, while their assiduous agents on the other, did not revolt at the meanest and most wicked compliances to facilitate the designs of their employers, or to gratify their own inordinate passion for power and wealth. Thus for a considerable time, a struggle was kept up between the power of one country, and the perseverance of the other, without a possibility of calculating consequences.



A particular detail of the altercations between the representatives, the burgesſes, and the provincial governors, the remonſtrances of the people, the reſolves of their legislative bodies, and the diſſolution of their aſſemblies by the *fiat* of a governor, the prayers of corporate and occupational ſocieties, or the petitions of more public and reſpectable bodies; the provocations on the ſide of government, and the riotous, and in ſome degree, unjuſtifiable proceedings of the populace, in almoſt every town on the continent, would be rather tedious than entertaining, in a compendious narrative of the times. It may therefore, be well to paſs over a year or two, that produced nothing but a ſamenefs of complaint, and a ſimilarity of oppoſition, on the one ſide; and on the other, a ſyſtematic effort, to puſh the darling meaſure of an American taxation, while neither party had much reaſon to promiſe themſelves a ſpeedy deciſion.

It has already been obſerved, that the revenue acts which had occaſioned a general murmur, had been repealed, except a ſmall duty on all India teas, by which a claim was kept up to tax the colonies at pleaſure, whenever it ſhould be thought expedient. This was an article uſed by all ranks in America; a luxury of ſuch univerſal conſumption, that adminiſtration was led to believe, that a monopoly of the ſales of tea, might be ſo managed, as to become a productive ſource of revenue.

CHAP. IV.

1770.

It was generally believed that governor Hutchinson had stipulated for the agency for his sons, as they were the first in commission; and that he had solicited for them, and obtained this odious employment, by a promise, that if they were appointed sole agents to the East India company, the sales should be so executed as to give perfect satisfaction, both to them and to administration. All communities furnish examples of men sufficiently base, to share in the spoils of their country; nor was it difficult to find such in every colony, who were ready enough to execute this ministerial job. Thus in consequence of the insinuations of those interested in the success of the measure, a number of ships were employed by government, to transport a large quantity of teas into each of the American colonies. The people throughout the continent, apprized of the design, and considering at that time, all teas a pernicious article of commerce, summoned meetings in all the capital towns, and unanimously resolved to resist the dangerous project by every legal opposition, before they proceeded to any extremities.

The first step taken in Boston, was to request the consignees to refuse the commission. The inhabitants warmly remonstrated against the teas being landed in any of their ports, and urged the return of the ships, without permitting them to break bulk. The commissioners at

New York, Philadelphia, and in several other colonies, were applied to with similar requests; most of them complied. In some places the teas were stored on proper conditions, in others, sent back without injury. But, in Massachusetts, their difficulties were accumulated by the restless ambition of some of her own degenerate sons. Not the smallest impression was made on the feelings of their governor, by the united supplications of the inhabitants of Boston and its environs. Mr. Hutchinson, who very well knew that virtue is seldom a sufficient restraint to the passions, but that, in spite of patriotism, reason, or religion, the scale too frequently preponderates in favor of interest or appetite, persisted in the execution of his favorite project. As by force of habit, this drug had become almost a necessary article of diet, the demand for teas in America was astonishingly great, and the agents in Boston, sure of finding purchasers, if once the weed was deposited in their stores, haughtily declined a resignation of office, and determined when the ships arrived, to receive and dispose of their cargoes at every hazard.

Before either time or discretion had cooled the general disgust, at the interested and supercilious behaviour of these young pupils of intrigue, the long expected ships arrived, which were to establish a precedent, thought dangerously consequential. Resolved not to yield to the smallest vestige of parliamentary taxation,

CHAP. IV.

1770.

however disguised, a numerous assembly of the most respectable people of Boston and its neighborhood, repaired to the public hall, and drew up a remonstrance to the governor, urging the necessity of his order, to send back the ships without suffering any part of their cargoes to be landed. His answer confirmed the opinion, that he was the instigator of the measure; it irritated the spirits of the people, and tended more to encrease, than allay the rising ferment.

1773.

A few days after this the factors had the precaution to apply to the governor and council for protection, to enable them to receive and dispose of their consignments. As the council refused to act in the affair, the governor called on colonel Hancock, who commanded a company of cadets, to hold himself in readiness to assist the civil magistrate, if any tumult should arise in consequence of any attempt to land the teas. This gentleman, though professedly in opposition to the court, had oscillated between the parties until neither of them at that time, had much confidence in his exertions. It did not however appear, that he had any inclination to obey the summons; neither did he explicitly refuse; but he soon after resigned his commission, and continued in future, unequivocally opposed to the ministerial system. On the appearance of this persevering spirit among the people, governor Hutchinson again resorted to his usual arts of chicanery and deception; he affected a mildness of deport-

ment, and by many equivocal delays detained the ships, and endeavoured to disarm his countrymen of that manly resolution which was their principal *fort*.

The storage or detention of a few cargoes of teas is not an object in itself sufficient to justify a detail of several pages ; but as the subsequent severities towards the Massachusetts were grounded on what the ministry termed their *refractory behaviour* on this occasion ; and as those measures were followed by consequences of the highest magnitude both to Great Britain and the colonies, a particular narration of the transactions of the town of Boston is indispensable. There the sword of civil discord was first drawn, which was not re-sheathed until the emancipation of the thirteen colonies from the yoke of foreign domination was acknowledged by the diplomatic seals of the first powers in Europe. This may apologize, if necessary, for the appearance of locality in the preceding pages, and for its farther continuance in regard to a colony, on which the bitterest cup of ministerial wrath was poured for a time, and where the energies of the human mind were earlier called forth, than in several of the sister states.

Not intimidated by the frowns of greatness, nor allured by the smiles of intrigue, the vigilance of the people was equal to the importance of the event. Though expectation was equally



awake in both parties, yet three or four weeks elapsed in a kind of *inertia* ; the one side flattered themselves with hopes, that as the ships were suffered to be so long unmolested, with their cargoes entire, the point might yet be obtained ; the other thought it possible, that some impression might yet be made on the governor, by the strong voice of the people.

Amidst this suspense a rumour was circulated, that admiral Montague was about to seize the ships, and dispose of their cargoes at public auction, within twenty-four hours. This step would as effectually have secured the duties, as if sold at the shops of the consignees, and was judged to be only a *finesse*, to place them there on their own terms. On this report, convinced of the necessity of preventing so bold an attempt, a vast body of people convened suddenly and repaired to one of the largest and most commodious churches in Boston ; where, previous to any other steps, many fruitless messages were sent both to the governor and the consignees, whose timidity had prompted them to a seclusion from the public eye. Yet they continued to refuse any satisfactory answer ; and while the assembled multitude were in quiet consultation on the safest mode to prevent the sale and consumption of an herb, *noxious* at least to the political constitution, the debates were interrupted by the entrance of the sheriff with an order from the governor, styling them an illegal assembly, and directing their immediate dispersion.

This authoritative mandate was treated with great contempt, and the sheriff instantly hissed out of the house. A confused murmur ensued, both within and without the walls; but in a few moments all was again quiet, and the leaders of the people returned calmly to the point in question. Yet every expedient seemed fraught with insurmountable difficulties, and evening approaching without any decided resolutions, the meeting was adjourned without day.

Within an hour after this was known abroad, there appeared a great number of persons, clad like the aborigines of the wilderness, with tomahawks in their hands, and clubs on their shoulders, who without the least molestation marched through the streets with silent solemnity, and amidst innumerable spectators, proceeded to the wharves, boarded the ships, demanded the keys, and with much deliberation knocked open the chests, and emptied several thousand weight of the finest teas into the ocean. No opposition was made, though surrounded by the king's ships; all was silence and dismay.

This done, the procession returned through the town in the same order and solemnity as observed in the outset of their attempt. No other disorder took place, and it was observed, the stillest night ensued that Boston had enjoyed for many months. This unexpected event

CHAP. IV.

1773.

struck the ministerial party with rage and astonishment ; while, as it seemed to be an attack upon private property, many who wished well to the public cause could not fully approve of the measure. Yet perhaps the laws of self-preservation might justify the deed, as the exigencies of the times required extraordinary exertions, and every other method had been tried in vain, to avoid this disagreeable alternative. Besides it was alleged, and doubtless it was true, the people were ready to make ample compensation for all damages sustained, whenever the unconstitutional duty should be taken off, and other grievances radically redressed. But there appeared little prospect that any conciliatory advances would soon be made. The officers of government discovered themselves more vindictive than ever : animosities daily increased, and the spirits of the people were irritated to a degree of alienation, even from their tenderest connexions, when they happened to differ in political opinion.

By the frequent dissolution of the general assemblies, all public debate had been precluded, and the usual regular intercourse between the colonies cut off. The modes of legislative communication thus obstructed, at a period when the necessity of harmony and concert was obvious to every eye, no systematical opposition to gubernatorial intrigues, supported by the king and parliament of Great Britain, was to be ex-

pected without the utmost concord, confidence, and union of all the colonies. Perhaps no single step contributed so much to cement the union of the colonies, and the final acquisition of independence, as the establishment of committees of correspondence. This supported a chain of communication from New Hampshire to Georgia, that produced unanimity and energy throughout the continent.

As in these annals there has yet been no particular mention made of this institution, it is but justice to name at once the author, the origin, and the importance of the measure.

At an early period of the contest, when the public mind was agitated by unexpected events, and remarkably pervaded with perplexity and anxiety, James Warren, Esq. of Plymouth first proposed this institution to a private friend, on a visit at his own house.\* Mr. Warren had been an active and influential member of the general assembly from the beginning of the troubles in America, which commenced soon after the demise of George the second. The principles and firmness of this gentleman were well known, and the uprightness of his character had sufficient weight to recommend the measure. As soon as the proposal was communicated to a number of gentlemen in Boston, it was adopted with zeal, and spread with the rapidity of

\* Samuel Adams, Esq. of Boston.

CHAP. IV.

1773.

enthusiasm, from town to town, and from province to province.\* Thus an intercourse was established, by which a similarity of opinion, a connexion of interest, and a union of action appeared, that set opposition at defiance, and defeated the machinations of their enemies through all the colonies.

The plan suggested was clear and methodical; it proposed that a public meeting should be called in every town; that a number of persons should be selected by a plurality of voices; that they should be men of respectable characters, whose attachment to the great cause of America had been uniform; that they should be vested by a majority of suffrages with power to take cognizance of the state of commerce, of the intrigues of *toryism*, of litigious ruptures that might create disturbances, and every thing else that might be thought to militate with the rights of the people, and to promote every thing that tended to general utility.

The business was not tardily executed. Committees were every where chosen, who were directed to keep up a regular correspondence with each other, and to give information of all intelligence received, relative to the proceedings of

\* The general impulse at this time seemed to operate by sympathy, before consultation could be had; thus it appeared afterwards that the vigilant inhabitants of Virginia had concerted a similar plan about the same period.



administration, so far as they affected the interest of the British colonies throughout America. The trust was faithfully and diligently discharged, and when afterwards all legislative authority was suspended, the courts of justice shut up, and the last traits of British government annihilated in the colonies, this new institution became a kind of juridical tribunal. Its injunctions were influential beyond the hopes of its most sanguine friends, and the recommendations of committees of correspondence had the force of law. Thus, as despotism frequently springs from anarchy, a regular democracy sometimes arises from the severe encroachments of despotism.

CHAP. IV.

1773.

This institution had given such a general alarm to the adherents of administration, and had been replete with such important consequences through the union, that it was justly dreaded by those who opposed it, and considered by them as the most important bulwark of freedom. A representation of this establishment, and its effects, had been transmitted to England, and laid before the king and parliament, and Mr. Hutchinson had received his majesty's disapprobation of the measure. With the hope of impeding its farther operation, by announcing the frown and the censure of royalty, and for the discussion of some other important questions, the governor had thought proper to convene the council and house of

representatives, to meet in January one thousand seven hundred and seventy-three.

The assembly of the preceding year had passed a number of very severe resolves, when the original letters mentioned above, written by governor Hutchinson and lieutenant-governor Oliver were detected, sent back to the Massachusetts, and laid before the house. They had observed that "the letters contained  
 "wicked and injurious misrepresentations, designed to influence the ministry and the nation, and to excite jealousies in the breast of  
 "the king, against his faithful subjects."\* They had proceeded to an impeachment, and unanimously requested, that his majesty would be pleased to remove both Mr. Thomas Hutchinson and Mr. Andrew Oliver from their public functions in the province, forever.† But before they had time to complete their spirited measures, the governor had as usual dissolved the assembly. This was a stretch of power, and a manifestation of resentment, that had been so frequently exercised both by Mr. Hutchinson and his predecessor, that it was never unexpected, and now totally disregarded. This mode of conduct was not confined to the Massachusetts; it was indeed the common signal of resentment exhibited by most of the colonial governors:

\* See 11th resolve in the sessions of one thousand seven hundred and seventy-two.

† Journals of the house.

they immediately dissolved the legislative assemblies on the discovery of energy, enterprize, or patriotifm, among the members.

When the new house of assembly met at Boston the present year, it appeared to be composed of the principal gentlemen and landholders in the province ; men of education and ability, of fortune and family, of integrity and honor ; jealous of the infringement of their rights, and the faithful guardians of a free people.

Their independency of mind was soon put to the test. On the opening of the new session, the first communication from the governor was, that he had received his majesty's express disapprobation of all *committees of correspondence* ; and to enforce the displeasure of the *monarch*, he very indiscreetly ventured himself to censure with much warmth this institution, and every other stand that the colonies had unitedly made to ministerial and parliamentary invasions. To complete the climax of his own presumption, he in a long and labored speech imprudently agitated the grand question of a parliamentary right of taxation without representation ;\* he endeavoured to justify, both by law and precedent, every arbitrary step that had been taken for ten years past to reduce the colonies to a disgraceful subjugation.

\* Appendix, No. IX. Extracts from governor Hutchinson's letters urging his designs.

This gave a fair opening to the friends of their country which they did not neglect, to discuss the illegality, injustice, and impolicy of the late innovations. They entered on the debate with freedom of inquiry, stated their claims with clearness and precision, and supported them with such reasoning and perspicuity, that a man of less hardiness than Mr. Hutchinson would not have made a second attempt to justify so odious a cause, or to gain such an unpopular point by dint of argument. But whether owing to his own intemperate zeal, or whether instigated by his superiors on the other side the Atlantic, to bring on the dispute previous to the disclosure of some extraordinary measures then in agitation, is uncertain. However this was, he supported his opinions with industry and ingenuity, and not discouraged by strong opposition, he spun out the debate to a tedious and ridiculous length. Far from terminating to the honor of the governor, his officious defence of administration served only to indicate the necessity of the most guarded watchfulness against the machinations of powerful and designing men; and fanned, rather than checked the *amor patriæ* characteristic of the times.

Soon after this altercation ended, the representative body took cognizance of an affair that had given great disgust, and created much uneasiness through the province. By the royal

charter granted by William and Mary, the governor, lieutenant-governor and secretary were appointed by the king; the council were chosen by the representatives of the people, the governor being allowed a negative voice; the judges, justices, and all other officers, civil and military, were left to his nomination, and appointed by him, with the advice and consent of a board of counsellors. But as it is always necessary in a free government, that the people should retain some means in their own hands, to check any unwarrantable exercise of power in the executive, the legislature of Massachusetts had always enjoyed the reasonable privilege of paying their own officers according to their ability, and the services rendered to the public.

It was at this time well known that Mr. Hutchinson had so far ingratiated himself as to entitle him to peculiar favor from the crown; and by a handsome salary from the king, he was rendered entirely independent of the people. His brother-in-law also, the lieutenant-governor, had obtained by misrepresentations, thought by some to have been little short of perjury,\* a pension which he had long solicited; but chagrin at the detection of his letters, and the discovery of his duplicity, soon put a period

\* See lieutenant-governor Oliver's affidavit, on the council books.



to a life that might have been useful and exemplary, had he confined his pursuits only to the domestic walks of life.

A strong family as well as political connexion, had for some time been forming among those who had been writing in favor of colonial regulations, and urging the creation of a *patrician rank*, from which all officers of government should in future be selected. Intermarriages among their children in the near degree of consanguinity before the parties were of age for maturity of choice, had strengthened the union of interests among the candidates for preferment. Thus by a kind of compact, almost every department of high trust as it became vacant by resignation, suspension or death, was filled by some relation or dependent of governor Hutchinson; and no other qualification was required except a suppleness of opinion and principle that could readily bend to the measures of the court.

But it was more recently discovered that the judges of the superior court, the near relations or coadjutors of Mr. Hutchinson, and few of them more scrupulously delicate with regard to the violation of the rights of their country than himself, had taken advantage of the times, and successfully insinuated that the dignity of their offices must be supported by an allowance from the crown sufficient to enable them to execute

the designs of government, exclusively of any dependence on the general assembly. In consequence of these representations, the judges were appointed to hold their places during the king's pleasure, and a yearly stipend was granted them to be paid out of the new revenue to be raised in America.

The general court had not been convened after the full disclosure of this system before the present period; of course no constitutional opposition could be made on the infraction of their charter, until a legal assembly had an opportunity to meet and deliberate. Uncertain how long the intriguing spirit of the governor would permit them to continue in existence, the sitting assembly judged it necessary early in the session to proceed to a parliamentary inquiry into the conduct of their judiciary officers. Accordingly the judges of the supreme court were called upon to receive the grants for their services as usual from the treasury of the province; to renounce all unconstitutional salaries, and to engage to receive no pay, pension or emolument in reward of services as justices of the court of judicature, but from the free grants of the legislative assembly.

Two of the judges, Trowbridge and Ropes, readily complied with the demand, and relinquished the offensive stipend. A third was William Cushing, Esq. a gentleman rendered

CHAP. IV.

1773.

respectable in the eyes of all parties by his professional abilities and general integrity. He was a sensible, modest man, well acquainted with law, but remarkable for the secrecy of his opinions: this kept up his reputation through all the ebullitions of discordant parties. He readily resigned the royal stipend without any observations of his own; yet it was thought at the time that it was with a reluctance that his taciturnity could not conceal. By this silent address he retained the confidence of the court faction, nor was he less a favorite among the republicans. He was immediately placed on the bench of justice after the assumption of government in the Massachusetts.\*

The next that was called forward was Foster Hutchinson, a brother of the governor's, a man of much less understanding, and as little public virtue; in short, remarkable for nothing but the malignancy of his heart. He, after much altercation and abuse of the general assembly, complied with a very ill grace with the requisitions of the house.

\* The talents, the manners, the probity, and the urbanity of Mr. Cushing procured his advancement to the supreme bench under the new constitution afterwards adopted by the United States. In this station he was useful to his country, and respected by every class through all the changes of party and opinion which he lived to see.

But the chief feat of justice in this extraordinary administration was occupied by a man\* unacquainted with law, and ignorant of the first principles of government. He possessed a certain credulity of mind that easily seduced him into erroneous opinions; at the same time a frigid obstinacy of temper that rendered him incapable of conviction. His insinuating manners, his superficial abilities, and his implicit devotion to the governor, rendered him a fit instrument to give sanction by the forms of law to the most atrocious acts of arbitrary power. Equally deaf to the dictates of patriotism and to the united voice of the people, he peremptorily refused to listen to the demands of their representatives; and boldly declared his resolution to receive an annual grant from the crown of England in spite of the opinions or resentment of his country: he urged as an excuse, the depreciation of his private fortune by his judicial attentions. His station was important and influential, and his temerity was considered as holding a bribe to execute the corrupt measures of the British court.

The house of representatives not interrupted in their system, nor intimidated by the presumption of the delinquent, proceeded directly to exhibit articles of impeachment against Peter Oliver, Esq. accusing him of high crimes and misdemeanors, and laid their complaints before

\* Peter Oliver, Esq. a brother-in-law of the governor's.

the governor and council. On a division of the house there appeared ninety-two members in favour of the measure, and only eight against it. The governor, as was expected, both from personal attachment and a full approbation of Mr. Oliver's conduct, refused to act or sit on the business; of course all proceedings were for a time suspended.

When a detail of these spirited measures reached England, exaggerated by the colorings of the officers of the crown, it threw the nation, more especially the trading part, into a temporary fever. The ministry rose in their resentment, and entered on the most severe steps against the Massachusetts, and more particularly the town of Boston. It was at this period that lord North ushered into the house of commons the memorable bill for shutting up the port of Boston, also the bill for better regulating the government of the Massachusetts.

The port-bill enacted that after the first of June one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, "Every vessel within the points Alderton and Nahant, (the boundaries of the harbor of Boston,) should depart within six hours, unless laden with food or fuel." That no merchandize should be taken in or discharged at any of the stores, wharves, or quays, within those limits; and that any ship, barge or boat, attempting to convey from other parts of



America, either stores, goods or merchandize to Boston, (one of the largest maritime towns on the continent) should be deemed a legal forfeiture to the crown.

This act was opposed with becoming zeal by several in both houses of parliament, who still inherited the generous spirit of their ancestors, and dared to stand forth the defenders of English liberty, in the most perilous seasons. Though the cruelty and injustice of this step was warmly criminated, the minister and his party urged the necessity of strong measures; nor was it difficult to obtain a large majority to enforce them. An abstract of an act for the more impartial administration of justice in the province of Massachusetts, accompanied the port-bill. Thus by one of those severe and arbitrary acts, many thousands of the best and most loyal subjects of the house of Brunswick were at once cut off from the means of subsistence; poverty stared in the face of affluence, and a long train of evils threatened every rank. No discriminations were made; the innocent were equally involved with the real or imputed guilty, and reduced to such distresses afterwards, that, but from the charitable donations of the other colonies, multitudes must have inevitably perished.

The other bill directed, that on an indictment for riot, resistance of the magistrate, or

CHAP. IV.

1774.

impeding the laws of revenue in the smallest degree, any person, at the option of the governor, or in his absence, the lieutenant-governor, might be transported to Great Britain for trial, and there be ordered to wait amidst his foes, the decisions of strangers unacquainted with the character of the prisoner, or the turpitude of a crime, that should subject him to be transported a thousand leagues from his own vicinity, for a final decision on the charges exhibited against him. Several of the southern colonies remonstrated warmly against those novel proceedings towards the Massachusetts, and considered it as a common cause. The house of burgeses in Virginia vigorously opposed this measure, and passed resolutions expressing “ their exclusive  
“ right to tax their constituents, and their  
“ right to petition their sovereign for redress  
“ of grievances, and the lawfulness of procur-  
“ ing the concurrence of the other colonies in  
“ praying for the royal interposition in favour  
“ of the violated rights of America : and that  
“ all trials for treasons, or for any crime  
“ whatsoever, committed in that colony, ought  
“ to be before his majesty’s courts within the  
“ said colony ; and that the seizing any person  
“ residing in the said colony, suspected of any  
“ crime whatsoever committed therein, and  
“ sending such person to places beyond the sea  
“ to be tried, was highly derogatory of the  
“ rights of British subjects.”

These acts were to continue in full force until satisfaction should be made to the East India company for the loss of their teas; nor were any assurances given, that in case of submission and compliance, they should be repealed. The indignation which naturally arose in the minds of the people on these unexpected and accumulated grievances, was truly inexpressible. It was frequently observed, that the only melioration of the present evils was, that the recal of Mr. Hutchinson accompanied the bills, and his leaving the province at the same period the port-bill was to be put in operation, seemed to impress a dawn of hope from time, if not from his immediate successor.

Every historical record will doubtless witness that he was the principal author of the sufferings of the unhappy Bostonians, previous to the convulsions which produced the revolution. So deeply riveted was this opinion among his enraged countrymen, that many apprehended the summary vengeance of an incensed populace would not suffer so notorious a parricide to repair quietly to England. Yet such were the generous and compassionate feelings of a people too virtuous to punish without a legal process, that he escaped the blow he had reason to fear would overtake him, when stripped of authority, and no longer acting as the representative of *majesty*.

Chagrined by the loss of place, mortified by the neglect of some, and apprehensive from the

1774.

repentment of others, he retired to a small village in the neighborhood of Boston, and secluded himself from observation until he embarked for London. This he did on the same memorable day when, by act of parliament, the blockade of Boston took place. Before his departure, the few partizans that still adhered to the man and his principles, procured by much assiduity a complimentary address, thanking him for past *services*, and held up to him the idea, that by his *talents* he might obtain a redress of grievances, which they well knew had been drawn on their country by the agency of Mr. Hutchinson. Much derision fell on the character of this group of flatterers, who were long distinguished only by the appellation of *Hutchinson's addressers*.

Mr. Hutchinson furnished with these pitiful credentials, left his native country forever. On his arrival in England, he was justified and caressed by his employers; and notwithstanding the criminality of his political conduct had been so fully evinced by the detection and recovery of his original letters, his impeachment, which was laid before the lords of the privy-council, was considered by them in a very frivolous light. A professional character, by some thought to have been hired for the purpose, was permitted to abuse the petitioners and their agent in the grossest terms scurrility could invent; and the lords reported, that "the pe-

“ tition was groundless, vexatious, and scandalous, and calculated only for the seditious purposes of keeping up a spirit of discontent and clamour in the province ; that nothing had been laid before them which did or could, in their opinion, in any manner or in any degree impeach the honour, integrity, or conduct of the governor or lieutenant-governor ;” who had been at the same time impeached.

CHAP. IV.

1774.

But the operation of his measures, while governor of the Massachusetts, was so productive of misfortune to Great Britain, as well as to the united colonies, that Mr. Hutchinson soon became the object of disgust to all parties. He did not live to see the independence of America established, but he lived long enough to repent in bitterness of soul, the part he had acted against a country once disposed to respect his character. After his mind had been involved many months in a state of chagrin, disappointment and despair, he died on the day the riots in London, excited by lord George Gordon, were at the height, in the year one thousand seven hundred and eighty. Those of the family who survived their unhappy father remained in obscurity in England.

It must however be acknowledged that governor Hutchinson was uniform in his political conduct. He was educated in reverential ideas



CHAP. IV.

1774.

of monarchic government, and considered himself the servant of a king who had entrusted him with very high authority. As a true disciple of passive obedience, he might think himself bound to promote the designs of his master, and thus he might probably release his conscience from the obligation to aid his countrymen in their opposition to the encroachments of the crown. In the eye of candor, he may therefore be much more excusable, than any who may deviate from their principles and professions of republicanism, who have not been biassed by the patronage of kings, nor influenced in favor of monarchy by their early prejudices of education or employment.

## CHAPTER V.

General Gage appointed Governor of Massachusetts.—General Assembly meet at Salem.—A proposal for a Congress from all the Colonies, to be convened at Philadelphia.—Mandamus Counsellors obliged to resign.—Resolutions of the General Congress.—Occasional observations.—The Massachusetts attentive to the military Discipline of their Youth.—Suffolk Resolves.—A Provincial Congress chosen in the Massachusetts.—Governor Gage summons a new House of Representatives.

THE speculatist and the philosopher frequently observe a casual subordination of circumstances independent of political decision, which fixes the character and manners of nations. This thought may be piously improved till it leads the mind to view those casualties, directed by a secret hand which points the revolutions of time, and decides the fate of empires. The occasional instruments for the completion of the grand system of Providence, have seldom any other stimulus but the bubble of *fame*, the lust of *wealth*, or some contemptible passion that centres in *self*. Even the bosom of virtue warmed by higher principles, and the man actuated by nobler motives, walks in a narrow sphere of comprehension. The scale by which the ideas of mortals are circumscribed generally limits his wishes to a certain point without consideration, or a just calculation of extensive consequences.

CHAP. V.

1774.

1774.

Thus while the king of Great Britain was contending with the colonies for a three-penny duty on *tea*, and the Americans with the bold spirit of patriotifm refifting an encroachment on their rights, the one thought they only asked a moderate and reasonable indulgence from their fovereign, which they had a right to demand if withheld; on the other fide, the moft fevere and ftrong meafures were adopted and exercifed towards the *colonies*, which parliament confidered as only the proper and neceffary chaftifement of *rebellious fubjects*. Thus on the eve of one of the moft remarkable revolutions recorded in the page of hiftory, a revolution which Great Britain precipitated by her indifcretion, and which the hardieft fons of America viewed in the beginning of oppofition as a work referved for the enterprifing hand of pofterity, few on either fide comprehended the magnitude of the conteft, and fewer ftill had the courage to name the independence of the American colonies as the *ultimatum* of their *designs*.

After the fpirits of men had been wrought up to a high tone of refentment, by repeated injuries on the one hand, and an open refiftance on the other, there was little reafon to expect a ready compliance with regulations, repugnant to the feelings, the principles, and the intereft of Americans. The parliament of Britain therefore thought it expedient to enforce obedience by the fword, and determined to fend

out an armament sufficient for the purpose, early in the spring one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four. The subjugation of the colonies by arms, was yet considered in England by some as a work of such facility, that four or five regiments, with a few ships of the line, were equal to the business, provided they were commanded by officers who had not sagacity enough to judge of the impropriety of the measures of administration, nor humanity to feel for the miseries of the people, or liberality to endeavour to mitigate the rigors of government. In consequence of this opinion, admiral Montague was recalled from Boston, and admiral Graves appointed to succeed, whose character was known to be more avaricious, severe and vigilant than his predecessor, and in all respects a more fit instrument to execute the weak, indigested and irritating system.

General Gage, unhappily for himself, as will appear in the sequel, was selected as a proper person to take the command of all his majesty's forces in North America, and reduce the country to submission. He had married a lady of respectable connexions in New York, and had held with considerable reputation for several years a military employment in the colonies. He was at this time appointed governor and commander in chief of the province of Massachusetts Bay; directed to repair immediately there, and on his arrival to remove the seat of

government from Boston, and to convene the general assembly to meet at Salem, a smaller town, situated about twenty miles from the capital. The governor, the lieutenant-governor, the secretary, the board of commissioners, and all crown officers were ordered by special mandate to leave Boston, and make the town of Salem the place of their future residence.

A few days before the annual election for May, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, the new governor of the Massachusetts arrived. He was received by the inhabitants of Boston with the same respect that had been usually shewn to those, who were dignified by the title of the king's representative. An elegant entertainment was provided at Faneuil Hall, to which he was escorted by a company of cadets, and attended with great civility by the magistrates and principal gentlemen of the town; and though jealousy, disgust and resentment burnt in the bosom of one party, and the most unwarrantable designs occupied the thoughts of the other, yet the appearance of politeness and good humor was kept up through the *etiquette* of the day.

The week following was the anniversary of the general election, agreeable to charter. The day was ushered in with the usual parade, and the house of representatives proceeded to business in the common form: but a specimen of



the measures to be expected from the new administration appeared in the first act of authority recorded of governor Gage. A list of counsellors was presented for his approbation, from which he erased the names of thirteen gentlemen out of twenty-eight, unanimously chosen by the free voice of the representatives of the people, leaving only a quorum as established by charter, or it was apprehended, in the exercise of his new prerogative he might have annihilated the whole. Most of the gentlemen on the negatived list had been distinguished for their attachment to the ancient constitution, and their decided opposition to the present ministerial measures. Among them was James Bowdoin, Esq. whose understanding, discernment, and conscientious deportment, rendered him a very unfit instrument for the views of the court, at this extraordinary period. John Winthrop, Hollisian professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at Cambridge; his public conduct was but the emanation of superior genius, united with an excellent heart, as much distinguished for every private virtue as for his attachment to the liberties of a country that may glory in giving birth to a man of his exalted character.\* Colonel Otis of Barnstable, whose name has been already mentioned; and John Adams, a

\* Dr. Winthrop was lineally descended from the first governor of the Massachusetts, and inherited the virtues and talents of his great ancestor, too well known to need any encomium.

barrister at law of rising abilities; his appearance on the theatre of politics commenced at this period; we shall meet him again in still more dignified stations. These gentlemen had been undoubtedly pointed out as obnoxious to administration by the predecessor of governor Gage, as he had not been long enough in the province to discriminate characters.

The house of representatives did not think proper to replace the members of council by a new choice; they silently bore this indiscreet exercise of authority, sensible it was but a prelude to the impending storm. The assembly was the next day adjourned for a week; at the expiration of that time, they were directed to meet at Salem. In the interim the governor removed himself, and the whole band of revenue and crown officers deserted the town of Boston at once, as a place devoted to destruction.

Every external appearance of respect was still kept up towards the new governor. The council, the house, the judiciary officers, the mercantile and other bodies, prepared and offered congratulatory addresses as usual, on the recent arrival of the commander in chief at the seat of government. The incense was received both at Boston and Salem with the usual satisfaction, except the address from the remaining board of counselors; this was checked with asperity, and the reading it through forbidden, as the compo-

tion contained some strictures on administration, and censured rather too freely, for the delicate ear of an infant magistrate, the conduct of some of his predecessors. But this was the last compliment of the kind, ever offered by either branch of the legislature of the Massachusetts to a governor appointed by the king of Great Britain. No marks of ministerial resentment had either humbled or intimidated the spirits, nor shook the intrepidity of mind necessary for the times; and though it was first called into action in the Massachusetts it breathed its influence through all the colonies. They all seemed equally prepared to suffer, and equally determined to resist in unison, if no mean but that of absolute submission was to be the test of loyalty.

CHAP. V.

1774.

The first day of June, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, the day when the Boston port-bill began to operate, was observed in most of the colonies with uncommon solemnity as a day of fasting and prayer. In all of them, sympathy and indignation, compassion and resentment, alternately arose in every bosom. A zeal to relieve, and an alacrity to support the distressed *Bostonians*, seemed to pervade the whole continent, except the dependents on the crown, and their partizans, allured by interest to adhere to the royal cause. There were indeed a few others in every colony led to unite with, and to think favorably of the measures of administration, from their attachment to mon-

archy, in which they had been educated; and some there were who justified all things done by the hand of power, either from fear, ignorance, or imbecility.

The session at Salem was of short duration, but it was a busy and an important period. The leading characters in the house of representatives contemplated the present moment, replete with consequences of the utmost magnitude; they judged it a crisis that required measures bold and decisive, though hazardous, and that the extrication of their country from the designs of their enemies, depended much on the conduct of the present assembly. Their charter was on the point of annihilation; a military governor had just arrived, with troops on the spot, to support the arbitrary systems of the court of St. James.

These appearances had a disagreeable effect on some who had before co-operated with the patriots; they began to tremble at the power and the severity of Britain, at a time when firmness was most required, zeal indispensable, and secrecy necessary. Yet those who possessed the energies of mind requisite for the completion or the defeat of great designs, had not their ardor or resolution shaken in the smallest degree, by either dangers, threats or caresses. It was a prime object to select a few members of the house, that might be trusted most confidentially

on any emergence. This task fell on Mr. Samuel Adams of Boston, and Mr. Warren of Plymouth. They drew off a few chosen spirits, who met at a place appointed for a secret conference;\* several others were introduced the ensuing evening, when a discussion of circumstances took place. Immediate decision, and effectual modes of action were urged, and such caution, energy and dispatch were observed by this daring and dauntless secret *council*, that on the third evening of their conference their business was ripe for execution.

This committee had digested a plan for a general congress from all the colonies, to consult on the common safety of America;† named their own delegates; and as all present were convinced of the necessity and expediency of such a convention, they estimated the expense,

\* Among these the names of Hancock, Cushing, and Hawley, of Sullivan, Robert Payne, and Benjamin Greenleaf of Newburyport, and many others, should not be forgotten, but ought always to be mentioned with respect, for their zeal at this critical moment.

† Such a remarkable coincidence of opinion, energy and zeal, existed between the provinces of Virginia and the Massachusetts, that their measures and resolutions were often similar, previous to the opportunity for conference. Thus the propriety of a general congress had been discussed and agreed upon by the Virginians, before they were informed of the resolutions of Massachusetts. Some of the other colonies had contemplated the same measure, without any previous consultation.



CHAP. V.

1774.

and provided funds for the liquidation, prepared letters to the other colonies, enforcing the reasons for their strong confederacy, and disclosed their proceedings to the house, before the governmental party had the least suspicion of their designs. Before the full disclosure of the business they were upon, the doors of the house were locked, and a vote passed, that no one should be suffered to enter or retire, until a final determination took place on the important questions before them. When these designs were opened, the partizans of administration then in the house, were thunderstruck with measures so replete with ability and vigour, and that wore such an aspect of high and dangerous consequences.

These transactions might have been legally styled *treasonable*, but loyalty had lost its influence, and power its terrors. Firm and disinterested, intrepid and united, they stood ready to submit to the chances of war, and to sacrifice their devoted lives to preserve inviolate, and to transmit to posterity, the inherent rights of men, conferred on all by the God of nature, and the privileges of Englishmen, claimed by Americans from the sacred fountains of compact.

When the measures agitated in the secret conference were laid before the house of representatives, one of the members a devotee to all governors, pretended a sudden indisposition, and re-

requested leave to withdraw; he pleaded the necessities of nature, was released from his uneasy confinement, and ran immediately to governor Gage with information of the bold and high-handed proceedings of the lower house. The governor not less alarmed than the sycophant, at these unexpected manœuvres, instantly directed the secretary to dissolve the assembly by proclamation.

Finding the doors of the house closed, and no prospect of admittance for him, the secretary desired the door-keeper to acquaint the house he had a message from the governor, and requested leave to deliver it. The speaker replied, that it was the order of the house, that no one should be permitted to enter on any pretence whatever, before the business they were upon was fully completed. Agitated and embarrassed, the secretary then read on the stairs a proclamation for the immediate dissolution of the general assembly.

The main point gained, the delegates for a congress chosen, supplies for their support voted, and letters to the other colonies requesting them to accord in these measures, signed by the speaker, the members cheerfully dispersed, and returned to their constituents, satisfied, that notwithstanding the precipitant dissolution of the assembly, they had done all that the circum-

stances of the times would admit, to remedy the present, and guard against future evils.

This early step to promote the general interest of the colonies, and lay the foundation of union and concord in all their subsequent transactions, will ever reflect lustre on the characters of those who conducted it with such firmness and decision. It was indeed a very critical era : nor were those gentlemen insensible of the truth of the observation, that “ whoever has a “ standing army at command, has, or may have “ the state.” Nor were they less sensible, that in the present circumstances, while they acknowledged themselves the subjects of the king of England, their conduct must be styled *rebellion*, and that death must be the inevitable consequence of defeat. Yet life was then considered a trivial stake in competition with liberty.

All the old colonies except Georgia, readily acceded to the proposal of calling a general congress ; they made immediate exertions that there might be no discord in the councils of the several provinces, and that their opposition should be consistent, spirited and systematical. Most of them had previously laid aside many of their local prejudices, and by public resolves and various other modes, had expressed their disgust at the summary proceedings of parliament against the Massachusetts. They reprobated the port-bill in terms of detestation, raised liberal contributions for the suffering inhabitants of

Boston, and continued their determinations to support that province at every hazard, through the conflict in which they were involved.

In conformity to the coercive system, the governors of all the colonies frowned on the sympathetic part the several legislative bodies had been disposed to take with the turbulent descendants, as they were pleased to style the Massachusetts, of *puritans*, *republicans* and *regicides*. Thus most of the colonial assemblies had been petulantly dissolved, nor could any applications from the people prevail on the supreme magistrate, to suffer the representatives and burgesses to meet, and in a legal capacity deliberate on measures most consistent with loyalty and freedom. But this persevering obstinacy of the governors did not retard the resolutions of the people; they met in parishes, and selected persons from almost every town, to meet in provincial conventions, and there to make choice of suitable delegates to meet in general congresses,

The beginning of autumn, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, was the time appointed, and the city of Philadelphia chosen, as the most central and convenient place, for this body to meet and deliberate; at so critical a conjuncture. Yet such was the attachment to Britain, the strength of habit, and the influence of ancient forms; such the reluctant dread

CHAP. V.

1774.

of spilling human blood, which at that period was univerfally felt in America, that there were few, who did not ardently wifh fome friendly intervention might yet prevent a rupture, which probably might fhake the empire of Britain, and wafte the inhabitants on both fides the Atlantic.

At this early period, there were fome who viewed the ftep of their fummoning a general congress, under exifting circumftances of peculiar embarrassment, as a *prelude* to a *revolution* which appeared pregnant with events, that might affect not only the political fyftems, but the character and manners of a confiderable part of the habitable globe.\*

America was then little known, her character, ability, and police, lefs underftood abroad; but ſhe ſoon became the object of attention among the potentates of Europe, the admiration of both the philofophic and the brave, and her fields the theatre of fame throughout the civilized world. Her principles were diffeminated: the feeds ſown in America ripened in the

\* This obfervation has ſince been verified in the remarkable revolution in France;—a ſtruggle for freedom on one ſide, and the combinations of European monarchs on the other, to depreſs and eradicate the ſpirit of liberty caught in America, was diſplayed to the world; nor was any of the combination of princes at the treaty of Pilnitz more perfevering in the cauſe of deſpotiſm than the king of Great Britain.



more cultivated grounds of Europe, and inspired ideas among the enslaved nations that have long trembled at the name of the *bastile* and the *bastinado*. This may finally lead to the completion of prophetic predictions, and spread universal liberty and peace, as far at least as is compatible with the present state of human nature.

CHAP. V.

1774.

The wild vagaries of the *perfectibility* of man, so long as the passions to which the species are liable play about the hearts of all, may be left to the dreaming *sciolist*, who wanders in search of impracticable theories. He may remain entangled in his own web, while that rational liberty, to which all have a right, may be exhibited and defended by men of principle and heroism, who better understand the laws of social order.

Through the summer previous to the meeting of congress, no expressions of loyalty to the sovereign, or affection to the parent state, were neglected in their public declarations. Yet the colonies seemed to be animated as it were by one soul, to train their youth to arms, to withhold all commercial connexion with Great Britain, and to cultivate that unanimity necessary to bind society when ancient forms are relaxed or broken, and the common safety required the assumption of new modes of government. But while attentive to the regulations of their in-

1774.

ternal economy and police, each colony beheld with a friendly and compassionate eye, the severe struggles of the Massachusetts, where the arm of power was principally levelled, and the ebullitions of ministerial resentment poured forth, as if to terrify the sister provinces into submission.

Not long after the dissolution of the last assembly ever convened in that province on the principles of their former charter, admiral Graves arrived in Boston, with several ships of the line and a number of transports laden with troops, military stores, and all warlike accoutrements. The troops landed peaceably, took possession of the open grounds, and formed several encampments within the town.

At the same time arrived the bill for new modelling the government of the Massachusetts. By this bill their former charter was entirely vacated: a council of thirty-six members was appointed by *mandamus*, to hold their places during the king's pleasure; all judges, justices, sheriffs, &c. were to be appointed by the governor, without the advice of council, and to be removed at his sole option. Jurors in future were to be named by the sheriff, instead of the usual and more impartial mode of drawing them by lot. All town-meetings without express leave from the governor were forbidden, except those annually held in the spring for the

choice of representatives and town-officers. Several other violations of the former compact completed the system.

This new mode of government, though it had been for some time expected, occasioned such loud complaints, such universal murmurs, that several of the newly appointed counsellors had not the courage to accept places which they were sensible would reflect disgrace on their memory. Two of them\* seemed really to decline from principle, and publicly declared they would have no hand in the dereliction of the rights of their country. Several others relinquished their seats for fear of offending their countrymen; but most of them, selected by Mr. Hutchinson as proper instruments for the purpose, were destitute of all ideas of public virtue. They readily took the qualifying oaths, and engaged to lend their hand to erase the last vestige of freedom in that devoted province.

The people still firm and undaunted, assembled in multitudes and repaired to the houses of the obnoxious counsellors. They demanded an immediate resignation of their unconstitutional appointments, and a solemn assurance that they would never accept any office incompatible with the former privileges enjoyed by their country. Some of them terrified by the

\* These were James Russell, Esq. of Charlestown, and William Vassal, Esq. of Boston.

resolution of the people complied, and remained afterwards quiet and unmolested in their own houses. Others, who had prostrated all principle in the hope of preferment, and were hardy enough to go every length to secure it, conscious of the guilty part they had acted, made their escape into Boston where they were sure of the protection of the king's troops. Indeed that unhappy town soon became the receptacle of all the devotees to ministerial measures from every part of the province: they there consoled themselves with the barbarous hope, that parliament would take the severest measures to enforce their own acts; nor were these hopes unfounded.

It has been observed that by the late edict for the *better administration of justice* in the *Massachusetts*, any man was liable on the slightest *suspicion of treason*, or *misprision of treason*, to be dragged from his own family or vicinity, to any part of the king of England's dominions for trial. It was now reported that general Gage had orders to arrest the leading characters in opposition, and transport them beyond sea, and that a reinforcement of troops might be hourly expected sufficient to enable him to execute all the mad projects of a rash and unprincipled ministry.

Though the operation of this system in its utmost latitude was daily threatened and ex-

pected, it made little impression on a people determined to withhold even a tacit consent to any infractions on their charter. They considered the present measures as a breach of a solemn covenant, which at the same time that it subjected them to the authority of the king of England, stipulated to them the equal enjoyment of all the rights and privileges of free and natural born subjects. They chose to hazard the consequences of returning back to a state of nature, rather than quietly submit to unjust and arbitrary measures continually accumulating. This was a dangerous experiment, though they were sensible that the necessities of man will soon restore order and subordination, even from confusion and anarchy: on the contrary, the yoke of despotism once rivetted, no human sagacity can justly calculate its termination.

While matters hung in this suspense, the people in all the shire towns collected in prodigious numbers to prevent the sitting of the courts of common law; forbidding the justices to meet, or the jurors to empanel, and obliging all civil magistrates to bind themselves by oath, not to conform to the late acts of parliament in any judiciary proceedings; and all military officers were called upon to resign their commissions. Thus were the bands of society relaxed, law set at defiance, and government unhinged throughout the province. Perhaps this may be



marked in the annals of time, as one of the most extraordinary eras in the history of man: the exertions of spirit awakened by the severe hand of power had led to that most alarming experiment of levelling all ranks, and destroying all subordination.

It cannot be denied that nothing is more difficult than to restrain the provoked multitude, when once aroused by a sense of wrong, from that supineness which generally overspreads the common class of mankind. Ignorant and fierce, they know not in the first ebullitions of resentment, how to repel with safety the arm of the oppressor. It is a work of time to establish a regular opposition to long established tyranny. A celebrated writer has observed, that “men bear with the defects in their police, as they do with their inconveniences and hardships in living:” and perhaps the facility of the human mind in adapting itself to its circumstances, was never more remarkably exemplified, than it was at this time in America.

Trade had long been embarrassed throughout the colonies by the restraints of parliament and the rapacity of revenue officers; the shutting up the port of Boston was felt in every villa of the New England colonies; the bill for altering the constitution of Massachusetts, prevented all

legislative proceedings; the executive officers were rendered incapable of acting in their several departments, and the courts of justice shut up. It must be ascribed to the virtue of the people, however reluctant some may be to acknowledge this truth, that they did not feel the effects of anarchy in the extreme.

CHAP. V.

1774.

But a general forbearance and complacency seemed for a time almost to preclude the necessity of legal restraint; and except in a few instances, when the indiscretion of individuals provoked abuse, there was less violence and personal insult than perhaps ever was known in the same period of time, when all political union was broken down, and private affection weakened, by the virulence of party prejudice, which generally cuts in funder the bands of social and friendly connexion. The people irritated in the highest degree, the sword seemed to be half drawn from the scabbard, while the trembling hand appeared unwilling to display its whetted point; and all America, as well as the Massachusetts, suspended all partial opposition, and waited in anxious hope and expectation the decisions of a continental congress.

This respected assembly, the *Amphyctions* of the western world, convened by the free suffrages of twelve colonies, met at the time proposed, on the fourth of September, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four. They

CHAP. V.

1774.

entered on business with hearts warmed with the love of their country, a sense of the common and equal rights of man, and the dignity of human nature. Peyton Randolph, Esq. a gentleman from Virginia, whose sobriety, integrity, and political abilities, qualified him for the important station, was unanimously chosen to preside in this grand council of American peers.

Though this body was sensibly affected by the many injuries received from the parent state, their first wish was a reconciliation on terms of reciprocity, justice and honor. In consequence of these sentiments they cautiously avoided, as far as was consistent with the duty due to their constituents, every thing that might tend to widen the breach between Great-Britain and the colonies. Yet they were determined, if parliament continued deaf to the calls of justice, not to submit to the yoke of tyranny, but to take the preparatory steps necessary for a vigorous resistance.

After a thorough discussion of the civil, political, and commercial interests of both countries, the natural ties, and the mutual benefits resulting from the strictest amity, and the unhappy consequences that must ensue, if driven to the last appeal, they resolved on a dutiful and loyal petition to the king, recapitulating their grievances, and imploring redress: they

modestly remonstrated, and obliquely censured the authors of those mischiefs, which filled all America with complaint.

CHAP. V.

1774.

They drew up an affectionate, but spirited memorial to the people of England, reminding them that they held their own boasted liberties on a precarious tenure, if government, under the sanction of parliamentary authority, might enforce by the terrors of the sword their unconstitutional edicts. They informed them, that they determined, from a sense of justice to posterity, and for the honor of human nature, to resist all infringements on the natural rights of men; that, if neither the dictates of equity, nor the suggestions of humanity, were powerful enough to restrain a *wanton* administration from shedding blood in a cause so derogatory to the principles of *justice*, not all the exertions of superior strength should lead them to submit fervently to the impositions of a foreign power. They forwarded a well-adapted address to the French inhabitants of Canada, to which they subjoined a detail of their rights, with observations on the alarming aspect of the late Quebec bill, and invited them to join in the common cause of America.

Energy and precision, political ability, and the genuine *amor patriæ*, marked the measures of the short session of this congress. They concluded their proceedings with an address to the

CHAP. V.

1774.

several American colonies, exhorting them to union and perseverance in the modes of opposition they had pointed out. Among the most important of these was a strong recommendation to discontinue all commerce with Great Britain, and encourage the improvement of arts and manufactures among themselves. They exhorted all ranks and orders of men to a strict adherence to industry, frugality, and sobriety of manners; and to look primarily to the supreme Ruler of the universe, who is able to defeat the crafty designs of the most potent enemy. They agreed on a declaration of rights, and entered into an association, to which the signature of every member of congress was affixed;\* in which they bound themselves to suspend all farther intercourse with Great Britain, to import no merchandize from that hostile country, to abstain from the use of all India teas; and that after a limited time, if a radical redress of grievances was not obtained, no American produce should be exported either to England or the West India islands under the jurisdiction of Britain.

To these recommendations were added several sumptuary resolves; after which they advised their constituents to a new choice of delegates, to meet in congress on the tenth of May, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five: they

\* See Appendix, No. X.



judged it probable that, by that time, they should hear the success of their petitions to the throne. They then prudently dissolved themselves, and returned to their private occupations in their several provinces, there to wait the operation of their resolutions and addresses.

It is scarcely possible to describe the influence of the transactions and resolves of congress on the generality of the people throughout the wide extended continent of America. History records no injunctions of men, that were ever more religiously observed; or any human laws more readily and universally obeyed, than were the recommendations of this revered body. It is indeed a singular phenomenon in the story of human conduct, that when all legal institutions were abolished, and long established governments at once annihilated in so many distinct states, that the recommendations of committees and conventions, not enforced by penal sanctions, should be equally influential and binding with the severest code of law, backed by royal authority, and strengthened by the murdering sword of despotism. Doubtless the fear of popular resentment operated on some, with a force equal to the rod of the magistrate: the singular punishments,\* inflicted in some instances by an inflamed rabble, on a few who en-

\* Such as tarring and feathering, &c.

deavored to counteract the public measures, deterred others from openly violating the public resolves, and acting against the general consent of the people.

Not the bitterest foe to American freedom, whatever might be his wishes, presumed to counteract the general voice by an avowed importation of a single article of British merchandize, after the first day of February, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. The cargoes of all vessels that happened to arrive after this limited period were punctually delivered to the committees of correspondence, in the first port of their arrival, and sold at public auction. The prime cost and charges, and the half of one per cent. was paid to the owners, and the surplus of the profits was appropriated to the relief of the distressed inhabitants of Boston, agreeable to the seventh article in the association of the continental congress.

The voice of the multitude is as the rushing down of a torrent, nor is it strange that some outrages were committed against a few obstinate and imprudent partizans of the court, by persons of as little consideration as themselves. It is true that in the course of the arduous struggle, there were many irregularities that could not be justified, and some violences in consequence of the general discontent, that will

not stand the test, when examined at the bar of equity ; yet perhaps fewer than ever took place in any country under similar circumstances. Witness the convulsions of Rome on the demolition of her first race of kings ; the insurrections and commotions of her colonies before the downfall of the commonwealth ; and to come nearer home, the confusions, the mobs, the cruelties in Britain in their civil convulsions, from William the conqueror to the days of the Stuarts, and from the arbitrary Stuarts to the riots of London and Liverpool, even in the reign of George the third.

Many other instances of the dread effects of popular commotion, when wrought up to resistance by the oppressive hand of power, might be adduced from the history of nations,\* and the

\* France might have been mentioned, as a remarkable instance of the truth of these observations, had they not been written several years before the extraordinary revolutions and cruel convulsions, that have since agitated that unhappy country. Every one will observe the astonishing difference in the conduct of the people of America and of France, in the two revolutions which took place within a few years of each other. In the one, all was horror, robbery, assassination, murder, devastation and massacre ; in the other, a general sense of rectitude checked the commission of those crimes, and the dread of spilling human blood withheld for a time the hand of party, even when the passions were irritated to the extreme. This must be attributed to the different religion, government, laws and manners of the two countries, previous to these great

ferocity of human nature, when not governed by interest or fear. Considering the right of personal liberty, which every one justly claims, the tenacious regard to property, and the pride of opinion, which sometimes operates to the dissolution of the tenderest ties of nature, it is wonderful, when the mind was elevated by these powerful springs, and the passions whetted by opposition or insult, that riot and confusion, desolation and bloodshed, was not the fatal consequence of the long interregnum of law and government throughout the colonies. Yet not a life was lost till the trump of war summoned all parties to the field.

Valor is an instinct that appears even among savages, as a dictate of nature planted for self-defence; but patriotism on the diffusive principles of general benevolence, is the child of society. This virtue with the fair accomplishments of science, gradually grows and increases with civilization, until refinement is wrought to a height that poisons and corrupts the mind. This appears when the accumulation of wealth is rapid, and the gratifications of luxurious appetite become easy; the seeds of benevolence are then often destroyed, and the *man* reverts

events; not to any difference in the nature of man; in similar circumstances, revenge, cruelty, confusion, and every evil work, operate equally on the ungoverned passions of men in all nations.

back to selfish barbarism, and feels no check to his rapacity and boundless ambition, though his passions may be frequently veiled under various alluring and deceptive appearances.

CHAP. V.

1774.

America was now a fair field for a transcript of all the virtues and vices that have illumined or darkened, disgraced and reigned triumphant in their turn over all the other quarters of the habitable globe. The progress of every thing had there been remarkably rapid, from the first settlement of the country. Learning was cultivated, knowledge disseminated, politeness and morals improved, and valor and patriotism cherished, in proportion to the rapidity of her population. This extraordinary cultivation of arts and manners may be accounted for, from the stage of society and improvement in which the first planters of America were educated before they left their native clime. The first emigrations to North America were not composed of a strolling banditti of rude nations, like the first people of most other colonies in the history of the world. The early settlers in the newly discovered continent were as far advanced in civilization, policy, and manners; in their ideas of government, the nature of compacts, and the bands of civil union, as any of their neighbors at that period among the most polished nations of Europe. Thus they soon grew to maturity, and became able to vie with their European ancestors in arts, in arms, in perspi-



cuity in the cabinet, courage in the field, and ability for foreign negotiations, in the same space of time that most other colonies have required to pare off the ruggedness of their native ferocity, establish the rudiments of civil society, and begin the fabric of government and jurisprudence. Yet as they were not fully sensible of their own strength and abilities, they wished still to hang upon the arm, and look up for protection to their original parent.

The united voice of millions still acknowledged the sceptre of Brunswick; firmly attached to the house of Hanover, educated in the principles of monarchy, and fond of that mode of government under certain limitations, they were still petitioning the king of England only to be restored to the same footing of privilege claimed by his other subjects, and wished ardently to keep the way open to a reunion, consistent with their ideas of honor and freedom.

Thus the grand council of the union were disposed to wait the operations of time, without hurrying to momentous decisions that might in a degree have sanctioned severities in the parent state that would have shut up every avenue to reconciliation. While the representatives of all the provinces had thus been deliberating, the individual colonies were far from being idle. Provincial congresses and conven-

tions had in almost every province taken place of the old forms of legislation and government, and they were all equally industrious and united in the same modes to combat the intrigues of the governmental faction, which equally infested the whole, though the eastern borders of the continent more immediately suffered. But their institutions in infancy, commerce suspended, and their property seized; threatened by the national orators, by the proud chieftains of military departments, and by the British fleet and army daily augmenting, hostilities of the most serious nature lowered on all sides; the artillery of war and the fire of rhetoric seemed to combine for the destruction of America.

The minds of the people at this period, though not dismayed, were generally solemnized, in expectation of events, decisive both to political and private happiness, and every brow appeared expressive of sober anxiety. The people trembled for their liberties, the merchant for his interest, the tories for their places, the whigs for their country, and the virtuous for the manners of society.

It must be allowed that the genius of America was bold, resolute and enterprising; tenacious of the rights their fathers had endured such hardships to purchase, they determined to defend to the last breath the invaluable possession. To check this ardent characteristic it

CHAP. V.

1774.

had, previous to the time we are upon, been considered, as if by common consent among the plantation governors, a stroke of policy to depress the militia of the country. All military discipline had for several years been totally neglected; thus untrained to arms, whenever there had been an occasional call in aid of British operations in America, the militia were considered as a rustic set of auxiliaries, and employed not only in the least honorable, but the most menial services. Though this indignity was felt, it was never properly resented; they had borne the burthen of fatigue and subordination without much complaint: but the martial spirit of the country now became conspicuous, and the inclination of the youth of every class was universally cherished, and military evolutions were the interludes that most delighted even children in the intermission of their sedentary exercises at school.

Among the manœuvres of this period of expectation, a certain quota of hardy youth were drawn from the train-bands in every town, who were styled *minute men*. They voluntarily devoted a daily portion of their time to improve themselves in the military art, under officers of their own choice. Thus when hostilities commenced, every district could furnish a number of soldiers, who wanted nothing but experience in the operations of war, to make them a match for any troops the sovereign of Britain could boast.

This military ardor wore an unpleasent aspect in the eyes of administration. By a letter from lord Dartmouth to general Gage, soon after he was appointed governor of the Massachusetts, it appeared that a project for disarming certain provinces was seriously contemplated in the cabinet.\* The parliament actually prohibited the exportation of arms, ammunition and military stores to any part of America, except for their own fleets and armies employed in the colonies; and the king's troops were frequently sent out in small parties to dismantle the forts, and seize the powder magazines or other military stores wherever they could be found. The people throughout the colonies with better success, took similar measures to secure to themselves whatever warlike stores were already in the country. Thus a kind of predatory struggle almost universally took place; every appearance of hostilities was discoverable in the occasional rencontres, except the drawing of blood, which was for a time suspended; delayed on one side from an apprehension that they were not quite ripe for the conflict; on the other, from an expectation of reinforce-

CHAP. V.

1774.

\* General Gage in his reply to the minister upon the above suggestion, observes, "Your lordship's idea of disarming certain provinces, would doubtless be consistent with prudence and safety; but it neither is, nor has been practicable, without having recourse to force: we must first become masters of the country."

ments that might ensure victory on the easiest terms ; and perhaps by both, from the recollection of former connexion and attachment.

A disunion of the colonies had long been zealously wished for, and vainly attempted by administration ; as that could not be effected, it was deemed a wise and politic measure, to make an example of one they judged the most refractory. Thus resentment seemed particularly levelled at the Massachusetts ; consequently they obliged that colony first to measure the sword with the hardy veterans of Britain.

The spirited proceedings of the county of Suffolk, soon after the arrival of governor Gage, and his hasty dissolution of the general assembly, in some measure damped the expectation of the ministry, who had flattered themselves that the depression and ruin of the Massachusetts would strike terror through the other provinces, and render the work of conquest more easy. But the decision and energy of this convention, composed of members from the principal towns in the county, discovered that the spirit of Americans at that time was not to be coerced by dragoons ; and that if one colony, under the immediate frowns of government, with an army in their capital, were thus bold and determined, new calculations must be made for the subjugation of all.



The convention met in Suffolk, at once unani-  
mously renounced the authority of the new  
legislature, and engaged to bear harmless all  
officers who should refuse to act under it. They  
pronounced all those, who had accepted seats at  
the board of council by mandamus, the incor-  
rigible enemies of their country. They recom-  
mended to the people to perfect themselves in  
the art of war, and to prepare to resist by force  
of arms, every hostile invasion. They resolved,  
that if any person should be apprehended for  
his exertions in the public cause, reprisals should  
be made, by seizing and holding in custody the  
principal officers of the crown, wherever they  
could be found, until ample justice should be  
done. They advised the collectors and receivers  
of all public monies, to hold it in their hands,  
till appropriations should be directed by autho-  
rity of a provincial congress. They earnestly  
urged an immediate choice of delegates for that  
purpose, and recommended their convening at  
Salem.

These and several other resolves in the same  
style and manner, were considered by govern-  
ment as the most overt acts of *treason* that  
had yet taken place; but their doings were  
but a specimen of the spirit which actuated the  
whole province. Every town, with the utmost  
alacrity, chose one or more of the most respecta-  
ble gentlemen, to meet in provincial congress,

1774.

agreeable to the recommendation on the fifteenth of October, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four. They were requested by their constituents, to take into consideration the distressed state of the country, and to devise the most practicable measures to extricate the people from their present perplexed situation.

In the mean time, to preclude the appearance of necessity for such a convention, governor Gage issued precepts, summoning a new general assembly to meet at Salem, the week preceding the time appointed for the meeting of the convention. The people obeyed the order of the governor, and every where chose their representatives; but they all chose the same persons they had recently delegated to meet in convention. Whether the governor was apprehensive that it would not be safe for his mandamus council to venture out of the capital, or whether conscious that it would not be a constitutional assembly, or from the imbecility of his own mind, in a situation altogether new to him, is uncertain; but from whatever cause it arose, he discovered his embarrassment by a proclamation, dated the day before he was to meet them at Salem, to dissolve the new house of representatives. This extraordinary dissolution only precipitated the pre-determination of the delegates; they had taken their line of conduct, and their determinations were not easily shaken.

The council chosen by the house on the day of their last election had also, as requested, repaired to Salem. The design was, to proceed to business as usual, without any notice of the annihilation of their charter. Their determination was, if the governor refused to meet with or countenance them, to consider him as absent from the province. It had been usual under the old charter, when the governor's signature could not be obtained, by reason of death or absence, that by the names of fifteen counsellors affixed thereto, all the acts of assembly were equally valid, as when signed by the governor. But by the extraordinary conduct of the chief magistrate, the general assembly was left at liberty to complete measures in any mode or form that appeared most expedient; accordingly they adjourned to Concord, a town situated about thirty miles from Salem, and there prosecuted the business of their constituents.

As it was not yet thought prudent to assume all the powers of an organized government, they chose a president, and acted as a provincial congress, as previously proposed. They recommended to the militia to choose their own officers, and submit to regular discipline at least thrice a week, and that a fourth part of them should be draughted, and hold themselves in readiness to march at a moment's warning to any part of the province. They recom-

1774.

mended to the several counties to adhere to their own resolves, and to keep the courts of common law shut till some future period, when justice could be legally administered. They appointed a committee of supplies to provide ammunition, provisions, and warlike stores, and to deposite them in some place of safety, ready for use, if they should be obliged to take up arms in defence of their rights.

This business required talents and energy to make arrangements for exigencies, new and untried. Fortunately Elbridge Gerry, Esq. was placed at the head of this commission, who executed it with his usual punctuality and indefatigable industry. This gentleman entered from principle, early in the opposition to British encroachments, and continued one of the most uniform republicans to the end of the contest. He was the next year chosen a delegate to the continental congress. Firm, exact, perspicuous, and tenacious of public and private honor, he rendered essential service to the union for many years that he continued a member of that honorable body.\*

\* Mr. Gerry's services and exertions to promote the public interest through every important station which he filled, from this period until he was appointed to negotiate with the republic of France in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-eight, were uniform. There his indefatigable zeal, his penetration, and cool perseverance, when every thing appeared on the eve of a rupture between

The provincial congress appointed a committee of safety, consisting of nine members, and vested them with powers to act as they should see fit for the public service, in the recess, and to call them together again, on any extraordinary emergence; and before they separated, they chose a new set of delegates, to meet in general congress the ensuing spring. After this they held a conference with the committees of donation and correspondence, and the selectmen of the town of Boston, on the expediency of an effort to remove the inhabitants from a town blockaded on all sides. They then separated for a few weeks, to exert their influence in aid to the resolutions of the people; to strengthen their fortitude, and prepare them for the approaching storm, which they were sensible could be at no great distance.

Though the inhabitants of Boston were shut up in garrison, insulted by the troops, and in many respects felt the evils of a severe military government; yet the difficulty of removing thousands from their residence in the capital, to seek an asylum in the country on the eve of winter, appeared fraught with inconveniencies too great to be attempted; they were of consequence, the most of them obliged to continue

the two republics, laid the foundation and formed the outlines of an accommodation, which soon after terminated in an amicable treaty between France and the United States of America.



amidst the outrages of a licentious army, and wait patiently the events of the ensuing spring.

The principal inhabitants of the town, though more immediately under the eye of their oppressors, lost no part of their determined spirit, but still acted in unison with their friends more at liberty without the city. A bold instance of this appeared, when Mr. Oliver, the chief justice, regardless of the impeachment that lay against him, attempted with his associates to open the superior court, and transact business according to the new regulations. Advertisements were posted in several public places, forbidding on their peril, the attornies and barristers at law, to carry any cause up to the bar. Both the grand and petit-jurors refused attendance, and finally the court was obliged to adjourn without day.

These circumstances greatly alarmed the party, more especially those natives of the country who had taken sanctuary under the banners of an officer, who had orders to enforce the acts of administration, even at the point of the bayonet. Apprehensive they might be dragged from their asylum within the gates, they were continually urging general Gage to more vigorous measures without. They assured him, that it would be easy for him to execute the designs of government, provided he would by law-martial seize, try, or transport

to England, such persons as were most particularly obnoxious; and that if the people once saw him thus determined, they would sacrifice their leaders and submit quietly.

CHAP. V.

1775.

They associated, and bound themselves by covenant, to go all lengths in support of the projects of administration against their country; but the general, assured of reinforcements in the spring, sufficient to enable him to open a bloody campaign, and not remarkable for resolution or activity, had not the courage, and perhaps not the inclination, to try the dangerous experiment, till he felt himself stronger. He was also sensible of the striking similarity of genius, manners, and conduct of the colonies in union. It was observable to every one, that local prejudices, either in religion or government, taste or politics, were suspended, and that every distinction was sunk, in the consideration of the necessity of connexion and vigor in one general system of defence. He therefore proceeded no farther, during the winter, than publishing proclamations against congresses, committees, and conventions, styling all associations of the kind unlawful and treasonable combinations, and forbidding all persons to pay the smallest regard to their recommendations, on penalty of his majesty's severest displeasure.

CHAP. V.

1775.

These feeble exertions only confirmed the people in their adherence to the modes pointed out by those, to whom they had intrusted the safety of the commonwealth. The only active movement of the season was that of a party commanded by colonel Leslie, who departed from Castle William on the evening of Saturday, February twenty-seventh, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five, on a secret expedition to Salem. The design was principally to seize a few cannon on the ensuing morning. The people apprized of his approach, drew up a bridge over which his troops were to pass. Leslie, finding his passage would be disputed, and having no orders to proceed to blows, after much expostulation engaged, that if he might be permitted to go on the ground, he would molest neither public nor private property. The bridge was immediately let down, and through a line of armed inhabitants, ready to take vengeance on a forfeiture of his word, he only marched to the extreme part of the town, and then returned to Boston, to the mortification of himself and of his friends, that an officer of colonel Leslie's acknowledged bravery should be sent out on so frivolous an errand.

This incident discovered the determination of the Americans, carefully to avoid every thing that had the appearance of beginning hostilities on their part; an imputation that

might have been attended with great inconvenience; nor indeed were they prepared to precipitate a conflict, the consequences and the termination of which no human calculation could reach. This manœuvre also discovered that the people of the country were not deficient in point of courage, but that they stood charged for a resistance, that might smite the sceptred hand, whenever it should be stretched forth to arrest by force the inheritance purchased by the blood of ancestors, whose self-denying virtues had rivalled the admired heroes of antiquity.

CHAP. V.

---

1775.

## CHAPTER VI.

Parliamentary Divisions on American Affairs—curfory Observations and Events.—Measures for raising an Army of Observation by the four New England Governments of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.—Battle of Lexington.—Sketches of the Conduct and Characters of the Governors of the southern Provinces.—Ticonderoga taken.—Arrival of Reinforcements from England.—Proscription and Characters of Samuel Adams and John Hancock, Esquires.—Battle of Bunker-Hill.—Death and Character of General Joseph Warren.—Massachusetts adopt a stable Form of Government.

CHAP. VI.

1775.

WE have seen several years pass off in doubtful anxiety, in repression and repulsion, while many yet indulged the pleasing hope, that some able genius might arise, that would devise measures to heal the breach, to revive the languishing commerce of both countries, and restore the blessings of peace, by removing the causes of complaint. But these hopes vanished, and all expectations of that kind were soon cut off, by the determined system of coercion in Britain, and the actual commencement of *war* in *America*.

The earliest accounts from England, after the beginning of the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five, announced the ferment of the British nation, principally on account of American measures, the perseverance of the



ministry, and the obstinacy of the king, in support of the system ;—the sudden dissolution of one parliament, and the immediate election of another, composed of the same members, or men of the same principles as the former.

Administration had triumphed through the late parliament over reason, justice, the humanity of individuals, and the interest of the nation. Notwithstanding the noble and spirited opposition of several distinguished characters in both houses, it soon appeared that the influence of the ministry over the old parliament was not depreciated, or that more lenient principles pervaded the councils of the new one. Nor did more judicious and favorable decisions lead to the prospect of an equitable adjustment of a dispute that had interested the feelings of the whole empire, and excited the attention of neighboring nations, not as an object of curiosity, but with views and expectations that might give a new face to the political and commercial systems of a considerable part of the European world.

The petition of the continental congress to the king, their address to the people of England, with general Gage's letters, and all papers relative to America, were introduced early in the session of the new parliament. Warm debates ensued, and the cause of the colonies was advocated with ability and energy by the

CHAP. VI.

1775.

most admired orators among the commons, and by several very illustrious names in the house of lords. They descanted largely on the injustice and impolicy of the present system, and the impracticability of its execution. They urged that the immediate repeal of the revenue acts, the recal of the troops, and the opening the port of Boston, were necessary, preliminary steps to any hope of reconciliation; and that these measures only would preserve the empire from consequences that would be fatal to her interests, as well as disgraceful to her councils. But, pre-determined in the cabinet, a large majority in parliament appeared in favor of strong measures. The ministerial party insisted that coercion only could ensure obedience, restore tranquillity to the colonies, repair the insulted dignity, and re-establish the supremacy of parliament.

An act was immediately passed, prohibiting New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut from carrying on the fishing business on the banks of Newfoundland. By this arbitrary step, thousands of miserable families were suddenly cut off from all means of subsistence. But, as if determined the rigors of power should know no bounds, before parliament had time to cool, after the animosities occasioned by the bill just mentioned, another\* was introduced by the

\* Parliamentary proceedings in one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five.

minister, whereby the trade of the southern colonies was restrained, and in future confined entirely to Great Britain. The minority still persevered in the most decided opposition both against the former and the present modes of severity towards the colonies. Very sensible and spirited protests were entered against the new bills, signed by some of the first nobility. A young nobleman of high rank and reputation predicted, that "measures commenced in iniquity, and pursued in resentment, must end in blood, and involve the nation in immediate civil war."\* It was replied, that the colonies were already in a state of rebellion; that the supremacy of parliament must not even be questioned; and that compulsory measures must be pursued from absolute necessity. Neither reason nor argument, humanity or policy, made the smallest impression on those determined to support all despotic proceedings. Thus after much altercation, a majority of two hundred and eighty-two appeared in favor of augmenting the forces in America, both by sea and land, against only seventy in the house of commons, who opposed the measure.

All ideas of courage or ability in the colonists to face the dragoons and resist the power of Britain, were treated with the greatest derision,

\* Debates in parliament, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five.

1775.

and particularly ridiculed by a general officer,\* then in the house, who soon after delivered his standards, and saw the surrender of a capital army under his command, to those undisciplined Americans he had affected to hold in so much contempt. The first lord of the admiralty also declared, “the Americans were neither disciplined, nor capable of discipline.”

Several ships of the line and a number of frigates were immediately ordered to join the squadron at Boston. Ten thousand men were ordered for the land service, in addition to those already there. A regiment of light-horse, and a body of troops from Ireland, to complete the number, were directed to embark with all possible dispatch to reinforce general Gage.

The speech from the throne, approving the sanguinary conduct of the minister and the parliament, blasted all the hopes of the more moderate and humane part of the nation. Several gallant officers of the first rank, disgusted with the policy, and revolting at the idea of butchering their American brethren, resigned their commissions. The earl of Effingham was among the first, who, with a frankness that his enemies styled a degree of insanity, assured his majesty, “that though he loved the profession  
“of a soldier, and would with the utmost

\* General Burgoyne, afterwards captured at Saratoga.

“cheerfulness sacrifice his fortune and his life  
 “for the safety of his majesty’s person, and the  
 “dignity of his crown; yet the same princi-  
 “ples which inspired him with those unalter-  
 “able sentiments of duty and affection, would  
 “not suffer him to be instrumental in depriv-  
 “ing any part of the people of their liberties,  
 “which to him appeared the best security of  
 “their fidelity and obedience; therefore with-  
 “out the severest reproaches of conscience he  
 “could not consent to bear arms against the  
 “Americans.”

CHAP. VI.

1775.

But there is no age which bears a testimony  
 so honorable to human nature; as shews man-  
 kind at so sublime a pitch of virtue, that there  
 are not always enough to be found ready to aid  
 the arm of the oppressor, provided they may  
 share in the spoils of the oppressed. Thus  
 many officers of ability and experience courted  
 the American service as the readiest road to  
 preferment.

Administration not satisfied with their own  
 severe restrictions, set on foot a treaty with  
 the Dutch and several other nations, to prevent  
 their aiding the colonies by supplying them  
 with any kind of warlike stores. Every thing  
 within and without wore the most hostile ap-  
 pearance, even while the commercial interest of  
 Great Britain was closely interwoven with that  
 of America; and the treasures of the colonies,



which had been continually pouring into the lap of the mother country, in exchange for her manufactures, were still held ready for her use, in any advance to harmony.

The boundaries of the king of England's continental domains were almost immeasurable, and the inhabitants were governed by a strong predilection in favor of the nation from whom they derived their origin : hence it is difficult to account on any principles of human policy, for the infatuation that instigated to the absurd project of conquering a country, already their's on the most advantageous terms. But the seeds of separation were sown, and the *ball* of empire rolled westward with such astonishing rapidity, that the pious mind is naturally excited to acknowledge a superintending Providence, that led to the period of independence, even before America was conscious of her maturity. Precipitated into a war, dreadful even in contemplation, humanity recoiled at the idea of civil feuds, and their concomitant evils.

When the news arrived in the colonies that the British army in Boston was to be reinforced, that the coercive system was at all hazards to be prosecuted, though astonished at the persevering severity of a nation still beloved and revered by Americans, deeply affected with the calamities that threatened the whole empire, and shocked at the prospect of the convulsions and

the cruelties ever attendant on civil war, yet few balanced on the part they were to act. The alternative held up was a bold and vigorous resistance, or an abject submission to the ignoble terms demanded by administration. Armed with resolution and magnanimity, united by affection, and a remarkable conformity of opinion, the whole people through the wide extended continent seemed determined to resist in blood, rather than become the slaves of arbitrary power.

CHAP. VI.

1775.

Happily for America, the inhabitants in general possessed not only the virtues of native courage and a spirit of enterprise, but minds generally devoted to the best affections. Many of them retained this character to the end of the conflict by the dereliction of interest, and the costly sacrifices of health, fortune and life. Perhaps the truth of the observation, that “a national force is best formed where numbers of men are used to equality, and where the meanest citizen may consider himself destined to command as well as to obey,” was never more conspicuous, than in the brave resistance of Americans to the potent and conquering arm of Great Britain, who, in conjunction with her colonies, had long taught the nations to tremble at her strength.

But the painful period hastened on, when the connexion which nature and interest had long

1775.

maintained between Great Britain and the colonies, must be broken off; the sword drawn, and the scabbard thrown down the gulf of time. We must now pursue the progress of a war enkindled by avarice, whetted by ambition, and blown up into a thirst for revenge by repeated disappointment. Not the splendor of a diadem, the purple of princes, or the pride of power, can ever sanction the deeds of cruelty perpetrated on the western side of the Atlantic, and not unfrequently by men, whose crimes emblazoned by title, will enhance the infamy of their injustice and barbarism, when the tragic tale is faithfully related.

We have already observed on the supplicatory addresses every where offered to the old government, the rebuffs attending them, the obstruction to legal debate, and the best possible regulations made by the colonies in their circumstances, under the new modes established by themselves.

The authority of congresses and committees of correspondence, and the spirit which pervaded the united colonies in their preparations for war, during the last six months previous to the commencement of hostilities, bore such a resemblance, that the detail of the transactions of one province is an epitome of the story of all.

The particular resentment of Great Britain levelled at the Massachusets, made it necessary for that province to act a more decided part, that they might be in some readines to repel the storm which it appeared probable would first burst upon them. Their provincial congress was sitting when the news first arrived, that all hope of reconciliation was precluded by the hostile resolutions of parliament. This rather quickened than retarded the important step, which was then the subject of their deliberations. Persuaded that the unhappy contest could not terminate without bloodshed, they were consulting on the expediency of raising an army of observation, from the four New England governments, that they might be prepared for defence in case of an attack, before the continental congress could again meet, and make proper arrangements for farther operations. They proceeded to name their own commanding officers, and appointed delegates to confer with New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, on the proportion of men they would furnish, and their quota of expense for the equipment of such an armament.

Connecticut and New Hampshire readily acceded to the proposal, but in Rhode Island several embarrassments were thrown in the way, though the people in that colony were in general as ready to enter warmly into measures for the common safety as any of the others ;

1775.

nor had they less reason. They had long been exasperated by the insolence and rapacity of the officers of a part of the navy stationed there to watch their trade. These had, without color of right, frequently robbed Newport, and plundered the adjacent islands. They had seized the little skiffs, in which a number of poor people had gained a scanty subsistence; and insulted, embarrassed and abused the inhabitants in various ways through the preceding year.

It is the nature of man, when he despairs of legal reparation for injuries received, to seek satisfaction by avenging his own wrongs. Thus, some time before this period,\* a number of men in disguise, had riotously assembled, and set fire to a sloop of war in the harbour. When they had thus discovered their resentment by this illegal proceeding, they dispersed without farther violence. For this imputed crime the whole colony had been deemed guilty, and interdicted as accessory. A court of inquiry was appointed by his majesty, vested with the power of seizing any person on suspicion, confining him on board a king's ship, and sending him to England for trial. But some of the gentlemen named for this inquisitorial business, had not the temerity to execute it in the

\* See Appendix, Note No. XI. governor Hutchinson's representation of this affair.



latitude designed; and after sitting a few days, examining a few persons, and threatening manly, they adjourned to a distant day.

CHAP. VI.

1775.

The extraordinary precedent of erecting such a court\* among them was not forgotten; but there was a considerable party in Newport, strongly attached to the royal cause. These, headed by their governor, Mr. Wanton, a man of weak capacity, and little political knowledge, endeavoured to impede all measures of opposition, and to prevent even a discussion on the propriety of raising a defensive army.

The news of an action at Lexington on the nineteenth of April, between a party of the king's troops and some Americans hastily collected, reached Providence on the same evening, a few hours after the gentlemen entrusted with the mission for conference with the colony had arrived there; they had not entered on business, having been in town but an hour or two before this intelligence was received by a special messenger.

On this important information, James Warren, Esq. the head of the delegation, was of

\* The gentlemen who composed this court, were Wanton, governor of Rhode Island, Horsmanden, chief justice of New York, Smith, chief justice of New Jersey, Oliver, chief justice of Massachusetts, and Auchmuty, judge of admiralty.

CHAP. VI.

1775.

opinion, that this event not only opened new prospects and expectations, but that it entirely changed the object of negotiation, and that new ground must be taken. Their mission was by the Massachusetts designed merely as a defensive movement, but he observed to the principal inhabitants collected to consult on the alarming aspect of present affairs, that there now appeared a necessity, not only for defensive but for offensive operations; he urged his reasons with such ability and address, that an immediate convention of the assembly was obtained. They met at Providence the ensuing day, where, by the trifling of the governor and the indiscretion of his partizans, the business labored in the upper house for several days. But the representative branch, impatient of delay, determined to act without any consideration of their governor, if he continued thus to impede their designs, and to unite, by authority of their own body, in vigorous measures with their sister colonies. A majority of the council however, at last impelled the governor to agree to the determinations of the lower house, who had voted a number of men to be raised with the utmost dispatch; accordingly a large detachment was sent forward to the Massachusetts within three days.

When the gentlemen left congress for the purpose of combining and organizing an army in the eastern states, a short adjournment was

made. Before they separated they selected a standing committee to reside at Concord, where a provincial magazine was kept, and vested them with power to summon congress to meet again at a moment's warning, if any extraordinary emergence should arise.

In the course of the preceding winter, a single regiment at a time had frequently made excursions from the army at Boston, and reconnoitred the environs of the town without committing any hostilities in the country, except picking up cannon, powder, and warlike stores, wherever they could find and seize them with impunity. In the spring, as they daily expected fresh auxiliaries, they grew more insolent; from their deportment, there was the highest reason to expect they would extend their researches, and endeavour to seize and secure, as they termed them, the *factious leaders of rebellion*. Yet this was attempted rather sooner than was generally expected.

On the evening of the eighteenth of April, the grenadiers and light infantry of the army stationed at Boston, embarked under the command of lieutenant colonel Smith, and were ordered to land at Cambridge before the dawn of the ensuing day. This order was executed with such secrecy and dispatch, that the troops reached Lexington, a small village nine miles beyond Cambridge, and began the tragedy of the day just as the sun rose.

1775.

An advanced guard of officers had been sent out by land, to seize and secure all travellers who might be suspected as going forward with intelligence of the hostile aspect of the king's troops. But notwithstanding this vigilance to prevent notice, a report reached the neighboring towns very early, that a large body of troops, accompanied by some of the most virulent individuals among the *torics*, who had taken refuge in Boston, were moving with design to destroy the provincial magazine at Concord, and take into custody the principal persons belonging to the committee of safety. Few suspected there was a real intention to attack the defenceless peasants of Lexington, or to try the bravery of the surrounding villages. But it being reduced to a certainty, that a number of persons had, the evening before, in the environs of Cambridge, been insulted, abused, and stripped, by officers in British uniform; and that a considerable armament might be immediately expected in the vicinity, captain Parker, who commanded a company of militia, ordered them to appear at beat of drum on the parade at Lexington, on the nineteenth. They accordingly obeyed, and were embodied before sunrise.

Colonel Smith, who commanded about eight hundred men, came suddenly upon them within a few minutes after, and, accosting them in language very unbecoming an officer of his rank, he ordered them to lay down their arms,

and disperse immediately. He illiberally branded them with the epithets of *rebel* and *traitor*; and before the little party had time, either to resist or to obey, he, with wanton precipitation, ordered his troops to fire. Eight men were killed on the spot; and, without any concern for his rashness, or little molestation from the inhabitants, Smith proceeded on his rout.

CHAP. VI.

1775.

By the time he reached Concord, and had destroyed a part of the stores deposited there, the country contiguous appeared in arms, as if determined not to be the tame spectators of the outrages committed against the persons, property, and lives of their fellow-citizens. Two or three hundred men assembled under the command of colonel Barrett. He ordered them to begin no onset against the troops of their sovereign, till farther provocation; this order was punctually obeyed. Colonel Smith had ordered a bridge beyond the town to be taken up, to prevent the people on the other side from coming to their assistance. Barrett advanced to take possession before the party reached it, and a smart skirmish ensued; several were killed, and a number wounded on both sides. Not dismayed or daunted, this small body of yeomanry, armed in the cause of justice, and struggling for every thing they held dear, maintained their stand until the British troops, though far superior in numbers, and in all the advan-



tages of military skill, discipline, and equipment, gave ground and retreated, without half executing the purpose designed, by this forced march to Concord.

The adjacent villagers collected, and prepared to cut off their retreat; but a dispatch had been sent by colonel Smith to inform general Gage, that the country was arming, and his troops in danger. A battalion under the command of lord Percy was sent to succour him, and arrived in time to save Smith's corps. A son of the duke of Northumberland,\* previous to this day's work, was viewed by Americans with a favorable eye; though more from a partiality to the father, than from any remarkable personal qualities discoverable in the son. Lord Percy came up with the routed corps near the fields of Menotomy; where barbarities were committed by the king's army, which might have been expected only from a tribe of savages. They entered, rifled, plundered, and burnt several houses; and in some instances, the aged and infirm fell under the sword of the ruffian; women, with their new-born infants, were obliged to fly naked, to escape the fury of the flames in which their houses were enwrapped.

\* The duke of Northumberland, father of earl Percy, had been uniformly opposed to the late measures of administration, in their American system.

The footsteps of the most remorseless nations have seldom been marked with more rancorous and ferocious rage, than may be traced in the transactions of this day; a day never to be forgotten by Americans. A scene like this had never before been exhibited on her peaceful plains; and the manner in which it was executed, will leave an indelible stain on a nation, long famed for their courage, humanity, and honor. But they appeared at this period so lost to a sense of dignity, as to be engaged in a cause that required perfidy and meanness to support it. Yet the impression of justice is so strongly stamped on the bosom of man, that when conscious the sword is lifted against the rights of equity, it often disarms the firmest heart, and unnerves the most valiant arm, when impelled to little subterfuges and private cruelties to execute their guilty designs.

The affair of Lexington, and the precipitant retreat after the ravages at Menotomy, are testimonies of the truth of this observation. For, notwithstanding their superiority in every respect, several regiments of the best troops in the royal army, were seen, to the surprise and joy of every lover of his country, flying before the raw, inexperienced peasantry, who had ran hastily together in defence of their lives and liberties. Had the militia of Salem and Marblehead have come on, as it was thought they might have done, they would undoubtedly have

CHAP. VI.

1775.

prevented this routed, disappointed army, from reaching the advantageous post of Charlestown. But the tardiness of colonel Pickering, who commanded the Salem regiment, gave them an opportunity to make good their retreat. Whether Mr. Pickering's\* delay was owing to timidity, or to a predilection in favor of Britain, remains uncertain; however it was, censure at the time fell very heavily on his character.

Other parts of the country were in motion; but the retreat of the British army was so rapid, that they got under cover of their own ships, and many of them made their escape into Boston. Others, too much exhausted by a quick march and unremitting exercise, without time for refreshment from sunrise to sunset, were unable, both from wounds and fatigue, to cross the river. These were obliged to rest the night, nor were they mistaken in the confidence they placed in the hospitality of the inhabitants of Charlestown; this they reasonably enough expected, both from motives of compassion and fear.

Intimidated by the appearance of such a formidable body of troops within their town, and touched with humanity on seeing the famished condition of the king's officers and soldiers, several of whom, from their wounds, and their suf-

\* Timothy Pickering, afterwards secretary of state under the presidency of Mr. Adams, by whom he was dismissed from public business.

ferings, expired before the next morning; the people every where opened their doors, received the distressed Britons, dressed their wounds, and contributed every relief: nothing was neglected that could assist, refresh, or comfort the defeated.

The victorious party, sensible they could gain little advantage by a farther pursuit, as the British were within reach of their own ships, and at the same time under the protection of the town of Charlestown; they therefore retreated a few miles to take care of their own wounded men, and to refresh themselves.

The action at Lexington, detached from its consequences, was but a trivial *manœuvre* when compared with the records of war and slaughter, that have disgraced the page of history through all generations of men: but a circumstantial detail of lesser events, when antecedent to the convulsions of empire, and national revolution, are not only excusable, but necessary. The provincials lost in this memorable action, including those who fell, who were not in arms, upwards of fourscore persons. It was not easy to ascertain how many of their opponents were lost, as they endeavoured by all possible means to conceal the number, and the disgrace of the day. By the best information, it was judged, including those who died soon after of wounds and fatigue, that their loss was very much great.

er than that of the Americans. Thus resentment stimulated by recent provocation, the colonies, under all the disadvantages of an infant country, without discipline, without allies, and without resources, except what they derived from their own valor and virtue, were compelled to resort to the last appeal, the precarious decision of the sword, against the mighty power of Britain.

The four New England governments now thought proper to make this last appeal, and resolved to stand or fall together. It was a bold and adventurous enterprise; but conscious of the equal privileges bestowed by Heaven, on all its intelligent creatures on this habitable ball, they did not hesitate on the part they had to act, to retain them. They cheerfully engaged, sure of the support of the other colonies, as soon as congress should have time to meet, deliberate, and resolve. They were very sensible, the middle and southern colonies were generally preparing themselves, with equal industry and ability, for a decision by arms, whenever hostilities should seriously commence in any part of the continent.

As soon as intelligence was spread that the first blow was struck, and that the shrill clarion of war actually resounded in the capital of the eastern states, the whole country rose in arms. Thousands collected within twenty-four hours,



in the vicinity of Boston ; and the colonies of Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire seemed all to be in motion. Such was the resentment of the people, and the ardor of enterprise, that it was with difficulty they were restrained from rushing into Boston, and rashly involving their friends in common with their enemies, in all the calamities of a town taken by storm.

CHAP. VI.

1775.

The day after the battle of Lexington, the congress of Massachusetts met at Watertown. They immediately determined on the number of men necessary to be kept on the ground, appointed and made establishments for the officers of each regiment, agreed on regulations for all military movements, and struck off a currency of paper for the payment of the soldiers, making the bills a tender for the payment of debts, to prevent depreciation. They drew up a set of judicious rules and orders for the army, to be observed by both officers and soldiers, until they should be embodied on a larger scale, under the general direction of the continental congress.

In the mean time, the consternation of general Gage was equalled by nothing but the rage of his troops, and the dismay of the *refugees* under his protection. He had known little of the country, and less of the disposition and bravery of its inhabitants. He had formed his opinions entirely on the misrepresentations of men, who,

CHAP. VI.

1775.

judging from their own feelings more than from the general conduct of mankind, had themselves no idea that the valor of their countrymen could be roused to hazard life and property for the sake of the common weal. Struck with astonishment at the intrepidity of a people he had been led to despise, and stung with vexation at the defeat of some of his best troops, he ordered the gates of the town to be shut, and every avenue guarded, to prevent the inhabitants, whom he now considered as his best security, from making their escape into the country. He had before caused entrenchments to be thrown up across a narrow isthmus, then the only entrance by land: still apprehensive of an attempt to storm the town, he now ordered the environs fortified; and soon made an entrance impracticable, but at too great an expense of blood.

The Bostonians thus unexpectedly made prisoners, and all intercourse with the country, from whence they usually received their daily supplies, cut off; famine stared them in the face on one side, and on the other they beheld the lawless rapine of an enraged enemy, with the sword of vengeance stretched over their heads. Yet, with a firmness worthy of more generous treatment, the principal citizens assembled, and after consultation, determined on a bold and free remonstrance to their military governor. They reminded him of his repeated

assurances of personal liberty, safety, and protection, if they would not evacuate the town, as they had long been solicited to do by their friends in the country. Had this been seasonably done, the Americans would have reduced the garrison by withholding provisions. The inhabitants of the town now earnestly requested, that the gates might be opened, that none who chose to retire with their wives, families, and property, might be impeded.

Whether moved by feelings of compassion, of which he did not seem to be wholly destitute, or whether it was a premeditated deception, yet remains uncertain; however, general Gage plighted his faith in the strongest terms, that if the inhabitants would deliver up their arms, and suffer them to be deposited in the city hall, they should depart at pleasure, and be assisted by the king's troops in removing their property. His shameful violation of faith in this instance, will leave a stain on the memory of the governor, so long as the obligations of truth are held sacred among mankind.

The insulted people of Boston, after performing the hard conditions of the contract, were not permitted to depart, until after several months of anxiety had elapsed, when the scarcity and badness of provisions had brought on a pestilential disorder, both among the inhabitants

and the soldiers. Thus, from a reluctance to dip their hands in human blood, and from the dread of insult to which their feebler connexions were exposed, this unfortunate town, which contained near twenty thousand inhabitants, was betrayed into a disgraceful resignation of their arms, which the natural love of liberty should have inspired them to have held for their own defence, while subjected to the caprice of an arbitrary master. After their arms were delivered up and secured, general Gage denied the contract, and forbade their retreat; though afterwards obliged to a partial compliance, by the difficulty of obtaining food for the subsistence of his own army. On certain stipulated gratuities to some of his officers, a permit was granted them, to leave their elegant houses, their furniture, and goods, and to depart naked from the capital, to seek an asylum and support from the hospitality of their friends in the country.

The islands within the harbour of Boston were so plentifully stocked with sheep, cattle, and poultry, that they would have afforded an ample supply to the British army for a long time, had they been suffered quietly to possess them. General Putnam, an officer of courage and experience, defeated this expectation by taking off every thing from one of the principal islands, under the fire of the British ships; at the same time, he was so fortunate as to burn

several of their tenders, without losing a man.\* His example was followed; and from Chelsea to Point Alderton, the islands were stripped of wheat and other grain, of cattle and forage; and whatever they could not carry off, the Americans destroyed by fire. They burnt the light-house at the entrance of the harbour, and the buildings on all the islands, to prevent the British availing themselves of such convenient appendages for encampments so near the town.

While these transactions were passing in the eastern provinces, the other colonies were equally animated by the spirit of resistance, and equally busy in preparation. Their public bodies were undismayed; their temper, their conduct, and their operations, both in the civil and military line, were a fair and uniform transcript of the conduct of the Massachusetts; and some of them equally experienced thus early, the rigorous proceedings of their unrelenting governors.

New York was alarmed soon after the commencement of hostilities near Boston, by a rumor, that a part of the armament expected from Great Britain, was to be stationed there to awe the country, and for the protection of the numerous loyalists in the city. In some instances,

\* General Putnam was an old American officer of distinguished bravery, plain manners, and sober habits; nourished in agricultural life, and those simple principles, that excite the virtuous to duty, in every department.



the province of New York had not yet fully acceded to the doings of the general congress; but they now applied to them for advice, and shewed themselves equally ready to renounce their allegiance to the king of Great Britain, and to unite in the common cause in all respects, as any of the other colonies. Agreeable to the recommendation of congress, they sent off their women, children, and effects, and ordered a number of men to be embodied, and hold themselves in readiness for immediate service.

Tryon was the last governor who presided at New York under the crown of England. This gentleman had formerly been governor of North Carolina, where his severities had rendered him very obnoxious. It is true, this disposition was principally exercised towards a set of disorderly, ignorant people, who had felt themselves oppressed, had embodied, and styling themselves *regulators*, opposed the authority of the laws. After they had been subdued, and several of the ringleaders executed, governor Tryon returned to England, but was again sent out as governor of the province of New York. He was received with cordiality, treated with great respect, and was for a time much esteemed, by many of the inhabitants of the city, and the neighbouring country. Very soon after the contest became warm between Great Britain and the inhabitants of America, he, like all the

other governors in the American colonies, tenacious of supporting the prerogatives of the crown, laid aside that spirit of lenity he had previously affected to feel.

CHAP. VI.

1775.

Governor Tryon entered with great zeal into all the measures of administration; and endeavoured with art, influence, and intrigue, of which he was perfectly master, to induce the city of New York, and the inhabitants under his government, to submit quietly, and to decline a union of opinion and action with the other colonies, in their opposition to the new regulations of the British parliament. But he soon found he could not avail himself sufficiently of the interest he possessed among some of the first characters in the city, to carry the point, and subdue the spirit of liberty, which was every day appreciating in that colony.

On the determination of the provincial congress to arrest the crown officers, and disarm the persons of those who were denominated  *Tories*, governor Tryon began to be apprehensive for his own safety. The congress of New York had resolved, “that it be recommended to the  
“several provincial assemblies, or conventions,  
“and councils, or committees of safety, to arrest  
“and secure every person in their respective col-  
“onies, whose going at large may, in their opin-  
“ion, endanger the safety of the colony, or the  
“liberties of America.”

1775.

Though governor Tryon was not particularly named, he apprehended himself a principal person pointed at in this resolve. This awakened his fears to such a degree, that he left the seat of government, and went on board the Halifax packet; from whence he wrote the mayor of the city, that he was there ready to execute any such business, as the circumstances of the times would permit. But the indifference as to the residence, or even the conduct of a plantation governor, was now become so general among the inhabitants of America, that he soon found his command in New York was at an end. After this he put himself at the head of a body of loyalists, and annoyed the inhabitants of New York and New Jersey, and wherever else he could penetrate, with the assistance of some British troops that occasionally joined them.

The governors of the several colonies, as if hurried by a consciousness of their own guilt, flying like fugitives to screen themselves from the resentment of the people, on board the king's ships, appear as if they had been composed of similar characters to those described by a writer of the history of such as were appointed to office in the more early settlement of the American colonies. He said, "it unfortunately happened for our American provinces, that a government in any of our colonies in those parts, was scarcely looked upon in any other light than that of a hospital, where the fa-

“ vorites of the ministry might lie, till they had recovered their broken fortunes, and oftentimes they served as an asylum from their creditors.”\*

CHAP. VI.

1775.

The neighbouring government of New Jersey was for some time equally embarrassed with that of New York. They felt the effects of the impressions made by governor Franklin, in favor of the measures of administration; but not so generally as to preclude many of the inhabitants from uniting with the other colonies, in vigorous steps to preserve their civil freedom. Governor Franklin had, among many other expressions which discovered his opinions, observed in a letter to Mr. secretary Conway, “ it gives me great pleasure, that I have been able through all the late disturbances, to preserve the tranquillity of this province, notwithstanding the endeavours of some to stimulate the populace to such acts as have disgraced the colonies.” He kept up this tone of reproach, until he also was deprived by the people of his command; and New Jersey, by the authority of committees, seized all the money in the public treasury, and appropriated it to the pay of the troops raising for the common defence. They took every other prudent measure in their power, to place themselves in readiness for the critical moment.

\* Modern Universal History, vol. xxxix. p. 357.

Pennsylvania, though immediately under the eye of congress, had some peculiar difficulties to struggle with, from a proprietary government, from the partizans of the crown, and the great body of the quakers, most of them opposed to the American cause. But the people in general were guarded and vigilant, and far from neglecting the most necessary steps for general defence.

In Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas, where they had the greatest number of African slaves, their embarrassments were accumulated, and the dangers which hung over them, peculiarly aggravated. From their long habit of filling their country with foreign slaves, they were threatened with a host of domestic enemies, from which the other colonies had nothing to fear. The Virginians had been disposed in general to treat their governor, lord Dunmore, and his family, with every mark of respect; and had not his intemperate zeal in the service of his master given universal disgust, he might have remained longer among them, and finally have left them in a much less disgraceful manner.

However qualified this gentleman might have been to preside in any of the colonies, in more pacific seasons, he was little calculated for the times, when ability and moderation, energy and condescension, coolness in decision, and delicacy



in execution, were highly requisite to govern a people struggling with the poniard at their throat and the sword in their hand, against the potent invaders of their privileges and claims.

CHAP. VI.

1775.

He had the inhumanity early to intimate his designs if opposition ran high, to declare freedom to the blacks, and on any appearance of hostile resistance to the king's authority, to arm them against their masters. Neither the house of burgeses, nor the people at large, were disposed to recede from their determinations in consequence of his threats, nor to submit to any authority that demanded implicit obedience, on pain of devastation and ruin. Irritated by opposition, too rash for consideration, too haughty for condescension, and fond of distinguishing himself in support of the parliamentary system, lord Dunmore dismantled the fort in Williamsburg, plundered the magazines, threatened to lay the city in ashes, and depopulate the country: As far as he was able, he executed his nefarious purposes.

When his lordship found the resolution of the house of burgeses, of committees and conventions, was no where to be shaken, he immediately proclaimed emancipation to the blacks, and put arms into their hands. He excited disturbances in the back settlements, and encouraged the natives bordering on the southern co-

CHAP. VI.

1775.

lonies, to rush from the wilderness, and make inroads on the frontiers. For this business, he employed as his agent one *Connolly*, a Scotch renegade, who travelled from Virginia to the Ohio, and from the Ohio to general Gage at Boston, with an account of his success, and a detail of his negotiations. From general Gage he received a colonel's commission, and was by him ordered to return to the savages, and encourage them, with the aid of some British settlers on the river Ohio, to penetrate the back country, and distress the borders of Virginia. But fortunately, Connolly was arrested in his career, and with his accomplices taken and imprisoned on his advance through Maryland; his papers were seized, and a full disclosure of the cruel designs of his employers sent forward to congress.

By the indiscreet conduct of lord Dunmore, the ferments in Virginia daily increased. All respect towards the governor was lost, and his lady terrified by continual tumult left the palace, and took sanctuary on board one of the king's ships. After much altercation and dispute, with every thing irritating on the one side, and no marks of submission on the other, his lordship left his seat, and with his family and a few loyalists retired on board the *Fowey* man of war, where his lady in great anxiety had resided many days.\* There he found some

\* Lady Dunmore soon after took passage for England.

of the most criminal of his partizans had resorted before he quitted the government; with these and some banditti that had taken shelter in a considerable number of vessels under his lordship's command, and the assistance of a few run-away negroes, he carried on a kind of predatory war on the colony for several months. The burning of Norfolk, the best town in the territory of Virginia, completed his disgraceful campaign.\*

The administration of lord William Campbell, and Mr. Martin, the governors of the two Carolinas, had no distinguished trait from that of most of the other colonial governors. They held up the supreme authority of parliament in the same high style of dignity, and announced the resentment of affronted majesty, and the severe punishment that would be inflicted on congresses, conventions and committees, and the miserable situation to which the people of America would be reduced, if they continued to adhere to the *factionous demagogues* of party. With the same spirit and cruel policy that instigated lord Dunmore, they carried on their negotiations with the Indians, and encouraged the insurrections of the negroes, until all harmony

\* See Appendix, Note, No. XII. relative to Virginia. It has been asserted by some that the inhabitants themselves assisted in the conflagration of Norfolk, to prevent lord Dunmore's retaining it as a place of arms.

CHAP. VI.

1775.

and confidence were totally destroyed between themselves and the people, who supported their own measures for defence in the highest tone of freedom and independence. Both the governors of North and South Carolina soon began to be apprehensive of the effects of public resentment, and about this time thought it necessary for their own safety to repair on board the king's ships, though their language and manners had not been equally rash and abusive with that of the governor of Virginia.

Henry Laurens, Esq. was president of the provincial congress of South Carolina at this period; whose uniform virtue and independence of spirit, we shall see conspicuously displayed hereafter on many other trying occasions. It was not long after the present period, when he wrote to a friend and observed, that "he meant to finish his peregrinations in this world, by a journey through the United States; then to retire and learn to die." But he had this important lesson to learn in the ordeal of affliction and disappointment, that he severely experienced in his public life and domestic sorrows, which he bore with that firmness and equanimity, which ever dignifies great and good characters.

Sir Robert Eden, governor of Maryland, a man of social manners, jovial temper, and humane disposition, had been more disposed to

lenity and forbearance, than any of the great officers in the American department. But so high wrought was the opposition to British authority, and the jealousies entertained of all magistrates appointed by the crown, that it was not long after the departure of the neighbouring governors, before he was ordered by congress to quit his government, and repair to England. He was obliged to comply, though with much reluctance. He had been in danger of very rough usage before his departure, from general Lee, who had intercepted a confidential letter from lord George Germaine to governor Eden. Lee threatened to seize and confine him, but by the interference of the committee of safety, and some military officers at Annapolis, the order was not executed. They thought it wrong to consider him as responsible for the sentiments contained in the letters of his correspondents; and only desired Mr. Eden to give his word of honor, that he would not leave the province before the meeting of a general congress of that state; nor did they suffer him to be farther molested. He was permitted quietly to take leave of his friends and his province, after he had received the order of the continental congress for his departure; and in hopes of returning in more tranquil times, he left his property behind him, and sailed for England in the summer, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six.\*

\* See the conduct relative to sir Robert Eden, and the transactions between the southern governors and the peo-



1775.

The influence of sir James Wright the governor of Georgia, prevented that state from acceding to the measure of a general congress, in one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four. Yet the people at large were equally disaffected, and soon after, in an address to his excellency, acknowledged themselves the only link in the great American chain, that had not publicly united with the other colonies in their opposition to the claims of parliament. They called a provincial congress, who resolved in the name of their constituents, that they would receive no merchandize whatever from Great Britain or Ireland after the seventh day of July, one thousand, seven hundred and seventy-five; that they fully approved and adopted the American declaration and bill of rights, published by the late continental congress; that they should now join with the other colonies, choose delegates to meet in general congress; and that they meant invariably to adhere to the public cause, and that they would no longer lie under the suspicion of being unconcerned for the rights and freedom of America.

Indeed the torch of war seemed already to have reached the most distant corner of the con-

ple, this year, at large in the British Remembrancer, which is here anticipated to prevent interrupting the narration by any further detail of general Lee's transactions in Maryland relative to governor Eden.

minent, the flame had spread and penetrated to the last province in America held by Great Britain, and a way opened to the gates of Quebec, before administration had dreamed of the smallest danger in that quarter. Soon after the action at Lexington, a number of enterprising young men, principally from Connecticut, proposed to each other a sudden march towards the lakes, and a bold attempt to surprize Ticonderoga, garrisoned by the king's troops. These young adventurers applied to governor Trumbull, and obtained leave of the assembly of Connecticut to pursue their project; and so secretly, judiciously, and rapidly was the expedition conducted, that they entered the garrison, and saluted the principal officer as their prisoner, before he had any reason to apprehend an enemy was near.\* This enterprize was conducted by the colonels Easton, Arnold, and Allen; the invaders possessed themselves of a considerable number of brass and iron cannon, and many warlike stores, without suffering any loss of life.

It had been proved beyond a doubt that the British government had spared no pains to encourage the inroads of the savages; of consequence this *coup de main* was deemed a very me-

\* On the surprize of Ticonderoga, the commanding officer there inquired by whose authority this was done? Colonel Allen replied, "I demand your surrender in the name of the great Jehovah and of the continental congress."

CHAP. VI.

1775.

ritorious and important step. Ticonderoga commanded all the passes between Canada and the other provinces. The possession of this important fortrefs on the lake Champlain, in a great meafure fecured the frontiers from the incurfions of the favages, who had been excited by the cruel policy of Britain to war, which, by thefe ferocious nations, is ever carried on by modes at which humanity fhudders, and civilization blufhes to avow.\*

Thus was the fword brandifhed through the land, and hung fufpended from cruel execution of all the evils attendant on a ftate of civil convulfion, only by the faint hope, that the fovereign of Britain might yet be softened to hold out the olive-branch in one hand, and a redrefs of grievances in the other. But every pacific hope was reverfed, and all profpect of the reftoration of harmony annihilated early in the fummer, by the arrival of a large reinforcement at Boston, commanded by three general officers of high confideration.

All former delufive expectations now extinguifhed, both the ftatesman and the peafant, actuated by the feelings of the man and the patriot, difcovered a moft unconquerable magna-

\* A few months after this expedition, colonel Allen experienced a reverse of fortune, by falling into the hands of the British near Montreal, was loaded with irons, and immediately fent to England.

nimity of spirit. Undismayed by the necessity of an appeal to the sword, though unprovided with sufficient resources for so arduous a conflict, they animated each other to sustain it, if necessary, until they should leave their foes only a depopulated soil, if victory should declare in their favor. Nature revolts at the idea, when the poniard is pushed by despair; yet preferring death to thralldom, the Americans were every where decisive in council, and determined in action. There appeared that kind of enthusiasm, which sets danger at defiance, and impels the manly arm to resist, till the warm current that plays round the heart, is poured out as a libation at the shrine of freedom.

On the other hand, the fears of the dependents on the crown were dissipated by the augmentation of the British army, their hopes invigorated, and every artifice used, to spread terror and dismay among the people. The turpitude of *rebellion*, and the dread consequences of defeat, were painted in the most gloomy colours; the merits and the abilities of the principal officers extolled, their distinguished names and characters enhanced, and every thing circulated that might tend to weaken the resolution of the people.

It was said, general Burgoyne commanded a squadron of light-horse, which was to scour the

CHAP. VI.

1775.

country, and pick up the leading insurgents in every quarter. The capacity, bravery, and virtues of general Clinton were every where announced by the votaries of administration; and the name of *Howe* was at that time, at once revered, beloved, and dreaded in America. A monumental tribute of applause had been reared in honor of one brother, who had fallen in that country in the late war between Great Britain and France; and the gratitude of the people had excited a predilection in favor of the other, and indeed of every branch of that family. But this partiality was soon succeeded by an universal disgust towards the two surviving brothers, lord and general Howe, who undertook the conquest of America; a project held reproachful, and which would have reflected dishonor on the perpetrators, even had it been crowned with success.

In the beginning of June, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five, general Gage thought proper to act a more decided part than he had hitherto done. He published a proclamation, denouncing *martial law* in all its rigors against any one who should supply, conceal, or correspond with, any of those he was pleased to stigmatize by the epithets of *traitors*, *rebels*, or *insurgents*. But as an act of grace, he offered pardon in the king's name to all who should lay down their arms and submit to mercy, only excluding by name, Samuel Adams and



John Hancock ; he alleged that their crimes were of too flagitious a nature to hope for pardon.

CHAP. VI.

1775.

This proscription discovered the little knowledge which general Gage then possessed of the temper of the times, the disposition of the people at large, or the character of individuals. His discrimination, rather accidental than judicious, set these two gentlemen in the most conspicuous point of view, and drew the particular attention of the whole continent to their names, distinguished from many of their compeers, more by this single circumstance, than by superior ability or exertion. By this they became at once the favorites of popularity, and the objects of general applause, which at that time would have been the fortune of any one, honored by such a mark of disapprobation of the British commander in chief.

Mr. Adams was a gentleman of a good education, a decent family, but no fortune. Early nurtured in the principles of civil and religious liberty, he possessed a quick understanding, a cool head, stern manners, a smooth address, and a Roman-like firmness, united with that sagacity and penetration that would have made a figure in a conclave. He was at the same time liberal in opinion, and uniformly devout ; social with men of all denominations, grave in deportment ; placid, yet severe ; sober and inde-

fatigable; calm in seasons of difficulty, tranquil and unruffled in the vortex of political altercation; too firm to be intimidated, too haughty for condescension, his mind was replete with resources that dissipated fear, and extricated in the greatest emergencies. Thus qualified, he stood forth early, and continued firm, through the great struggle, and may justly claim a large share of honor, due to that spirit of energy which opposed the measures of administration, and produced the independence of America. Through a long life he exhibited on all occasions, an example of patriotism, religion, and virtue honorary to the human character.

Mr. Hancock was a young gentleman of fortune, of more external accomplishments than real abilities. He was polite in manners, easy in address, affable, civil, and liberal. With these accomplishments, he was capricious, sanguine, and implacable: naturally generous, he was profuse in expense; he scattered largesses without discretion, and purchased favors by the waste of wealth, until he reached the ultimatum of his wishes, which centered in the focus of popular applause. He enlisted early in the cause of his country, at the instigation of some gentlemen of penetration, who thought his ample fortune might give consideration, while his fickleness could not injure, so long as he was under the influence of men of superior judgment. They complimented him by nominations to com-

mittees of importance, till he plunged too far to recede ; and flattered by ideas of his own consequence, he had taken a decided part before the battle of Lexington, and was president of the provincial congress, when that event took place.

By the appearance of zeal, added to a certain alacrity of engaging in any public department, Mr. Hancock was influential in keeping up the tide of opposition ; and by a concurrence of fortuitous circumstances, among which this proscription was the most capital, he reached the summit of popularity, which raised him afterwards to the most elevated stations, and very fortunately he had the honor of affixing his signature as president, to many of the subsequent proceedings of the continental congress, which will ever hold an illustrious rank in the page of history.

Mr. Hancock had repaired to Philadelphia, to take his seat in congress, immediately after he made his escape from Lexington. Part of the object of the excursion of the eighteenth of April, was the capture of him and Mr. Adams ; they were both particularly inquired for, and the house in which they lodged surrounded by the king's troops, the moment after these gentlemen had retreated half-naked. Had they been found, they would undoubtedly have been shut up in Boston, if nothing more fatal had

been inflicted, instead of being left at liberty to pursue a political career that will transmit their names with applause to posterity.

The absence of the late worthy president of congress, Mr. Randolph, and the arrival of Mr. Hancock at Philadelphia, at the fortunate moment when the enthusiasm inspired by Gage's proclamation was at the height, both concurred to promote his elevation. He was chosen to preside in the respectable assembly of delegates, avowedly on the sole principle of his having been proscribed by general Gage. It was uncouthly said, by a member of congress, that "they would shew *mother Britain* how little they cared for her, by choosing a Massachusetts man for their president, who had been recently excluded from pardon by public proclamation." The choice was suddenly made, and with rather too much levity for the times, or for the dignity of the office. Mr. Hancock's modesty prompted him for a moment to hesitate on the unexpected event, as if diffident of his own qualifications; when one of the members,\* of a more robust constitution, and less delicacy of manners, took him in his arms, and placed him in the presidential chair.

\* A Mr. Harrison, from Virginia, the same who made the above speech. These circumstances were verbally detailed to the author of these annals by a respectable member of congress then present.

This sudden elevation might place the fortunate candidate in a similar situation with the celebrated pope Ganganelli, who observed of himself, that after putting on the triple crown, he often felt his own pulse, to see if he was the same identical person he was a few years before. Mr. Hancock continued in the presidential chair until October, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-nine, when he took a formal leave of congress, and never again rejoined that respectable body. His time however was fully occupied in his own state in the various employments, to which he was called by a majority of voices in the Massachusetts, where his popular talents had a commanding influence, during the residue of his life.\* But in the progress of the revolution, several men of less consequence than Mr. Hancock, and far inferior claims to patriotism, were raised to the same dignified station. -

CHAP. VI.

1775.

In the effervescence of popular commotions, it is not uncommon to see the favorites of fortune elevated to the pinnacle of rank by trivial circumstances, that appear the result of accident.

Those who mark the changes and the progress of events through all revolutions, will frequently see distinctions bestowed, where there are no

\* See Appendix, Note, No. XIII.



commanding talents, and honors retained, more from the strong influence of popular enthusiasm, than from the guidance of reason, which operates too little on the generality of mankind.

It may be observed, that public commotions in human affairs, like the flocks of nature, convulse the whole system, and level the lofty mountains, which have arisen for ages above the clouds, beneath the vallies; while the hillock, unnoticed before, is raised to a pitch of elevation, that renders it a land-mark for the eye of the weary seaman to rest upon.

All revolutions evince the truth of the observation of a writer, that “Many men great  
“ in title, have the spirit of slaves, many low in  
“ fortune, have great spirits, many a Cicero  
“ has kept sheep, many a Cæsar followed the  
“ plough, many a Virgil folded cattle.”\*

The sudden rotations in human affairs are wisely permitted by Providence, to remind mankind of their natural equality, to check the pride of wealth, to restrain the insolence of rank and family distinctions, which too frequently oppress the various classes in society.

The late proclamation of general Gage was considered as a prelude to immediate action,

\* Sir Francis Osborne's Memoirs.

and from all intelligence that could be obtained from the town, there appeared the strongest reason to expect a second sally from the troops lying in Boston. Uncertain on which side the storm would begin, the provincials thought it necessary to guard against surprise, by fortifying on both sides of the town, in the best manner they were able. They threw up some slight entrenchments at Roxbury, and several other places on the south side of Boston; at the same time, on the night of the sixteenth of June, they began some works at the extreme part of a peninsula at the north, running from Charlestown to the river, which separates that town from Boston. They executed this business with such secrecy and dispatch, that the officers of a ship of war then in the river, expressed their astonishment in the morning, when they saw some considerable works reared and fortified in the compass of a few hours, where, from the contiguous situation,\* they least expected the Americans would look them in the face.

The alarm was immediately given, and orders issued, that a continual fire should be kept

\* These works were erected on Breed's hill. This was the spot that cost the British army so dear through the glorious action of that day, generally styled the battle of *Bunker hill*. After the Americans retreated, the British left Breed's hill, took their stand, and strongly fortified Bunker hill, about a fourth of a mile distant. Thus has the name of the place of action been frequently confounded.

CHAP. VI.

1775.

playing upon the unfinished works, from the ships, the floating batteries in the river, and a fortified hill on the other side ; but with unparalleled perseverance, the Americans continued to strengthen their entrenchments, without returning a shot until near noon, when the British army, consisting of ten companies of grenadiers, four battalions of infantry, and a heavy train of artillery, advanced under the command of general Pigot and major general Howe. A severe engagement ensued : many men and several brave officers of the royal army fell on the first fire of the Americans. This unexpected salute threw them into some confusion ; but by the firmness of general Howe, and the timely assistance of general Clinton, who, with a fresh detachment arrived in season, the troops were immediately rallied, and brought to the charge with redoubled fury. They mounted the ramparts with fixed bayonets, and notwithstanding the most heroic resistance, they soon made themselves masters of the disputed hill.

Overpowered by numbers, and exhausted by the fatigue of the preceding night, and all hope of reinforcement cut off by the incessant fire of the ships across a neck of land that separated them from the country, the provincials were obliged to retreat, and leave the ground to the British troops. Many of their most experienced officers acknowledged the valor of their opponents ; and that in proportion to the forces en-

gaged, there had been few actions in which the military renown of British troops had been more severely tried. Their chagrin was manifest, that the bravery of British soldiers, which had been often signalized in the noblest feats of valor, should be thus resisted; that they should be galled, wounded, and slaughtered, by an *bandful of cottagers*, as they termed them, under officers of little military skill, and less experience, whom they had affected to hold in ineffable contempt.

There is a certain point of military honor, that often urges against the feelings of humanity, to dip the sword in blood. Thus, from the early maxims of implicit obedience, the first principle of military education, many men of real merit hazarded fortune, life, and reputation, in the inglorious work of devastation and ruin, through the fields and villages of America. Yet such was the reluctance shewn by some to engage with spirit in the disagreeable enterprise of this day, that their officers were obliged to use the utmost severity towards them, to stimulate others to persevere. The town of Charlestown was reduced to ashes by the fire of the shipping, while the land forces were storming the hills. Thus, in concert, was this flourishing and compact town destroyed, in the most wanton display of power. There were about four hundred dwelling-houses in the centre of Charlestown, which, with the out-houses adja-

cent, and many buildings in the suburbs, were also sunk in the conflagration. The fate of this unfortunate town was beheld with solemnity and regret, by many even of those who were not favorably disposed to the liberties of the western world. The ingratitude which marked the transaction aggravated the guilty deed. We have recently seen the inhabitants of that place, prompted by humanity, opening their doors for the relief, and pouring balm into the wounds, of the routed corps on the nineteenth of April. This in the eye of justice must enhance the atrocity, and forever stigmatize the ingratitude, which so soon after wrapped the town in flames, and sent out the naked inhabitants, the prey of poverty and despair.

There are few things which place the pride of man in a more conspicuous point of view, than the advantages claimed in all military rencontres that are not decisive. Thus, though at the expense of many lives, and the loss of some of their bravest officers, the British army exulted much in becoming masters of an unfinished entrenchment, and driving the Americans from their advanced post. Upwards of one thousand men, including the wounded, fell in this action on the royal side. Among the slain was lieutenant colonel Abercrombie, an officer much esteemed by his friends and his country, and a major Pitcairn, a gentleman of so much merit, that his fall was lamented even by his



enemies. His valor on this occasion would have reflected glory on his memory, had it been signalized in a more honorable cause.\*

CHAP. VI.

1775.

While this tragedy was acting on the other side of the Charles river, the terror and consternation of the town of Boston are scarcely describable. In the utmost anxiety, they beheld the scene from the eminences. Apprehensive for themselves, and trembling for their friends engaged in the bloody conflict, they were not less affected by the hideous shrieks of the women and children connected with the king's troops, who beheld their husbands, their friends, and relations, wounded, mangled, and slain, ferried over the river in boat-loads, from the field of carnage.

On the other side, though the Americans were obliged to quit the field with very considerable loss, yet they gloried in the honor they had this day acquired by arms. They retired only one mile from the scene of action, where they took possession of an advantageous height, and threw up new works on Prospect hill, with the enthusiasm of men determined to be free.

\* It may be observed, that his zeal in the cause in which he was engaged, had hurried him previous to this action to some steps that could not easily be forgiven by Americans, particularly by those who believed him to have been the officer, who first gave the order for the king's troops to fire on the militia assembling at Lexington, on their appearance.

CHAP. VI.

1775.

They soon environed the town of Boston on all sides with military parade, and though they wept the fall of many brave men, they bade a daily challenge to their enemies.

But a cloud was cast over every face by the death of the intrepid major general Joseph Warren, who, to the inexpressible grief of his countrymen, lost his life in the memorable action usually styled the battle of Bunker hill. He fell covered with laurels, choosing rather to die in the field, than to grace the victory of his foes by the triumph they would have enjoyed in his imprisonment. He had been chosen president of the provincial congress, when Mr. Hancock repaired to Philadelphia, and was an active volunteer in several skirmishes that had taken place since the commencement of hostilities, which in the minds of his enemies would have sanctioned the severest indignities their resentment might have dictated, had he fallen into their hands at this early period of the war.

This gentleman had been appointed a major general only four days previous to the late action : he was educated in the medical line, and was much respected for his professional as well as his political abilities. He possessed a clear understanding, a strong mind, a disposition humane and generous, with manners easy, affable, and engaging ; but zealous, active, and sanguine, in the cause of his oppressed country, it

is to be lamented, that he rather incautiously courted the post of danger, and rushed precipitately on his fate, while more important occasions required his paying some regard to personal safety. Yet, if the *love of fame* is the strongest passion of the mind, and human nature pants for distinction in the flowery field, perhaps there was never a moment of more unfading glory, offered to the wishes of the brave, than that which marked the *exit* of this heroic officer.

He was the first victim of rank that fell by the sword in the contest between Great Britain and America: and the conflagration of Charlestown, enkindled by the wanton barbarity of his enemies, lighted his *manes* to the grave. These circumstances ensure a record in every historical annal, while his memory will be revered by every lover of his country, and the name of *Warren* will be enrolled at the head of that band of patriots and heroes, who sacrificed their lives to purchase the independence of America.

After the late action, the British troops appeared to be in no condition for further operations; weakened by the severe engagement near Bunker hill, sickly in the camp, and disheartened by unexpected bravery, where they had feared no resistance; straitened for provisions, and destitute of forage, except what was piratically plundered from the neighbouring

CHAP. VI.

1775.

shores, they kept themselves shut up in Boston the remainder of the summer. Here they continued in so quiet a manner, that had they not sometimes for their own amusement saluted the country with the sound of a useless cannonade, or the bursting of a shell, the people might have forgotten, that the monarch of Britain had several thousand soldiers cooped up within the walls of a city that still acknowledged him as their sovereign. The inhabitants of the town were held in duress, but their military masters did not presume to enlarge their own quarters.

While this interesting scene had been acting in the field, the congress of the Massachusetts had sent on to Philadelphia for the opinion of the united delegates relative to their assumption of a regular form of government. Articles of confederation had been agreed to in general congress, in which a recapitulation of grievances, and the reasons for taking up arms were subjoined in terms little short of a declaration of war. These had been published in May, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five; but their ratification by legislative bodies, or provincial congresses, had not yet generally taken place. But as the independence of America was not yet formally declared, it was in contemplation with many members of congress, as well as others of equal judgment, that when all should be convinced, that the breach

between the two countries was totally irreconcilable, that the same modes of legislation and government should be adopted in all the colonies. It was then thought that a similarity of manners, police, and government, throughout the continent, would cement the union, and might support the sovereignty of each individual state, while yet, for general purposes, all should be in subordination to the congressional head.

An elegant writer has observed, that it is no easy matter to render the union of independent states perfect and entire, unless the genius and forms of their respective governments are in some degree similar. The judicious body assembled at Philadelphia were fully convinced of this; they were not insensible that a number of states, under different constitutions, and various modes of government and civil police, each regulated by their own municipal laws, would soon be swayed by local interests that might create irreconcilable feuds tending to disjoint the whole.\* It was therefore judged best, to re-

\* Congress had about this time adopted the resolution to advise each of the colonies explicitly to renounce the government of Great Britain, and to form constitutions of government for themselves, adequate to their exigencies, and agreeable to their own modes of thinking, where any variation of sentiment prevailed. This was acted upon, and a representative government, consisting of one or more branches, was adopted in each colony.



commend to the Massachusetts, the resumption of a regular form of government in the present exigence, on the plan of the old charter of William and Mary, which gave authority to the majority of counsellors, chosen by an house of representatives, to exercise all governmental acts, as if the governor was really absent or dead.

On this recommendation, James Warren, Esq. president of the provincial congress, by their authority, issued writs in his own name, requiring the frecholders in every town to convene, and elect their representatives, to meet at Wattertown on the twentieth of July, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. This summons was readily obeyed, and a full house appeared at the time and place appointed; the late president of the provincial congress was unanimously chosen speaker of the new house. Regardless of the vacant chair, they selected a council, and the two branches proceeded to legislation and the internal police of the province, as usually had been the practice in the absence of the governor and lieutenant governor.\*

Thus, after living for more than twelve months without any legal government, without law, and without any regular administration of justice, but what arose from the internal sense of moral obligation, which is seldom a

\* See Appendix, Note, No. XIV.

ufficient restraint on the people at large, the Massachusetts returned peaceably to the regular and necessary subordination of civil society. Reduced nearly to a state of nature with regard to all civil or authoritative ties, it is almost incredible, that the principles of rectitude and common justice should have been so generally influential. For, such is the restless and hostile disposition of man, that it will not suffer him to remain long in a state of repose, whether on the summit of human glory, or reclined on his own native turf, when probable contingencies promise him the acquisition of either wealth or fame. From the wants, the weakness, and the ferocity of human nature, mankind cannot subsist long in society, without some stable system of coercive power. Yet amidst the complicated difficulties with which they were surrounded, the horrors of anarchy were far from prevailing in the province: vice seemed to be abashed by the examples of moderation, disinterestedness, and generosity, exhibited by many of the patriotic leaders of present measures.

It has been observed already, that not a drop of blood had ever been spilt by the people in any of the commotions preceding the commencement of war, and that the fear of popular resentment was undoubtedly a guard on the conduct of some individuals. Others, checked by the frowns of public virtue, crimes of an atrocious nature had seldom been perpetrated: all classes seemed to be awed by the mag-

CHAP. VI.

1775.

nitide of the objects before them ; private disputes were amicably adjusted or postponed, until time and events should give the opportunity of legal decision, or render the claims of individuals of little consequence, by their being ingulfed in the torrent of despotism, generally poured out by the conqueror, who fights for the establishment of uncontrolled power,

## CHAPTER VII.

A Continental Army—Mr. Washington appointed to the Command.—General Gage recalled—succeeded by Sir William Howe.—Depredations on the Sea Coast—Falmouth burnt.—Canadian Affairs—Death and Character of General Montgomery.

FREEDOM, long hunted round the globe by a succession of tyrants, appeared at this period, as if about to erect her standard in America; the scimitar was drawn from principles, that held life and property as a feather in the balance against the chains of servitude that clanked in her disgusted ear. The blood of innocence had already crimsoned over the fields which had teemed for the nourishment of Britain, who, instead of listening to the groans of an oppressed country, had recently wrung out the tears of anguish, until the inhabitants of the plundered towns were ready to quit the elegancies of life, and take refuge in the forest, to secure the unimpaired possession of those privileges which they considered as a grant from heaven, that no earthly potentate had a right to seize with impunity.

The bulk of mankind have indeed, in all countries in their turn, been made the prey of ambition. It is a truth that no one will con-

test, though all may regret, that in proportion to the increase of wealth, the improvement in arts, and the refinements in society, the great body of the people have either by force or fraud, become the slaves of the few, who by chance, violence, or accident, have destroyed the natural equality of their associates. Sanctioned by time and habit, an indefeasible right has been claimed, that sets so mischievous a creature as man above all law, and subjects the lives of millions, to the rapacious will of an individual, who, by the intoxicating nature of power, soon forgets that there are any obligations due to the subject, a reptile in his opinion, made only for the drudgery necessary to maintain the splendor of government, and the support of prerogative. Every step taken by the British government, relative to the colonies, confirmed this truth, taught them their danger, and evinced to the Americans the necessity of guarding at all points, against the assumed jurisdiction of an assembly of men, disposed to innovate continually on the rights of their fellow subjects who had no voice in parliament, and whose petitions did not reach, or had no influence on the ear of the sovereign.

The success of the last supplicatory address offered to the parliament of Britain by the United States, still hung in suspense; yet the crisis appeared so alarming, that it was thought necessary by many, to attend immediately to the establishment of a continental army on



some stable and respectable footing. But there were some influential members in congress, who dreaded the consequence of a step so replete with the appearance of hostility, if not with the avowed design of independence; they observed, that such a measure would be an inevitable bar to the restoration of harmony.

CHAP. VI.

1775.

Some, who had warmly opposed the measures of administration, and ably advocated the rights of the colonies, were of this opinion. The idea of dissevering the empire, shocked their feelings; they still ardently wished, both from the principles of humanity, and what they judged the soundest policy, to continue if possible, the natural connexion with Britain. Others of a more timid complexion, readily united with these gentlemen, and urged, notwithstanding the contempt poured on all former supplications, that even, if their late petition should be rejected, they should yet make one effort more for conciliation and relief, by the hitherto fruitless mode of prayer and remonstrance. Men of more enlarged and comprehensive views, considered this proposal as the *finesse* of shallow politicians, designed only to prevent the organization of a continental army.

The celebrated Machiavel, pronounced by some the prince of politicians, has observed, "that every state is in danger of dissolution, "whose government is not frequently reduced

“to its original principles.” The conduct of the British administration towards the colonies, the corruption of the government in every department, their deviations from first principles, and the enormous public debt of the nation, evinced not only the necessity of a reform in parliament, but appeared to require such a renovation of the British constitution, as was not likely soon to take place. Thus circumstanced, many thought it the interest of America, to dissolve the connexion with such a government, and were utterly opposed to delay, or any further application to the British king or parliament, by petition or concession.

After a long debate on the subject, the last description of persons were obliged reluctantly to accede to a measure which they thought promised nothing but delay or disgrace. By a kind of necessary compromise, a most humble and loyal petition directly to the king of Great Britain, was again agreed to by the delegated powers of the United States. At the same time, it was stipulated by all parties, that military preparations should be made, and an army raised without farther hesitation. A decided majority in congress, voted, that twenty thousand men should be immediately equipped and supported at the expense of the United States of America. The honorable William Penn, late governor of Pennsylvania, was chosen agent to the court of Britain, and directed to

deliver the petition to the king himself, and to endeavor by his personal influence, to procure a favorable reception to this last address.

CHAP. VII.

1775.

The command of the army, by the unanimous voice of congress, was vested in George Washington, Esq. then a delegate from the State of Virginia. He received this mark of confidence, from his country, with becoming modesty, and declined all compensation for his services, more than should be sufficient to defray his expenditures, for which he would regularly account.

Mr. Washington was a gentleman of family and fortune, of a polite, but not a learned education; he appeared to possess a coolness of temper, and a degree of moderation and judgment, that qualified him for the elevated station in which he was now placed; with some considerable knowledge of mankind, he supported the reserve of the statesman, with the occasional affability of the courtier. In his character was blended a certain dignity, united with the appearance of good humour; he possessed courage without rashness, patriotism and zeal without acrimony, and retained with universal applause the first military command, until the establishment of independence. Through the various changes of fortune in the subsequent conflict, though the slowness of his movements was censured by some, his character suffered little diminution to the conclusion of a war, that

from the extraordinary exigencies of an infant republic, required at times, the caution of Fabius, the energy of Cæsar, and the happy facility of expedient in distress, so remarkable in the military operations of the illustrious Frederick.\* With the first of these qualities, he was endowed by nature ; the second was awakened by necessity ; and the third he acquired by experience in the field of glory and danger, which extended his fame through half the globe.

In the late war between England and France, Mr. Washington had been in several military rencounters, and had particularly signalized himself in the unfortunate expedition under general Braddock, in the wilderness on the borders of the Ohio, in the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty-five. His conduct on that occasion raised an *eclat* of his valor and prudence ; in consequence of which many young gentlemen from all parts of the continent, allured by the name of major Washington, voluntarily entered the service, proud of being enrolled in the list of officers under one esteemed so gallant a commander.

General Washington arrived at the camp at Cambridge in the neighbourhood of Boston, the beginning of July, one thousand, seven hun-

\* The late king of Prussia, well known for this trait in his character, by all who are acquainted with the history of his reign.



dred and seventy-five. He was accompanied by several officers of distinction from the southern states, and by Charles Lee and Horatio Gates, both natives of Great Britain, appointed now to high rank in the American army. There appeared much expectation from his abilities, and a general satisfaction in the appointment of Mr. Washington to the chief command. A congratulatory address, expressive of their esteem, with the strongest assurances of their aid and support, to enable him to discharge the duties of his arduous and exalted station, was presented him from the provincial congress of Massachusetts, through the hand of their president, James Warren. To this gentleman, general Washington brought letters of importance, and to him he was referred for advice by the delegates of the Massachusetts, as "a judicious, confidential friend, who would never deceive him."

In his reply to this address, general Washington observed, "That in leaving the enjoyments of domestic life, he had only emulated the virtue and public spirit of the whole province of Massachusetts Bay; who with a firmness and patriotism without example in history, had sacrificed the comforts of social and private felicity, in support of the rights of mankind, and the welfare of their country." Indeed all ranks were emulous to manifest their respect to the commander of the army. Multi-



tudes flocked from every quarter to the American standard, and within a few weeks the environs of Boston exhibited a brave and high spirited army, which formed to order, discipline, and subordination, more rapidly than could have been expected from their former habits. Fired with an enthusiasm arising from a sense of the justice of their cause; ardent, healthy, and vigorous; they were eager for action, and impatient to be led to an attack on the town of Boston, where the British army was encamped. But they were still ignorant that both private and political adventurers, had been so negligent of their own and the public safety, as to pay little attention to the importation of powder, arms, and other warlike stores, previous to the prohibition of Britain, restricting the shipment of those articles to America, but for the immediate use of the king's troops.

Thus when hostilities commenced, and a war was denounced against the colonies, they had innumerable difficulties to surmount. Several of the most formidable powers of Europe had been invited by Britain to aid the cruel purposes of administration, either by the loan of auxiliaries, or by a refusal of supplies to the infant states, now struggling alone against a foe, whose power, pride and success, had often made the nations tremble. On a retrospect of the critical situation of America, it is astonishing she did not fall at the threshold; she had new

governments to erect in the several states, her legislatures to form, and her civil police to regulate on untrodden ground. She had her armies to establish, and funds to provide for their payment: she had her alliances to negotiate, new sources of trade to strike out, and a navy to begin, while the thunder of Britain was alarming her coasts, the savages threatening her borders, and the troops of George the third, with the sword uplifted, pushing their execrable purpose to exterminate the last vestige of freedom.

CHAP VII.

1775.

But as Providence had led to the period of independence, the powers of industry and invention were called forth. Not discouraged by the magnitude of the work, or the numberless obstacles to the completion of their design, no difficulties damped the ardor and unanimity of their exertions, though for a time it appeared, as if their magazines must be furnished by the nitre from heaven, and the ore dug by their own hands from the bowels of the earth. The manufacture of salt-petre, at first considered as the ideal project of some enthusiast for freedom, was not only attempted, but became the easy occupation of women and children. Large quantities were furnished from many parts of America, and powder-mills were erected, which worked it with success. Sulphur, lead, and iron ore, are the natural productions of the country, and mountains of flint had recently

been discovered and wrought for use. As nature had thus furnished the materials, every hand that was not engaged in arms was employed in arts, with an alacrity and cheerfulness that discovered a determination to be free. Precipitated into a conflict that probably might light half Europe in flames, the demand was too great, and the process too slow, to rely entirely on the efforts of genius and industry.

When general Washington became fully apprized of the astonishing deficiency in the article of powder, having been led into a misapprehension of the stock on hand, by irregular returns, his embarrassment was great; he immediately applied for advice to the speaker of the house of representatives, who judged that the most prompt measures were indispensably necessary. They agreed that the speaker should communicate the circumstance to a few members who might be confidentially entrusted: the result was, that committees were immediately sent by the assembly to many towns in the province, in a cautious, guarded manner, to require the stocks of powder on hand in their several magazines. This was expeditiously effected, and with little difficulty; but the collection was very inadequate, yet sufficient to relieve the anxiety of the present moment. Happily they were not apprized within the walls of Boston, of the poverty of their antagonists without, particularly in this article, until they had time

to collect the small stocks from the neighbouring towns, and to receive some, though far from an ample supply, from the southern colonies. At this crisis, had general Gage ventured without his entrenchments, both the American army and the people, must have been involved in extreme distress.

CHAP. VII.

1775.

Several vessels had been privately sent both to the Dutch and English islands to procure arms and ammunition ; but so narrowly were they watched by the British cruisers, that they had returned with little success.

These circumstances accelerated a spirited measure, before contemplated only by a few ; the arming and equipping of ships to cruise on British property, was a bold attempt, that startled the apprehensions of many, zealously opposed to the undue exercise of British power ; but necessity impelled, and the enterprize was pursued. The general assembly of the Massachusetts soon resolved to build, equip and arm, a number of vessels suitable for the purpose, to cruise and capture any British ships that might be found on, or near their coasts. They granted letters of marque and reprisal to several adventurers, and appointed courts of admiralty for the trial and condemnation of any captures within those limits. By these means, the seasonable capture, in the beginning of this enterprize, of a British ship, laden with ordnance, and an assorted cargo of warlike stores, suffi-

1775.

ciently supplied the exigencies of the army, and dissipated the fears of those, who had suffered the most painful apprehensions for the safety of their country.

These naval preparations may perhaps be said, not to have been merely of a defensive nature, the line yet avowedly observed by the Americans; but they had advanced too far to recede; sophistical distinctions of words, or names, were laid aside. It is a fact, of which every one is sensible, that successful opposition to arbitrary sway, places a civic crown on the head of the hero that resists; when contingencies that defeat confer an hempen cord instead of a wreath of laurel. The success and catastrophe of the infant navy of America, will be shewn in the succeeding pages.

The naked state of the magazines had been kept as secret as possible, and every preparation for attack or defence, had been made, as if no deficiency was felt, while there were not three rounds of powder in the American camp. Lines of circumvallation had been formed from Mystick river to Roxbury and Dorchester. But, notwithstanding the appearance of strength, the collection of numbers, and the hostile disposition of both parties, nothing of consequence was attempted by either, after the action of the seventeenth of June, during the remainder of Gage's



administration. This inactivity was heavily censured by the more ardent spirits both within and without the camp; it was thought disgraceful on the one side, nor would it have been less dishonorable on the other, had not their inability from the causes just mentioned prevented more vigorous movements. Yet, from the circumstances of the colonies, their petition to the king still pending, and their allegiance not formally renounced, it was judged by many, most prudent for the American army, to remain for the present only on the defensive.

Governor Gage obtained leave to repair to England in the autumn of one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. It was indeed unfortunate for him, that he had been appointed to the command of an army and the government of a province, without the talents that qualified for the times. He was naturally a man of a humane disposition, nor had his courage ever been impeached; but he had not the intrigue of the statesman to balance the parties, nor the sagacity necessary to defeat their designs; nor was he possessed of that soldierly promptitude that leaves no interval between the determination and the execution of his projects. Glad to quit the thorny field, he bade adieu to a country he had not the ability, and perhaps not the inclination to subdue, and the command of the army devolved on Sir William Howe.

1775.

General Oglethorpe, his senior in office, an experienced veteran, grown old in military *fame* without fullying his laurels, had the prior offer of this command. He agreed to accept the appointment on condition the ministry would authorize him to assure the colonies, that justice should be done them. His proposal at once appeared the result of humanity and equity; he declared, that “he knew the people of America well; that they never would be subdued by arms, but that their obedience would be ever secured by doing them justice.”\* A man with these ideas was not a fit instrument for the designs of the British government: he was therefore, agreeable to his own request, permitted to remain at home, where he was a quiet spectator of the folly of his country through a seven years war with the colonies.† On his declining the appointment, the important and hazardous command was given to general Howe, a man of pleasure and a foldier; but the predominancy of the

\* British Annual Register.

† General Oglethorpe had been distinguished for the benevolence of his disposition through all his transactions in America, where he had resided several years. His mildness and equity towards the natives in the early settlement of the state of Georgia, and his conduct both in a civil and military capacity, had won the esteem and affection of the inhabitants of the southern colonies, the approbation of his sovereign, and the applause of his native country.

Modern Universal History, vol. XL.

first trait in his character often interfered with the vigour and decision necessary to complete the last. Early on his promotion, his severity and indiscretion erased the favorable impression which many in America yet cherished for his name and family.

In the beginning of his administration, he published a proclamation condemning to military execution any of the remaining inhabitants of Boston, who should attempt to leave the town; he compelled them to form themselves into bodies under officers he should appoint, and to take arms in case of an attack, against their brethren in the country. Yet for a certain sum of money, he promised an exemption from the cruel task of imbruing their hands in the blood of their friends. But the most memorable event that took place, while he presided in the province, previous to the evacuation of Boston, was the cannonade and destruction of Falmouth, a flourishing and well-built town in the eastern parts of the Massachusetts.

Alarm and depredation had spread from shore to shore through all the sea coasts of America; their shipping were seized, their islands plundered, their harbors infested by the landing of marauding parties, and many places threatened with immediate conflagration. Bristol, near Rhode Island, had been attacked in a dark

stormy night, and an hundred and twenty cannon fired on that defenceless town within an hour. Many houses were injured, and some set on fire; a remarkable sickness had raged in the town for some time, and the languishing inhabitants were now hurried into the streets in their beds, to preserve them from immediate death in the conflagration of their houses.\* This was an uncivil mode of demanding a tax of cattle, sheep, and hogs, for the supply of the squadron of captain (afterwards) Sir James Wallace, who had for many months harassed and distressed the state of Rhode Island.

This rude attack upon Bristol, took place only eight days previous to the wanton desolation which on the eve of winter stripped the inhabitants of Falmouth, both of shelter and provisions, and drove them naked into the wilderness, uncertain of any accommodations to secure them from the inclemency of the season. One captain Mowatt, who had recently been a prisoner there, and had received the most hospitable treatment from the inhabitants, was the instrument to execute this deed of unprovoked barbarity. It is true he notified the town, that “he would give them two hours

\* The Rev. Mr. Burt, distinguished for his piety, benevolence, and attachment to the liberties of his country, was found dead in a field the morning after the conflagration. He had fled from his bed where he was confined by sickness, to escape the flames that consumed his house.

“ to remove the *human species*, at the period of  
 “ which term, a red pendant would be hoisted  
 “ at the main-top-gallant-mast head, and that  
 “ on the least resistance he should be freed from  
 “ all humanity dictated by his orders or his in-  
 “ clination.”\*

Three gentlemen repaired on board his ship to inquire the reason of this extraordinary summons. Mowatt replied, that “ he had orders “ to set on fire all the sea-port towns from Bos- “ ton to Halifax, and that he supposed New- “ York was already in ashes.” He said, “ he “ could dispense with his orders on no terms “ but the compliance of the inhabitants to de- “ liver up their arms and ammunition, and their “ sending on board a supply of provisions, four “ carriage-guns, and the same number of the “ principal persons in the town, as hostages, that “ they should engage not to unite with their “ country in any kind of opposition to Bri- “ tain.” He assured them that on a refusal of these conditions, he should lay the town in ashes within three hours.

Unprepared for such an attack, and intimidated by the roar of cannon, which began to play on the town, the people supplicated a suspension till the morning before they replied to the humiliating proposal. They improved the

\* The above is an exact copy of Mowatt's letter. See British Remembrancer.



short reprieve which with difficulty they obtained, in removing their families and effects ; after which they made no further resistance, not even to the marines who landed with lighted torches to make the devastation complete. In this defenceless situation, the inhabitants considered opposition only as a useless waste of human life, and many of them stood on the heights, the passive spectators of the fire that played on the town through the day. They beheld with various emotions, a conflagration that reduced many of them to penury and despair ; thus, were they prepared for the occupation of soldiers, and driven to the field from the double motive of resentment and the necessity of immediate subsistence.

New York, Stonington, Newport, and many other places were threatened, but did not experience a similar fate. The last, situated on an island, was obliged to stipulate for a weekly supply, to save their town from the fury of the piratical corsairs that surrounded them, who proudly boasted of the civility and generosity of their nation. England has indeed been long celebrated for magnanimity, clemency, and humanity ; but it is with nations as with individuals, when human nature falls from virtue, it generally sinks into the extremes of vice, in proportion as it was before conspicuous for superior excellence.

Thus, the monarch divested of compassion, and the ministry of principle, the naval strength of Britain, the mistress of the seas, and the terror of Europe, was employed to interrupt the commerce, lay waste the cities, destroy the towns, and plunge the inhabitants of America in misery and despair; forgetful that she was ever contributing by the acquisitions of her industry to the strength of Britain. Nor was America yet sufficiently irritated, to renounce her allegiance to the king, or relinquish her connexion with England, cemented by the strong ties of habit and consanguinity, language, religion, and manners. Yet, though there was no formal dissolution of the legal bands that had united them, the frequent outrages experienced by Americans, convinced them of the necessity of some effectual naval preparations on their part. This was so obvious, that Congress no longer delayed acting with decision on a measure that had been balanced by various opinions. They directed general Washington to contract for a number of armed vessels to cruise abroad, to defend the sea coasts at home, and as far as it was practicable, to capture British property wherever it might be found.

Many gentlemen, sanguine in opinion, that an American navy was no *Utopian* project, but that her marine might rapidly rise to a respectable height, engaged with an energy that sel-

dom fails of carrying into execution any attempt the human mind, on principles of reason, is capable of forming. They accordingly built on the large rivers from Portsmouth to Pennsylvania, a number of vessels, row-gallies, and frigates, from four to forty guns; fitted, manned, and completely equipped them for sea in the course of a few months. All encouragement was given both to public and private adventurers who engaged in the sea service; success was equal to expectation; many very valuable prizes, and a vast number of provision vessels from England, Ireland, and Nova Scotia, were captured, and by this means the Americans were soon supplied, not only with the necessaries for war, but with the conveniences and the luxuries of life.

While things remained in this situation in Boston, and along the Atlantic shore, a very busy and important scene was acting in another quarter of America. The conquest of Quebec by the immortal *Wolfe*, in conjunction with the bold and hardy New Englanders, is a story well known in the annals of Britain. On the peace concluded with France at Fontainbleau, in the duke of Bedford's administration, the whole province of Canada was ceded to the crown of England, in lieu of more valuable acquisitions relinquished to France. Most of the inhabitants of the country were French, some of them noble, and all of them attached to their former

master. The Roman Catholic faith was the established religion of the country, yet the Canadians were in all respects to be governed according to the laws of England, until the Quebec bill, the subject of much political disunion in England, passed into an act, in one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four. This act cut the Canadians off from the privileges of English subjects, denied them an assembly of their own on the principles of the British constitution, deprived them of the trial by jury in civil processes; the laws of France were restored, and the boundaries of the province were extended far beyond the just limits: the Roman Catholic religion also was not only to be tolerated, but was established by act of parliament. This was very offensive both to the French and the English inhabitants, who found their interests inseparably connected. These new regulations were made with a view of fixing the Canadians more firmly in the interest of the ministry; but as they had tasted the advantages of a less despotic government, the people in general had adopted more liberal modes of thinking, both in civil and religious matters; and most of the inhabitants were equally dissatisfied with the late parliamentary regulations.

The Quebec act, unpopular in England, and alarming in America, was particularly disgusting to all the English settlers in Canada, ex-

cept a few individuals employed by the crown. Neither the authority of administration, nor the address of governor Carleton, was sufficient to quiet the disorders that arose, or to induce the Canadians in this early stage of the dispute, to take arms to assist in the subjugation of the other colonies. They murmured loudly at the measures of the British government; they refused peremptorily to act against the United States, and several of the principal English inhabitants corresponded with some of the members of Congress, and encouraged the measures that were taken to bring the province of Canada into an union with the thirteen colonies.

Thus it required no small intrigue to instigate even the savages who delight in blood, to the commission of unprovoked hostilities, which would interrupt the traffic carried on between them and the frontiers of the other provinces. It has been justly observed, “that the introduction of barbarians and savages into the contests of civilized nations, is a measure pregnant with shame and mischief, which the interest of a moment may impel, but which is reprobated by the best principles of humanity and reason.”\* But these were not the principles on which the American war was conducted. Congress had authentic information, that every method was used to induce the savages

\* Gibbon on the decline and fall of the Roman empire.



to take up the hatchet against the Americans. Several conferences had been held the preceding summer, with many of their chiefs assembled at Montreal. This was in consequence of the machinations of colonel Johnson, a famous Indian partisan in the last war, whose influence among them was very extensive. In these conferences he gave each of them a war belt and a tomahawk; invited them to drink the blood, and feast on the body of a *Bostonian*, and to sing the war-song over a roasted bullock and a pipe of wine he had prepared for the purpose; but several of them declined either to eat, drink, or sing the barbarous song. They afterwards delivered up the black belt with the hatchet depicted thereon, to some of the American officers.\*

These transactions were considered as incontrovertible proof, that administration was determined to employ as their allies, the fierce and numerous *hordes* of the wilderness, to subdue and butcher the Americans, even before they had thrown off their allegiance to the crown of Britain. It had also been recently discovered, that governor Carleton had received a commission, authorizing him to muster and arm all persons residing within the province of Canada, and, “as occasion should require, to march and embark the levies to any of the provinces of

\* General Schuyler's letter, Dec. 14th, 1775, published by order of congress.

CHAP. VII.

1775.

“ America, to pursue and prosecute either by  
 “ sea or land, all enemies, pirates, or rebels,  
 “ either in or out of the province ; and if it  
 “ should so please God, them to vanquish, to  
 “ take, and so apprehended, according to law,  
 “ them to put to death, or to preserve alive, at  
 “ his discretion.”\*

A detail of the sufferings of one family will evince the wretched situation of all in that province who had the courage to complain of the measures of administration, or indulged a favorable opinion of the exertions of the other colonies. The singular mode of bending the minds of men of liberal opinions to the designs of government, was first experimented on Mr. Walker, an English gentleman of fortune and abilities, who had been many years a resident at Montreal. His avowed dislike of the Quebec bill, drew on him the resentment of the officers of government, and involved him in altercation and danger. He had, in answer to the servile maxim—“ *Qui le roi, est maitre*”—repeated by one Rouvelle, coolly replied, that “ with regard  
 “ to monsieur Rouvelle, it might be so, as he  
 “ ate his majesty’s bread ;” but added, “ I deny  
 “ that the king is *my master* : I respect him as  
 “ my lawful sovereign, and am ready to pay

\* The whole of general Carleton’s extraordinary commission may be seen in the parliamentary register of Nov. 2d, in the second sessions of the then parliament.

“due obedience to his lawful commands ; but  
 “I cannot acknowledge any one as *my master*  
 “while I live by my own industry ; when I re-  
 “ceive pay from the king, perhaps my ac-  
 “knowledgments may be equally submissive.”  
 Rouvelle immediately informed general Carleton of this conversation ; his prudence was commended, and he was soon after appointed one of the judges of the supreme court at Montreal. This appointment was equally astonishing to the French inhabitants, as it was disgusting to the English. Men of all descriptions had a very ill opinion of Rouvelle. The recent conversation between him and Mr. Walker was misrepresented and exaggerated. The partisans of the crown and the officers of the army were highly exasperated against him ; and soon after, resentment was carried so far as to attempt the assassination of Mr. Walker.

CHAP. VII.

1775.

A number of soldiers under the command of a captain Disney, entered his house in the evening, when at supper with a few friends. On a sudden noise at the door of the hall, Mrs. Walker imagined it to be some Canadians, who had been the preceding day on business with Mr. Walker, as an officer of justice. Without any hesitation she pronounced *entrez* ; but to her inexpressible surprise, the next moment she saw through the glasses of the inner door, a number of faces, some of them blacked, others covered with a vizard of crape, all rising on the steps, and rushing with

precipitation into the room: in an agony of surprife ſhe exclaimed, “ Good God, this is “ murder !” Mr. Walker fat with his back to the door, and before he had time to riſe, he received from one of the ruffians, a violent ſtroke of a broad ſword on his head; he attempted to recover his arms and defend himſelf, but wounded in a moſt cruel manner, he funk motionleſs on the floor, when one of the villains kneeled on his breaſt, and cut off his right ear, while he ſo far retained his ſenſes as to hear one of them ſay, “ damn him, he is dead.”

After recovering from his wounds, he commenced a civil proceſs againſt Diſney and his party. The crime was proved with all its atrocious aggravations, but juſtice had not its operation, either in compenſation to the ſufferer, or puniſhment of the guilty. Mr. Walker finding himſelf unſafe in the city, retired to his country-houſe, determined to amuſe himſelf with his books and his farm, without farther attention to political or public ſcenes; but his perfecution was not at an end; he had not long reſided in his villa, before he was moleſted in a ſtill more barbarous manner.

A party of thirty ſoldiers was ſent by governor Carleton, to bring him dead or alive to Quebec. They ſurrounded his houſe juſt before day, and ſummoned him to ſurrender. Inſtead of a compliance, he courageouſly endea-

voured to defend himself and his family, until the party without set fire to his house in several places, when he was obliged to escape the flames by throwing himself from the third story. In the fall from a window of such a height, one of his legs was broken, which left him to the mercy of his antagonists, who made him their prisoner, and conducted him to Quebec, where he was loaded with irons, denied the use of pen, ink, and paper, and forbidden even the light of a taper in his darksome cell.

Mrs. Walker, a lady of great elegance and sensibility, had in the terror of the night, leaped from a second story window, and walked through the snow till exhausted by fear and fatigue, she was overtaken by one of the party, who had the compassion to throw his cloak over her, and conduct her to a neighbouring house. She soon after made her escape from that part of the country over the lakes, accompanied by the commissioners, congress had some time before sent on, to confer with and secure the interest of the Canadians. The boat in which she crossed one of those inland seas, passed another almost within call, which conveyed her husband a prisoner to Quebec.

It has already been observed, that an address had been sent by Congress to the inhabitants of Canada, couched in nervous, friendly and pathetic terms, reminding them of their com-



CHAP. VII.

1775.

mon danger, and urging them to a union with the other colonies in defence of their common rights. But the mixture of French, British, American, and savage inhabitants of that country, rendered it very uncertain how far the other colonies might depend on the aid or friendship of the Canadians. Congress apprized of the situation of affairs there, judged it prudent to endeavour to engage the people of all descriptions in that quarter, more firmly to the interest of the union. It was thought a favorable crisis for this purpose, when the flower of the British troops then in America, were shut up in Boston; and when the governors of the southern provinces, interrupted in their negotiations with the Indians, had taken refuge on board the king's ships, either from real or imagined personal danger. This was an important business, as whoever possesses Canada will in a great measure command the numerous tribes beyond the lakes. A respectable delegation was sent to Montreal, to treat with the white inhabitants, and as far as possible to conciliate or secure the copper-colored nations.

The importance of possessing Canada, strongly impressed the minds at this time, of gentlemen of the first penetration. A very respectable committee was sent by congress into the country, with Dr. Franklin at the head of the mission; whose talents as a statesman, perfect knowledge of the French language, extensive

literary acquaintance with that nation, urbanity of manners, courteous deportment, united with a prudent reserve, marked him as a suitable character to negotiate with, and endeavour to attach the Canadians of all descriptions to the American union. Mr. Carrol of Maryland, a clergyman of the Roman Catholic profession, was sent on with the delegation, to administer the ordinances of religion, baptism, absolution, &c., which they had been denied for some time by their clergy under British influence; who, instead of bestowing the blessings of the church, had denounced their anathemas, to the great grievance of many tender consciences, and threatened the vengeance of heaven, as well as earth, on failure of due submission to parliamentary mandates.

These efforts to engage and fix the Canadians to a certain point failed; the committee returned with little success. Words and professions are of little avail when the sword is, or is about to be, lifted for decision. Congress now found that a force sufficient to strengthen the hands of their friends in that province, was the only mode to be relied on. In consequence of this necessity, they directed two regiments of New York militia, and a body of New Englanders, consisting in the whole of about three thousand men, to proceed under the command of the generals Schuyler and Montgomery, by the lake

CHAP. VII.

1775.

Champlain to the river Sorel, which empties itself into the St. Lawrence, and immediately attempt the reduction of Quebec. They arrived at the *Iſle Noix*, which lies at the entrance of that river, in the autumn of one thousand ſeven hundred and ſeventy-five.

The commander there publiſhed a declaration announcing the reaſons of this movement, and inviting the inhabitants of every deſcription to arrange themſelves under the banners of liberty, and unite in the common cauſe of America. After this, they immediately puſhed on through woods, ſwamps, and moraffes, to a fort about twelve miles diſtance: here, an unexpected attack from a large body of Indians, obliged them to retreat to their former poſt, and wait the arrival of reinforcements.

On this retreat to the *Iſle Noix*, general Schuyler immediately returned to Albany; the oſtenſible reaſon was, the broken ſtate of his health, which indeed was ſo impaired, as to render him unfit for the fatigue of ſuch a ſervice. Thus the whole weight of the war in that quarter, was left to the intrepid Montgomery; who though qualified by his courage, capacity, and military experience, was not in force ſufficient for ſo great an undertaking. He, however, notwithstanding the vigilance of general Carleton, made himſelf maſter of the forts of Chamblee and St. John's, and with various other ſucceſſes

arrived at Montreal, about the middle of November. General Carleton had arrived there some time before, and had made every exertion for the preservation of all the posts in the neighbourhood, as well as those above mentioned; but the people disaffected, and his army weak, his efforts were blasted, and he thought himself happy to escape the vigilance of Montgomery; who had placed guards at every post for his interception: he, however, in a dark night, in an open boat, fortunately passed them all, and arrived at Quebec in safety.

When general Montgomery arrived at Montreal, the inhabitants, both French and English, wished to surrender by capitulation; but with a spirit and dignity consistent with his usual character, he refused this, though at the same time he gave them the strongest assurances of justice, security, and personal safety. He pledged his honor for their peaceable possession of their property, and the free exercise of their religion: he expressed in liberal terms, his disposition to protect the inhabitants on the same footing with the other American colonies. He then demanded the possession of the gates, and the keys of all the public stores, and ordered them to be delivered by nine o'clock the ensuing morning. Accordingly the gates were thrown open, and his troops entered at the appointed hour: thus without the smallest resistance, he took possession of this important post. He treated every

class of inhabitants with that lenity and politeness, which at once attached them to his person, strengthened their prejudices against the British government, and cherished the favorable ideas many had before imbibed, both of the Americans, and the cause in which they were engaged.

When Montgomery had made all proper arrangements for the security and peace of Montreal, he prepared immediately to go forward and invest Quebec, then in a weak, defenceless condition, their governor absent, the inhabitants disaffected, and but an handful of troops in the garrison. When general Carleton left the neighbourhood of Montreal, he made the utmost dispatch to reach and put the capital of Canada in a proper state of defence ; but he found Quebec in the greatest consternation and danger, from a quarter not apprehended, and scarcely conceived possible, from the novelty and hazard of the undertaking.

A detachment of upwards of one thousand men had been marched from the army near Boston. The command of this little band had been given to colonel Arnold, a young soldier of fortune, who held in equal contempt both danger and principle. They took passage at Merrimack, and arrived at the mouth of the Kennebeck on the twenty-second of September. There, finding it probable their provisions



might fall short, when there could be no possibility of a fresh supply, Arnold sent back three hundred of his men.\* Most of the remainder embarked in batteaux prepared for the purpose: a small division of the troops marched slowly, and kept the banks of the river.

They encamped together every night, though frequently interrupted in their progress, by rocks, falls, rapids, and carrying-places, where they were obliged to carry their boats for several miles together on their shoulders. With incredible perseverance, they traversed woods, mountains, swamps, and precipices, and were obliged alternately to cut their way where no human foot had trodden, to ford shallows, or attempt the navigation of a rapid stream, with a rocky bottom, which seemed not designed as a passage for any human being to attempt. At the same time their provisions were so reduced, that they were obliged to eat their own dogs, and convert their shoe-leather into food.

But with astonishing resolution, they surmounted every obstacle, and near two thirds of the detachment completed a *route* of several hundred miles, through an hideous wilderness, unexplored before but by the beasts and savages of the forest. It was at the time thought, that if the historian did justice to the heroic firmness

\* These appeared ready to desert with a field officer at their head, if they had not been permitted to return.

of this little party, that it would be as honorable a testimony of the exertions of human intrepidity, as the celebrated march of the renowned Hannibal: but the enterprising spirit of America has since taught her sons to tread over a track of the forlorn desert so much more extensive, that this now appears but an epitome of their hardihood.

Colonel Arnold with his little army almost exhausted by hunger and fatigue, reached the Canadian settlements on the third of November. He was received in a friendly manner, and a liberal supply of provisions was collected for his relief. By the alacrity of the inhabitants, he was in a few days furnished with boats to cross the St. Lawrence, and by favor of the night he effected his passage, in spite of the vigilance of several frigates that lay in the river. When he sat down before Quebec, he found all the batteries manned from the shipping; but having no artillery, he could do little more than parade before the city, and wait the arrival of general Montgomery.

In the mean time, general Carleton was not idle; every preparation that courage or vigilance could dictate, was made for the reception of Montgomery. He ordered by proclamation, all who refused to take arms, immediately to quit the city with their wives and children, on peril of being treated with the utmost severity,

as rebels and traitors to their king. Many of them obeyed, and abandoned their residence and property. The Scotch inhabitants and the French *noblesse*, he could at that time firmly rely on; all others, disgusted with the Quebec act, and alienated by the severity of the governor, were in a temper to renounce their loyalty, and join the Americans. Yet the fear of losing their property in the confusion that might ensue, if the city was obliged to change its masters, operated on some, and caused them to arm, though with great reluctance. The consideration of pecuniary losses will always have a powerful influence on the minds of men: thus, the zeal which had been nurtured for the defence of liberty, soon began to abate; and both English and Canadians, actuated by the principle of immediate self-interest, concealed their former defection to the British government. Many of them were wealthy and opulent, and became daily more disposed to unite in defence of the town, which contained more families in opulent circumstances, than all the province besides.

After placing a garrison in Montreal, new clothing his troops, and stationing some small detachments in the out-posts in the neighbourhood, general Montgomery sent a few troops to different parts of the province, to expedite farther supplies of provisions, clothing, and other necessaries. He then pushed on his march beneath the fall of snows, embarrassed

CHAP. VII.

1775.

with bad roads, a severe winter, an inhospitable climate, and the murmur of his little army. The term of their enlistment was nearly expired; nothing kept them together but their attachment to their commander, and that zeal in the public cause, which had already prompted them to encounter perils and endure hardships, which the human constitution seems not calculated to surmount, after being softened by the habits of civilized life. But by the address of the commander, and the resolution of the troops, they with incredible expedition arrived at Quebec, notwithstanding the impediments that lay in their way.

The soldiers in garrison, with the marines from the king's frigates, that had been placed therein, and the armed militia, both French and English, did not amount to more than two thousand men when the army arrived from Montreal; but by the intrepidity of general Carleton, and the activity of his officers, they had prepared for defence with the spirit of veterans. They rejected with disdain a summons from Montgomery to surrender the town, to prevent the fatal consequences of its being taken by storm; fired on the flag that offered to convey letters with proposals for capitulation, obliged it to retire, and all communication was forbidden by the inflexible Carleton.

General Montgomery after this, sent a second letter\* by colonel Arnold and Mr. Macpherson, his aid-de-camp, to general Carleton. He upbraided him with personal ill-treatment, with the cruelty exercised towards the prisoners that had fallen into his hands, and with the unparalleled conduct, except among savages, of firing at a flag of truce. He warned him not to destroy either public or private stores, as he had done at Montreal, and kept up a tone of superiority as if sure of success. The messengers reached the walls of Quebec, but were ordered to decamp with speed, and informed that the governor would receive no letters or hold any intercourse with rebels.

Thus circumstanced, general Montgomery judged that immediate and decided action, was the only means of serving his country, and securing to himself that renown, which the lustre of his former conduct had acquired. Thus, depending too much on his own good fortune, and too little acquainted with the arrangement and vigor within the walls, he resolved on the dangerous and desperate measure of an effort to take the city by *escalade*. He made his dispositions accordingly, and under the cover of a violent snow-storm, his army in four separate divi-

\* See general Montgomery's letter, December 6, 1775. Appendix, Note No. XV.



sions, began the arduous work at the same moment, early on the morning of the thirty-first of December.

But the enemy had gained intelligence of his movements, the alarm had been given, and a signal made for a general engagement in the lower town, some time before Montgomery had reached it. He however pushed on through a narrow passage, with a hanging rock on the one side, and a dangerous precipice of the banks of the river on the other, and with a resolution becoming his character, he gained the first barrier. Warmed with the spirit of magnanimity and a thirst for glory, the inseparable companions of exalted minds, he met undaunted the fire of his enemies, and accompanied by some of his bravest officers, he rushed on to attack a well-defended barricade. But to the regret of the army, the grief of his country, and the inexpressible sorrow of his numerous friends, the valiant Montgomery, with the laurels fresh blooming on his brow, fell at the gates by a random shot from the frozen walls of Quebec.

Connected with one of the first families in New York,\* happy in the highest enjoyment of domestic felicity, he was led by principle to quit the occupations of rural life; and animated with an ardent zeal for the cause of human nature, the liberties of mankind, and the glory of Amer-

\* He married a daughter of judge Livingston.

ica, both his active life, and his heroic death, verified his last expression to his amiable lady....  
 “*You shall never blush for your Montgomery.*”\*

CHAP. VII.

1775.

His philosophic taste, his pleasing manners, his private virtues, and his military abilities, were acknowledged and revered even by his enemies, who cannot but pronounce the Canadian fields are marked with peculiar glory. It is there the choicest flowers of fame may be culled to crown the memory of a Wolfe and a Montgomery. Yet, while one of those illustrious names, written in characters of blood, reflects lustre on the glory of a British monarch, the other will announce to posterity, the efforts of virtue to resist the tyranny of his successor.

General Montgomery was justly considered as an early martyr in the cause of freedom, and the premature stroke that robbed his country of an officer of tried bravery and decided merit, was not only bewailed by his friends, but excited the tear of generous compassion from all those who were susceptible of the nobler feelings of the soul, among such as were opposed to him in political opinion. The animosities of war, and the enmities created by different sentiments, or rivalry in fame, should ever expire with the life of a hero. Yet the obsequies of this great

\* The writer of these annals had the particulars of his last adieu, in a letter from his lady immediately after his death.

CHAP. VII.

1775.

and amiable man, were not attended with those honorary marks of respect, usually paid to illustrious military characters, when victory has facilitated resentment: his body was thrown into a sledge, and without even a coffin, conveyed to the place of burial. The manner of general Montgomery's interment, was at first reported much more to the honor of governor Carleton; but the above account is from the testimony of several respectable American officers then in Quebec.\* By the persuasion of a lady who afterwards married the lieutenant governor of Quebec, who had formerly served in the British army with general Montgomery, the body of this worthy officer was taken up, and again interred in a rough coffin, but without any particular marks of respect. The other officers who fell, were indiscriminately thrown with their clothes on, into the same grave with their foldiers.

The death of general Montgomery decided the fate of the day, though colonel Arnold and his party with great bravery kept up the attack; nor did they quit the field until after Arnold was obliged to retire, having received a dangerous wound. Notwithstanding this accident, added to the unspeakable loss of their brave commander, this small resolute party kept

\* Particularly captain, afterwards general, Dearborn; taken prisoner at the attempt on the second barrier.

their ground, until galled on every side, attacked in the rear, and their retreat cut off by a British party, who found means to secure a passage that prevented even the attempt, yet they kept up an obstinate defence for several hours, but at last were obliged to surrender themselves prisoners of war.\*

CHAP. VII.

1775.

Though the manes of their commander in chief had not been treated with that generosity which is usually the result of true magnanimity, yet general Carleton treated the prisoners that afterwards fell into his hands, with more humanity; their wounds were dressed, their wants relieved, and his own physicians sent to visit the sick. He also endeavoured to recal those, who, after the defeat, had taken shelter in the woods, or such as had been left sick or wounded on the way, after the retreat; and by proclamation, he promised liberty to all the unhappy stragglers, when they should be cured of their wounds and diseases.

After the death of Montgomery, the retreat of Arnold, and a surrender of a considerable

\* Most of the American officers distinguished themselves by their intrepidity and vigilance on this fated day; but none more than colonel Morgan, who seemed to be adapted by nature, by his strength of body, vigor of mind, and unconquerable resolution, for the severe conflicts of war. This was afterwards exemplified in the many rencounters he met in the ravage of the Carolinas.

part of his troops, the broken forces collected and retired about three miles from the city. There they kept up a kind of blockade through the winter; and by the spirit of Arnold, on whom the command had devolved, and the vigilance of his party, they prevented in a great measure, additional recruits and supplies for the relief of the city. This there was every reason to expect would be attempted, not only from the difficulties of their situation within the city, but from the fickleness of the Canadians without, and their manifest disposition to enlist under the banners of success. From their local circumstances, this change of temper might from the beginning have been apprehended, from those pretended allies of the United States. Their neighbourhood and connexion with the savages, their long habit of oscillating between England and France, and their ignorance in general of the grounds of the dispute, must naturally render their fidelity to the states, under the jurisdiction of Congress, very uncertain.

But we leave the lakes, the wilderness, the savages, and their employers in that quarter, for the present, to observe for a time, the interesting movements on the borders of the Atlantic, and the disposition discovered by the ancient parent of the colonies, which soon produced consequences of the highest moment. It may,



however, be proper to observe here, that general Arnold extricated himself in a remarkable manner from his embarrassments in this quarter ; and lived to be conspicuously distinguished through the American war, for his bravery and address, his activity, and his villany.

CHAP. VII.

---

1775.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Diffensions in the British Parliament.—Petition of Governor Penn rejected.—Boston evacuated.—Sir Henry Clinton sent to the Southward—Followed by General Lee—His Character.—Sir Peter Parker's Attack on Sullivan's Island.—General Howe's Arrival at Sandy-Hook.—General Washington leaves Cambridge.—Observations on the Temper of some of the Colonies.

CHAP. VIII.

1775.

WHILE as above related, a busy and important scene was exhibited at the northward, the southern colonies were parrying the embarrassments created by the royal governors, some of whom had recently left America. The people were gradually laying aside the prejudices which mankind generally imbibe for old established governments, and were preparing themselves for new modes, if necessity should impel, whenever the delegates with whom they had entrusted their rights, should judge affairs fully ripened for a declaration of independence, and a final separation from Britain. The American congress was yet waiting the result of their late petition to the throne, with a degree of temper and moderation scarcely paralleled, among men possessing the unlimited confidence of their country on the one side, and on the other irritated by the neglect and contempt of their oppressors, and the rude insults of ministerial menace.

Thus suspended on the wing of expectation, or rather an unfounded and fruitless hope, every thing remained quiet at head-quarters, through the winter of one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six. No attempt was made against Boston by the American army, nor did general Howe shew any disposition to fall from the town, and interrupt the tranquillity of the camp. In short, the British army, engrossed by the pleasures of the town, and the exhibition of *farces* composed by one of their general officers,\* became so inactive, and appeared so inoffensive, that the Americans (little less disposed to indulge in the pleasures of peace) enjoyed at Cambridge the conviviality of the season. The ladies of the principal American officers repaired to the camp. Harmony and hospitality, united with that simplicity which had hitherto been characteristic of the domestic taste, style, and manners of the most respectable Americans, reigned among them for several months, without the smallest interruption. Civility and mutual forbearance appeared between the officers of the royal and continental armies, and a frequent interchange of flags was indulged, for the gratification of the different partisans.

\* General Burgoyne, whose genius for these literary productions was afterwards displayed more to his honor.

CHAP. VIII.

1775.

But notwithstanding the reluctance to action, observable in two powerful and contiguous armies, the wheels of revolution were rolling on in swift progression. The approach of spring lowered with the fate of empire, the birth of nations, and the painful convulsions experienced by every state, struggling to retrieve and permanently secure the rights of nature, seized or curtailed by the strong hand of power.

Through the last ten years, the British ministry had been repeatedly changed, and though none of them, except the duke of Grafton and the marquis of Rockingham,\* who had figured at the head of administration, had shewn any disposition to do justice to America, yet the counsels of the cabinet had been kept in continual fluctuation. From the retirement of lord Bute, in one thousand seven hundred and sixty-six, there had been an extraordinary variety and succession of characters in the colonial department. The lords Grenville, Rockingham, North, Hillsborough, and Dartmouth, had alternately taken the lead in this thorny path: several others had labored in the road for a time, and retired equally unsuccessful and chagrined; particularly the duke of Grafton.†

\* The marquis of Rockingham was through his whole life uniformly opposed to the American war.

† The duke of Grafton was very explicit with his majesty in his reasons for resignation.

From the religious deportment of lord Dartmouth, he had secured the partiality of a party ; but it soon appeared from the inefficacy of his measures, and the want of stability in his conduct, that he was a very unfit person for a place, that required deeper intrigue, more energy, and stronger abilities than he possessed. Tired of the burthen himself, and his employers weary of his administration, he resigned his office in the summer of one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five.

On his resignation, lord George Germaine, “the *hero* of *Minden*,” entered a field which did not brighten his laurels, though he engaged with a boldness and temerity of spirit, that he had not on all occasions discovered. Zealous for the honor of his sovereign, the interest and superiority of his nation, the dignity and supremacy of parliament, he undertook the conduct of the American war, and the subjugation of the colonies, with a temper and resolution more sanguine than discreet. Early in his administration, and through the whole course of this eventful year, proposals for an accommodation with the colonies, were offered from various quarters ; but conciliation with America, had no place in the system of the new minister.

The first bill that appeared for this purpose, was from the hand of lord Chatham, whose energetic abilities and dignified policy, had re-



cently rescued the empire from ruin. But not even the talents of a man who had been courted by his sovereign, admired by his enemies, and adored by the nation, had any influence on a ministry, deaf to every thing but an American revenue, and the supremacy of parliament. After the failure of the efforts of this distinguished statesman, Burke, Franklin, Fothergill, Hartley, and others, anxious to prevent the wanton waste of human blood, brought forward their proposals to procure a reconciliation with the colonies, either on the terms of equity, or partial concession. They supported them with the most interesting pathos, and with great strength of argument : but neither the persuasive eloquence of the orator,\* the reasoning powers or conclusive arguments of the philosopher,† nor the mild simplicity and humane interference of the upright quaker,‡ were listened to with the smallest attention, by a predetermined administration, sanctioned by the approbation of royalty. Every suggestion that wore any appearance of lenity, or re-union with the colonies, was rejected on the principle of the supremacy of parliament. Tenacious of their power, and the right to alter, or resume at pleasure, all colonial charters, and to regulate and tax as consistent with the convenience of the

\* Edmund Burke.

† Dr. Franklin.

‡ Dr. Fothergill.....All well known in the literary world.

parent state, the late petition from congress, met the usual neglect that had been shewn to every former application.

CHAP. VIII.

1775.

Before it was totally rejected, the duke of Richmond suggested the propriety of questioning governor Penn, who presented the petition, relative to the strength, the resources, the disposition, and the designs of America. Mr. Penn was a gentleman whose talents were equal to the business he was sent to negotiate. When called on the floor of the house of commons for examination, he gave a clear and decided statement of the situation and the views, the expectations, the wishes, and the final determination of his countrymen, if they failed in their present attempt to be heard by their sovereign.\* But it was immediately asserted, that congress was an illegal body; that no parley could be held with rebels; that while the Americans in hostile array were preparing armies for opposition to parliamentary authority, it was beneath the dignity of the supreme legislative, to hold treaties with men who denied their supremacy; that coercion alone was the proper line of action for the nation; and that it was necessary this system should be pushed with redoubled vigor. Consequently, after much debate, it was agreed in the house, that foreign auxiliaries should be

\* When the petition was presented by Mr. Penn and Arthur Lee, Esq. they were told by the Minister that no notice would be taken of it.

hired, at an immense expence, to assist in the complete subjugation of the colonies. A treaty with the landgrave of Hesse, and a price for payment for the loan of his slaves was voted, and several other similar steps adopted to facilitate the designs against America.

These measures appeared to many in the house, replete with absurdity, particularly the calling in of foreign mercenaries, to assist in a work that discovered little liberality, less humanity, and no wise policy. It was observed, that no language or act could justify the authors or supporters of this project. It was replied, "that foreign troops, inspired with military maxims and ideas of implicit obedience, would be less liable to be biased by that false lenity, which national soldiers might indulge at the expence of national interest."\* This was an unusual and bold assertion to be made in a British house of commons, and seemed tinged with a spirit of despotism, that had not always been characteristic of Englishmen: and indeed now, the minority in opposition to this and several other high-handed measures, was too respectable to be frowned into insignificance, even by the disapprobation of kings.†

The noble names of Rockingham, Scarborough, Abingdon, Effingham, and Ponsonby;

\* British Annual Register.

† See Appendix, Note No. XVI.

the dukes of Manchester, Devonshire, Richmond, and Grafton, with many others of equal rank and consideration, appeared on the protests against the sanguine, summary, and dangerous proceedings of parliament. Their opinions were supported even by some of the royal family: the efforts of the duke of Cumberland were strenuous; he reprobated in the most explicit terms, the whole American system; he lamented in pathetic language, the employing of foreigners; he observed, that he much regretted “that *Brunswickers*, who once to their honor, had been employed in defence of the liberties of the subject, should now be sent to subjugate a distant part of the British empire.”\*

But in spite of *protests*, arguments, reason, or humanity, the parliament of Britain proceeded as expressed in the dissent of the lords, to “a refinement in tyranny.” Towards the close of the year, they interdicted all trade with America, declared the colonies out of the royal protection, licensed the seizure of their property on the high seas, and by an act of parliament, gave the forfeiture to the captors, and directed an indiscriminate compulsion of all persons taken on board any American vessel, to serve as common sailors in his majesty’s navy.

\* See the speech of his royal highness at large in the British Annual Register.

1775.

This mode of procedure was opposed and criminated with all the powers of language, by some members of the first consequence in the house of commons. They pronounced it the last degree of wretchedness and indignity to which human nature could be subjugated. They observed that “this was an instance of tyranny worse than death, thus to compel the unfortunate captives who might fall into their hands, after being plundered themselves, to assist their enemies in plundering their brethren.” They asserted “that such modes of severity were without example, except among pirates, outlaws, and the common enemies of civil society.” Yet, notwithstanding these sensible remonstrances, there were some of the most distinguished characters in England, so heated by party spirit, national pride, and the high claims of parliamentary dignity and superiority, as shamelessly to avow the necessity of leaping over the boundaries of equity, and winking out of sight the immutable laws of justice. It is painful to record, as an evidence of this assertion, a single instance, that must cause a blush for the weakness or wickedness of man. Even the great lord *Mansfield*, whose superior talents, profound erudition, law knowledge, and philosophical abilities, should have elevated him above all local or party prejudices, declared publicly, “that the original question of *right* ought no longer to be considered; that the justice of the cause must give way to the present sit-



“uation; that they were engaged in a war, and must use every effort to obtain the end proposed thereby.”\* If the politician can justify this sophistical reasoning, the dictates of justice must lead the upright to revolt at the idea: a declaration so devoid of the principles of rectitude, from a man of his lordship’s celebrity, at once shocks the feelings of equity and wounds the sensations of humanity.

The passions of some were irritated by this extraordinary speech of lord Mansfield, and the judgment of others convinced, that America had nothing to expect either from the justice or clemency of parliament, under the influence of men of such abilities and principles. Yet still the chimerical project of conquest and subjugation, continued to be uniformly opposed by the dissenting lords in one house, and a melioration of the American system urged in the other, on the strongest grounds of reason, justice, policy, and humanity; but a ministerial majority was astonishingly kept up in both, and on a division on every question relative to the colonies, the minority bore no proportion to the names in the other scale.

A war with America did not at this period appear to be the general wish of the nation at

\* Debates in parliament, and lord Mansfield’s speech in the house of lords, December, 1775.

CHAP. VIII.

1775.

large ; but engaged in their own pleasures and pursuits, they seemed rather inattentive to the object in dispute, as a matter that very little concerned them. There was indeed some clamor among the great body of the merchants, on the total destruction of the American trade, and some of the manufacturing towns were disposed to be riotous on the occasion ; but the danger of a foreign war, or a final dismemberment of the empire, was not generally apprehended by the people, though these consequences were predicted by some sagacious heads, and the hearts of the patriotic and compassionate were hurt by the anticipation of the impending evils.

Calling in the aid of foreigners, and introducing a large body of German mercenaries in British pay, to settle a domestic quarrel with the colonies, was mortifying to the pride and valor of every uncorrupted Englishman. But the torrent of secret influence was irresistible ; the expensive system was precipitated : prerogative and conquest was the ministerial creed ; *power* the princely object : and on the approbatory speech of the monarch, when all was at hazard, there appeared a coolness that bordered on *apathy*. Silence and submission were enjoined on the friends of America in the house of commons ; and the liberty of writing their names, and witnessing their uneasiness by their own signature, was all the consolation of the

protesting lords, while these important questions were in agitation.\*

CHAP. VIII.

---

1775.

The debates in parliament relative to colonial measures, the king's speech, and the rejection of the late petition of the continental congress, arrived in America before the month of March, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six. These were accompanied with the intelligence of the Hessian treaty, and that foreign auxiliaries from various other nations were to be employed in the compulsory system, and that the barbarous strangers were to assist in the entire subjugation of the colonies, if not otherwise reduced to unworthy submission.

---

1776.

---

On this information, the indignation of all ranks can scarcely be described. The king's speech was condemned, and ordered to be burnt in the centre of the camp at Cambridge. The wavering were resolved, the timid grew bold, the placid and philosophic lovers of peace left the retired haunts of literary felicity, and beneath the helmet and the buckler, courted the post of danger :—vigorous action was now the

\* On the prohibitory, the restraining act, the interdiction of trade, and all other coercive bills, the usual rate of voices in favor of them, was from an hundred and twenty to an hundred and fifty—the number of the minority seldom more than thirty or forty ; when they amounted to forty, it was thought a considerable acquisition.

only line of conduct to be observed through every department. Previous to any other movement, it was judged important that the British forces should be immediately removed from their strong hold in the town of Boston, lest the work should be rendered more difficult on the arrival of fresh troops from Great Britain, now daily expected.

General Washington, sensible of this necessity, and that no more time was to be lost, opened a severe cannonade on the western side, not far distant from the town, on the evening of the fourth of March. This was designed rather to divert attention within the walls, than for any important consequences expected from this manœuvre without. The Americans kept up a constant fire through the night, while several smaller works were erected for the annoyance of the besieged; but the principal effect was expected from the heights of Dorchester. By the greatest industry and dispatch, a strong battery, very unexpectedly to the enemy, appeared there on the morning of the fifth, from whence the Americans played their artillery with ease on the town. The assailants under the direction of general Thomas, erected and extended their works in such a judicious manner, as to command the peninsula leading to Boston, Castle-William, and at the same time a considerable part of the harbor.

General Howe, mortified that such an advantageous post should have been so long neglected by himself, and astonished at the appearance of such strong and defensible works, rising as it were in a night, without noise or alarm in that quarter, did not long hesitate on the part necessary for him to act in this critical conjuncture. There remained no alternative between a bold and vigorous attempt to dislodge the Americans, or an immediate evacuation of the town. To fly on the first appearance of danger, was humiliating to the pride of the foldier, lessening his military honor, and sinking the dignity of the commander in chief.

A choice of difficulties lay before him. He was short of provisions; the foldiers had become discontented with the service, and fatigued with continual watching: an immediate retreat might appear to him less disgraceful, than the consequences of resistance under many apparent disadvantages. On the other hand, chagrined at the idea of drawing off seven or eight thousand of the best troops the king his master had in service, without striking a blow, and relinquishing the only American town they then had in possession, to the *undisciplined peasantry* of the country, was still a more humiliating thought. From these considerations he made all possible preparation to dislodge the American troops, the evening after they were discovered on the heights of Dorchester. But



the intervention of the elements disconcerted his operations: a tremendous storm of wind and rain prevented the dangerous enterprise, and saved the expense of much blood.

General Howe finding his design impracticable, in consequence of this disappointment, ordered an embarkation to begin as soon as the tempest should subside. But embarrassed by a crowd of refugees and other delinquents, who, conscious they could not rely on their country for safety, had thrown themselves on his protection; encumbered with women, children, furniture, soldiers, officers, and camp equipage; the inconveniences and dangers of a voyage at the equinoctial season; the sterility of the country\* and the coldness of the clime to which he must repair, with a discontented army and a *group* of miserable, disappointed tories, rendered the situation of the British commander in chief truly pitiable. To add to the confusion of the scene, the strictest harmony did not exist between the officers of the army and navy; this increased the difficulty of accommodation on this unexpected emergency, when so many useless persons claimed protection and subsistence.

When the Americans saw the British troops about to depart, they did not offer to impede

\* General Howe went from Boston to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

their design in the smallest degree ; the cannonade was suspended, and they beheld with an eye of compassion, the extraordinary emigration of some hundreds of disaffected Americans, whom they suffered to depart with the successful army, without a wish to retard their flight. These unhappy people took with them such of their effects as the hurry of the occasion and their military masters would permit. General Washington with a few troops entered Boston, with the ensigns of triumph displayed, and beheld the rear of the panic-struck army of Britain, precipitately flying from a town that had long been the object of ministerial vengeance.

CHAP. VIII.

1776.

This bloodless victory on the one side, and the disgraceful flight on the other, was viewed with pleasure and surprise, or with astonishment and grief, in proportion to the political hopes and fears that agitated the various parties, who all considered the transactions of the day replete with important consequences. Every mark of respect was externally shewn to general Washington, even by those who were not well affected to the cause in which he was engaged. Many of this class, more culpable than some who went off with the British army, chose to stay and cast themselves on the mercy of their countrymen, rather than to hazard the danger of a voyage, the loss of property, and a separation from their families.

Some, much less criminal than these, and many really inoffensive persons, suddenly struck

with imaginary fears, abandoned their habitations and their country, which by a little address they might quietly have possessed. Several very doubtful characters not only acted with decent civility and condescension, but confidently assumed merit to themselves as friends of the revolution: some of these were afterwards promoted to places and offices of high trust. Indeed the loyalists in general who stayed in Boston, and chose to run all hazards rather than quit their native country, experienced much clemency from the opposite party; yet, perhaps not in the full latitude that policy might have dictated: but the impressions of danger and insult to which the victors had long been exposed, operated more powerfully in the minds of many, than the laws of forgiveness, or the distant view of political consequences.

Thus a kind of inquisitorial court was erected in Boston, and some persons more warm than discreet, and more zealous than judicious, were appointed to decide on the criminality of state delinquents, several of whom were adjudged to punishments rather ridiculous than severe. This step tended only to strengthen the alienation of those who had, either from interest, treachery, timidity, or a passion for the splendor of monarchy, enlisted under the banners of royalty, without any fixed principles in religion or politics. Had the new government at this period, passed an act of indemnity and oblivion,

and proclaimed pardon to all who had incurred the public resentment, excepting a few who had notoriously deserved proscription, it is probable many would have returned to the bosom of their country, and become faithful subjects to the United States, when they could have done it without the imputation of being rebels to their sovereign. This consideration before the declaration of independence, had a conscientious influence on the minds of some who disapproved of the ministerial encroachments, yet scrupled the right of resistance while the legal subjects of the British crown; but the line of separation soon after drawn, the doubts of many well-disposed persons were entirely dissipated.

After the evacuation of Boston, the succession of important events was too rapid for the mind to dwell long on single incidents. It remained for some time uncertain where the British army and navy would next direct their operations. Though they sailed immediately for Halifax, it was only to disembark their useless hands, and secure a rendezvous until fresh reinforcements should arrive from England.

The situation of the southern colonies at this time commanded the attention of every well-wisher to the American cause. Some time before the British troops left Boston, general Clinton had been sent southward to the assistance of

governor Martin and lord William Campbell. We have seen that before they left their governments, they had instigated a number of the back settlers in the Carolinas to create disturbances. These people formerly aggrieved by their own government, had styled themselves *Regulators*, had embodied for opposition, had resisted authority, and had suffered severely. They were now persuaded, that the same persons who had some years before oppressed them, were at this time in rebellion against their sovereign. This opinion was strengthened by governor Martin, who kept up a correspondence with their leaders, and invited them to repair to the royal standard at Brunswick, where they should be supported by a large body of the king's troops.

Though as observed, these people had been compelled to submission, and had remained quiet a number of years, yet their old antipathies were not obliterated. Ignorant of the causes of the general uneasiness of the colonies, and mistaken in character, they united under the very men who had formerly exercised every severity against them and their leaders.\* These were joined by the Highlanders, who had mi-

\* Particularly a colonel Fanning, a violent partisan of the crown, who had been in the former insurrection, the executioner of most of their principal leaders, without even the form of a trial.



grated in shoals after the rebellion in Scotland, in one thousand seven hundred and forty-five : they had suffered too much not to dread a second opposition to the authority of the king of England. These descriptions of men were for a time very troublesome on the southern borders, more particularly of North Carolina ; but by the spirit and activity of some continental troops, under the command of brigadier general More, the whole party was defeated. Their commanding officer Macdonald, and most of their other officers imprisoned, the unhappy remnant who escaped imprisonment or death, retreated to the woods ; and all hope or fear from this quarter, was extinguished before the arrival of Sir Henry Clinton at Cape Fear.

As soon as it was discovered at Cambridge, that general Clinton had left Boston, general Lee was ordered to set forward to observe his manœuvres, and prepare to meet him with advantage in any part of the continent he might think proper to visit. No man was better qualified at this early stage of the war, to penetrate the designs, or to face in the field an experienced British veteran, than general Lee. He had been an officer of character and rank in the late war between England and France.\* Fearless of danger, and fond of glory, he was

\* He had served with reputation in Portugal, under the command of the count de la Lippe.

1776.

calculated for the field, without any of the graces that recommend the foldier to the circles of the polite. He was plain in his person even to ugliness, and careless in his manners to a degree of rudeness. He possessed a bold genius and an unconquerable spirit: his voice was rough, his garb ordinary, his deportment morose. A considerable traveller, and well acquainted with most of the European nations, he was frequently agreeable in narration, and judicious and entertaining in observation. Disgusted with the ministerial system, and more so with his sovereign who authorised it, he cherished the American cause from motives of resentment, and a predilection in favor of freedom, more than from a just sense of the rights of mankind.

Without religion or country, principle, or attachment, gold was his deity, and liberty the idol of his fancy: he hoarded the former without taste for its enjoyment, and worshipped the latter as the patroness of licentiousness, rather than the protectress of virtue. He affected to despise the opinion of the world, yet was fond of applause. Ambitious of fame without the dignity to support it, he emulated the heroes of antiquity in the field, while in private life he sunk into the vulgarity of the clown. Congress did wisely to avail themselves of his military experience in the infancy of a confederated army, and still more wisely in placing him in a de-

gree of subordination. He was on the first list of continental officers, and only the generals Washington and Ward were named before him ; but though nominally the third in rank, as a soldier he was second to no man. The abilities of general Ward were better adapted to the more quiet disquisitions of the cabinet, than on the hostile and dangerous scenes of the field or the camp, both which he soon left and retired to private life, when nothing remained to prevent this singular stranger from taking the command of the armies of the United States, but the life of Washington.

CHAP. VIII.

1776.

General Lee with his detachment from Cambridge reached New York, and put it in a state of defence, before sir Henry Clinton arrived there, though he had sailed from Boston several days previous to its being known at Cambridge. While at New York, Lee drew up a list of suspected persons, and disarmed them. He carried his military authority so high, that the congress of that state thought proper to check his career : they informed him, that the trial and punishment of their citizens belonged to themselves, and not to any military character. He apologized by observing, that “when the enemy  
“were at the door, *forms* must be dispensed  
“with ; that his duty to them, to the continent,  
“and to his conscience, dictated the measure ;  
“that if he had done wrong, he would submit  
“himself to the shame of being imputed rash ;

CHAP. VIII.

1776.

“ but that he should still have the consolation in  
 “ his own breast, that pure motives of serving  
 “ the community, uncontaminated by individ-  
 “ ual resentment, had urged him to those steps.”

The movements of general Lee were so rapid, that to the surprize of Sir Henry Clinton, he was in Virginia before him. But as the object of the British armament was still farther south, Lee with uncommon celerity, traversed the continent, met general Clinton in North Carolina, and was again ready for the defence of Sullivan's Island, near Charleston in South Carolina, before the arrival of the British troops under the command of general Clinton.

Sir Peter Parker had appeared off Cape Fear in the month of May, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six, with a considerable squadron of line-of-battle ships, and a number of transports containing several regiments of land forces, and a heavy train of artillery. A body of troops commanded by lord Cornwallis and general Vaughan were soon after landed on Long Island: the design was to unite with general Clinton, and reduce Charleston, the rich capital of South Carolina. This state had thrown off their allegiance, assumed a government of their own, and chosen John Rutledge, Esq. their chief magistrate, under the style and title of *President*.

Notwithstanding the parade of immediate attack, near a month elapsed in total inaction, before the assault on Sullivan's Island was begun by the British naval commander: in the mean time, the Americans were strongly posted there. The engagement took place on the twenty-ninth of June, and was conducted with great spirit and bravery on both sides; the highest encomiums are justly due to the valor and intrepidity of the British officers and seamen; and notwithstanding the courage and ability of general Gadsden, the vigor, activity, and bravery of general Moultrie, and the experience and military knowledge of general Lee, it is probable the action would have terminated more to the honor of the British navy, had they been properly supported by the land forces.

It remains yet to be investigated, why no attempt was made by the troops on Long Island, to cause a diversion on the other side, which would doubtless have altered the whole face of the action. But whether from a series of unexpected resistance, their imaginations had become habituated to view every thing through the medium of danger, or whether from a degree of caution that sometimes betrays the brave into the appearance of timidity, or from any jealousies subsisting between the commanders, is uncertain. However, this neglect occasioned loud complaints among the officers of the navy; nor was it easy for lord Cornwallis



and general Clinton, though high on the rolls of military fame, to wipe off the aspersions thrown on their conduct. Even their apologies for their own inactivity, instead of exculpating themselves, were rather a testimony of the skill, ability, and vigor of their antagonists; who, in so short a time, were prepared to bid defiance to the combined force of Britain, though commanded by sea and land, by officers of acknowledged merit in the line of their profession.

Many brave officers of the navy fought with valor and spirit, that would have been truly glorious in a more honorable cause. One instance of this, among many others of the unfortunate who fell on the occasion, was the valiant and spirited captain Morris of the Bristol: he lost an arm by a ball in the beginning of the engagement, and while retired to dress his wounds, two of his surgeons were killed by his side, before they had finished the operation. On this, the captain with his usual intrepidity, resumed his command; when he immediately received a shot through the body, and had time only to observe before he expired, that "he consigned his family to his God and his country." After an obstinate engagement of ten or twelve hours, the sailors disheartened, and their officers wounded,\* the shattered fleet with diffi-

\* Lord William Campbell, governor of South Carolina, who had taken refuge on board one of the king's ships, was mortally wounded in the attack on fort Moultrie.

culty retired to the distance of three or four miles from the fort, and in a few days put themselves in a condition to withdraw to the general rendezvous before New York.

CHAP. VIII.

1776.

The triumph of the Americans in this success, who had always justly dreaded the naval power of Britain, was in equal proportion to the chagrin of their enemies, thus repulsed in a quarter where, from the locality of circumstances, they least expected it. The multitude of manumitted slaves, and the aristocratic spirit of many of the principal planters, had flattered them with the idea, that in the southern colonies they should meet but a feeble resistance. Lord Dunmore, who had joined in the expedition, continued several weeks after the repulse, to cruise about the borders of Virginia, and the Carolinas, with his little fleet of fugitives and slaves. But, as the mid-summer heats increased, a pestilential fever raged on board, which carried off many of the refugees, and swept away most of the miserable negroes he had decoyed from their masters. Forbidden admittance wherever he attempted to land, and suffering for provisions, he burnt several of his vessels; the remainder, except one in which he sheltered himself and family, and two other ships of war for his protection, he sent laden with the wretched victims of his folly and cruelty, to

seek some kind of subsistence in the Floridas, Bermudas, and the West Indies.

Lord Howe had been long expected with his motley mercenaries from Hesse, Hanover, and Brunfwick. His brother Sir William, after a disagreeable residence of two or three months at Halifax, did not think proper to wait longer there the arrival of his lordship. Miserably accommodated, and painfully agitated by the recollection of his disgraceful flight from Boston, anxious for intelligence from Europe, and distressed by the delay of recruits and supplies, without which little could be done to retrieve his suffering fame, he quitted that station, accompanied by admiral Shuldham, and arrived at Sandy Hook the twenty-ninth of June. On his passage to New York, he accidentally fell in with a few scattering transports from England, which he took under his protection, while many less fortunate were captured by the American cruisers.

General Howe was, soon after his arrival at New York, joined by the repulsed troops from the southward, and the broken squadron under the command of Sir Peter Parker; by a regiment from St. Augustine, another from Pensacola, also by a few troops from St. Vincents, some small additions from other posts, and a considerable party of loyalists from New Jersey, and from the environs of Philadelphia and New

York, which by great industry had been collected and embodied by governor Tryon. Notwithstanding this acquisition of strength, he found the continental army so strongly posted on Long Island and New York, that he did not immediately attempt any thing of consequence.

CHAP. VIII.

1776.

Immediately after the evacuation of Boston, general Washington had sent on the army in detachments, and when he had made some necessary arrangements for the future defence of the eastern states, he hastened on himself to New York, where he had made all possible preparation for the reception of general Howe. It has just been observed, that the British commander had collected all his strength, and called in the forces from every quarter of America except Canada, where, under the direction of the generals Carleton and Burgoyne, measures were ripening for a junction at Albany, with the expected conquerors of the more southern colonies. But in the present circumstance of affairs, general Howe thought proper to land his troops at Staten Island, and wait more favorable appearances, which he had reason to expect on the arrival of his brother, an event hourly and anxiously looked for.

His lordship was considered by many in America, as the harbinger of peace, though advancing in all the pride and pomp of war, accompanied by the ready executioners of every

hostile design. It was reported, that the commander of a formidable equipment both for sea and land service, came out in a double capacity ; that though prepared for offensive operations, lord Howe had yet a commission from his royal master to accommodate the disputes, and to restore tranquillity to the colonies, on generous and equitable terms. The augurs of each party predicted the consequences of this ministerial manœuvre, and interpreted the designs of his lordship's commission, according to their own hopes, fears, or expectations.

In the infancy of her emancipation, America was not such an adept in the science of political intrigue, but that many yet flattered themselves, that an accommodation might take place, and that halcyon days might be restored by the interposition of the two brothers, lord and general Howe, joined in the commission of peace under the sanction of royal indulgence ; but more judicious men saw through, and despised the bubble of policy, which held a pardon in one hand and a poniard in the other, with the detestable offer of assassination or slavery. They considered the mode of pacification proposed, as at once an insult to the feelings, and an affront to the understandings of a people, too ferocious for trifling when all was at stake, and too wise to be cajoled by superficial appearances. Yet, those best acquainted with the situation and character, the genius and connexions of the



inhabitants of the middle colonies, were not surpris'd to find many among them, who seem'd ready to embrace such humiliating conditions, as the safety, the interest, the honor, and justice of America, were bound to reject.

It was well known, that from the beginning of the grand contest, the lamp of liberty had not burnt so bright in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, as in some other parts of America. Though there was a party in New York strongly attached to the cause of the colonies, there had been early reason to suppose, that some men of high consideration in that state were not entirely proof against the influence of ministerial gold. New Jersey was the retreat of the timid, the disaffected, and the lovers of inglorious ease, from each corner of America. They there thought they might rest secure from the ravages of war, as the torch which was lighted at both ends, might be extinguish'd before it penetrated to the centre.

The quakers and the proprietary interest, long hung as a dead weight on the spirited measures of the genuine friends of freedom and of their country, both in Pennsylvania and Maryland; but the incidents of a few months connect'd every interest, and brought almost every dissentient voice into union, and hasten'd on an event that every one consider'd as decisive of the fate of America. The necessity of a declaration of

CHAP. VIII.

1776.

independence was acknowledged by all : even Maryland, the last state in the union that came into the measure, and whose delegates seceded on the question of independence, was among the first who erected their own government, and established their own modes of legislation, independent of proprietors or kings.

“The dread of slavery in free nations, has at all times produced more virtues than the principles of their political institutions.”\* This dread hung heavily on the most sober and judicious, the most wise and virtuous part of the inhabitants of America. They were sensible that both public and private virtue sink with the loss of liberty, and that the nobler emulations which are drawn out and adorn the soul of man, when not fettered by servility, frequently hide themselves in the shade, or shrink into littleness at the frown of a despot. They felt too much for themselves, and feared too much for posterity, longer to balance between either complete or partial submission, or an unreserved and entire claim to absolute independence.

These ideas precipitated the important *era* when a connexion was dissolved, the continuance of which both nature and affection seemed to require. Great Britain the revered parent, and America the dutiful child, had long been

\* Travels of Anacharsis.

bound together by interest, by a sameness of habits, manners, religion, laws, and government. The recollection of their original consanguinity had always been cherished with an amiable sensibility, or a kind of mechanic enthusiasm, that promoted mutual felicity when they met on each other's shores, or in distant lands saluted each other in the same language.

CHAP. VIII.

1776.

A dereliction of old habits of friendship and attachment was far from the wish of many, who had yet strongly opposed the ministerial system: but the period was now arrived, when America felt her wrongs, without hope of redress, and supported her own rights by assuming her rank as a distinct nation on the political theatre. We shall see her relinquish at once all hopes of protection, or fears of control, from the sovereignty of Britain. The reverential awe with which she had formerly viewed her potent parent, was laid aside, and every effort made to forget her fond attachment for a people, that from her earliest infancy she had looked up to as fathers, brothers, and friends.

The severities of the British government towards the American colonies, had not yet taught them to express themselves in any other modes of language, but what indicated their firm attachment to the mother country; nor had they erased the habitual ideas, even of tenderness, conveyed in their usual modes of ex-

CHAP. VIII.

---

1776.

pression. When they formed a design to visit England, it had always been thus announced, "I am going home." Home, the seat of happiness, the retreat to all the felicities of the human mind, is too intimately associated with the best feelings of the heart, to renounce without pain, whether applied to the natural or the political parent.

## CHAPTER IX.

Declaration of Independence.—Lord Howe's Arrival in America.—Action on Long Island.—Retreat of the Americans through the Jerseys, and the Loss of the Forts Washington and Lee.—Affairs in Canada.—Surprise of the Hessians at Trenton.—Various Transactions in the Jerseys.—General Howe's Retreat—Makes Headquarters at Brunswick—His Indecision—Some Traits of his Character.

THE commissioners who had been announced as the messengers of peace, were now hourly expected; but the dubious aspect of their mission, and the equivocal character in which they were about to appear, was far from lulling to inattention the guardians of the cause of America. Their errand was ostensibly, to restore peace to the colonies; but many circumstances combined to evince, that the design was in reality, to furnish new pretexts for the prosecution of the war, with redoubled vigor. Thus was the continental congress fully convinced of the impropriety of longer holding themselves in suspense, by delusory hopes, or the uncertain termination of their expectations or their fears. They were sensible the step they were about to take, would either set their country on the pinnacle of human glory, or plunge it in the abject state into which turbulent and conquered colonies have



CHAP. IX.

1776.

been generally reduced. Yet they wisely judged, that this was a proper period to break the shackles, and renounce all political union with the parent state, by a free and bold declaration of the independence of the American States. This measure had been contemplated by some gentlemen in the several colonies, some months before it took place. They had communicated their sentiments to the individual members of congress, but that body had been apprehensive, that the people at large were not prepared to unite in a step so replete with important consequences. But the moment of decision had now arrived, when both the congress and the inhabitants of the colonies advanced too far to recede.

Richard Henry Lee, Esq., a delegate from the state of Virginia, a gentleman of distinguished abilities, uniform patriotism, and unshaken firmness and integrity, was the first who dared explicitly to propose, that this decided measure, on which hung such mighty consequences, should no longer be delayed. This public and unequivocal proposal, from a man of his virtue and shining qualities, appeared to spread a kind of sudden dismay. A silent astonishment for a few minutes seemed to pervade the whole assembly: this was soon succeeded by a long debate, and a considerable division of sentiment on the important question.

After the short silence just observed, the measure proposed by Mr. Lee was advocated with peculiar zeal by John Adams, Esq., of the Massachusetts Bay. He rose with a face of intrepidity and the voice of energy, and invoked the *god of eloquence*, to enable him to do justice to the cause of his country, and to enforce this important step in such a manner, as might silence all opposition, and convince every one of the necessity of an immediate declaration of the independence of the United States of America.

Mr. John Dickinson, of Pennsylvania, took the lead in opposition to the boldness and danger of this decided measure. He had drawn the petition to the king forwarded by Mr. Penn, and though no man was more strenuous in support of the rights of the colonies, he had always been averse to a separation from Britain, and shuddered at the idea of an avowed revolt of the American colonies. He arose on this occasion with no less solemnity than Mr. Adams had recently done, and with equal pathos of expression, and more brilliance of epithet, he invoked the *Great Governor of the Universe*, to animate him with powers of language sufficient to exhibit a view of the dread consequences to both countries, that such a hasty dismemberment of the empire might produce. He descanted largely on the happy effects that might probably ensue from more patient and conciliatory disposi-

tions, and urged at least a temporary suspension of a step, that could never be revoked. He declared that it was his opinion, that even policy forbade the precipitation of this measure, and that humanity more strongly dictated, that they ought to wait longer the success of petitions and negotiations, before they formally renounced their allegiance to the king of Great Britain, broke off all connexion with England, plunged alone into an unequal war, and rushed without allies into the unforeseen and inevitable dangers that attended it.

The consequences of such a solemn act of separation were indeed of serious and extensive magnitude. The energy of brilliant talents, and great strength of argument, were displayed by both parties on this weighty occasion. The reasons urging the necessity of decision, and the indubitable danger of delay, were clear and cogent; the objections, plausible, humane, and important: but after a fair discussion of the question, an accurate statement of the reasons for adopting the measure, and a candid scrutiny of the objections against it, grounded either on policy or humanity, a large majority of the members of congress appeared in favor of an immediate renunciation of allegiance to the crown, or any future subjugation to the king of Great Britain.

A declaration\* of the independence of America, and the sovereignty of the United States, was drawn by the ingenious and philosophic pen of Thomas Jefferson, Esq., a delegate from the state of Virginia.† The delegates from twelve‡ of the American States, agreed almost unanimously to this declaration; the language, the principles, and the spirit of which, were equally honorable to themselves and their country. It was signed by John Hancock, then president of congress, on the fourth of July, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six.

The allegiance of thirteen states at once withdrawn by a solemn declaration, from a government towards which they had looked with the highest veneration; whose authority they had acknowledged, whose laws they had obeyed, whose protection they had claimed for more than a century and a half—was a consideration of solemnity, a bold resolution, an experiment

\* See Appendix, Note No. XVII.

† This wise and patriotic statesman was afterwards appointed ambassador to the court of France. On the adoption of the present constitution of government, he was appointed secretary for foreign affairs, was chosen vice-president, and afterwards president of the United States of America.

‡ The members from Maryland seceded, but in a short time after joined the confederation.

of hazard: especially when the infancy of the colonies as a nation, without wealth, resources, or allies, was contrasted with the strength, riches, and power of Great Britain. The timid trembled at the ideas of final separation; the disciples of passive obedience were shocked by a reflection of a breach of faith to their ancient sovereign; and the enemies to the general freedom of mankind, were incensed to madness, or involved in despair. But these classes bore a small proportion to those who resented the rejection of their petitions, and coolly surveyed the impending dangers, that threatened themselves and their children, which rendered it clear to their apprehension, that this step was necessary to their political salvation. They considered themselves no longer bound by any moral tie, to render fealty to a sovereign thus disposed to encroach on their civil freedom, which they could now secure only by a social compact among themselves, and which they determined to maintain, or perish in the attempt.

By the declaration of independence, dreaded by the foes, and for a time doubtfully viewed by many of the friends of America, every thing stood on a new and more respectable footing, both with regard to the operations of war, or negotiations with foreign powers. Americans could now no more be considered as *rebels*, in their proposals for treaties of peace and conciliation with Britain; they were a distinct people,



who claimed the rights, the usages, the faith, and the respect of nations, uncontrolled by any foreign power. The colonies thus irretrievably lost to Great Britain, a new face appeared on all affairs, both at home and abroad.

CHAP. IX.

1776.

America had been little known among the kingdoms of Europe; she was considered only as an appendage to the power of Britain: the principles of her sons were in some respects dissimilar, and their manners not yet wrought up to the standard of refinement reigning in ancient courts: her statesmen in general were unacquainted with the intrigues necessary for negotiation, and the *finesse* usually hackneyed in and about the cabinets of princes. She now appeared in their eyes, a new theatre, pregnant with events that might be interesting to the civil and political institutions of nations, that had never before paid much attention to the growth, population, and importance of an immense territory beyond the Atlantic.

The United States had their ambassadors to create, or to transplant from the bar or the counting-house. Their generals were many of them the yeomanry or the tradesmen of the country; their subordinate officers had been of equal rank and fortune, and the army to be governed was composed of many of the old associates of the principal officers, and were equally tenacious of personal liberty. The *regalia* of

1776.

power, orders of nobility, and the splendor of courts, had been by them viewed only at a distance. The discipline of armies was entirely new; the difficulty of connecting many distinct states to act as it were by one will, the expenses of government in new exigencies, and the waste of war had not yet been accurately calculated by their politicians and statesmen. But their senators, their representatives, and their magistrates, were generally sagacious and vigilant, upright and firm; their officers were brave, their troops in spirits, and with a full confidence in their commander in chief: hope was exhilarated by the retreat from Boston, and the repeated successes of their arms at the southward; while new dignity was added to office, and stronger motives for illustrious action, by the rank America had now taken among the nations. Thus, by the declaration of independence they had new ground to tread; the scene of action was changed, genius was called forth from every quarter of the continent, and the public expectation enhanced by the general favorable appearance in all their military operations.

In this situation stood affairs, both in the cabinet and the field, when lord Howe arrived at Staten Island, with a formidable squadron under his command, on the twelfth of July, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six. At the head of this hostile arrangement, his

lordship came in full confidence of success: yet amidst the splendor and parade of war, while he held out his potent arm, he still cherished the delusory hope of peace.

By a pompous declaration, he early announced his pacific powers to the principal magistrates of the several colonies, and promised pardon to all who, in the late times, had deviated from their allegiance, on condition, that they would speedily return to their duty, and gave encouragement that they should, on compliance, hereafter reap the benefit of royal favor. Lord Howe observed in his declaration, “that the  
 “commissioners were authorized in his majesty’s  
 “name, to declare any province, colony, coun-  
 “ty, district, or town, to be at the peace of his  
 “majesty: and that due consideration should  
 “be had to the meritorious services of any, who  
 “should aid or assist in restoring the public  
 “tranquillity; that their dutiful representa-  
 “tions should be received, pardons granted,  
 “and suitable encouragement to such as would  
 “promote the measures of legal government  
 “and peace, in pursuance of his majesty’s most  
 “gracious purposes.”\*

\* This declaration, and the consequent resolves of congress, may be seen at large in the public journals of the session of one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six.

CHAP. IX.

1776.

Congress ordered the declaration to be immediately published in all the American gazettes, that the people of the United States might be fully informed of the terms of peace; that they might see for themselves, that the business of the commissioners was to amuse, disunite, and deceive them; and that those who still continued in suspense, from hopes founded either on the justice or moderation of the court of Great Britain, might now be fully convinced, that their own valor, virtue, and firmness, must rescue and preserve the freedom of their country.\*

The next advance his lordship made for the execution of his commission, was by a flag sent on shore within a few days after his arrival, with a letter directed to George Washington, Esq. By their principles and their professions, the Americans were taught at this period, to look down on titles and distinguished ranks; yet, in this instance, they did not think proper to pass over the implicit denial of either, to their commander in chief. It was viewed as a designed affront, from those who consider such

\* The American congress were not remiss at this time, in exerting their efforts to detach foreigners from the service of Britain, and alluring them to become inhabitants of the United States, by promising them a quiet residence, an allotment of lands, and a security from all interruptions in the enjoyment of their religious opinions, and the investiture of all the privileges of native citizens.

adventitious circumstances of so much consequence, as carefully to avoid all honorary epithets in their addresses to the first officers of the United States. It was thought more becoming the dignity of his station, both as a soldier and a patriot, for the chief commander to refuse an address that tacitly denied the legality of his commission, and the right now claimed of negotiating on terms of equality: this letter was therefore, by the advice of the principal officers, returned unopened.

This drew out a second advance from the hands of the British commissioners, when major Patterson, adjutant general of the army, was charged with a letter directed to George Washington, &c. &c. &c. He was received in military state, and treated with great politeness in the American camp. His lordship in this second address, expressed the highest respect for the private character of general Washington, but as he did not yet condescend to acknowledge the commander in chief of the American troops, as any thing more than a *rebel* in arms, this letter was also returned without breaking the seal.

Many civilities passed in this interview with Mr. Patterson, who did not forget to insinuate his own wishes for the restoration of friendship and harmony between the two countries. He, with due propriety, made several observations



on the extensive powers vested in the commissioners for this salutary purpose: this introduced some general conversation relative to the treatment of prisoners on both sides. The conference was of some length, but as no circumstance indicated a happy result from the negotiation, general Washington in the most explicit terms, informed the British adjutant general, that the inhabitants of the American States were generally of opinion, that a people armed in defence of their rights, were in the way of their duty; that conscious of no criminality, they needed no pardon; and as his lordship's commission extended no farther, nothing important could be expected from protracting the negotiation.

In the mean time, reinforcements were daily dropping in to the assistance of the British army. The scattered divisions of Hessians, Waldeckers, &c. designed for the summer campaign, had been somewhat retarded by not knowing with certainty, the spot destined for head-quarters. They had some of them sailed directly for Halifax: this occasioned a delay of any energetic movement, until the latter part of the month of August, when the British army began to act with vigor.

General Washington had rather incautiously encamped the bulk of his army on Long Island, a large and plentiful district, about two miles from

the city of New York. This island contained many settlements, through an extent of one hundred and twenty miles in length. It was inhabited principally by loyalists, and persons generally disaffected to the American cause. Many were at a loss for a reason, nor indeed could any conjecture, why the commander of the American army should hazard his troops on an island, liable at any moment to be surrounded by the British navy. However it was, several thousand Americans were there posted, under the command of the generals Putnam, Sullivan, and William Alexander, lord Stirling.

Sir William Howe very wisely judged, that it was a less arduous and a more promising undertaking to dislodge the Americans from their encampment on the island, than a direct attempt to reduce New York. The royal army at that time consisted of about thirty thousand men: these he found no difficulty in landing from Staten Island, and in detachments posted them from one end of Long Island to the other, separated from the Americans by a ridge of hills covered with woods. Very fortunately for the enterprise of the British, one of the American out-guards early fell into the hands of general Clinton. In consequence of some intelligence gained by this accident, he, before day-light on the morning of the twenty-seventh of August, possessed himself of some very advantageous heights, and made such a judicious arrangement

CHAP. IX.

1776.

of his troops, as might have insured success, even had the Americans been better prepared for the attack, which at that time was rather unexpected.

The assault was begun by the Hessian general de Heister. He opened the cannonade in front of the American lines, early on the morning of the twenty-eighth. A general engagement speedily ensued. Nearly the whole of the British forces were called into action, under the command of sir Henry Clinton, earl Percy, and lord Cornwallis. By some fatal neglect, a very important post was left unguarded by the American, which was seized by the British troops, who fought on this occasion with a spirit and bravery becoming the experienced commander and the hardy veteran. The American troops were early deranged. Apprized of their danger, they with great resolution endeavoured to recover their camp; but nearly surrounded by the British, and pushed in the centre by the Hessians, they were so far from effecting their design, that their retreat was nearly cut off: yet many of them desperately fought their way through some of the British lines, and again bravely stood on their defence; others entangled in the woods and marshes through which they endeavoured to escape, were either captured, or perished in the attempt.

In the midst of the general anxiety for the danger and distress of the little army on Long Island, general Washington, undoubtedly anxious to retrieve his mistake in thus exposing them, passed over from New York to endeavour to secure the retreat of the surviving troops. This was executed in the night of the twenty-ninth, without noise or tumult. The remainder of the broken regiments that had outlived the fatal action, abandoned the island with a considerable part of their baggage, some artillery, and military stores, and without molestation reached the city of New York. They had made a bold and resolute stand, against far superior numbers and discipline; and it may be deemed fortunate that any of them escaped, as on an island they might easily have been hemmed in by a small number of British ships. Perhaps the commanders on both sides were afterwards sensible of their error, the one in hazarding his troops in such an exposed situation, the other in suffering a single American to escape either captivity or death.

The loss of men in this action was not inconsiderable on either side, but it fell most heavily on the Americans. Many brave men perished by the sword, others, as was observed, were lost in the morasses and swamps to which they had fled on the defeat. Three general officers, and a large number of inferior rank, were made prisoners. A regiment of valiant young men

from Maryland, many of them of family and fortune, commanded by the gallant colonel Smallwood, were almost to a man cut off. The misfortune of the day was feverely felt by them, but without checking the ardor of the American army, the people, or the continental congress. The same uniform dignity, and unruffled superiority of mind, appeared in the judicious determinations of the united delegates, in the conduct of the state departments, and in the subsequent firmness of most of the military officers, as before this defeat. But the success of their arms, and the acquisition of Long Island, exhilarated the spirits of the British, and gave hopes of more compliant dispositions, and a more ready acquiescence in the requisitions of ministers, or the *veto* of kings: and that the business of the commissioners might now be brought forward without farther impediment.

Not many days after the retreat from Long Island, congress was called upon to exhibit a new proof of their firmness. General Sullivan, one of the captured officers, was dispatched on parole with a message to that assembly, in the joint names of lord and general Howe. The purport of the message was, that they had full powers, and that they were disposed to treat on terms of accommodation and peace. At the same time they intimated, that as congress was not considered in the eye of majesty, as a legal assembly, they only desired a private conference



with a few individuals belonging to that body, in the character and capacity of private gentlemen. To this extraordinary request, which threw them into a very delicate situation, congress replied, that as delegates of a free and independent people, they could with no propriety send any of the members of congress in a private capacity, on an errand so replete with public consequences; but they would depute a committee from their body, to inquire by what authority and on what terms; his lordship and brother were empowered to negotiate.

The insidious message received had no tendency to eradicate the previous opinion of congress, that this was but a ministerial pretext to palliate their injurious designs. They were convinced, that the commission of the agents was derogatory to the great national councils, and to that high authority which had vested the British commissioners with no powers, but to pardon those who deemed themselves guiltless, and with no conciliatory proposals at which freemen would not spurn, unless driven to despair. Yet they condescended so far to this political trifling, as to depute a very respectable committee to meet lord Howe, and confer on the subject. The celebrated doctor Franklin, the honorable Mr. Rutledge of South Carolina, and John Adams, Esq. of the Massachusetts,

were the persons chosen for this singular interview.

On a stipulated day they met his lordship on Staten Island, accompanied only by Mr. Strachey his secretary. He received them with much civility, but conversed equivocally; and though careful not to be explicit, it did not require the penetration of men of far less superior abilities, to discover that he was restricted to very narrow limits, for a negociator between contending nations. It was evident that he had no plan of accommodation, or any proposals for amity, on any terms but those of absolute and unconditional submission. Yet these gentlemen patiently attended to the circumvolutions of his lordship, who observed neither precision or perspicuity in his modes of conversing; nor could he disguise an apparent embarrassment, under the display of affability and good humor. It was even painful to see a British nobleman, endowed with talents for the most honorable employments, thus reduced to act under a veil of intrigue, inconsistent with the character of the gentleman or the man of business.\*

This conference continued three or four hours, when a short and frugal repast conclu-

\* The above detail of the interview on Staten Island, was soon after verbally related to the author of these annals, by one of the committee of conference.

ded a negotiation that had fed many well-meaning people with delufory hopes, and for feveral months had been the fubject of political fpeculation both in Europe and America. This fingular interview had indeed little other effect, than, on the one fide, to rivet that ftrong difguft which before exifted, againft the treacherous councils of the Britifh miniftry and parliament, and on the other, to convince more perfectly the agents of monarchy, of the determined fpirit of America, and the ability of the men with whom fhe had entrusted the fecurity of her rights. However, when the parties took leave of each other, it was not without fome tender emotions. Dr. Franklin had been in long habits of friendfhip and intimacy with lord Howe. They had in England frequently converfed, and afterwards correffponded, on the parliamentary difpute with America. Their regard for each other was mutual, and as there was now every reafon to fuppofe, this would be the laft perfonal interview between them, the idea was painful, that this political ftorm might fweep away all remains of private friendfhip.\*

\* In the familiar converfation between lord Howe and doctör Franklin, his lordfhip expreffed a regard for the Americans, and the pain he felt for their approaching fufferings. Doctör Franklin, in his eafy, fententious manner, thanked him for his regards, and affured him, that “the Americans would fhew their gratitude, by endeavouring to leffen as much as poffible, all pain he might feel on their account, by exerting their utmoft abilities in taking good care of themfelves.”

---

1776.

It was not long after all ideas of negotiation were relinquished, before the commissioners and their sovereign had the most positive proofs, that though the villages might be distained with the crimson tide that threatened to deluge the land, yet freedom in her last asylum, would resist the designs of all who had fought for her annihilation, to the last moment of her existence.

The late defeat of the Americans, and the entire possession of Long Island, threw accumulated advantages into the hand of the British commander, who made immediate preparation to attack, and take possession of the city of New York. In consequence of these movements, general Washington, advised by the most judicious of his officers,\* thought it prudent to evacuate the city without further delay. It would indeed have been madness to have attempted a longer defence with his diminished numbers, against a potent army flushed with recent success. The American army was drawn off from above Kingsbridge, on the twenty-first of October, but a day before the British took possession of the city. General Washington encamped his retreating troops on the heights of Haerlem, about nine miles distance from King-

\* General Lee particularly, who had just arrived from Georgia. He, by urging this advice, may be said to share in the merit of saving the American army.

bridge. When general Howe took possession of the evacuated post, he must from this event undoubtedly have felt some consolation for the mortification he had suffered on recollecting the circumstances of his flight from Boston. The alternate triumph or chagrin, from the uncertain chances and events of war, are generally of short duration: the Americans, now in their turn experienced the pains of anxiety, disappointment, and want, through a rapid flight from post to post, before a victorious army, who despised their weakness, and ridiculed their want of discipline.

CHAP. IX.

1776.

General Howe placed a strong detachment in the garrison for the defence of the city of New York, and immediately marched with the main body of his army in pursuit of Washington. He crossed East River, seized a point of land near West Chester, and made himself master of the lower road to Connecticut, with design to impede the intercourse between the northern and southern states. By this movement, he also hoped to impel the American commander, at every hazard, to risk an engagement that might probably have been decisive. But general Washington was too well acquainted with human nature, to suffer his troops, though ardent for action, and impatient of delay, to trust to the impulse of constitutional courage, and expose the reputation of the American arms, and the decision of the great contest,



1776.

to the uncertain events of a day, under the present disadvantages of number and discipline. A second defeat in so short a time, would undoubtedly have spread dismay, and perhaps a defection that might have been fatal to the independence of America.\* He was sensible his troops, though naturally brave, were not sufficiently inured to danger, and hardened by experience, to raise the mind to that sublime pitch of enthusiasm and inflexibility, necessary to stand their ground against superior strength, discipline, and numbers. He therefore determined, by cautious and guarded marches, to keep in flank with the British army, until circumstances might put it in his power to combat on more equal terms.

He placed a strong party in fort Washington, a fortress near King'sbridge, which, though well provided, was at the time judged not tenable by some of his best officers. This opinion was over-ruled, and between three and four thousand men were left there. This was considered by many a second fatal mistake of the renowned

\* This opinion was corroborated by the behaviour of the Americans, when the British landed from Kepp's Bay, Sept. 15. They discovered a timidity that nothing can excuse, but their recent sufferings on Long Island, their inferior numbers, and their dread of the superior discipline of British troops.

Washington.\* With the remainder of the army the commander in chief decamped, and moved towards the high grounds on the upper road to Boston. The possession of this part of the country was an important object; of consequence, the Americans were closely pursued by general Howe, who did not yet relinquish his hopes of a decisive action.

Frequent skirmishes had taken place on the *route*, without material advantages on either side; but on the twenty-eighth of October, the British overtook the American army near the White Plains, thirty miles distant from New York city, when an action of moment ensued. The attack was begun by the Hessians, the forlorn hope of the British army. They were commanded by general de Heister and colonel Rhal. Equal resolution animated both parties, and a considerable slaughter among the troops on both sides took place.† The Americans unable to bear these losses, fully apprised of the strength of their enemy, and that reinforcements had recently arrived under lord Percy, both the American commander and the army,

\* General Washington, however, was undoubtedly advised to this step, by several of his best officers.

† Among the slain was the valiant colonel Smallwood, whose regiment was nearly cut to pieces in the action on Long Island.

---

1776.

were equally willing to take a more distant position.

The British army had gained several very important advantages, among which was the command of the river Brunx, which was passed by colonel Rhal, who by this means acquired a very important post, which enabled him essentially to annoy the American army.

The action on the White Plains was a well-fought battle on both sides ; but the Americans had neither the numbers, the experience, nor the equipments for war, at that time, which rendered them equally able to cope with the strength, the numbers, the preparation, and the valor of the British army, under officers whose trade had long been that of war. And though the American commander made his escape with his final armament, and retreated with all the prudence and firmness of a general who had been longer tried in the field of action, the British had certainly a right in this affair, to boast a complete victory.\*

After the engagement, general Washington found it necessary to quit the field. He drew

\* The town of White-Plains was set on fire after the action, and all the houses and forage near the lines burnt. This the British writers charge to the account of the American commander.

back in the night to his entrenchments, and the next day took possession of some higher grounds, about the distance of two miles.

CHAP. IX.

1776.

General Howe, after parading a few days near the late scene of action, and indiscriminately plundering the neighbourhood, ordered his tents to be struck, and a movement of his whole army to be made towards New York. As his troops had long been kept in continual motion, were fatigued and harassed by sudden alarms, and the season far advanced, it was rationally concluded, that his design was to repair immediately to winter-quarters. But by a stroke of generalship, little expected where no remarkable superiority in military knowledge had yet been discovered, affairs took a most unfavorable turn for the Americans, and reduced the little, resolute continental army to dangers and distresses, to exertions and vigor, scarcely to be paralleled in history.

The numbers that had already fallen on both sides, by the rapid movements and frequent skirmishes for the space of three or four months, cannot be ascertained with exactitude. It was computed that not less than five thousand, principally Hessians, either perished or deserted from the ministerial army, after the action of Long Island to the middle of November, when general Howe laid the estimate before lord

CHAP. IX.

1776.

George Germaine.\* The Americans undoubtedly suffered in more than equal proportion, and from many causes were much less able to bear the reduction. The peculiar mode of raising troops hitherto adopted by the United States, had a tendency to retard the operations of war, and in some measure to defeat the best concerted plans, either for enterprise or defence. The several colonies had furnished their quota of men for a limited term only; and the country unused to standing armies, and the control of military power, impatient at the subordination necessary in a camp, and actuated by a strong sense of the liberty of the individual, each one had usually returned to his habitation at the expiration of his term of service, in spite of every danger that threatened the whole. This had occasioned frequent calls on the militia of the country, in aid of the army thus weakened, and kept in continual fluctuation by raw recruits, raised and sent on for a few months at a time.

In addition to these embarrassments, animosities had sometimes arisen between the southern and eastern troops, occasioned by the revival of some old *local* prejudices. The aristocratic spirit

\* In general Howe's letter to the secretary for American affairs, he acknowledged he had lost upwards of three hundred staff and other officers, and between four and five thousand privates.



that had been formerly characteristic of the south, frequently appeared in airs of assumed superiority, very disgusting to the feelings of their eastern brethren, the bold and hardy New Englanders; the *full-blooded* Yankees, as they sometimes boasted themselves; who, having few slaves at their command, had always been used to more equality of condition, both in rank, fortune, and education. These trivial causes sometimes raised animosities to such a height, that in the present circumstances of the army, the authority of the commander in chief was scarcely sufficient to restrain them.

CHAP. IX.

1776.

General Washington was also obliged often in his retreat through the Jerseys, to press for provisions, forage, and clothing, in a manner new to the inhabitants of America; who, as their misfortunes seemed to thicken, grew more remiss for a time, in voluntary aids to the army. Their grain was seized and threshed out for the use of the troops, their blankets, provisions, &c. forcibly taken from their houses, with a promise of payment in paper bills, when the exigencies of the country should permit: but it always appeared to the people the act of some subordinate officers, rather than the order of the commander in chief. Thus was his popularity kept up; and thus were the inhabitants of the Jerseys plundered by each party; while many of them disaffected to both, were uncertain on which side to declare.

CHAP. IX.

1776.

General Howe, well acquainted with these embarrassing circumstances, and apprized that Congress were taking measures to remedy the evils in future, wisely judged, that as he could not force Washington to a general engagement, it would be more advantageous for the present, to suspend his pursuit, and dislodge the Americans from their strong holds in the environs of New York. He was too sensible from the causes above related, that the continental army would diminish of itself, as soon as the term of their enlistment expired. From these considerations, he drew back his army, with the determination to invest fort Washington immediately.\* This fortress on the one side of the North River, and fort Lee on the opposite shore, commanded the whole navigation of the river, at the same time that it impeded the communication with New York by land.

General Washington could not rationally suppose, that a post of so much importance would remain long unmolested, or that the garrison could be defended against the whole force of the British army. General Lee afterwards boasted in a letter to a friend, that he had advised the evacuation of both fort Washington and fort Lee, previous to the main body of the American army leaving the neighbourhood of New

\* Near Kingsbridge, fifteen miles from the city of New York.

York. However this might have been, it was indeed a great mistake that it was not done; general Washington might then have had the assistance of the brave men who fell there.\*

General Knyphausen with six battalions, suddenly crossed the country from Rochelle to Kingsbridge, where, joined by the light infantry and grenadiers, the one commanded by lord Cornwallis, the other by earl Percy, the fort was on all sides attacked with vigor, and defended with bravery. On the sixteenth of November, colonel Magaw the commanding officer, was summoned to surrender without farther delay. He requested that he might be al-

\* An officer of the army wrote to general Lee after the surrender of fort Washington, and expressed himself thus :  
 “ We have all additional reasons for most earnestly wishing  
 “ to have you where the principal scene of action is laid.  
 “ I have no doubt had you been here, the garrison of  
 “ Mount Washington would now have composed a part of  
 “ this army ; every gentleman of the family, the officers  
 “ and foldiers generally, have a confidence in you ; the en-  
 “ emy constantly inquire where you are, and seem to me  
 “ to be less confident when you are present. We are in-  
 “ formed by an officer lately liberated, that the enemy have  
 “ a southern expedition in view ; that they hold us very  
 “ cheap in consequence of the late affair at Mount Wash-  
 “ ington, where both the plan of defence and execution  
 “ were contemptible : if a real defence of the lines was in-  
 “ tended, the number was too few ; if the fort only, the  
 “ garrison was too numerous by half.”

*Extract from general Reed to general Lee.*

CHAP. IX.

1776.

lowed to consider till nine o'clock the next morning, before he gave a decisive answer. It was replied, that two hours only were granted. At the expiration of this short *parley*, the adjutant general of the British army, who waited the reply, was informed, that the fort would be defended to the last moment. Accordingly a resistance was made with astonishing valor for several hours; but to prevent the farther effusion of blood, the Americans yielded to necessity, and surrendered themselves prisoners of war, at the moment when the Hessian and British troops were on the point of storming the garrison.

Near three thousand continental troops were lost by this disaster. These unhappy victims of war, notwithstanding the inclemency of the season, were stripped of their apparel and thrown naked into the jails of New York; where, after suffering the extremes of misery from cold, hunger, and sickness, most of them perished. The remnant who escaped immediate death, were after some months imprisonment, sent on parole to visit their friends, many of them infected with the small-pox, and all of them in such a languishing, emaciated condition, as proved a useful lesson to their countrymen; who, by this instance of severity towards the brave and unfortunate, were universally convinced, that death in the field of battle, was much to be preferred to the cruelties they had

reason to expect, if they fell into British hands, though a nation once famed for the virtues of justice, generosity, and clemency.

CHAP. IX.

1776.

After the surrender of fort Washington, no time was lost; the advantages gained by the British troops were pushed with spirit. With the utmost ease they took possession of fort Lee: the American garrison fled on the first apprehension of an attack, without offering the smallest resistance. General Howe embraced these favorable circumstances to prosecute his designs, stimulated by the hope of reaching and surprising Philadelphia, before the American army could be reinforced. Thus, near the close of the campaign, when the continental troops were daily dropping off, and a severe winter setting in, he had every reason to cherish his most sanguine hopes. He for some time pushed his purposes with vigor and alacrity, and obliged general Washington with an handful of men, to retreat from town to town, until hunted through the state of New Jersey, and even over the Delaware, which he had time to cross only six hours before the whole body of the British army, consisting of ten or twelve thousand men, were on the opposite banks.

The reasons why general Howe did not sooner overtake the distressed fugitives, or why he cantoned his troops, without crossing the river and taking possession of the city of Philadelphia, re-



main yet to be investigated. The retreat was conducted with ability, but the remnant that escaped was too small to intimidate the enemy, or to encourage the friends of the American cause. A great part of the inhabitants of the city, either from fear, affection, or interest, were at that time disposed to receive with open arms the British commander; and the consternation of all parties operated in favor of erecting the king's standard in the capital of America.

Congress, by advice of some military characters, precipitately removed to Baltimore, in the state of Maryland. The public concern was also heightened at this critical period, by the recent capture of general Lee. He had been collecting a number of militia in the neighbourhood of Morristown, with a design to fall on the rear of the British army, while in chase of Washington through the Jerseys. It is not known why he was thus unguarded, but he incautiously lodged at the little village of Backenridge, four miles from the troops he had collected, and about twenty from the British army. Here he was betrayed, surpris'd, and taken prisoner. Colonel Harcourt of the light horse, conducted the enterprize with so much address, that with a very small party, he without noise pass'd all the American guards on his way, surrounded the house, and took possession of his prisoner without the smallest resistance. In the hurry of the business, Lee was not suffered to take

either hat or cloak, and thus in a ruffian-like manner, was he conducted to the British headquarters.

CHAP. IX.

1776.

A peculiar triumph was enjoyed by his enemies in the capture of this single officer. They considered his services at that period, of the greatest consequence to the American army : in addition to this, he was viewed as a rebel to the sovereign of Britain in a double sense, both as a deserter from the king's service, in which he had long held an honorable rank, and as an abettor of the American defection, and one of the first officers in their army : he was of course confined in the strictest manner, and threatened with military execution as a traitor to the king. The Americans at that time had no British prisoners of equal rank, yet they made the most strenuous efforts for his release. A colonel Campbell with five Hessian field-officers, were soon after offered for the exchange of general Lee : when this was refused, general Washington advertised sir William Howe, that their blood must atone for his life, if Lee fell a sacrifice to the resentment of his enemies.

Humanity recoils at the sufferings of individuals, who by the laws of retaliation, are deemed the legal victims of policy ; but though the mind of the gentle may be wounded by the necessity, habit, in time, too often learns it to ac-

quiesce in the cruel policy of nations. Public emergencies may require the hand of severity to fall heavily on those who are not personally guilty, but compassion prompts, and ever urges to milder methods. However, general Lee was not executed, nor suddenly released. Colonel Campbell was closely imprisoned, and treated with much severity, and a considerable time elapsed before either of them were relieved, except by some mitigation in the manner of colonel Campbell's confinement, which was carried to an extreme not warranted even to a notorious felon.\*

Perhaps at no period of the great struggle for independence, were the affairs of the United States at so low an ebb as at the present. The footsteps of the British army in their route through the Jerseys, were every where marked with the most wanton instances of rapine and bloodshed: even the sacred repositories of the dead were not unmolested by the sacrilegious hands of the soldiery; † while the licentiousness

\* General Lee was also treated very severely until the defeat of Burgoyne. After this he was permitted to repair to New York on parole, and soon after liberated by an exchange of prisoners.

† This usage of the dead is authenticated by the accounts of several gentlemen of respectability near the scene of action.

of their officers spread rape, misery, and despair, indiscriminately through every village.

CHAP. IX.

1776.

Thus, while human nature was disgraced, and the feelings of benevolence shocked, by the perpetration of every crime; when the army spared neither age or sex, youth, beauty, or innocence; it is observable, that the distresses of war had fallen principally on that state, which at that time contained a greater proportion of persons attached to the royal cause, than could have been found in any other part of America. But so intermixed and blended were persons, families, and parties of different political opinions, that it was not easy to distinguish, in the wanton riot of victory, their friends from their foes, or the royalists from the whigs, even had the royal army been disposed to discriminate. It was indeed impossible for their foreign auxiliaries to make any distinction among Americans, though some British officers would gladly have checked the insolence of triumph, unbalanced by any principle of religion, honor, or humanity. A neglect of strict discipline prevented the melioration of crime and misery, and filled up the measure of censure which afterwards fell on the commander in chief of the British forces, even from those who wished to give his military operations the most brilliant cast.\*

\* See sir William Howe's defence of his conduct in his letters to administration, published in London.

CHAP. IX.

1776.

Had general Howe persevered in his pursuit, and have crossed the Delaware, he would inevitably have destroyed even the vestige of an American army. The remnant of the old troops drawn into Philadelphia, was too small for resistance, the citizens were divided and intimidated, congress had retreated to Baltimore, the country was dispirited, and Washington himself, ready to despair, had actually consulted some of his officers, on the expediency of flying to the back parts of Pennsylvania, or even beyond the Allegany mountains, to escape the usual fate of unsuccessful rebels, or as himself expressed it, "to save his neck from a halter."\*

Thus, without an army, without allies, and without resources, the gloom of disappointment overspread not only the brow of the commander in chief, but expanded wide, and ruin from every quarter lowered on the face of American freedom. Newport and the adja-

\* This was confidentially said to an officer, who reported, that the general put his hand to his neck, and observed, that it did not feel as if made for a halter. See *Stedman's History*. It is probable if ever general Washington really expressed himself in this manner, it was uttered more from the momentary ebullition of distress, than from the serious contemplation of despair. It discovered more a determination to live free, than any timidity from sudden dismay. Had general Howe overtaken the American troops, and have secured their commander, he would doubtless have been made a victim of severe vengeance.



cent islands were taken possession of by a part of the British army and navy, under the command of commodore sir Peter Parker and sir Henry Clinton. The whole colony of Rhode Island was not able to make the smallest resistance to the seizure of their capital: and to complete the climax of danger which this melancholy winter exhibited, the irruptions of the natives in various parts, was not the least. Many tribes of those aborigines, stimulated by their native fierceness, wrought up still higher by British influence, and headed by some American desperadoes in the service of Britain, were making the most horrid depredations on the back settlements of some of the southern states: nor did the affairs of America at the northward wear a more favorable aspect,

CHAP. IX.

1776.

General Carleton had conducted the campaign of this year, with the ability of the statesman, and the courage of the soldier; and notwithstanding the severity of his general character, he, with a degree of humanity honorable to himself, and exemplary to his military associates, had been disposed to commiserate the unfortunate. It has been observed, that all who fell into his hands after the death of general Montgomery, were treated with lenity and tenderness. He was doubtless sensible, that a war enkindled more to satiate a spirit of resent-

1776.

ment and pride, than to establish the principles of justice, required every palliative to mitigate the odium of the disgraceful design of subduing America by the aid of savages, who had hunted for ages in the wilderness beyond the distant lakes. General Carleton with the most extraordinary vigilance and vigor, had conducted the pursuit of the Americans, until Arnold and his party were chased out of the province of Quebec: nor did he ever lose sight of his object, which was to make himself master of the Hudson, and form a junction at Albany with general Howe, whose troops in detached parties were wasting the middle colonies, and co-operating in the same design.

By uncommon exertions, Carleton obtained a fleet in the wilderness, of such strength and superiority, as to destroy the little American squadron on the Lake Champlain, one of the smaller navigable basins in the woods of that astonishing country. The lakes of America are among the wonders of the world. They are numerous and extensive, deep, and navigable at many hundred miles distance from the ocean. A view of this part of creation is sublime and astonishing. There are five of those lakes of principal magnitude. The smallest of them, *Lake Ontario*, is more than two hundred, and the largest, *Lake Superior*, is five hundred leagues

in circumference.\* Happy might it have been for the Atlantic states, had they been contented within these boundaries of nature, and not at an after period, have wasted the blood of their citizens in attempting to wrest from the natives a vast extent of territory, which it is very improbable they will be long able to govern, unless a remarkable coincidence of events should give them a commanding influence, superior to any European power.

The bravery of Arnold was on his retreat, equally conspicuous with the outset of his extraordinary undertaking: but notwithstanding his vigilance, and the valor of his soldiers, they were reduced to the utmost distress before he blew up the remainder of his fleet, which Carleton had not captured, and run his last ship on shore, without acknowledging the superiority of the British flag, by the servile signal of striking his colors. Obligated to relinquish every post of advantage, Arnold and the remnant of his troops, were driven naked, defenceless, and despondent, from forest to forest, and from lake to lake, until they reached Ticonderoga. The garrison there had been reinforced by some

\* The principal of these inland seas are, Lake Superior, Huron, Michigan, Erie, and Ontario. The description of these and the smaller sheets of water spread over the vast western territory, may be found in every geographical work.

CHAP. IX. § militia from the eastern states, but they were  
1776. in no condition to meet general Carleton, whose  
advancement they had every reason to expect,  
with superior numbers, and the double advantage  
of discipline and success, and his exertions  
aided by tribes of copper-colored savages.

General Thomas had been sent from Cambridge in the spring, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six, with a detachment of the continental army, to endeavour in conjunction with the eastern militia, to retrieve the wretched state of affairs in Canada. He was a man of cool judgment, possessed of courage the result of principle, rather than bravery the impulse of passion. He was respected by the citizens, beloved by the soldiers, and well qualified by the firmness of his mind, and the strength of his constitution, to face the dangers of a campaign in the wilderness. But unfortunately for him, he was deputed to the northern command to oppose the conjoined forces of the native barbarians and their British allies, at a time when the remains of the American army were dismayed by defeat, worn out by fatigue, and in addition to their distresses, a pestilential disorder, then fatal to New Englanders, had spread through the camp. The small-pox, by the ill policy of the country, had been so long kept from their doors, that there was scarce a man among them, who was not more afraid of an attack from this kind of pestilence, than the

fury of the sword: but no caution could prevent the rapidity of the contagion; it pervaded the whole army; and proved fatal to most of the new raised troops.

The character of the military officer who dies in his bed, however meritorious, is seldom crowned by the *eclat* of fame, which follows the hero who perishes in the field. Thus this good man, qualified to reap the fairest laurels in a day of battle, was immediately on his arrival at the scene of action, cut down by the hand of sickness, and his memory almost extinguished by a succession of new characters and events that crowded for attention. By the death of general Thomas, and the reduced state of the Americans, they were far from being in any preparation for the reception of general Carleton, whose arrival they momentarily expected. They had nothing to hope—an immediate surrender to mercy was their only resource. On this they had determined; when to their surprise and joy they were informed, that all further pursuit was relinquished, and that the Canadians and British troops had precipitately retreated.

Thus the remnant of the broken continental army was left at full liberty to escape in the best manner they could from other impending dangers. From the nature of the grounds,



and from the neighbourhood of the savages, from their weak, sickly, and reduced state, their retreat was extremely difficult; but in scattered parties they reached Crown Point in a very feeble condition. After this series of successful efforts, all farther thoughts of the reduction and conquest of Canada, were for the present laid aside. General Carleton had repaired to Quebec. General Phillips with a considerable force made winter-quarters at Montreal; and general Burgoyne took passage for England. Both these officers had been very active in aid of Carleton, through the campaign of one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six.

The defeat of the Americans in Canada, and the advantages gained by the British arms in the Jerseys, and indeed for some months in every other quarter, gave to the royal cause an air of triumph. The brilliant hopes formed from these circumstances, by the calculators of events for the ensuing spring, led the ministry and the army, the nation and their sovereign, to flatter themselves that the completion of the war was at no great distance; and that only one more campaign would be necessary for the entire subjugation of America. The vicissitudes of fortune, that hourly cloud or brighten all human affairs, soon convinced them that this was but the triumph of a day. The new year opened in a reverse view. A spirited movement of general Washington at this important crisis,

had a most happy effect : a single incident gave a different face to the affairs of the colonies, in a shorter time than could have been imagined, after the ruinous appearance of every thing at the close of the campaign.

CHAP. IX.

1776.

On the evening of the twenty-fifth of December, general Washington in a most severe season, crossed the Delaware with a part of his army, then reduced to less than two thousand men in the whole. They very unexpectedly landed near Trenton. Colonel Rhal, an officer of decided bravery, commanded a detachment of twelve hundred Hessians stationed there, where they lay in perfect security. It was near morning before they were alarmed : the surprise was complete ; the resistance small : Rhal was mortally wounded, and his whole corps surrendered prisoners of war. After the fatigue, the hazards, and the success of the night, general Washington with his party and his prisoners, consisting of the three regiments of Rhal, Lofbourg, and Knyphausen, recrossed the river before eight in the morning, with little or no loss.

This adventure gave an astonishing spring to the spirits of the American army and people, a short time before driven to the brink of despair. They had viewed the Hessians as a most terrific enemy, and in conjunction with the veterans of Britain, as an invulnerable foe. To

1776.

see such a body of them surpris'd in their camp, and yielding themselves prisoners to the shreds of an American army, inspir'd them with a boldness that an action of the greatest magnitude might not have awakened in different circumstances. General Washington did not sit down in Philadelphia satisfied with the *eclat* of this enterprise, but in a few days again pass'd the Delaware, and took post at Trenton.

The British army elated by success, had lain carelessly cantoned in small divisions, in a line extending through New Jersey to New York. General Howe was afterwards severely censured by his employers, for his neglect in not crossing the Delaware, while he had the promise of the most brilliant success from his own arms. The panic of the Pennsylvanians had inspir'd most of them with a disposition to succumb to any terms he should impose, which ought to have been an additional stimulus to have pursued his good fortune. Nor was he less censured for his unguarded cantonments, through such an extensive line as the whole length of the Jerseys.\*

General Washington moved on from Trenton to Princetown by a circuitous march, to avoid engaging the British or being hemmed in near Trenton. He suddenly attacked the

\* See trial and defence of general Howe.

British encampment at Princetown, while the main body of the British army had marched to Trenton, with design to dislodge the Americans from that post. From Princetown the American army moved to Elizabethtown. Animated by success, warmed by bravery, and supported by fortitude, they gathered strength as they moved, and gained some signal advantages in several places on the Jersey side of the river; and in their turn pursued the king's troops, with as much rapidity as they had recently fled before them; while the British, as if seized with a general panic, made but a feeble resistance.

After many marches, counter-marches, and skirmishes, the strength of the British force was collected at Brunswick, a town in the Jerseys, about sixty miles from Philadelphia, and thirty-five from New York. They continued their head-quarters there the remainder of the winter; but they were not without apprehensions for the safety of their troops and their magazines, even at this distance from Philadelphia, notwithstanding the contempt with which they had but a short time before, viewed the broken, disheartened remains of a continental army, which they had pursued into the city.

The British were indeed very far superior to the Americans, in every respect necessary to

military operations, except the revived courage and resolution, the result of sudden success after despair. In this, the Americans at the time yielded the palm to none; while the confidence of their antagonists apparently diminished, and victory began by them to be viewed at a distance.

The waste of human life from various causes, through the vicissitudes of this winter, was not inconsiderable on either side: but the success of the American arms through the Jerseys, was in some measure damped by the death of the brave general Mercer of Virginia, who fell at Princetown, in an action made memorable by the loss of so gallant an officer. His distinguished merit was gratefully acknowledged by congress, in the provision afterwards made for the education and support of the youngest son of his family.

The fortunate movements of the Americans at this critical era, had the usual effect on public opinion. Such is human nature, that success ever brightens the talents of the fortunate commander, and applause generally outruns the expectations of the ambitious. General Washington, popular before, from this period became the idol of his country, and the admiration of his enemies. His humanity to the prisoners who fell into his hands, was a contrast to the severities suffered by those captured at



fort Washington, and the victims in other places, that fell under the power of either Hessians or Britons. In a book of general orders belonging to colonel Rhal, found after the action at Trenton, it was recorded, that "His excellency the commander in chief orders, that all Americans found in arms, not having an officer with them, shall be immediately hanged."\* This instance may serve as a sample of the cruel designs, and summary modes of proceeding to execution among military masters, who hold themselves above the censure or control of civil authority, or the restraints of humanity.

On the contrary, the lenity shewn by general Washington towards the loyalists captured by his soldiers, disarmed the prejudices of many, and multitudes flocked to the American standard, who, in the beginning of the dispute, were favorers of the royal cause, and within a few months had been ready to throw themselves into the arms of Great Britain. But every favorable impression was erased, and every idea of submission annihilated, by the indiscriminate ravages of the Hessian and British soldiery in their *route* through the Jerseys. The

\* The intimation of lord Cornwallis afterwards, to the commander of a party sent out, much superior to the Americans they expected to meet, was not more humane. His lordship observed, that "he wanted no prisoners."

elegant houses of some of their own most devoted partisans were burnt: their wives and daughters pursued and ravished in the woods to which they had fled for shelter. Many unfortunate fathers, in the stupor of grief, beheld the misery of their female connexions, without being able to relieve them, and heard the shrieks of infant innocence, subjected to the brutal lust of British grenadiers, or *Hessian Yaughers*.

In short, it may be difficult for the most descriptive pen, to portray the situation of the inhabitants of the Jerseys, and the neighbourhood of their state. The confusion of parties, the dismay of individuals, who were still serving in the remnant of the American army, whose dearest connexions were scattered through the country, and exposed to the danger of plunder and misery, from the hostile inroads of a victorious army, can be imagined only by those whose souls are susceptible at once of the noblest and the tenderest feelings. Many of this description were among the brave officers, who had led the fragments of a fugitive army across the Delaware, and sheltered in the city of Philadelphia, had by flight escaped a total excision.

But after escaping the perilous pursuit, there appeared little on which to ground any rational

hope of effectually counteracting the designs of their enemies. They found congress had retreated, and that the inhabitants of the city were agitated and divided. Several of the more wealthy citizens secured their property by renouncing the authority of congress, and acknowledging themselves the subjects of the crown : others availed themselves of a proclamation of pardon, published by the British commander, and took protection under the royal standard, for personal security.

Several officers of high character and consideration, were on the point of pursuing the same steps, previous to the action at Trenton, from the anxiety they felt for their families, despair of the general cause, danger of the city, or the immediate military executions that might take place, when the victorious army should cross the river, which they momentarily expected. Why this was not done, remains involved among the fortuitous events, which often decide the fate of armies, or of nations, as it were by accident. The votaries of blind chance, or indeed the more sober calculators on human events, would have pronounced the fortune of the day was in the hands of the British commander. Why he did not embrace her tenders while it was in his power, no one can tell ; nor why he stopped short on the borders of the

CHAP. IX.

1776.

river, as if afraid the waters of the Delaware, like another Red Sea, would overwhelm the pursuers of the injured Americans, who had in many instances as manifestly experienced the protecting hand of Providence, as the favored Israelites.

The neglect of so fair an opportunity, by a single effort, to have totally destroyed or dispersed the American army, or in the language of administration, to have cut off the *hydra head* of *rebellion*, by the subjugation of the capital city, was viewed in the most unpardonable light by his employers. They were not yet fully apprised of the spirit of Americans: their ideas did not quadrate with those of a distinguished military officer, well acquainted with the country, who observed in a letter to a friend,\* “it was no exaggeration to assert, that “there were two hundred thousand strong-bodied, active yeomanry, ready to encounter “all hazards and dangers, ready to sacrifice all “considerations, rather than surrender a tittle “of the rights which they have derived from “God and their ancestors.” Subsequent events will prove that he had not formed a mistaken opinion of the resolution and prowess of the Americans. It will be seen, that they were far

\* See a letter from general Charles Lee to the duke of Richmond, October, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four.

from relinquishing their claim to independence, by the ill success of a single campaign. The tardy conduct of sir William Howe was reprehended with severity; nor was he ever able to justify or vindicate himself, either to administration or to the world.

CHAP. IX.

1776.

From these and other circumstances, the character of sir William Howe depreciated in proportion to the rising fame of the American commander in chief, his rival in glory, and his competitor for the crown of victory, on a theatre that soon excited the curiosity, and awakened the ambition of the heroes and princes of Europe.

Indeed it must be acknowledged, that general Howe had innumerable difficulties to surmount, notwithstanding the number of his troops. He was at a distance from his employers, who were ignorant of his situation, and unable to support him as emergencies required. He was in an enemy's country, where every acquisition of forage or provisions, was procured at the expense or hazard of life or reputation. A considerable part of his army was composed of discontented foreigners, who, disappointed of the easy settlements they had been led to expect, from the conquest of rebels, and the forfeiture of their estates,—their former poverty not mitigated, nor their yoke of slavery meliorated, in the service of their new mas-



CHAP. IX.

1776.

ters,—they were clamorous for pay, and too eager for plunder, to be kept within the rules of discipline : and their alien language and manners disgusting to their British comrades, a constant bickering was kept up between them.

Nor was the British commander less embarrassed by the tories, who from every state had fled from the resentment of their countrymen, and hung upon his hands for subsistence. On their fidelity or their information, he could make little dependence. Many of them had never possessed property at all, others irritated by the loss of wealth ; both were continually urging him to deeds of cruelty, to which he did not seem naturally inclined. At the same time, he was sensible that the hopes of his nation would sink by the protraction of a war, which they had flattered themselves might be concluded with the utmost facility and expedition.

There were many concurring circumstances to lead the world to conclude, that sir William Howe was not qualified, either by education or habits of life, for the execution of an object of such magnitude, as the restoration of the revolted colonies to obedience, and dependence on the crown of Britain. “ He fought as a soldier and a servant to his king, without other principle than that of passive obedience. The immensity of the prospect before him, embarrassed his mind, clouded his understand-

“ing ; and, too much engrossed by his bottle  
 “and his mistress, he frequently left his orders  
 “and his letters to be fabricated by subordinate  
 “officers : and seemed at some times to sink  
 “into stupor or indolence, at others, brave and  
 “cool as Julius Cæsar.”

If these traits of the character of the British commander are just and impartial, as said to be by one of his former associates,\* the world need be at no loss why such instances of shameful outrage and rapine appeared wherever his army entered ; or why, when he had driven the Americans over the Delaware, he did not pursue and complete the business, by a triumphal entrance into Philadelphia, and the total destruction of general Washington and his remaining troops.

No military character ever had a fairer opportunity (as observed above) to place the martial laurel on his brow, than was presented to general Howe on the banks of the Delaware ; but he suffered it to wave at a distance, without the resolution to seize it : and instead of a chaplet of glory, he reaped only the hatred of America, the loss of esteem and reputation in England, and disgrace and censure from his parliamentary masters.

\* See letter of general Lee, Appendix, Note No. XVIII, which discovers the temper and character of the writer, as well as of sir William Howe.

CHAP. IX.

1776.

The negligence of fir William Howe gave an opportunity to the Americans, to recover the energies of their former courage. The hopeless prospect that had beclouded their minds, vanished on the successful termination of a single enterprise projected by the commander in chief, and executed with resolution and magnanimity, by officers who had been almost reduced to despondency.

The surprize of Trenton saved the army, the city, and in some degree, the reputation of the commander in chief, which frequently depends more on the fortunate exigencies of a moment than on superior talents. The world ever prone to neglect the unfortunate, however brave, amiable, or virtuous, generally pays its idolatrous homage to those elevated by the favors of the ideal deity to the pinnacle of honor: yet real merit usually commands the plaudit of posterity, however it may be withheld by contemporaries, from rivalry or envy.

Perhaps there are no people on earth, in whom a spirit of enthusiastic zeal is so readily enkindled, and burns so remarkably conspicuous, as among the Americans. Any fortuitous circumstance, that holds out the most distant promise of a completion of their wishes, is pushed with an ardor and unanimity that seldom fails of success. This characteristic trait may in some measure account for the rapidity

with which every thing has been brought to maturity there, from the first settlement of the colonies.

CHAP. IX.

---

1776.

The energetic operation of this sanguine temper, was never more remarkably exhibited, than in the change instantaneously wrought in the minds of men, by the capture of Trenton at so unexpected a moment. From a state of mind bordering on despair, courage was invigorated, every countenance brightened, and the nervous arm was outstretched, as if by one general impulse, all were determined to drive the hostile invaders, that had plundered their villages, and dipt the remorseless sword in the bosom of the innocent victims of their fury, from off the American shores.

But we shall see in the subsequent pages of these memoirs, that they had yet many years to struggle with the dangers, the chances, and the miseries of war, before an extensive country, convulsed in every part, was restored to tranquillity. Agonizing amidst the complicated difficulties of raising, paying, and keeping an army in the field, it is easy to conceive it was not with much facility, that money was drawn from the pockets of the rich, for the support of the public cause, at the hazard of receiving a scrip of depreciated paper, in lieu of silver and gold.

A nominal substitute for specie has often its temporary advantages, and when not extended too far, its permanent ones; but is oftener attended with a great balance of evil. Its deceptive value often plunges a great part of the community into ruin, and corrupts the morals of the people before they are apprehensive of the danger. Yet without the expedient of a paper currency, the Americans could never have supported an army, or have procured the necessaries of life from day to day. Experience had before taught them the pernicious effects of a paper medium, without funds sufficient for its redemption; but the peculiar exigencies of their situation, left them no other resources.

The United States had engaged in an hazardous enterprise, in which all was at stake. Deficient as they were in the means necessary to support a war, against a wealthy and potent nation, they yet stood alone, uncertain whether any other power would aid their cause, or view them with that degree of consideration, that might obtain a credit for foreign loans. It was an interesting spectacle to all such nations as had colonies of their own, to view such an unexpected spirit of resistance and revolt in the Americans, as might be contagious, and probably produce commotions as much to be dreaded by them, as the alienation of the thirteen colonies was by England. The most judicious statesmen



in America were sensible, that much time must elapse, and many events take place, before any foreign stipulations could be effected. They were therefore impelled by the peculiar circumstances of their situation, to resort to this dangerous expedient, or relinquish the contest. No wise legislator, no experienced statesman, no man of principle, would have recourse to a measure fraught with such uncertain consequences, but from that necessity which in human affairs, sometimes precludes all deliberation between present utility, and distant events which may accrue.

CHAP. IX.

1776.

In consequence of this dilemma, congress had emitted sums to a vast amount in paper bills, with a promise on the face of the bill, of payment in specie at some distant period. This circumstance was alarming to the avaricious and the wealthy, who immediately withdrew their gold and silver from circulation. This and other combining circumstances, among which the immense sums counterfeited in New York by the British, and thrown into the colonies, produced an immediate and an astonishing depreciation. At the same time, the widow and the orphan were obliged to receive the interest of their property, deposited for security in the public treasuries, according to the nominal sum on the face of the bills; by which they and other classes, were reduced to

extreme necessity. The operative effects of this paper medium, its uses, its depreciation, and total annihilation, will be seen hereafter, when the credit of the circulating paper had sunk so low, that no one presumed to offer it in barter for any commodity. All public demands were consolidated by government at a very great discount, and public securities given to those who had demands for services or loans, and the faith of congress pledged for their payment in full value, as soon as practicable.\*

The honor and the fate of the commander in chief, had been daily hazarded by the unrestrained license of soldiers, with whom it was optional to stay a few days longer, or to withdraw after the short term of their enlistment had expired, however imminent the dangers might be that threatened their country. Yet the establishment of a permanent army was not more ardently wished by general Washington, than by every judicious man in America: but the work, though not insurmountable, was attended with complicated difficulties. The reluctance felt through that class of men from which an army was to be drawn, to enlist for an indefinite term, was apparent to all. The precarious resources for the support of an army, which at that time depended

\* See Appendix, Note No. XIX

only on a depreciating medium, could not be concealed, and were discouraging indeed: at the same time, it was a subject too delicate to expatiate on, as the more it was conversed upon, the greater was the danger of defeating the desired object. But, the firmness of congress unshaken, and the legislatures of the individual states equally zealous, while the people at large were convinced of the utility of the measure, the object was in time obtained, though not so rapidly as the exigencies of the day required.

## CHAPTER X.

Defultory Circumstances.—Skirmishes and Events.—General Howe withdraws from the Jerseys—Arrives at the River Elk—Followed by Washington.—The Battle of Brandywine.—General Washington defeated, retreats to Philadelphia—Obliged to draw off his Army.—Lord Cornwallis takes Possession of the City.—Action at Germantown, Red Bank, &c.—The British Army take Winter-Quarters in Philadelphia.—The Americans encamp at Valley-Forge.—General Washington's Situation not eligible.—De Lisle's Letters.—General Conway resigns.—The Baron de Steuben appointed Inspector General of the American Army.

CHAP. X.

1777.

IN the beginning of the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven, the spirits of the Americans were generally re-animated by fresh hopes, in consequence of the measures taken by congress to establish a permanent army, until the conclusion of the war, and still more by their sanguine expectations of success from the negotiations, and prospects of an alliance with France.

A solemn confederation, consisting of a number of articles by which the United States should in future be governed, had been drafted, discussed, and unanimously signed by all the delegates in congress, in the month of October, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six. This instrument was sent to each legisla-

ture in the thirteen states, and approved and afterwards ratified by the individual governments. After this, the congress of the United States thought proper to appoint commissioners to the court of France, when fortunately a loan of money was negotiated on the faith of the United States, and permission obtained for the reception of American ships of war, and the sale of prizes that might be captured by them, and carried into any of the ports of France. They were also encouraged to hope for still further assistance from the generosity of that nation.

The growth of the infant marine of the United States had been so rapid, and so successful had been the adventurers in this early stage of the war, that it was rationally concluded, it could not be many years before the navy of America might make a respectable figure among the nations.

It was not expected in Great Britain, that the colonies could thus early have acquired a naval force of the least consideration. In consequence of this idea, a great number of British ships and transports, that went out slightly armed, or not armed at all, were this year captured on their way to America. So bold and adventurous were the American privateers, and their public ships, that the domestic trade of Britain was rendered insecure; and a convoy



CHAP. X.

1777.

became necessary to protect the linen ships from Dublin to Newry: a circumstance that never before took place.\* The successful depredations also on the British West India trade, were felt through Great Britain in an alarming degree; and shocked their commerce so far, as to occasion sudden and frequent bankruptcies in London, Bristol, and almost all the great marts of the nation.

Thus the colonies were filled with every thing necessary for carrying on a war, or that furnished them the luxuries of life. But the sudden acquisition of wealth, which in consequence of unexpected success, flowed into the lap of individuals, so much beyond their former fortune or ideas, was not indeed very favorable to the virtue or manners of the possessors. It had a tendency to contract the mind, and led it to shrink into selfish views and indulgencies, totally inconsistent with genuine republicanism. The coffers of the rich were not unlocked for the public benefit, but their contents were liberally squandered in pursuit of frivolous enjoyments, to which most of them had heretofore been strangers.

This avaricious spirit, indeed, somewhat retarded the measures contemplated by congress, who had determined, that the army in future

\* British Annual Register, 1777,

should stand on a more stable footing. They had directed that eighty-eight battalions should be raised, and kept in full pay until the close of the war; and as an encouragement to enlist, they promised a certain allotment of lands to both officers and soldiers, at the commencement of peace; yet the recruiting service went on heavily for a time, and at an immense expense to the United States. But among a people whose personal liberty had been their proudest boast, the above was not the sole cause of the difficulty of raising a permanent army: the novelty of being enchained to a standing army was disgusting; they generally revolted at the idea of enlisting for an indefinite term: thus the army still remained incomplete, and the militia were again called out as before. In that mode there was no want of zeal and alacrity; great numbers always appeared ready for any temporary service.

CHAP. X.

1777.

During the winter of this year, the British commander did not attempt any thing of greater magnitude, than the destruction of the American magazines. He effected his purpose at Peekskill, at Courtland Manor; and about the middle of April, he sent on a detachment under the command of governor Tryon, to the little town of Danbury, on the borders of Connecticut, where a considerable quantity of provisions and other articles had been deposited, for the use of the American army. He consid-

CHAP. X.

1777.

ered it of great importance to cut off these resources, before the opening of the spring campaign.

In conjunction with sir William Erskine and brigadier general Agnew, governor Tryon, who had embodied near two thousand royalists, was vested with the principal command, on the trivial expedition to Danbury. He executed his orders with alacrity. They destroyed a few hogheads of rum and sugar, a considerable quantity of grain and other provisions, about seventeen hundred tents, and plundered and burnt a number of houses in the town of Danbury. But their retreat to their shipping was intercepted by the militia of the country, drawn out by the generals Wooster and Silliman. A small detachment of continental troops commanded by general Arnold, with a party of recruiting officers joined them, and a rencounter ensued, when much bravery was exhibited on both sides. General Wooster, an aged and experienced officer, and a very worthy man, was mortally wounded. General Arnold had his horse shot under him at the moment a soldier had his bayonet lifted for his destruction; but with surprizing agility, he disengaged himself from his horse, and drew a pistol that laid his enemy dead at his feet. On the third day after his landing, governor Tryon again reached the shipping, and re-embarked his troops with inconsiderable loss, though exceedingly fatigued

by a march of thirty miles, harassed the whole time by an enemy arranged on each hand, and pressed in the rear by recruits hourly coming in to the assistance of his opponents.\*

Within a few days, reprisals were made for this successful feat of Tryon, by the more brilliant enterprise of colonel Meiggs; who, with only one hundred and seventy men, landed on the southern part of Long Island, surprised the enemy lying at Sag Harbour, burnt twelve armed vessels, captured the sailors, destroyed the forage and stores on the east part of the island, and returned to Guilford, about ninety miles distance, within thirty hours from the time of his departure from thence. He brought with him the trophies of his success, without the loss of a man. As no action of importance was exhibited for several months, these smaller depredations and inconsiderable skirmishes, served only to keep the spirits in play, and preserve the mind from that lethargic state, which inaction or want of object creates.

The plan digested for the summer campaign, among the British officers, was, to gain posses-

\* It has been acknowledged by some British historians, that their loss more than counterbalanced the advantages gained in this expedition to Danbury.

sion of Philadelphia, to command the central colonies, and to drive the Americans from all their posts in the province of Canada. Some circumstances had taken place that seemed to favor these designs. Confident of his success from his superior numbers in the field, general Howe for a time, exercised all the artifices of an experienced commander, to bring general Washington to a decisive engagement: but, from a perfect command of his temper, and a judicious arrangement of the few continental troops, and the militia he had in aid, the American chieftain defeated every measure practised to bring him to a general action. He placed about two thousand men in Princeton, and with the main body of his army, took his stand on the high and advantageous grounds in the neighbourhood, and made all possible preparation for defence. This determined line of conduct in general Washington, gave a new turn to British operations. On the nineteenth of June, general Howe decamped from Brunswick, and removed to Amboy, with every appearance of a speedy embarkation. His troops as usual committed every outrage on their way, and as if instigated by despair of becoming masters of the country, and envious of the progress of arts and sciences in America, the colleges and public libraries were burnt, all public buildings and places of worship swept away, and nothing that had the appearance of distinguished elegance escaped. But the mind and the



pen weary of the detail of destruction, it is enough to observe, that the British army in their retreat, left every trait of desolation and barbarism behind them.

CHAP. X.

1777.

The manœuvres of the British commander led to the belief, and every thing wore the strongest appearance, that he was about to take a final leave of the Jerseys. The illusion succeeded so far, as to induce general Washington to send a body of three thousand men, commanded by the generals Maxwell, Conway, and lord Stirling, with design to attack the rear of their march. General Howe apprised of this movement, hastily returned to the charge. He dispatched lord Cornwallis on a circuitous route, who soon came up with lord Stirling, strongly posted in a wood.

The Americans determined to dispute the ground with Cornwallis; but the ardor of the British troops, and the rivalry of the Hessians, obliged them soon to quit their advantageous post, and retreat with precipitation. The loss the Americans sustained was not inconsiderable; they suffered greatly, both from the extreme heat of the season, and the valor of their antagonists. From this and some other circumstances, it was for a time generally believed, that the late movement of general Howe and his army, was but a feint to draw general Washington to an action, rather than from a fixed

design immediately to evacuate the state of New Jersey. Convinced of this, Washington drew in his lines, and recovered his camp on the hills, determined to persevere in his defensive system, until some more advantageous opportunity should justify the hazard of a general engagement.

It would undoubtedly have been highly imprudent for general Howe at this time, to have persisted in pushing his way to the Delaware, through a country disgusted and alienated by the barbarity of his troops. Most of the inhabitants of this state were now armed for defence. Inflamed by resentment from the sufferings of the last year, impelled by necessity from the impediments in the way of all private occupations, and fired by a love of glory, they were now ardent for action, in proportion as they had been heretofore remiss; and came to the field prepared to conquer or die in defence of their country. At the same time, general Washington was daily gaining strength by the arrival of fresh troops, from various other quarters.

The British commander accordingly thought proper about mid-summer, to decamp in earnest. He drew off his whole force as privately as possible to New York; thence embarked, and sailed from Sandy Hook the twenty-third of July. The destination of the fleet and army

was kept so profoundly secret, that for some time after their embarkation, every capital on the continent was apprehensive that they should be the object of the next visit from a potent armament, that seemed at a loss where to direct their operations. This expectation occasioned a general anxiety until the latter part of August, when the fleet appeared in the Chesapeake, and the army soon after landed at the head of the river Elk. On his arrival there, general Howe immediately published a proclamation, in which he assured the inhabitants everywhere of safety and protection, provided they were not found in arms, and promised pardon to all officers and soldiers who should surrender to the royal army.

Indeed his disposition to clemency appeared so conspicuous on his first arrival, that it prevented the entire depopulation of the adjacent parts of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the lower counties of Delaware; the inhabitants of which, on the first appearance of so formidable a foe in their neighbourhood, were struck with consternation, and on the point of abandoning their habitations.

It was now obvious, that the possession of the city of Philadelphia was the stake for which both armies played. General Washington had moved with the greatest part of his troops for the defence of that elegant city, and had by de-

CHAP. X.

1777.

tached parties, embarrassed the march of the British army from the river Elk to the Brandywine. In the neighbourhood of the last the two armies met, and on the eleventh of September came to a general engagement. The battle was fought with bravery, and sustained with spirit on both sides; but the fortune of the day declared against the Americans, yet not so decidedly as the sanguine expectations of their antagonists had led them to hope from such an event. But it gave them an astonishing advantage in the minds of the people through all the district of Pennsylvania; and enabled general Howe with more facility to complete his enterprise. Many officers of high rank on both sides, suffered much in the spirited action at the Brandywine. A few days after this affair, general Wayne, who had concealed himself in a wood, with fifteen hundred men, in order to harass the rear of the British, was discovered and attacked by brigadier general Grey, who had given orders that no alarm should be made by the use of fire-arms. He made the onset about one o'clock in the morning; and by the more cruel exercise of the bayonet, several hundred Americans were killed and wounded: the remainder with difficulty escaped by flight.

Among others who suffered in the battle of Brandywine, the marquis de la Fayette, a young nobleman of France, was dangerously wound-

ed. Warmed by an enthusiastic love of liberty, and animated by a laudable ambition, this amiable young gentleman had left the court of France without leave of the king : and quitting the pleasures of domestic felicity, he embarked at his own expence, and engaged in the service of the United States at an early period of the war, when the affairs of America wore the darkeſt aſpect. His zeal and his heroiſm to the concluſion of the conteſt, placed the well-earned laurel on his brow, and procured him the love, reſpect, and beſt wiſhes of the people throughout America. Indeed all the French officers in the continental army, among whom were many of high conſideration, acquitted themſelves with diſtinguiſhed gallantry on this and many other occaſions, where the courage of the ſoldier, and the humanity of the officer, were called into exerciſe.

CHAP. X.

1777.

General Waſhington obliged to retreat in diſorder, and cloſely purſued after the action, retired to Cheſter. He ſoon after with his army reached Philadelphia ; but the Britiſh commanders directed their operations with ſo much judgment and ſucceſs, that before the twenty-fixth of September, Waſhington thought proper to evacuate the city. Lord Cornwallis with the Britiſh grenadiers, and two battalions of Hefſians, on that day made a triumphal entry, and took poſſeſſion of the capital of the United States.



---

1777.

The era was truly critical. Congress again found it necessary, a second time to desert the city, and now repaired to York-Town for safety. Diffusions ran high among the inhabitants of Philadelphia. Some of the most opulent families were disaffected, and renounced all adherence to the union : and several persons of different descriptions, emboldened by the absence of congress, and the success of the British arms, took this opportunity to declare in favor of the royal cause. One of principal consideration among them, went out, and conducted the king's troops into the city. Others declared themselves zealously attached to the measures of administration, and equally disgusted with the opposition of the colonies. Among these was Joseph Galloway, a member of congress, and speaker of the house of representatives in Pennsylvania. He soon after repaired to England ; where he indefatigably exerted his abilities and his influence against his native country, on all occasions.

Besides those individual apostates, the quaker interest had long embarrassed every public measure in that colony. They were a large and powerful body in the state of Pennsylvania ; and, notwithstanding their pacific principles, though not actually in arms, they at this time took a decided part against the American cause. Their previous conduct had drawn upon themselves many severities. Several of the

principal leaders had been imprisoned, and others sent out of the city of Philadelphia, on the approach of the British army. Yet still they refused the smallest submission to the present government, and appealed to the laws, by which they claimed personal safety. But whether from a consideration of the necessity of a temporary suspension of law, in times of public and imminent danger, or whether from the sanguine resolutions which operate on all parties, when their favorite system totters on the brink of ruin, little regard was paid even to the legal claims of this body of citizens. Several persons of the first distinction and character among them, notwithstanding their just and sensible remonstrances, were sent off to Virginia, to prevent the influence they might have through a state, then the principal seat of war.

From these political dissensions, the partial defeats, the loss of Philadelphia, the slowness of recruits for permanent service, the difficulty of obtaining supplies for the army from various causes, and particularly from the monopolizing and avaricious spirit that was fast gaining ground in America, and from *delay*, "the betrayer of all confederations," a lowering aspect was cast over the operations of America on every side. On the contrary, the British government, the army, and their adherents,

CHAP. X.

1777.

had much reason to flatter themselves with an idea of the speedy completion of their designs against the United States. They were now in possession of the first city in the union ; general Clinton was in force at New York ; general Vaughan on the North River, with troops sufficient to sweep away the inhabitants on both sides, and to keep the adjacent country in awe. A large detachment of the British army still held the possession of Newport : colonel Lofbourg with a Hessian brigade in conjunction with them, was piratically plundering the neighbouring coasts, and burning the scattered villages of the state of Rhode Island.

It is proper here to observe, that soon after the British troops had taken possession of Rhode Island, some animosities had arisen between general Howe and lord Percy, who commanded there. This was occasioned by a requisition from sir William Howe to his lordship, to send him on fifteen hundred men for the better defence of New York, and to aid his operations in that quarter.

Lord Percy declined a compliance with this order, alleging as a reason for this refusal, that the Americans were rapidly collecting and strengthening themselves in the town of Providence ; that the number of troops already there, gave them reason to be apprehensive for the safety of Newport. General Howe resent-

ed the refusal; threatened earl Percy with a trial for disobedience of orders, and reprimanded him in language which the earl thought derogatory to an officer of his rank, character, and consequence. On this usage, which lord Percy considered very affrontive, he immediately wrote to his father the duke of Northumberland, requesting him, without delay, to obtain his recall from the American service. Soon after this he embarked for England, having resigned his command to general Prescott.

His advance to the chief command of the troops on Rhode Island, was not long enjoyed by general Prescott, before a circumstance took place which was sufficiently mortifying to himself and the British. In the beginning of July, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven, colonel Barton, a provincial officer, and several others, accompanied by only thirty-eight men, embarked in several boats from Warwick Neck, eluding the vigilance of the British ships and guard-boats, he and his party passed them in the dark, and landed on Rhode Island about twelve o'clock at night.

Colonel Barton had received some intelligence, of the insecure situation in which the British commander frequently lodged on the island. On this information, he formed the bold design of surprising and seizing him: this he effected with a facility beyond his own most

fanguine expectations. Having first secured the sentinel at the door, he surpris'd general Prescott in his bed. One of his *aids* leaped from a window in hopes of escape, but was prevented. Their design accomplished, the little party hastened to their boats with all possible expedition. Signals were made for an alarm on shore; but it was too late: Barton and his party were out of danger. When they reached the spot from whence they had set out on this adventure, a chariot was prepared for the reception of general Prescott, in which he was escorted safely from Warwick to Providence.

Colonel Barton received great applause from his countrymen, for his spirited and well-executed enterprize. It was not indeed an object of much magnitude; but the previous circumstances of general Prescott's conduct had been such, as to render his capture a subject of much exultation to the Americans. He had, while in command at Newport, insulted and abused the inhabitants, ridiculed the American officers, and set a price upon some of their heads, particularly on that of general Arnold, which Arnold retaliated with the advertisement of a small price for the head of general Prescott.

The similarity of circumstances that attended the capture of the generals Prescott and Lee, and their rank in the armies to which they respectively belonged, rendered it highly proper



that an exchange should have taken place immediately. It was however for a time delayed; but finally, general Lee obtained his liberty in consequence of this business.

CHAP. X.

1777.

The discouraging circumstances above related with regard to the arrangements, military posts, and operations of the British, from Newport to New York, and from New York to Philadelphia, gave very promising prospects of success to the British in that part of America. At the same time general Burgoyne, with the flower of the British army, the Canadian provincials, and hordes of savages that poured down from beyond the lakes, was making advances, and in the language of bombast and self-confidence, threatened destruction and vengeance to any who should have hardihood enough, to endeavour to stop his progress, or to oppose the authority under which he acted.

But notwithstanding the general wayward appearance of the affairs of the United States, the legislatures as we shall see, lost not their magnanimity, the people their ardor, nor the army their valor. Not disheartened by the circumstances of the late action at the Brandywine, or the loss of Philadelphia, general Washington with his brave troops, in numbers comparatively inconsiderable, kept the British army in play, until the setting in of winter. Within a few days after the surrender of Philadelphia,

the Americans attacked the royal camp at Germantown, situated about six miles from the city, where the main body of the British army had taken their stand.

This was a very unexpected manœuvre. The attempt was bold, and the defence brave. The Americans for a time, seemed to have greatly the advantage; but the enterprize finally failed. They were obliged to retreat in great confusion, after the heavy loss of many officers and men. The disappointment of the Americans, was in consequence of the address and ability of colonel Mifgrove, who judiciously stood on the defensive, and checked the progress of the continental troops, until general Grey and brigadier general Agnew, with a large detachment, came to his relief. A warm, but short action ensued: when the Americans were totally routed, and driven out of the field of action.

General Lee, who had not the highest opinion of general Washington's military abilities, observed on this occasion, "that by a single stroke of the *bathos*, the partial victory at Germantown was corrupted into a defeat."\* This was however, too severe a censure. A number of circumstances co-operated to blast the hopes of the Americans, after the early

\* General Lee's letters.

promise of success. The Britons themselves have given testimony to the bravery and good conduct of Washington and his army on this occasion. One of their writers has attested, "in this action the Americans acted upon the offensive; and though repulsed with loss, shewed themselves a formidable adversary, capable of charging with resolution, and retreating with order. The hope therefore entertained from the effect of any fair action with them, as decisive, and likely to put a speedy termination to the war, was exceedingly abated."

The highest expectation had been formed on the reduction of Philadelphia, both by the foreign and internal foes of America. Though both armies were fired with equal ardor, and on all occasions were equally ready for action, yet the repeated skirmishes for several weeks in the neighbourhood of the city, were not productive of any very important consequences, except the loss of many brave men, and several officers of great merit. None of these were more distinguished and lamented, than general Nash on the American side, and brigadier general Agnew and colonel Bird of the British line, who lost their lives in the battle of Germantown.

It was very important to the British commander after the above transactions, to open a

free passage to Philadelphia by the Delaware, in order to obtain supplies of provisions by water for their army. This was impeded by the American shipping, and by several strong posts held by the Americans on the river; the principal of which was Red Bank. Here they had an opportunity of retrieving the recent disgrace of their arms at Germantown. The Hessians under the command of colonel Donop, had the principal hand in this business. He crossed the Delaware with fifteen hundred men, at Cooper's ferry opposite Philadelphia, and marched to attack the redoubts at Red Bank.

A cannonade was opened: the camp was attacked with spirit, and defended with equal gallantry by colonel Greene of Rhode Island; who replied to the summons of count Donop to surrender, "that he should defend the place to the last extremity." On this, the Hessians attempted to storm the redoubts; but the assailants were obliged to retreat in their turn. One Hessian brigade was nearly cut to pieces in the action, and count Donop mortally wounded and taken prisoner, as were several other officers of consideration. The remainder retreated with great precipitation through the night, leaving one half of their party dead, wounded, or prisoners to the Americans; crossed the river the next morning; and in this mortified situation, the remnant who escaped entered Philadelphia. This important pass was

a key to the other posts on the river ; and for its brave defence the officers and soldiers were justly applauded, and colonel Greene complimented by congress, with a present of an elegant sword.

CHAP. X.

1777.

After the action at Red Bank, the vigilance and caution of general Washington could not be overcome by the valor and advantages of his foes, so far as to induce him to hazard any action of consequence.\* The design of opening the Delaware, was now the principal object with the British commander. This was effected without much difficulty, after the reduction of Mud Island. From this strong post, the Americans were obliged to retreat, after a very manly resistance. They did not evacuate their works until reduced to despair, by some British ships advantageously playing upon them. From the very superior advantages of their enemies in many respects, they were induced to set fire to every thing within reach ; and after

\* For this general Washington was very severely censured by some ; and even the legislature of the state of Pennsylvania remonstrated to congress, and expressed their uneasiness, that the American commander should leave the capital in possession of the enemy, and retire to winter-quarters. But his little army destitute of every necessary, without the possibility of a supply at that season, was a sufficient apology.



great slaughter they abandoned a place, which had already cost them too much in its defence.\*

In the struggle to open the Delaware, the *Augusta* and the *Merlin* on the part of Britain, were lost; but the losses of the Americans were far beyond those of the British. The Delaware frigate and some others were captured, and several ships burnt by themselves, to prevent their falling into the hands of their enemies.

Nothing more decided than the above transactions took place this season. The Delaware river thus cleared, and eligible winter-quarters secured for the king's troops, and the cold season fast advancing, general Howe gave up the pursuit of the cautious and wary Washington. He found it impossible with all his efforts to bring him to another general action, while his own judgment, and that of the most judicious of his officers, forbade it, and common prudence dictated the probable disadvantages of such a movement. His numbers were too small, and

\* The writer of this work does not aim at a particular description or detail of all the engagements, battles, and rencounters, between the two contending armies. A general sketch of the most material military movements, completes her design; the primary object of which, is not a dry narrative of military havoc.

the wants of the army too many, to hazard any thing. The most guarded and prudent defence was the only line of conduct left to the American commander.

CHAP. X.

---

1777.

These circumstances induced general Howe, about the middle of December, to draw the main body of his army into the city of Philadelphia. They were indeed unable longer to keep the field, being very destitute of tents and other equipage necessary for the army in a cold climate, at this inclement season.

Thus after the proud vaunts of victory and conquest, and the loss of many gallant officers and brave men, the British commander had little to boast at the conclusion of the campaign, but the possession of a city abandoned by the best of its inhabitants, and the command of the adjacent country, circumscribed within the narrow limits of twenty miles. This was but a small compensation for the waste of life and treasure. It was a gloomy picture of the termination of a campaign, for sir William Howe to convey to his master and to his countrymen, after the exultation for some partial successes had flattered them with the highest hopes of speedy and complete victory. Yet, notwithstanding these vauntings over a people, among whom there did not yet appear a probability of complete subjugation by the sword, nor the smallest traces of a disposition among the peo-

CHAP. X.

1777.

ple of America, to yield obedience to the laws and requisitions, which the government of Great Britain were attempting thus to enforce at the point of the bayonet.

After fir William Howe had retired and taken winter-quarters in the city, a novel scene, considering the weakness of the continental army, was exhibited without. To the surprize and wonder of their foes, and to the admiration of all mankind acquainted with the circumstances, the Americans, nearly destitute of tents, poorly supplied with provisions, almost without shoes, stockings, blankets, or other clothing, cheerfully erected themselves huts of timber and brush, and encamped for the winter, at a place called Valley-Forge, within twenty-five miles of the city of Philadelphia. Thus in the neighbourhood of a powerful British army, fearless of its numbers and strength, a striking proof of their intrepidity in suffering, and their defiance of danger, was exhibited by a kind of challenge bidden to their enemies, not very usual in similar situations. The commander in chief, and several of the principal officers of the American army, in defiance of danger, either to themselves or to such tender connexions, sent for their ladies from the different states to which they belonged, to pass the remainder of the winter, and by their presence to enliven the gloomy appearance of a huttred

village in the woods, inhabited only by an hungry and half-naked soldiery.\*

CHAP. X.

1777.

The resolution and patience of this little army surmounted every difficulty. They waited long, amidst penury, hunger, and cold, for the necessary supplies, which in spite of the utmost exertions of the several states, came in but too slowly. Such was the deficiency of horses and waggons, for the ordinary as well as extraordinary occasions of the army, that the men in many instances, cheerfully yoked themselves to little carriages of their own construction: others loaded the wood and provisions on their backs for present supply, in their extreme necessity. General Washington informed a committee sent from congress to inquire into the state of the army, that some brigades had been some days without meat, and that the common soldiers had frequently been at his quarters, to make known their distresses. Unprovided with materials to raise their cold lodgment from the ground, the dampness of the situation, and the wet earth on which they lay, occasioned sickness and mortality to rage among them to an astonishing degree:—"Indeed, " nothing could surpass their suffering, except

\* Nothing but the inexperience of the American ladies, and their confidence in the judgment of their husbands, could justify this hazard to their persons, and to their feelings of delicacy.

CHA P. X.

1777.

“the patience and fortitude with which it was  
 “endured by the faithful part of the army.  
 “Those of a different character deserted in  
 “great numbers.”\*

In this weak and dangerous situation, the American army continued encamped at Valley-Forge, from December till May; while the British troops in high health and spirits, lay in Philadelphia, without once attempting to molest them. For this want of vigor and enterprise, general Howe was severely and justly censured in Britain, blamed by those interested in his success in America, and ridiculed by the impartial observer in every quarter. By his negligence this winter, he again undoubtedly lost the fairest opportunity of executing the designs of his *master*, and acquiring to himself much military fame. But by wasting his time in effeminate and reprehensible pleasures, he sunk his character as an officer; and few scrupled to assert, that the man of honor and valor was lost for a time, in the arms of a handsome adulteress. Many of his officers followed his example, and abandoned themselves to idleness and debauchery; while the soldiers were left to indulge their own licentious habits,

At this period, though not attacked by a foreign foe, the situation of the American commander in chief was really not very enviable,

\* See a letter from the committee sent from congress, to Mr. Laurens the president.



It required the utmost prudence and address, to keep together the appearance of an army, under the complicated miseries they must feel, in the depth of winter, hungry and barefooted, whose fatiguing, circuitous marches over the snowy path, had been marked by their bleeding feet, before they, in such a destitute predicament, pitched their tents in the valley. The dilatory spirit of some, and the peculating dispositions of other officers in the various public departments, increased every difficulty with regard to clothing and subsistence. The deplorable state of the sick, the corrupt conduct in some of the hospitals, the want of discipline among the soldiers, the inexperience of officers, the slowness of recruits, and the diminution of the old army from various causes, were circumstances discouraging indeed; and might have been considered, if not a balance, at least a weight in the scale, against the advantages and the pride of high station. Yet these were not all the embarrassments which the commander in chief had to encounter;—general Washington had his personal enemies to combat: nor was he without his rivals for power and fame.\*

\* Both the conduct and letters of general Lee, had in several instances confirmed the opinion, that he was ambitious of obtaining the chief command of the army of the United States; and doubtless he had a party that for a short time flattered these expectations. At this time indeed he was a prisoner, but his correspondencies were extensive.

CHAP. X.

1777.

In all communities there are some restless minds, who create jealousies and foment divisions, that often injure the best cause, and the most unimpeachable character: and it may be observed, that there is ever a spirit of intrigue and circumvention, that runs parallel with the passions of men. Thus the fortune of war is frequently changed by dangerous emulations, and the best systems of social and political happiness overthrown, by the envy and resentment of little minds, or the boundless ambition of more exalted souls. Nor was it many years, before America discovered she had in her bosom, her Cæsans and her Catilines, as well as her Brutuses and her Catos.

Many persons were disgusted with the dictatorial powers vested in general Washington, after the action at Trenton, which they alleged were at his own request. These were ample indeed. He was empowered by congress "to reform and new model the military arrangements, in such manner as he judged best for the public service." He was also vested with several other discretionary powers.\* Congress had indeed limited his power to six months; but exigencies of the highest necessity, had urged him sometimes to exercise it in a manner too arbitrary for the principles and dispositions of Americans, unused to the

\* See resolves of congress.

impresment of their property for the use of armies.

CHAP. X.

---

1777.

In this state of affairs, the commander was attacked by anonymous letters, fictitious signatures, and incendiary suggestions: he was censured for his cool operations, defensive movements, and *Fabian* slowness. Disadvantageous impressions were made on the minds of some, and others were led to believe, that general Washington was not without his weaknesses and his foibles. It was observed by one of his principal officers: \*—"That decision is  
 "often wanting in minds otherways valua-  
 "ble:—That an indecisive mind in a com-  
 "mander, is one of the greatest misfortunes  
 "that could befall an army:—That he had often  
 "lamented this circumstance through the cam-  
 "paign:—That they were in a very awful situ-  
 "ation, in an alarming state, that required the  
 "utmost wisdom and firmness of mind."

A wish at this time undoubtedly prevailed, among some distinguished characters, † for a su-

\* See a letter from general Reed to general Lee, afterwards published.

† Samuel Adams of Boston, general Mifflin, and several other characters of distinction, were suspected of unfriendly designs towards the commander in chief. But

percedence of his command : but Washington, cool, cautious, and more popular than any man, his good genius was ever at hand to preserve his character invulnerable : yet, several circumstances confirmed the opinion, that even some members of congress at this period, were intriguing for his removal. It might indeed at this time, have had a fatal effect on American affairs, had general Washington fallen beneath

there never were sufficient grounds to suppose, that Mr. Adams ever harbored any disaffection to the person of general Washington : on the contrary, he respected and esteemed his character, and loved the man. But zealous and ardent in the defence of his injured country, he was startled at every thing that appeared to retard the operations of war, or impede the success of the revolution ; a revolution for which posterity is as much indebted to the talents and exertions of Mr. Adams, as to those of any one in the United States.

General Mifflin was a young gentleman of a warm and sanguine disposition. Active and zealous, he engaged early in opposition to the measures of the British parliament. He took arms, and was among the first officers commissioned, on the organization of a continental army. For this he was read out of the society of quakers, to which himself and his family had belonged. But Mr. Mifflin's principles led him to consider himself under a moral obligation, to act offensively as well as defensively, and vigorously to oppose the enemies of his country ; and from his character and principles, he undoubtedly wished to see a commander in chief of the united armies, who would admit of no delay in the acceleration of the object in which they were engaged.

a popular disgust, or the intrigues of his enemies.

Perhaps few other men could have kept together the shadow of an army, under such a combination of difficulties as the young republic had to encounter, both in the field and the cabinet. Many men of a more active and enterprising spirit, might have put a period to the war in a shorter space of time; yet perhaps not ultimately so much in favor of America, as the slow, defensive movements of the officer then vested with the chief command.

This line of conduct was thought by some, to be not so much owing to his superior sagacity and penetration, as to a constitutional want of ardency, at times when energy appeared most necessary to many persons. A predilection in favor of a connexion with Britain, seemed united with this disposition. It had appeared clearly by many circumstances in conversation with his confidential friends, that he was not in the beginning of opposition, fond of a final separation from the parent state; and that he wished to move defensively, until some events might take place, that would bring back, and with honor and dignity re-unite, the revolted colonies to the bosom of their ancient parent.\*

\* In the early period of the war, many very worthy characters opposed to the British system, besides general



CHAP. X.

1777.

But the public opinion always in his favor, with a happy talent to secure the confidence of the people, he commanded in a remarkable manner, their affections, their resources, and their attachment, to the end of the war; and had the good fortune to parry every charge brought against him, with the firmness of the soldier, though not without the sensibility of the man who found his reputation at stake. He complained heavily to his private friends, yet took no public notice of the vague imputations of slander, that fell from the pen of a French officer of distinction, under the signature of De Lisle.

These letters were fraught with the most severe strictures on the general's military character and abilities. Some other letters in the same style and manner, without a name, were directed to gentlemen of character and consideration in several of the states. Some addressed to Patrick Henry, the governor of the state of Virginia, he immediately transmitted to congress, and to the general himself. However boldly some of the charges were urged, they

Washington, wished for a reconciliation with Great Britain, if it could be procured consistently with honor, and with sufficient pledges of security to the just claims of the colonies, rather than an irrevocable separation. But time convinced all, that nothing but independence, and a total dismemberment, could secure the liberties of the United States.

made little impression on the public mind : the transient tale of the day passed as the pathless arrow, without leaving a trace behind. His enemies shrunk from the charge ; and general Washington, by the current of applause that always set in his favor, became more than ever the idol of the army and the people.

CHAP. X.

1777.

General Conway, the reputed author of the letters signed De Lisle, was a gentleman of great military talents and experience, with an ambition equal to his abilities. He had left France with high expectations of rank in the service of the United States. Not satisfied with the appointment of inspector general of the American army, his pride wounded, and disappointed that he did not sustain a higher grade in office, which he had been led to flatter himself with before he left his country, and disgusted by the suspicions that fell upon him after the publication of De Lisle's letters, he resigned his commission, and returned to Europe.

Conway was not the only officer of his country, that suffered similar mortifications. The credulity of men of talents, family, and merit, had been imposed on by the indiscretion of one\* of the American agents, and their imaginations fired by ideas of *rank* and preferment in America, to which no foreigner was entitled.

\* Silas Deane, the first agent sent by congress to France.

CHAP. X.

1777.

Thus, chagrined from the same cause, it was thought the valiant Coudray, an officer of distinguished name and merit, who was a brigadier general and chief engineer in the French service, leaped voluntarily to his watery grave. His death indeed, was attributed to the fleetness of his horse, which it was said he could not command. Having occasion to cross the Schuylkill, in company with some other officers, he entered a boat on horseback. The career was swift; the catastrophe fatal: he leaped in on one side of the boat, and with equal celerity, out on the other. Thus both horse and rider were irretrievably lost. Coudray was beloved and lamented by all who knew him: and the loss of Conway was regretted by many who esteemed him for his literary abilities, and his military talents.

The important office of inspector general relinquished from necessity by general Conway, was immediately conferred on the baron de Steuben, an officer with the best credentials, who had recently arrived from Germany. The essential services of this celebrated disciplinarian, were in a very short time felt throughout the army. New regulations took place, and new arrangements were made in the hospitals, in the commissary's, the quarter-master's, and other departments, which had been shamefully abused, not from a want of capacity or integrity in the preceding inspectors, but from the igno-

rance, inexperience, or peculation of many of the subordinate officers. From the date of the baron's advancement, a more thorough knowledge of *tactics* was acquired by the officers; more system, discipline, and order appeared in the army; more equitable and permanent regulations, and a stricter adherence to the rules and laws of war, took place, than had been observed at any period before. The merits of this officer, universally acknowledged, were afterwards generously rewarded by the congress of the United States.

CHAP.  


---

 1777.

It may not however be improper to observe, before we pass on to the subsequent circumstances of the war, that though the baron de Steuben had been promoted to the rank of inspector general, by the approbation of congress and the army, yet general Conway had a considerable party attached to him, among the military officers. Many persons thought that his dismissal from office, and permission to return to France, under the degradation of character which fell upon him, without any specified charges of delinquency in office, or any solid proofs that he really had been the author of the anonymous reproaches thrown on the character of general Washington, was at once affrontive both to himself and his nation. These ideas are more clearly exhibited in a

sketch of the life of Conway, by another hand.\*

---

1777.

We shall only further observe, that the French nation was not disposed to resent individual flights, or even public neglects, at this interesting period: a nation who viewed the resistance of the American colonies to the overbearing power of Britain, on a broad scale. They considered their opposition, if successful, as at once redounding to their own interest, and to the promotion of the liberties of mankind in general.

It had for many years been a primary object with the house of Bourbon, to humble the pride and power of Britain. No contingencies that had arisen among the nations for near a century, appeared so likely to produce this effect, as an alienation from, and a total loss of their colonies. This consideration heightened the natural ardor, and quickened the constitutional energies of every Frenchman, to lend his hand to the work. Their characteristic impetuosity always appeared conspicuous in politics and war, as well as in the intrigues of love and gallantry. They were ever restless under any appearance of slowness that might retard the execution of their object: but the critical sit-

\* See Appendix, Note No. XX.



uation of the American army at this period, rendered an attempt to lessen the influence and the character of the commander in chief, dangerous and inexcusable.

CHAP. X.

1777.

Notwithstanding the freedom of opinion, and the license of the press, which should never be too much restrained in a free country, there are times and circumstances which require silence; and however disposed any one might be to censure the conduct of general Washington, either for the want of enterprise, alacrity, or military skill, yet perhaps no man in the United States, under the pressure of so many difficulties, would have conducted with more discretion and judgment.

If there was any error in the dismissal of general Conway, it might be in not observing a due degree of delicacy, or furnishing any testimonials of his having acquitted himself well in his military capacity, a point on which all in that line are very tenacious. The displacing of a single officer of any rank, is not sufficiently important to dwell upon long; and the apology for having done it at all, must be the danger at this time, of disgusting a foreign corps belonging to a court whose assistance was necessary, and whose aid had been courted, though their faith was not yet absolutely pledged to promote the emancipation of the United States.

CHAP. X.

1777.

France however, was looking with too eager and steady an eye, on the operations and success of the resistance of the colonies, to the measures and mandates of the crown and parliament of England, to be moved by any partial considerations, from the line of political conduct which they had adopted. This was to embrace the first favorable opportunity, when contingent circumstances might promise success, to support the claim of independence, and render the breach complete and durable, between the United States and Great Britain; and thereby deprive that rival nation of the immense advantages they had already reaped, and might again recover by a revival and continuance of the connexion.

That part of the American army immediately under the command of general Washington, must now be left encamped at Valley-Forge for the winter. Their situation impels the mind to throw over them that veil of compassion, which a season of perplexity, though not of absolute despair, requires. We must now look over, and survey with an anxious eye, and in the succeeding pages view the humiliating events, which for a time, attended the fortune of war in the northern department; and trace the footsteps of the foldier, through the forlorn desert, which was ultimately the path to victory and glory.

---

# A P P E N D I X

## TO VOLUME FIRST.

---

*NOTE No. 1. Page 9.*

THE reader's curiosity may be gratified by the perusal of a few particulars relative to the Plymouth settlers, from their earliest memorials. One hundred and one persons left Holland, all of whom arrived at Plymouth in the month of December, one thousand six hundred and twenty. From the sufferings and hardships they sustained, more than half their number died before the end of March, one thousand six hundred and twenty-one.

On the borders of a forlorn wilderness, without any governmental restrictions, they thought it necessary to adopt some measures for order and subordination. They voluntarily on their arrival at Cape Cod, entered into covenant for this necessary purpose. It was a short code, but replete with rules of equity and authority, sufficient to maintain peace among themselves, in their infant state. Forty-one persons affixed their names to the instrument; but at the end of four months, only twenty of them were living. These were, John Carver their first governor, William Bradford the second, and Edward Winslow\* the third, captain Miles Standish, who had been an experienced military

\* Prince's Chronology, where may be found most of the particulars extant, relative to the first settlers at Plymouth.

officer in the Netherlands, Richard Warren, eminently useful in the establishment of the new colony,\* (he lived only to the year one thousand six hundred and twenty-eight,†) John Alden, Samuel Fuller, William Brewster, Isaac Allerton, Stephen Hopkins, Gilbert Winslow, Peter Brown, Richard Gardner, John Howland, Francis Cook, John Billington, Francis Eaton, Edward Doty, George Soule, Edward Leister.

Several weeks elapsed after their arrival at Plymouth, before they saw any of the natives. About the middle of March, an Indian chief named Samoset appeared, and abruptly exclaimed, "welcome English." This Indian had formerly been a prisoner to some Europeans, and had learnt a little of their language. By him they found that a pestilence had raged among the bordering nations, that had swept them all off within the limits of Cape Cod and Braintree Bay, two or three years before. This was corroborated by the vast number of graves, and sepulchral mounds and holes they had observed, in which the dead were interred, in all the grounds they had explored. Samoset informed them, that Massasoit was a neighbouring chief, who held jurisdiction over several other tribes. This induced the English to send him a friendly message by Samoset, which was faithfully delivered. The great sachem soon came forward in an amicable manner, and entered into a treaty of peace with this handful of strangers.

In the next autumn, an addition of thirty-five persons from the Leyden congregation, arrived at Cape Cod. They soon found their associates at Plymouth, patient, pious, and contented, though they could set nothing on their board but a lobster, cold water, and a scanty pittance

\* Prince's Chronology.

† The estates first purchased of the natives by Winslow, Warren, and Bradford, remain in the hands of their posterity to this day:—Warren at Plymouth, Bradford at Duxborough, and Winslow at Marshfield.

of Indian bread, for the entertainment of their countrymen recently arrived, to share with them the difficulties and dangers of planting settlements in the wilderness, at a vast distance from the civilized world, and surrounded by hordes of hostile nations of terrific form and barbarous manners.\*

---

NOTE No. II. Page 28.

VIRGINIA RESOLVES.

On the twenty-ninth of May, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-five, the house of burgessees of Virginia came to the following resolutions:—

WHEREAS the honorable house of commons in England, have of late drawn into question, how far the general assembly of this colony hath power to enact laws for laying taxes and imposing duties, payable by the people of this his majesty's most ancient colony—For settling and ascertaining the same to all future times, the house of burgessees of this present general assembly, have come to the several following resolutions:—

*Resolved,* That the first adventurers and settlers of this his majesty's colony and dominion of Virginia, brought with them, and transmitted to their posterity, and all others, his majesty's subjects since inhabiting in this his majesty's colony, all the privileges and immunities that have at any time been held, enjoyed, and possessed, by the people of Great Britain.

*Resolved,* That by the two royal charters granted by king James the first, the colonists aforesaid are declared entitled to all privileges of faithful, liege, and natural born subjects, to all intents and purposes, as if they had been abiding and born within the realm of England.

\* New England Memorial.



*Resolved*, That his majesty's liege people of this his most ancient colony, have enjoyed the right of being thus governed by their own assembly, in the article of taxes and internal police; and that the same have never been forfeited, or any other way yielded up, but have been constantly recognized by the king and people of Great Britain.

*Resolved therefore*, That the general assembly of the colony, together with his majesty or his substitute, have in their representative capacity, the only exclusive right and power, to levy taxes and impositions upon the inhabitants of this colony; and that every attempt to vest such a power in any person or persons whatsoever, other than the general assembly aforesaid, is illegal, unconstitutional, and unjust, and has a manifest tendency to destroy British, as well as American freedom.

The following resolves were not passed, though drawn up by the committee. They are inserted as a specimen of the first and early energies of the *Old Dominion*, as Virginia is usually called.

*Resolved*, That his majesty's liege people, the inhabitants of this colony, are not bound to yield obedience to any law or ordinance whatsoever, designed to impose any taxation whatsoever upon them, other than the laws and ordinances of the general assembly aforesaid.

*Resolved*, That any person who shall, by speaking or writing, maintain that any person or persons, other than the general assembly of this colony, have any right or power, to impose or lay any taxation whatsoever on the people here, shall be deemed an enemy to this his majesty's colony.



NOTE NO. III. Page 30.

On the twenty-first of October, the freeholders and other inhabitants of the town of Plymouth had a meet-

ing, and unanimously agreed on instructions to Thomas Foster, Esq., their representative in the general assembly of Massachusetts Bay. In which, after expressing the highest esteem for the British constitution, shewing how far the people of America have exerted themselves in support thereof, and detailing their grievances, they proceed as follows :—

“ YOU, sir, represent a people who are not only descended from the first settlers of this country, but inhabit the very spot they first possessed. Here was first laid the foundation of the British empire in this part of America ; which from a very small beginning, has increased and spread in a manner very surprising, and almost incredible ; especially when we consider, that all this has been effected without the aid or assistance of any power on earth ; that we have *defended, protected, and secured* ourselves, against the invasions and cruelty of savages, and the subtlety and inhumanity of our inveterate and natural enemies the French : and all this without the appropriation of any tax by stamps, or stamp-acts laid upon our fellow-subjects in any part of the king’s dominions, for defraying the expenses thereof. This place, sir, was at first the asylum of liberty, and we hope will ever be preserved sacred to it ; though it was then no more than a forlorn wilderness, inhabited only by savage men and beasts. To this place our fathers, (whose memories be revered !) possessed of the principles of liberty in their purity, disdaining slavery, fled, to enjoy those privileges which they had an undoubted right to, but were deprived of by the hands of violence and oppression in their native country. We, sir, their posterity, the freeholders and other inhabitants of this town, legally assembled for that purpose, possessed of the same sentiments, and retaining the same ardor for liberty, think it our indispensable duty on this occasion, to express to you these our sentiments of the stamp-act, and its fatal consequences to this country, and to enjoin upon you, as you regard not only the wel-

“ fare, but the very being of this people, that you, (consist-  
 “ ent with our allegiance to the king, and relation to the  
 “ government of Great Britain,) disregarding all propofals  
 “ for that purpofe, exert all your power and influence in re-  
 “ lation to the ftamp-act, at leaft until we hear the fuccesfs  
 “ of our petitions for relief. We likewise, to avoid difgra-  
 “ cing the memories of our ancestors, as well as the re-  
 “ proaches of our own confciences, and the curfes of poster-  
 “ ity, recommend it to you to obtain, if poffible, in the hon-  
 “ orable houfe of representatives of this province, a full and  
 “ explicit affertion of our rights, and to have the fame en-  
 “ tered on their public records—that all generations yet to  
 “ come may be convinced, that we have not only a juft  
 “ fenfe of our rights and liberties, but that we never (with  
 “ fubmiffion to Divine Providence) will be flaves to any  
 “ power on earth. And as we have at all times an abhor-  
 “ rence of tumults and diforders, we think ourfelves happy  
 “ in being at prefent under no apprehenfions of any, and in  
 “ having good and wholefome laws, fufficient to preferve  
 “ the peace of the province in all future times, unlefs pro-  
 “ voked by fome imprudent meafure; fo we think it by  
 “ no means advifeable, for you to intereft yourfelf in the  
 “ protection of ftamp-papers or ftamp-officers.

“ The only thing we have further to recommend to you  
 “ at this time is, to obferve on all occafions, a fuitable fru-  
 “ gality and economy in the public expenfes; and that you  
 “ confent to no unneceffary or unufual grant at this time  
 “ of diftreff, when the people are groaning under the bur-  
 “ then of heavy taxes; and that you ufe your endeavours  
 “ to inquire into, and bear testimony againft, any paff,  
 “ and to prevent any future, unconfitutional draughts on  
 “ the public treafury.”

---

NOTE No. IV. Page 32.

Names of the gentlemen delegated to meet at New York, in one thousand feven hundred and fixty-five,

on occasion of the stamp-act: with the resolves of this first American congress.

*From the province of the Massachusetts Bay.*

James Otis,	}	Esquires.
Oliver Partridge,		
Timothy Ruggles,		

*From the colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.*

Metcalf Bowler,	}	Esquires.
Henry Ward,		

*From the colony of Connecticut.*

Eliphalet Dyer,	}	Esquires.
David Rowland,		
William Samuel Johnson,		

*From the colony of New York.*

Robert R. Livingston,	}	Esquires.
John Cruger,		
Philip Livingston,		
William Bayard,		
Leonard Lispenard,		

*From the colony of New Jersey.*

Robert Ogden,	}	Esquires.
Hendrick Fisher,		
Joseph Borden,		

*From the province of Pennsylvania.*

John Dickenson,	}	Esquires.
John Morton,		
George Bryan,		

*From the government of the counties of Newcastle, Kent, and  
Suffex, on Delaware.*

Cæsar Rodney,	}	Esquires.
Thomas M <sup>c</sup> Kean,		

*From the province of Maryland.*

William Murdock,	}	Esquires.
Edward Tilghman,		
Thomas Ringold,		

*From the province of South Carolina.*

Thomas Lynch,  
Christopher Gadsden, } Esquires.  
John Rutledge,

*Saturday, A. M. October 19, 1765.*

The congress met according to adjournment, and resumed, &c. as yesterday, and upon mature deliberation, agreed to the following declarations of the rights and grievances of the colonists in America, which were ordered to be inserted in their journals.

The members of this congress sincerely devoted with the warmest sentiments of affection and duty to his majesty's person and government, inviolably attached to the present happy establishment of the protestant succession, and with minds deeply impressed by a sense of the present and impending misfortunes of the British colonies on this continent; having considered as maturely as time will permit, the circumstances of the said colonies, esteem it our indispensable duty to make the following declarations of our humble opinion, respecting the most essential rights and liberties of the colonists, and of the grievances under which they labor, by reason of several late acts of parliament.

I. That his majesty's subjects in these colonies, owe the same allegiance to the crown of Great Britain, that is owing from his subjects born within the realm, and all due subordination to that august body, the parliament of Great Britain.

II. That his majesty's liege subjects in these colonies, are entitled to all the inherent rights and liberties of his natural born subjects within the kingdom of Great Britain.

III. That it is inseparably essential to the freedom of a people, and the undoubted right of Englishmen, that no taxes be imposed on them, but with their own consent, given personally, or by their representatives.



IV. That the people of these colonies are not, and from their local circumstances cannot, be represented in the house of commons in Great Britain.

V. That the only representatives of the people of these colonies are people chosen by themselves, and that no taxes ever have been, or can be, constitutionally imposed on them, but by their respective legislatures.

VI. That all supplies to the crown being free gifts of the people, it is unreasonable and inconsistent with the principles and spirit of the British constitution, for the people of Great Britain to grant to his majesty the property of the colonists.

VII. That trial by jury is the inherent and invaluable right of every British subject in these colonies.

VIII. That the late act of parliament, entitled, "An act for granting and applying certain stamp-duties, and other duties, in the British colonies and plantations in America, &c." by imposing taxes on the inhabitants of these colonies, and the same act, and several other acts, by extending the jurisdiction of the courts of admiralty beyond its ancient limits, have a manifest tendency to subvert the rights and liberties of the colonists.

IX. That the duties imposed by several late acts of the British parliament, from the peculiar circumstances of these colonies, will be extremely burthensome and grievous; and from the scarcity of specie, the payment of them absolutely impracticable.

X. That as the profits of the trade of these colonies ultimately centre in Great Britain, to pay for the manufactures which they are obliged to take from thence, they eventually contribute very largely to all supplies granted there to the crown.

XI. That the restrictions imposed by several late acts of parliament on the trade of these colonies, will render them unable to purchase the manufactures of Great Britain.

XII. That the increase, prosperity, and happiness of these colonies, depend on the full and free enjoyment of their rights and liberties, and an intercourse with Great Britain, mutually affectionate and advantageous.

XIII. That it is the right of the British subjects in the colonies to petition the king, or either house of parliament.

LASTLY. That it is the indispensable duty of these colonies, to the best of sovereigns, to the mother country, and to themselves, to endeavour by a loyal and dutiful address to his majesty, and humble applications to both houses of parliament, to procure the repeal of the act for granting and applying certain stamp-duties; of all clauses of any other acts of parliament, whereby the jurisdiction of the admiralty is extended as aforesaid; and of the other late acts for the restriction of American commerce.

After these resolves, they chose Thomas Lynch, James Otis, and Thomas M<sup>r</sup> Kean, Esquires, to prepare a petition to the house of commons. An address to the king and to the house of lords, was also prepared and forwarded.

---

NOTE NO. V. Page 49.

Copy from Mr. Dickenson's original letter to Mr. Otis, accompanying the celebrated Farmer's Letters.

*“Philadelphia, Dec. 5, 1767.*

“DEAR SIR,

“The liberties of our common country appear  
“to me to be at this moment exposed to the most imminent

“ danger ; and this apprehension has engaged me to lay my  
 “ sentiments before the public in letters, of which I send  
 “ you a copy.

“ Only one has been yet published ; and what their ef-  
 “ fect may be cannot yet be known. But whenever the  
 “ cause of American freedom is to be vindicated, I look to-  
 “ wards the province of Massachusetts Bay. She must, as  
 “ she has hitherto done, first kindle the sacred flame, that  
 “ on such occasions must warm and illuminate this conti-  
 “ nent.

“ Words are wanting to express my sense of the vigilance,  
 “ perseverance, spirit, prudence, resolution, and firmness,  
 “ with which your colony has distinguished herself, in our  
 “ unhappy times. May God ever grant her noble labors  
 “ the same successful issue which was obtained by the  
 “ repeal of the stamp-act.

“ In my gratitude to your province in general, I do  
 “ not forget the obligations which all Americans are un-  
 “ der to you in particular, for the indefatigable zeal and  
 “ undaunted courage you have shewn in defending their  
 “ rights. My opinion of your love for your country, induces  
 “ me to commit to your hands the inclosed letters, to be  
 “ disposed of as you think proper, not intending to give out  
 “ any other copy. I have shewn them to three men of  
 “ learning here, who are my friends. They think with me,  
 “ that the most destructive consequences must follow, if  
 “ these colonies do not instantly, vigorously, and unani-  
 “ mously unite themselves, in the same manner they did  
 “ against the stamp-act. Perhaps they and I are mistaken :  
 “ I therefore send the piece containing the reasons for this  
 “ opinion, to you, who I know can determine its true  
 “ worth ; and if you can discover no other merit in it, per-  
 “ mit me at least to claim the merit of having wrote it  
 “ with the most ardent affection for the British colonies, the  
 “ purest intentions to promote their welfare, an honest de-

“fire to assert their rights, and with a deep sense of their  
“impending misfortunes.

“Our cause is a cause of the highest dignity : it is noth-  
“ing less than to maintain the liberty with which Heaven  
“itself ‘hath made us free.’ I hope it will not be disgra-  
“ced in any colony by a single rash step. We have consti-  
“tutional methods of seeking redress, and they are the best  
“methods.

“This subject leads me to inform you with pleasure, be-  
“cause I think it must give you pleasure, that the modera-  
“tion of your conduct in composing the minds of your fel-  
“low-citizens, has done you the highest credit with us.  
“You may be assured I feel a great satisfaction in hearing  
“your praises ; for every thing that advances your reputa-  
“tion or interest, will always afford sincere joy to, dear sir,

“Your most affectionate, and

“Most humble servant,

“JOHN DICKENSON.

“*Hon. James Otis, jun. Esq.*”

---

NOTE NO. VI. Page 53.

This measure had been contemplated by several gentlemen, a year or two before it took place ; among others, by the learned and excellent doctor Jonathan Mayhew of Boston : see the annexed letter, written by him soon after the repeal of the stamp-act. The abilities, virtue, and patriotism of doctor Mayhew, were so distinguished, that the following fragment may be pleasing and particularly impressive, as it was the last letter he ever wrote to any one, and within three days after its date, this great and good man closed his eyes on the politics and vanities of human life.

“ *Lord's day morning, June 8, 1766.*

“ HON. JAMES OTIS, JUN. ESQ.

“ SIR,

“ To a good man all time is holy enough, and  
“ none too holy to do good, or to think upon it.

“ Cultivating a good understanding and hearty friend-  
“ ship between these colonies and their several houses of  
“ assembly, appears to me to be so necessary a part of pru-  
“ dence and good policy, all things considered, that no  
“ favorable opportunity for that purpose ought to be omit-  
“ ted: I think such an one now presents. Would it not  
“ be very proper and decorous, for our assembly to *send*  
“ circular congratulatory letters to all the rest, without  
“ exception, on the *repeal*, and the present favorable aspect  
“ of things? Letters conceived at once in terms of warm  
“ friendship and regard to them, of loyalty to the king, of  
“ filial affection towards the mother country, and intimat-  
“ ing a desire to cement and perpetuate union among  
“ ourselves, by all practicable and laudable methods? A  
“ good foundation is already laid for this latter, by the  
“ late congress, which in my poor opinion was a wise  
“ measure, and actually contributed not a little towards  
“ our obtaining a redress of grievances, however some may  
“ affect to disparage it. Pursuing this track, and never  
“ losing sight of it, may be of the utmost importance to  
“ the colonies, on some future occasions, perhaps the only  
“ means of perpetuating their liberties; for what may be  
“ hereafter we cannot tell, how favorable soever present  
“ appearances may be. It is not safe for the colonies to  
“ *sleep*, since they will probably always have some *wakeful*  
“ enemies in Britain; and if they should be such children  
“ as to do so, I hope there are at least some persons too  
“ much of men, and friends to them, to rock the cradle, or  
“ sing lullaby to them.

“ You have heard of the *communion of churches*, and I  
“ am very early to-morrow morning to set out for Rut-



“ land, to assist at an ecclesiastical council. Not expecting  
 “ to return this week, while I was thinking of this in my  
 “ bed, with the dawn of day, the great use and impor-  
 “ tance of a *communion of colonies*, appeared to me in a very  
 “ strong light, which determined me immediately to set  
 “ down these hints, in order to transmit them to you.  
 “ Not knowing but the house may be prorogued or dis-  
 “ solved before my return, or having an opportunity to  
 “ speak to you, you will make such a use of them as you  
 “ think proper, or none at all.

“ I have had a sight of the answer to the last very extra-  
 “ ordinary *speech*,\* with which I was much pleased. It  
 “ appears to me solid and judicious, and though spirited,  
 “ not more so than the case absolutely required, unless we  
 “ could be content to have an absolute and uncontrollable,  
 “ instead of a limited, constitutional g——r. I cannot  
 “ think the man will have one wise and good, much less  
 “ one truly great man at home, to stand by him in so open  
 “ and flagrant an attack upon our charter rights and priv-  
 “ ileges. But the less asperity in language the better, pro-  
 “ vided there is firmness in adhering to our rights, in  
 “ opposition to all encroachments.

“ I am, sir,

“ Your most obedient,

“ Humble servant,

“ JONATHAN MAYHEW.”

---

NOTE NO. VII. Page 54.

Copy of the circular letter which was sent from the  
 house of representatives of the province of Massachu-  
 setts Bay, to the speakers of the respective houses of  
 representatives and burgesses on the continent of North  
 America.

\* Speech of governor Bernard.

“ *Province of the Massachusetts Bay, Feb. 11, 1768.*

“ SIR,

“ The house of representatives of this province  
 “ have taken into their serious consideration, the great  
 “ difficulties that must accrue to themselves and their con-  
 “ stituents, by the operation of the several acts of parlia-  
 “ ment imposing duties and taxes on the American col-  
 “ onies.

“ As it is a subject in which every colony is deeply in-  
 “ terested, they have no reason to doubt but your house is  
 “ duly impressed with its importance; and that such con-  
 “ stitutional measures will be come into as are proper. It  
 “ seems to be necessary, that all possible care should be  
 “ taken that the representations of the several assemblies,  
 “ upon so delicate a point, should harmonize with each  
 “ other: the house therefore hope that this letter will be  
 “ candidly considered, in no other light than as expressing  
 “ a disposition freely to communicate their mind to a sister  
 “ colony, upon a common concern, in the same manner as  
 “ they would be glad to receive the sentiments of your, or  
 “ any other house of assembly on the continent.

“ The house have humbly represented to the ministry  
 “ their own sentiments; that his majesty’s high court of  
 “ parliament is the supreme legislative power over the  
 “ whole empire; that in all free states the constitution is  
 “ fixed; and as the supreme legislative derives its power  
 “ and authority from the constitution, it cannot overleap  
 “ the bounds of it, without destroying its foundation.  
 “ That the constitution ascertains and limits both sove-  
 “ reignty and allegiance; and therefore his majesty’s  
 “ American subjects, who acknowledge themselves bound  
 “ by the ties of allegiance, have an equitable claim to the  
 “ full enjoyment of the fundamental rules of the British  
 “ constitution. That it is an essential, unalterable right in  
 “ nature, engrafted into the British constitution as a funda-

“ mental law, and ever held sacred and irrevocable by the  
 “ subjects within the realm, that what a man hath honestly  
 “ acquired, is absolutely his own, which he may freely  
 “ give, but cannot be taken from him without his consent.  
 “ That the American subjects may therefore, exclusive of  
 “ any consideration of charter rights, with a decent firm-  
 “ ness, adapted to the character of freemen and subjects,  
 “ assert this natural, constitutional right.

“ It is moreover their humble opinion, which they  
 “ express with the greatest deference to the wisdom of the  
 “ parliament, that the acts made there, imposing duties on  
 “ the people of this province for the sole and express pur-  
 “ pose of raising a revenue, are infringements of their  
 “ natural and constitutional rights. Because as they are  
 “ not represented in the British parliament, his majesty’s  
 “ commons in Britain, by those acts grant their property  
 “ without their consent.

“ The house further are of opinion that their constitu-  
 “ ents, considering their local circumstances, cannot by any  
 “ possibility be represented in the parliament; and that it  
 “ will forever be impracticable that they should be equally  
 “ represented there, and consequently not at all, being  
 “ separated by an ocean of a thousand leagues. That his  
 “ majesty’s royal predecessors for this reason were gra-  
 “ ciously pleased to form a subordinate legislative here,  
 “ that their subjects might enjoy the unalienable right of  
 “ a representation. Also that considering the utter im-  
 “ practicability of their ever being fully and equally  
 “ represented in parliament, and the great expense that  
 “ must unavoidably attend even a partial representation  
 “ there, this house think that a taxation of their constitu-  
 “ ents, even without their consent, grievous as it is, would  
 “ be preferable to any representation that could be admit-  
 “ ted for them there.

“ Upon these principles, and also considering that were  
 “ the right in the parliament ever so clear, yet for obvious

“ reasons it would be beyond the rule of equity, that their  
 “ constituents should be taxed on the manufactures of Great  
 “ Britain here, in addition to the duties they pay for them  
 “ in England, and other advantages arising to Great Bri-  
 “ tain from the acts of trade ; this house have preferred a  
 “ humble, dutiful, and loyal petition to our most gracious  
 “ sovereign, and made such representations to his majesty’s  
 “ ministers, as they apprehend would tend to obtain redress.

“ They have also submitted to consideration, whether  
 “ any people can be said to enjoy any degree of freedom,  
 “ if the crown in addition to its undoubted authority of  
 “ constituting a governor, should appoint him such a sti-  
 “ pend as it should judge proper, without the consent of  
 “ the people, and at their expense : and whether while the  
 “ judges of the land and other civil officers, hold not their  
 “ commissions during good behaviour, their having salaries  
 “ appointed for them by the crown, independent of the  
 “ people, hath not a tendency to subvert the principles of  
 “ equity, and endanger the happiness and security of the  
 “ subject.

“ In addition to these measures, the house have wrote  
 “ a letter to their agent, Mr. De Berdt, the sentiments of  
 “ which he is directed to lay before the ministry ; wherein  
 “ they take notice of the hardship of the act for preventing  
 “ mutiny and desertion, which requires the governor and  
 “ council to provide enumerated articles for the king’s  
 “ marching troops, and the people to pay the expense ;  
 “ and also the commission of the gentlemen appointed  
 “ commissioners of the customs, to reside in America,  
 “ which authorizes them to make as many appointments as  
 “ they think fit, and to pay the appointees what sums  
 “ they please, for whose mal-conduct they are not account-  
 “ able. From whence it may happen that officers of the  
 “ crown may be multiplied to such a degree, as to become  
 “ dangerous to the liberty of the people, by virtue of a  
 “ commission which doth not appear to this house to de-  
 “ rive any such advantages to trade as many have been led  
 “ to expect.

“ These are the sentiments and proceedings of this house ;  
 “ and as they have too much reason to believe that the  
 “ enemies of the colonies have represented them to his  
 “ majesty’s ministers, and the parliament, as factious, dis-  
 “ loyal, and having a disposition to make themselves inde-  
 “ pendent of the mother country, they have taken occasion  
 “ in the most humble terms, to assure his majesty and his  
 “ ministers, that with regard to the people of this province,  
 “ and as they doubt not of all the colonies, that the charge  
 “ is unjust.

“ The house is fully satisfied that your assembly is too  
 “ generous, and enlarged in sentiment, to believe that this  
 “ letter proceeds from an ambition of taking the lead, or  
 “ dictating to the other assemblies ; they freely submit their  
 “ opinion to the judgment of others, and shall take it kind  
 “ in your house to point out to them any thing further that  
 “ may be thought necessary.

“ This house cannot conclude without expressing their  
 “ firm confidence in the king, our common head and  
 “ father, that the united and dutiful supplications of his dis-  
 “ tressed American subjects will meet with his royal and  
 “ favorable acceptance.”

*(Signed by the Speaker.)*

A copy of the above letter was also, by order of the house, sent to Dennis De Berdt, Esq. agent to the province in London, that he might make use of it, if necessary, to prevent any misrepresentations in England.

---

NOTE NO. VIII. Page 96.

A few extracts from the letters of Mr. Hutchinson to Mr. Jackson, Bolland, and others, the year previous to the disturbance in March, one thousand seven hun-



dred and seventy, fully evince his sentiments of stationing and retaining troops in the capital of the Massachusetts.

*“ Boston, January, 1769.*

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I sent you under a blank cover, by way of  
 “ Bristol and Glasgow, the account of proceedings in New  
 “ York assembly, which you will find equal to those of  
 “ the Massachusetts. Perhaps if they had no troops, the  
 “ people too would have run riot as we did. Five or six  
 “ men of war, and three or four regiments, disturb nobody  
 “ but some of our grave people, who do not love assemblies  
 “ and concerts, and cannot bear the noise of drums  
 “ upon a Sunday. I know I have not slept in town any  
 “ three months these two years, in so much tranquillity, as  
 “ I have done the three months since the troops came.”

Extract of a letter from Mr. Bollan to Mr. Hutchinson.

*“ Henrietta Street, August 11, 1767.*

“ Mr. Paxton has several times told me, that  
 “ you and some other of my friends were of opinion, that  
 “ standing troops were necessary to support the authority  
 “ of the government at Boston, and that he was authorized  
 “ to inform me this was your and their opinion. I need  
 “ not say that I hold in the greatest abomination such outrages  
 “ that have taken place among you, and am sensible  
 “ it is the duty of all charter, or other subordinate governments,  
 “ to take due care, and punish such proceedings;  
 “ and that all governments must be supported by force,  
 “ when necessary; yet we must remember how often standing  
 “ forces have introduced greater mischiefs than they  
 “ retrieved, and I am apprehensive that your distant situation  
 “ from the centre of all civil and military power, might  
 “ in this case, sooner or later, subject you to peculiar  
 “ difficulties.

“ When Malcolm’s bad behaviour made a stir here, a minister who seemed inclined to make use of standing forces, supposing this might not be agreeable to me, I avoided giving an opinion, which then appeared needless and improper, but afterwards, when it was confidently said, that preparations were making to send a considerable number of standing troops, in order to compel obedience, I endeavoured to prevent it.”

Mr. Bollan goes on to observe, that “ he had informed some influential gentlemen in England, that he had the highest reason to believe, that whoever should be instrumental in sending over standing troops to America, would be cursed to all posterity.”

Extract from governor Hutchinson’s letters to governor Pownal. It is uncertain on what occasion the following assertion was made, but it discovers the spirit and wishes of the writer.

“ *Boston, June 22, 1772.*

“ The union of the colonies is pretty well broke ; I hope I shall never see it renewed. Indeed our sons of liberty are hated and despised by their former brethren in New York and Pennsylvania, and it must be something very extraordinary ever to reconcile them.”

---

NOTE No. IX. Page 113.

Extracts from Mr. Hutchinson’s letters to Mr. Jackson, Pownal, and others.

“ *Boston, August 27, 1772.*

“ But before America is settled in peace, it would be necessary to go to the bottom of all the disorder, which has been so long neglected already. The opinion that every colony has a legislature within itself,

“ the acts and doings of which are not to be controlled by  
“ parliament, and that no legislative power ought to be  
“ exercised over the colonies, except by their respective  
“ legislatures, gains ground every day, and it has an influ-  
“ ence upon all the executive parts of government. Grand  
“ juries will not present; petit juries will not convict the  
“ highest offenders against acts of parliament: our news-  
“ papers publickly announce this independence every  
“ week; and, what is much more, there is scarce an assem-  
“ bly which has not done it at one time or another. The  
“ assembly of this province has done as much the last ses-  
“ sion by their public votes and resolves, and by an address  
“ which they have sent to doctor Franklin, to be presented  
“ to the king; so there is sufficient grounds for parliament  
“ to proceed, if there is a disposition. What, it will be  
“ said, can be done? A test as general as the oaths re-  
“ quired instead of the oaths of allegiance and supremacy,  
“ would be most effectual; but this there is reason to fear  
“ would throw America into a general confusion, and I  
“ doubt the expediency. But can less be done than affix-  
“ ing penalties, and disqualifications or incapacities, upon  
“ all who by word or writing shall deny or call in question  
“ the supreme authority of parliament over all parts of the  
“ British dominions? Can it be made necessary for all  
“ judges to be under oath, to observe all acts of parliament  
“ in their judgments? And may not the oaths of all jurors,  
“ grand and petit, be so framed as to include acts of par-  
“ liament as the rule of law, as well as law in general  
“ terms? And for assemblies or bodies of men, who shall  
“ deny the authority of parliament, may not all their  
“ subsequent proceedings be declared to be *ipso facto* null  
“ and void, and every member who shall continue to act in  
“ such assembly be subject to penalties and incapacities?  
“ I suggest these things for consideration. Every thing  
“ depends upon the settlement of this grand point. We  
“ owe much of our troubles to the countenance given  
“ by some in England to this doctrine of independence.  
“ If the people were convinced that the nation with one  
“ voice condemned the doctrine, or that parliament at all

“ events, was determined to maintain its supremacy, we  
 “ should soon be quiet. The demagogues who generally  
 “ have no property, would continue their endeavours to  
 “ inflame the minds of the people for some time; but  
 “ the people in general have real estates, which they  
 “ would not run the hazard of forfeiting, by any treasona-  
 “ ble measures. If nothing more can be done, there must  
 “ be further provisions for carrying the act of trade into  
 “ execution, which I am informed administration are very  
 “ sensible of, and have measures in contemplation. Thus  
 “ you have a few of my sudden thoughts, which I must  
 “ pray you not to communicate as coming from me, lest I  
 “ should be supposed here to have contributed to any fu-  
 “ ture proceedings respecting America. I have only room  
 “ to add that I am, with sincere respect and esteem,  
 “ Your’s, &c.”

“ *Boston, December 8, 1772.* ”

“ TO MR. JACKSON.

[*Private.*]

“ DEAR SIR,

“ They succeed in their unwearied endeav-  
 “ ours to propagate the doctrine of independence upon  
 “ parliament, and the mischiefs of it every day increase.  
 “ I believe I have repeatedly mentioned to you my opin-  
 “ ion of the necessity of parliament’s taking some measures  
 “ to prevent the spread of this doctrine, as well as to guard  
 “ against the mischiefs of it. It is more difficult now,  
 “ than it was the last year, and it will become more and  
 “ more so every year it is neglected, until it is utterly  
 “ impracticable. If I consulted nothing but my own ease  
 “ and quiet, I would propose neglect and contempt of eve-  
 “ ry affront offered to parliament by the little American  
 “ assemblies, but I should be false to the king, and betray  
 “ the trust he has reposed in me. \* \* \* \* \*  
 “ \* \* \* \* \*  
 “ \* \* \* \* \* You see no difference between the  
 “ case of the colonies and that of Ireland. I care not in

“ how favorable a light you look upon the colonies, if it  
 “ does not separate us from you. You will certainly find  
 “ it more difficult to retain the colonies, than you do Ire-  
 “ land. Ireland is near and under your constant inspec-  
 “ tion. All officers are dependent, and removable at  
 “ pleasure. The colonies are remote, and the officers  
 “ generally more disposed to please the people than the  
 “ king, or his representative. In the one, you have always  
 “ the *ultima ratio* ; in the other, you are either destitute of  
 “ it, or you have no civil magistrate to direct the use of it.  
 “ Indeed, to prevent a general revolt, the naval power  
 “ may for a long course of years be sufficient, but to pre-  
 “ serve the peace of the colonies, and to continue them  
 “ beneficial to the mother country, this will be to little  
 “ purpose : but I am writing to a gentleman who knows  
 “ these things better than I do.”

“ *Boston, January, 1773.*

“ JOHN POWNAL, ESQ.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I have not answered your very kind and con-  
 “ fidential letter of the 6th of October. Nothing could  
 “ could confirm me more in my own plan of measures for  
 “ the colonies, than finding it to agree with your sentiments.  
 “ You know I have been begging for measures to maintain  
 “ the supremacy of parliament. Whilst it is suffered to be  
 “ denied, all is confusion, and the opposition to govern-  
 “ ment is continually gaining strength.”

“ *Boston, April 19, 1773.*

“ JOHN POWNAL, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Our patriots say that the votes of the town of  
 “ Boston, which they sent to Virginia, have produced the  
 “ resolves of the assembly there, appointing a committee  
 “ of correspondence ; and I have no doubt it is their ex-



“petition, that a committee for the same purpose will be  
 “appointed by most of the other assemblies on the conti-  
 “nent. If any thing therefore be done by parliament  
 “respecting America, it now seems necessary that it should  
 “be general, and not confined to particular colonies, as the  
 “same spirit prevails every where, though not in the like  
 “degree.”

“*Boston, October 18, 1773.*”

“JOHN POWNAL, ESQ.

[*Private.*]

“DEAR SIR,

“The leaders of the party give out openly that  
 “they must have another convention of all the colonies;  
 “and the speaker has made it known to several of the  
 “members, that the agent in England recommends it as a  
 “measure necessary to be engaged in without delay, and  
 “proposes, in order to bring the dispute to a crisis, that  
 “the rights of the colonies should be there solemnly and  
 “fully asserted and declared; that there should be a firm  
 “engagement with each other, that they will never grant  
 “any aid to the crown, even in case of war, unless the  
 “king and the two houses of parliament first recognize  
 “those rights; and that the resolution should be immedi-  
 “ately communicated to the crown; and assures them,  
 “that in this way they will finally obtain their end.

“I am not fond of conveying this sort of intelligence;  
 “but as I have the fullest evidence of the fact, I do not  
 “see how I can be faithful to my trust and neglect it;  
 “therefore, though I consider this as a private letter, yet  
 “I leave it to you to communicate this part of it, so far as  
 “his majesty’s service may require, and as I have nothing  
 “but that in view, I wish it may go no further. The  
 “measure appears to me, of all others, the most likely to  
 “rekindle a general flame in the colonies.”

The above extracts were taken from governor Hutchinson’s letter book, found after he repaired to England, de-

posited in a secret corner of his house at Milton. If the reader wishes a further gratification of his curiosity in regard to the subtil stratagems of Mr. Hutchinson, he is referred to the whole collection, as published in England.

---

NOTE No. X. Page 150.

Names of the members of the American congress, in one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four.

*PEYTON RANDOLPH, President.*

NEW HAMPSHIRE. John Sullivan, Nathaniel Folsom.

MASSACHUSETTS BAY. Thomas Cushing, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Robert Treat Paine.

RHODE ISLAND. Stephen Hopkins, Samuel Ward.

CONNECTICUT. Eliphalet Dyer, Roger Sherman, Silas Deane.

NEW YORK. Isaac Low, John Alford, John Jay, James Duane, William Floyd, Henry Weisner, Samuel Bocrum.

NEW JERSEY. James Kinsey, William Livingston, Stephen Crane, Richard Smith.

PENNSYLVANIA. Joseph Galloway, Charles Humphreys, John Dickenson, Thomas Mitflin, Edward Biddle, John Morton, George Ross.

NEWCASTLE, &c. Cæsar Rodney, Thomas M<sup>c</sup>Kean, George Read.

MARYLAND. Matthew Tilghman, Thomas Johnson, William Paca, Samuel Chase.

VIRGINIA. Richard Henry Lee, George Washington, Patrick Henry, jun. Richard Bland, Benjamin Harrison, Edmund Pendleton.

NORTH CAROLINA. William Hooper, Joseph Hewes, R. Caswell.

SOUTH CAROLINA. Henry Middleton, Thomas Lynch, Christopher Gadsden, John Rutledge, Edward Rutledge.

## NOTE No. XI. Page 180.

Extract of a letter from governor Hutchinson to commodore Gambier.

“*Boston, June 30, 1772.*”

“DEAR SIR,

“ \* \* \* \* \*  
 “ \* \* \* \* \*. Our last ships carried you  
 “ the news of the burning the Gaspee schooner at Provi-  
 “ dence. I hope if there should be another like attempt,  
 “ some concerned in it may be taken prisoners and carried  
 “ directly to England. A few punished at Execution  
 “ Dock, would be the only effectual preventive of any  
 “ further attempts. \* \* \* \* \*  
 “ \* \* \* \* \*”

On the same subject, to secretary Pownal.

“*Boston, August 29, 1772.*”

“DEAR SIR,

“ I troubled you with a long letter the 21st of  
 “ July. Give me leave now only to add one or two things  
 “ which I then intended, but to avoid being too tedious,  
 “ omitted. People in this province, both friends and ene-  
 “ mies to government, are in great expectations from the  
 “ late affair at Rhode Island of burning the king’s schooner,  
 “ and they consider the manner in which the news of it will  
 “ be received in England, and the measures to be taken, as  
 “ decisive. If it is passed over without a full inquiry and  
 “ due resentment, our liberty people will think they may  
 “ with impunity commit any acts of violence, be they ever  
 “ so atrocious, and the friends to government will despond,  
 “ and give up all hopes of being able to withstand the  
 “ faction. The persons who were the immediate actors,  
 “ are men of estate and property in the colony. A prose-  
 “ cution is impossible. If ever the government of that

“ colony is to be reformed, this seems to be the time, and  
 “ it would have a happy effect in the colonies which adjoin  
 “ to it. Several persons have been advised by letters from  
 “ their friends, that as the ministry are united, and opposi-  
 “ tion at an end, there will certainly be an inquiry into the  
 “ state of America, the next session of parliament. The  
 “ denial of the supremacy of parliament, and the contempt  
 “ with which its authority has been treated by the Lilli-  
 “ putian assemblies of America, can never be justified or  
 “ excused by any one member of either house of parliament.

“ \* \* \* \* \*  
 “ \* \* \* \* \*  
 “ \* \* \* \* \*”

“ *Boston, September 2, 1772.*

“ SAMUEL HOOD, ESQ.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Captain Linzee can inform you of the state of  
 “ Rhode Island colony better than I can. So daring an  
 “ insult as burning the king’s schooner, by people who are  
 “ as well known as any who were concerned in the last  
 “ rebellion, and yet cannot be prosecuted, will certainly  
 “ rouse the British lion, which has been asleep these four or  
 “ five years. Admiral Montague says, that lord Sandwich  
 “ will never leave pursuing the colony, until it is disfran-  
 “ chised. If it is passed over, the other colonies will follow  
 “ the example.”

---

NOTE No. XII. Page 203.

The sufferings of the colony of Virginia, under lord Dunmore’s administration, and the spirit and magnanimity of the inhabitants, might claim a larger detail in this narrative; but so distinguished have been many of their leading characters, through all the transactions of the great contest, from the introduction of the resolves by Patrick Henry, in the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty-five, to the

elevation of Mr. Jefferson to the presidential chair in one thousand eight hundred and one, as to be sufficient to furnish ample materials for a volume by itself. But every historical record of the American revolution and its consequences, must necessarily introduce the names of many illustrious characters that have adorned and dignified the state of Virginia.

---

*NOTE No. XIII. Page 215.*

Mr. Hancock retained his popularity to the end of his life. His death did not take place until the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three. He was chosen governor of the Massachusetts in one thousand seven hundred and eighty, and though a remarkable debilitation of body rendered him to appearance little able to discharge the duties of the first magistrate, yet the suffrages of the people kept him long in the chair, after he was reduced to such a state of weakness as to be lifted by his servants into his carriage, and thence into the state house, to deliver his public speeches. In this he acquitted himself with a degree of elocution, pleasing and popular, though his health did not admit of his writing them previously, and seldom had he strength to add his signature to the acts of the legislature. But his mental faculties were not much impaired by the infirmities of his bodily constitution; they were not indeed composed of those elementary sparks of genius that soon burn themselves out; nor were the energies of his mind blunted by industry and application.

He had been so long habituated to ideas of independence, that after they were thoroughly fixed in his mind, he uniformly retained his principles to the last. He was against the consolidation of the general government, and the monarchical views of many who had risen to power before he had finished his career of life. He supported his opinion of the sovereignty of the individual states, in a



manly manner, in one of his last transactions of a public nature ; this was his conduct relative to the suability of the states. An experiment made by a process commenced against the Massachusetts, in favor of William Vassal, Esq., the governor of the state was summoned by a writ to answer to the prosecution. He declined the smallest concession that might lessen the independence and sovereignty of each state, and supported his opinion with firmness and dignity equally popular and honorable to himself. Litigations of this nature were soon after barred, by an amendment in the constitution of the United States.

An ample measure of gratitude was repaid to Mr. Hancock, both for public services and private benefits ; a mantle of love was thrown over his foibles by his countrymen, and his memory was embalmed in the affections of his townsmen.

---

*NOTE No. XIV. Page 226.*

The state of Massachusetts continued this mode of legislation and government until the year one thousand seven hundred and eighty, when a convention was called for the purpose, and a more stable form adopted : by this, a governor, lieutenant governor, senate, and house of representatives were to be chosen by the free suffrages of the people ; a council of nine were to be chosen by the legislative, either from the senate or the people at large.

---

*NOTE No. XV. Page 265.*

Copy of general Montgomery's last letter to general Carleton.

*“ Holland House, December 6, 1775.*

“ SIR;

“ Notwithstanding the personal ill treatment I  
 “ have received at your hands, notwithstanding the cruelty  
 “ you have shewn to the unhappy prisoners you have taken,  
 “ the feelings of humanity induce me to have recourse to  
 “ this expedient, to save you from the destruction which  
 “ hangs over your wretched garrison. Give me leave to  
 “ inform you, that I am well acquainted with your situa-  
 “ tion; a great extent of works, in their nature incapable  
 “ of defence, manned with a motley crew of sailors, most  
 “ of them our friends and citizens, who wish to see us with-  
 “ in their walls,—a few of the worst troops that call them-  
 “ selves soldiers,—the impossibility of relief, and the certain  
 “ prospect of wanting every necessary of life, should your  
 “ opponents confine their operations to a single blockade,—  
 “ point out the absurdity of resistance; such is your sit-  
 “ uation.

“ I am at the head of troops accustomed to success, con-  
 “ fident of the righteous cause they are engaged in, inured  
 “ to danger and fatigue, and so highly incensed at your  
 “ inhumanity, illiberal abuse, and the ungenerous means  
 “ employed to prejudice them in the minds of the Cana-  
 “ dians, that it is with difficulty I restrain them till my  
 “ batteries are ready, from insulting your works, which  
 “ would afford them the fair opportunity of ample ven-  
 “ geance and just retaliation. Firing upon a flag of truce,  
 “ hitherto unprecedented, even among savages, prevents  
 “ my following the ordinary mode of conveying my senti-  
 “ ments; however I will at any rate acquit my conscience:  
 “ should you persist in an unwarrantable defence, the conse-  
 “ quence be upon your own head. Beware of destroying  
 “ stores of any sort, public or private, as you did at Mon-  
 “ treal or in the river: if you do, by heavens, there will be  
 “ no mercy shewn.”

## NOTE No. XVI. Page 278.

The many protests of a number of the house of lords, which appeared from time to time against the high measures of a majority in parliament, epitomize the American grievances in a point of view that exhibited the opinion at the time, of a very considerable part of the most judicious and unprejudiced persons through the nation, both in and out of parliament. These protests may be found in a variety of British publications.

This general favorable disposition towards the Americans in the early part of the contest, was evinced by numberless circumstances; a crimination of the measures of administration against the colonies, existed on both sides of the Tweed, and indeed throughout the kingdom. Many letters, and other excellent writings on the subject of civil and religious liberty, were transmitted from England to America, from the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty-five, until the period when hostilities commenced. Among the numberless instances that might be adduced, of the spirit and disposition of the writers of those times, we will here only give the following extract of a letter from the earl of Buchan to Mr. Otis; this was accompanied by some very excellent essays on the subject of liberty, and by several portraits of his person, adorned at the foot with a cap of liberty in the centre of the annexed motto, "Ubi libertas, ibi patria."

*London, January 26, 1768.*

"SIR,

"I take the liberty of transmitting to you the  
 "inclosed representations of a man, strongly attached to  
 "the principles of that invaluable liberty, without which  
 "no real happiness can subsist any where.

"My family has often bled in the support of it; and  
 "descended as I am, from the English Henrys and Ed-

“wards, I glory more in the banishment of my great-  
 “grandfather, lord Cardrois, to Carolina, and the stand  
 “made by lord Halifax, my ancestor, than in all that title  
 “and descent can give me.

“You may dispose of the other prints to the lovers of  
 “my principles; and I beg you will be so good as to  
 “transmit four of them to Messrs. \* \* \* \* \*  
 “\* \* \* \* \* as eminent defenders  
 “of those doctrines in the church, which are so intimately  
 “connected with liberty in the state. \* \* \* \* \*  
 “\* \* \* \* \* Lord Chatham† has forsaken  
 “you, having loved this world; but his favorite, your  
 “humble servant, will not, I trust, ever follow his steps.”

“I am, sir, with great regard,

“Your most obedient, humble servant,

“BUCHAN.

“James Otis, Esq. Boston.”



NOTE No. XVII. Page 309.

In CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.

A DECLARATION by the REPRESENTATIVES of the  
 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA in GENERAL CONGRESS  
 assembled.

When in the course of human events, it becomes neces-  
 sary for one people to dissolve the political bands which  
 have connected them with another, and to assume among  
 the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to  
 which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a  
 decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires, that  
 they should declare the causes which impel them to the  
 separation.

† Lord Chatham afterwards totally reprobated the conduct of ad-  
 ministration towards the colonies.

We hold these truths to be self-evident : that all men are created equal ; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights : that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness : that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed : and whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence indeed will dictate that governments long established, should not be changed for light and transient causes ; and accordingly, all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed : but when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government. The history of the present king of Great Britain, is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations ; all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states : to prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained ; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other laws, for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would



relinquish the rights of representation in the legislature; a right inestimable to them, and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing, with manly firmness, his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused, for a long time after such dissolution, to cause others to be erected, whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise,—the state remaining in the mean time, exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose, obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners, refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

He has obstructed the administration of justice, by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made judges dependent on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of officers, to harass our people, and eat out their subsistence.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies, without the consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the military independent of, and superior to, the civil power.

He has combined with others, to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws, giving his assent to their pretended acts of legislation :

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us :

For protecting them, by a mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states :

For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world :

For imposing taxes on us without our consent :

For depriving us, in many cases, of the benefit of trial by jury :

For transporting us beyond seas, to be tried for pretended offences :

For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighbouring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries, so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these colonies :

For taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments :

For suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his protection, and waging war against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries, to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy, scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow-citizens, taken captive on the high seas, to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is, an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.

In every stage of these oppressions, we have petitioned for redress, in the most humble terms : our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have we been wanting in attention to our British brethren. We have warned them, from time to time, of attempts, by their legislature, to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us ; we have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here ; we have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity ; and we have conjured them, by the ties of our common kindred, to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connexions and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and consanguinity. We must therefore acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.

We therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in general congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES ; and that they are absolved

from all allegiance to the British crown; and that all political connexion between them and the state of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that, as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do. And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

*Signed by order and in behalf of the congress,*

JOHN HANCOCK, PRESIDENT.

*Attest:—*

CHARLES THOMPSON, SECRETARY.

---

NOTE No. XVIII. Page 357.

Copy of a letter from general Lee to doctor B. Rush. See life and memoirs of general Lee.

*“Camp at Valley Forge, June 4, 1778.*

“MY DEAR RUSH,

“Though I had no occasion for fresh assurances of your friendship, I cannot help being much pleased with the warmth which your letter, delivered to me by Mr. H\*\*\*, breathes; and I hope, it is unnecessary to assure you, that my sentiments, with respect to you, are correspondent.

“You will think it odd, that I should seem to be an apologist for general Howe: I know not how it happens; but when I have taken prejudices in favor, or against a man, I find it a difficulty in shaking them off. From my first acquaintance with Mr. Howe, I liked him: I thought him friendly, candid, good natured, brave, and rather sensible than the reverse: I believe still that he is naturally so; but a corrupt, or more properly, no education,

“ the fashion of the times, and the reigning idolatry amongst  
 “ the English, (particularly the soldiery ; ) for every scap-  
 “ tred calf, wolf, or ass, have so totally perverted his  
 “ understanding and heart, that private friendship has not  
 “ force sufficient to keep a door open for the admittance  
 “ of mercy towards political heretics. He was besides  
 “ persuaded that I was doubly criminal, both as a traitor  
 “ and deserter. In short, so totally was he inebriated with  
 “ this idea, that I am convinced he would have thought  
 “ himself both politically and morally damned, had he  
 “ acted any other part than what he did. He is besides,  
 “ the most indolent of mortals ; never took further pains  
 “ to examine the merits or demerits of the cause in which  
 “ he was engaged, than merely to recollect, that Great  
 “ Britain was said to be the mother country, George the  
 “ third king of Great Britain, that the parliament was  
 “ called the representatives of Great Britain, that the king  
 “ and parliament formed the supreme power, that, a su-  
 “ preme power is absolute and uncontrollable, that all  
 “ resistance must consequently be rebellion ; but above all,  
 “ that he was a soldier, and bound to obey in all cases  
 “ whatever.

“ These are his notions, and this his logic : but through  
 “ these absurdities, I could distinguish, when he was left  
 “ to himself, rays of friendship and good nature breaking  
 “ out. It is true, he was seldom left to himself ; for never  
 “ poor mortal, thrust into high station, was surrounded by  
 “ such fools and scoundrels. M<sup>c</sup>Kenzie, Balfour, Gallo-  
 “ way, were his counsellors ; they urged him to all his acts  
 “ of harshness ; they were his scribes ; all the damned stuff  
 “ which was issued to the astonished world was their’s. I  
 “ believe he scarcely ever read the letters he signed. You  
 “ will scarcely believe it, but I can assure you as a fact,  
 “ that he never read the curious proclamation, issued at the  
 “ Head of Elk, till three days after it was published. You  
 “ will say, that I am drawing my friend Howe in more  
 “ ridiculous colors than he has yet been represented in ;  
 “ but this is his real character. He is naturally good



“ humored, complaisant, but illiterate and indolent to the  
 “ last degree, unless as an executive soldier, in which capa-  
 “ city he is all fire and activity, brave and cool as Julius  
 “ Cæsar. His understanding is, as I observed before, rather  
 “ good than otherwise, but was totally confounded and  
 “ stupified by the immensity of the task imposed upon him.  
 “ He shut his eyes, fought his battles, drank his bottle, had  
 “ his little \*\*\*\*\*, advised with his counsellors, received his  
 “ orders from North and Germaine, (one more absurd than  
 “ the other,) took Galloway’s opinion, shut his eyes, fought  
 “ again, and is now, I suppose, to be called to account for  
 “ acting according to instructions. But I believe his eyes  
 “ are now opened; he sees he has been an instrument of  
 “ wickedness and folly; indeed, when I observed it to him,  
 “ he not only took patiently the observation, but indirectly  
 “ assented to the truth of it. He made, at the same time,  
 “ as far as his *mauvais honte* would permit, an apology for  
 “ his treatment of me.

“ Thus far with regard to Mr. Howe. You are struck  
 “ with the great events, changes, and new characters, which  
 “ have appeared on the stage since I saw you last; but I  
 “ am more struck with the admirable efficacy of blunders.  
 “ It seemed to be a trial of skill, which party should outdo  
 “ the other; and it is hard to say which played the deepest  
 “ strokes; but it was a capital one of ours, which certainly  
 “ gave the happy turn which affairs have taken. Upon  
 “ my soul, it was time for fortune to interpose, or we were  
 “ inevitably lost; but this we will talk over another time.  
 “ I suppose we shall see one another at Philadelphia very  
 “ soon, in attendance. God bless you!

“ Your’s, affectionately,

“ CHARLES LEE.”

## NOTE No. XIX. Page 362.

The iniquitous conduct of speculators and swindlers, to secure to themselves the possession of most of the public securities, will leave a stain on a large class of people, who by every art endeavoured to sink the faith of congress. Indeed their attempts to injure the credit of all public bodies, were attended with the most pernicious consequences to the honest and unsuspecting holders of public paper. By every insidious practice, they induced the ignorant and necessitous, to part with their securities for the most trifling considerations, to supply their immediate wants. Thus afterwards, when a new constitution of government was formed, and a funding system created, no discrimination was made in favor of the original holders, who had dispossessed themselves of the public securities. Those who had gained them by their artificial deception, were enriched beyond all calculation by subsequent circumstances: they afterwards received the nominal value in specie, while many of the former holders were reduced to extreme poverty.

It was pathetically observed, by one who felt these inconveniencies, that “the public securities, tired of their  
 “humble abodes, had soon fled to the splendid seats of  
 “wealth and greatness; and that while they remained  
 “with a class who had dearly earned them by their ser-  
 “vices, no interest was promised, no time, place, or person  
 “ascertained, to direct our application for payment. They  
 “fell into disgrace, which concurring with our necessities,  
 “as they could yield no present comfort or future hope,  
 “induced us to part with them for the most trifling con-  
 “siderations: but when they had chosen their elevated  
 “residence, their credit revived, and provision was made  
 “for the payment of interest upon them. We, in event,  
 “literally sold them for nothing, and are obliged to pay  
 “their present holders an annual sum for keeping them in  
 “possession; for many of us have, or must soon pay for the

“ interest of them, a sum nearly or quite equal to the money  
 “ given to purchase them, and still be annually taxed to  
 “ discharge the interest and principal of said securities.”

This is an anticipation of what literally took place afterwards, though it is but justice to observe, that Mr. Madison of Virginia, a distinguished member of congress, and several others of that body, left no rational argument untried, to procure a discrimination, when the funding system was about to be introduced in one thousand seven hundred and eighty-eight, that would have made some equitable compensation to the original holders of public securities, and prevented a sudden accumulation of wealth to a class of men, who had, many of them, never earned by their own private industry, or their services to the public, sufficient for a competent support. They grew rich on the property of those who had suffered in the service of their country, who were left to complain, without a possibility of redress.

---

NOTE No. XX. Page 400.

Extracts of a short account of the treatment of major general Conway, late in the service of America, from general Lee's letters.

“ On Monday the 23d of November, 1778, the honorable major general Conway set out from Philadelphia, on his return to France. The history of the treatment this gentleman has received, is so singular, that it must make a figure in the anecdotes of mankind. He was born in Ireland, but at the age of six was carried into France; was bred up from his infancy to the profession of arms; and it is universally allowed, by the gentlemen of that nation, that he has, in their service, the reputation of being what is called un tres brave major d'infanterie, which is no small character; it implies, if I comprehend

“ the term aright, a man possessed of all the requisite qual-  
 “ ities to fill the duties of a general officer in the secondary  
 “ line, but by no means ranks him among those favored  
 “ mortals, to whom it has pleased God to give so large a  
 “ portion of the ethereal spirit, as to render reading, theory,  
 “ and practice unnecessary ; but with the spectacle of this  
 “ phenomena, Heaven entertains the earth but very seldom ;  
 “ Greece, as historians report, had but one ; Rome none ;  
 “ England and France, only one each. As to this hem-  
 “ isphere, I shall be silent on the subject, lest I should be  
 “ suspected of not being serious. But be this as it may, it  
 “ is past doubt that general Conway is a man of excellent  
 “ understanding, quick and penetrating,—that he has seen  
 “ much service, has read a great deal, and digested well  
 “ what he has read. It is not less certain, that he embark-  
 “ ed with the warmest zeal for the great American cause,  
 “ and it has never been insinuated, unless by those who  
 “ have the talent of confounding causes, that his zeal has  
 “ diminished. His recompense has been, what ? He has  
 “ lost his commission ; he has been refused the common  
 “ certificate, which every officer receives at the expiration  
 “ of his services, unless his delinquencies have been very  
 “ substantial indeed. And, for what crime ? For none, by  
 “ any law, or the most strained construction that ca. be put  
 “ on any law. The reasons given are so far from being  
 “ substantial, that they really ought to reflect honor on his  
 “ character. It seems he has been accused of writing a  
 “ letter to a confidential friend, communicating an opinion,  
 “ that the commander in chief was not equal to the great  
 “ task he was charged with. Is this a crime ? The con-  
 “ trary. If it was really his opinion, it was decent, it was  
 “ honest, it was laudable, it was his duty. Does it come  
 “ under any article of war ? I may venture to affirm that  
 “ it does not. God help the community that should be  
 “ absurd enough to frame a law which could be construed  
 “ into such a sense ; such a community could not long sub-  
 “ sist. It ever has been, and ever ought to be, the custom  
 “ in all armies, not absolutely barbarians, for the officers

“ of high rank minutely to canvass the measures of their  
“ commander in chief ; and if his faults or mistakes appear  
“ to them many and great, to communicate their sentiments  
“ to each other ; it can be attended with no one bad con-  
“ sequence ; for if the criticisms are unjust and impertinent,  
“ they only recoil on the authors, and the great man who  
“ is the subject of them, shines with redoubled lustre. But  
“ if they are well founded, they tend to open the eyes of  
“ the prince or state, who, from blind prejudice, or some  
“ strange infatuation, may have reposed their affairs in  
“ hands ruinously incapable. Does any man of sense, who  
“ is the least acquainted with history, imagine that the  
“ greatest generals the world ever produced have escaped  
“ censure ? Hannibal, Cæsar, Turenne, Marlborough, have  
“ all been censured ; and the only method they thought  
“ justifiable, of stopping the mouths of their censors, was  
“ by a fresh exertion of their talents, and a perpetual series  
“ of victories. Indeed it is observable, that in proportion  
“ to the capacity or incapacity of the commander in chief,  
“ he countenances or discountenances the whole tribe of  
“ tale-bearers, informers, and pickthanks, who ever have  
“ been, and ever will be, the bane of those courts and  
“ armies where they are encouraged or even suffered. Al-  
“ lowing general Washington to be possessed of all the vir-  
“ tues and military talents of Epaminondas, and this is  
“ certainly allowing a great deal ; for whether from our  
“ modern education, or perhaps the modern state of human  
“ affairs, it is difficult to conceive that any mortal in these  
“ ages, should arrive at such perfection ; but allowing it to  
“ be so, he would still remain mortal, and of course subject  
“ to the infirmities of human nature ; sickness, or other  
“ casualties, might impair his understanding, his memory,  
“ or his courage ; and in consequence of this failure, he  
“ might adopt measures apparently weak, ridiculous, and  
“ pernicious. Supposing this possible case, whether a law,  
“ the letter or spirit of which should absolutely seal up the  
“ lips, and restrain the pens of every witness of the defec-  
“ tion, would it not in fact be denouncing vengeance



“ against those who alone have the means in their power  
 “ of saving the public from the ruin impending, if they  
 “ should dare to make use of these means for its salvation.  
 “ If there were such a law, its absurdity would be so mon-  
 “ strously glaring, that we may hardly say, it would be  
 “ more honored in the breach than in the observance. In  
 “ the English and French armies, the freedom with which  
 “ the conduct and measures of commanders in chief are  
 “ canvassed, is notorious; nor does it appear that this free-  
 “ dom is attended with any bad consequences: it has never  
 “ been once able to remove a real great officer from his  
 “ command. Every action of the duke of Marlborough  
 “ (every body who has read must know) was not only  
 “ minutely criticised, but his whole conduct was dissected,  
 “ in order to discover some crime, blunder, fault, or even  
 “ trifling error; but all these impertinent pains and wicked  
 “ industry were employed in vain; it was a court intrigue  
 “ alone that subverted him.

“ General Wolfe, with whom to be compared it can be  
 “ no degradation to any mortal living, was not merely  
 “ criticised, but grossly calumniated by some officers of  
 “ high rank under him; but that great man never thought  
 “ of having recourse to the letter or construction of any  
 “ law, in order to avenge himself; he was contented with  
 “ informing his calumniators, that he was not ignorant of  
 “ their practices, and that the only method he should take  
 “ for their punishment, would be an active perseverance in  
 “ the performance of his duty, which, with the assistance  
 “ of God, he made no doubt would place him beyond the  
 “ reach of their malice. As to what liberties they had  
 “ taken with him personally, he should wait till he was  
 “ reduced to the rank of a private gentleman, and then  
 “ speak to them in that capacity.

“ Upon the whole, it appears that it never was under-  
 “ stood to be the meaning of the English article of war,  
 “ which enjoins respect towards the commander in chief;

“ and of course it ought not to be understood, that the  
“ meaning of that article of the American code, (which is  
“ a servile copy from the English,) is meant to prescribe  
“ the communication of our sentiments to one another, on  
“ the capacity or incapacity of the man on whom the mis-  
“ ery or ruin of the state depends; its intention was, with-  
“ out doubt, in part complimentary, and partly to lay some  
“ decent restrictions on the license of conversation and writ-  
“ ing, which otherwise might create a diffidence in the  
“ minds of the common soldiery, detrimental to the public  
“ service. But that it was meant to impose a dead, torpid  
“ silence, in all cases whatever, on men, who, from their  
“ rank, must be supposed to have eyes and understanding,  
“ nothing under the degree of an idiot, can persuade him-  
“ self; but admitting, in opposition to common sense and  
“ all precedents, the proceeding to be criminal; admitting  
“ Mr. Conway guilty of it, to the extent represented, which  
“ he can demonstrate to be false; in the name of God,  
“ why inflict the highest, at least negative punishment, on a  
“ man untried, and unheard? The refusal of a certificate  
“ of having honestly served, is considered as the greatest of  
“ negative punishments; indeed in the military idea, it is a  
“ positive one.

“ And I sincerely hope, and do firmly believe, (such is  
“ my opinion of the justice of congress,) that when they  
“ have coolly reflected on the merits and fortunes of this  
“ gentleman, they will do him that justice, which nothing  
“ but the hasty misconstruction of a law hastily copied from  
“ another law, never defined nor understood, has hitherto  
“ prevented.”











## Mercy Warren's History Given to L. of C.

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS has been given the manuscript of Mercy Warren's "The History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution," believed to be the first history of the revolution to be written by an American-born author. Publication of the 3-volume work in Boston in 1805 precipitated a furious quarrel between Mrs. Warren and President John Adams. Mrs. Warren, wife of General James Warren, Massachusetts Revolutionary leader, had written that Adams' "passions and prejudices were sometimes too strong for his sagacity and judgment." Adams, in effect, proved her point by retorting that "history is not the province of ladies." A second manuscript copy of the history, in the hand of Mrs. Warren's son, containing changes made as a result of the controversy, is also included in the gift. The donor is Charles Warren, great-grandson of the author, attorney-general in Wilson's administration, and winner of the Pulitzer Prize for history in 1923 for "The Supreme Court in United States History."

-Publishers' Weekly, 13 June 1942  
p. 2224

MAR 1 - 1932



*F. B. W. Mason.*

