

trast to the supineness of the greater number of native princes. He became engaged in a contest with the English; and by his rapid movements, and his sudden attacks, was a most formidable enemy by land and sea. Having plundered and wasted the Carnatic, he appeared with five thousand horsemen before Madras, in 1769; and there concluded a treaty with the terrified Council, in the absence of their troops. The terms of the alliance which was then concluded were not onerous. Their moderation evinced the sagacity of this extraordinary ruler.

An arrangement was, in 1769, made between the Administration and the East Indian Directors. The Company were to hold the territorial revenues of India for five years, they paying £400,000 annually into the Exchequer. But in 1770 the resources of India materially failed. There was a terrible famine in Bengal, in which it is supposed that one-third of the inhabitants perished. In 1772, the Company declared a deficiency of above a million; obtained loans from the Bank of England to a large amount; and at last went to Parliament for aid, with the undoubted risk of provoking a more stringent inquiry into their affairs than had ever before been instituted. In 1773, an Act was passed, by which £1,400,000 was lent to the Company; the payment of £400,000 per annum was postponed; and the dividend of the proprietors was restricted to 6 per cent., until the loan should be repaid. By another Act the annual elections of directors were to be subject to regulations, such as prevailed till the very recent changes. A Governor-General was to reside in Bengal, to which presidency the other two were made subordinate. The first Governor-General, Warren Hastings, was named in this Act, as were the new Council. The appointments of Parliament were to continue for five years, and then the nomination was to revert to the Court of Directors, subject to the approbation of the Crown. One of the new council was Philip Francis; and this appointment has given birth to the theory that Junius ceased to write when he was propitiated by so great a bounty upon his silence.

The transactions of the government with the East India Company were completed by what was meant as a concession to the Directors. They had in their warehouses seventeen million pounds of tea, for which they wanted a market. Permission was given by Act of Parliament to export teas belonging to the Company to any of the British plantations in America, with a drawback of the duty payable in England. The colonial tax of three pence in the pound was to be paid in the American ports. Ships were freighted, and consignees appointed to sell their cargoes. Fatal boon, whose consequences no one saw.

CHAPTER IX.

Destruction of Tea in Boston Harbour.—Franklin before the Council.—Boston Port Bill.—Burke's speech against taxing America.—Chatham's speech.—Sentiments of the Americans.—State of Parties in America.—Leaders of the House of Commons.—Reception of the Boston Port Bill.—Military preparations.—Chatham's and Burke's efforts for conciliation.—Rapid growth of America.—English feelings on the American question.—Hostilities commenced at Lexington.—Ticonderoga and Crown Point taken.—Washington's view of civil war.—Principles involved in the struggle.

It was Sunday, the 28th of November, 1773, when there sailed into Boston harbour the English merchant ship Dartmouth, laden with chests of tea belonging to the East India Company. The Act of Parliament which allowed the Treasury to license vessels to export the teas of the Company to the American colonies, free of duty, was the signal for popular gatherings in Boston. Samuel Adams, in the "Boston Gazette," roused again that feeling of resistance which had partially subsided. The governor of Massachusetts, in October, wrote to lord Dartmouth, who had succeeded lord Hillsborough as colonial secretary, that Samuel Adams, "who was the first person that openly, and in any public assembly, declared for a total independence," had "obtained such an ascendancy as to direct the town of Boston and the House of Representatives, and consequently the Council, just as he pleases." The East India Company had appointed its consignees in Boston. On the night of the 2nd of November, summonses were left at the houses of each of these persons, requiring them to appear on a certain day at Liberty Tree, to resign their commission; and notices were issued desiring the freemen of Boston and of the neighbouring towns to assemble at the same place. The consignees did not appear; but a Committee of the Assembly traced them to a warehouse, where they were met to consult. They were required not to sell the teas, but to return them to London by the vessels which might bring them. They refused to comply, and were denounced as enemies to their country. Philadelphia had previously compelled the agents of the Company to resign their appointments. Town meetings were held at Boston, when strong resolutions were adopted. In this state of things, on that Sunday, the 28th of November, the first tea-ship arrived. The New England colonists preserved that strict observance of the Sabbath

which their puritan fathers felt the highest of duties. But it was a work of necessity to impede the landing of the tea; and a Committee met twice on that Sunday to concert measures. They obtained a promise from Rotch, the commander of the ship Dartmouth, that his vessel should not be entered till the following Tuesday. On Monday, the Committee of all the neighbouring town assembled at Boston; and five thousand persons agreed that the tea should be sent back to the place whence it came. "Throw it overboard," cried one. The consignees, alarmed at this demonstration, declared that they would not send back the teas, but that they would store them. This proposal was received with scorn; and then the consignees agreed that the teas should not be landed. But there was a legal difficulty. If the rest of the cargo were landed, and the tea not landed, the vessel could not be cleared in Boston, and after twenty days was liable to seizure. Two more ships arrived, and anchored by the side of the Dartmouth. The people kept watch night and day to prevent any attempt at landing the teas. Thirteen days after the arrival of the Dartmouth, the owner was summoned before the Boston Committee, and told that his vessel and his tea must be taken back to London. It was out of his power to do so, he said. He certainly had not the power; for the passages out of the harbour were guarded by two king's ships, to prevent any vessel going to sea without a license. On the 16th, the revenue officers would have a legal authority to take possession of the Dartmouth. For three days previous there had been meetings of the Boston Committee; but their journal had only this entry—"No business transacted matter of record."

On the 16th of December, there was a meeting in Boston of seven thousand persons, who resolved that the tea should not be landed. The master of the Dartmouth was ordered to apply to the governor for a pass, for his vessel to proceed on her return voyage to London. The governor was at his country house. Many of the leaders had adjourned to a church, to wait his answer. The night had come on when Rotch returned, and announced that the governor had refused him a pass, because his ship had not cleared. There was no more hesitation. Forty or fifty men, disguised as Mohawks, raised the war-whoop at the porch of the church; went on to the wharf where the three ships lay alongside; took possession of them; and deliberately emptied three hundred and forty chests of tea into the waters of the bay. It was the work of three hours. Not a sound was heard, but that of breaking open the chests. The people of Boston went to their rest, as if no extraordinary event had occurred.

On the 27th of January, 1774, the news of this decisive act reached the English government. On the 29th there was a great meeting of the Lords of the council, to consider a petition from Massachusetts, for the dismissal of Hutchinson, the governor, and Oliver, the lieutenant-governor. Dr. Franklin appeared before the Council as agent for Massachusetts. He had rendered himself obnoxious to the English government by a proceeding which even his patriotism could not wholly justify. He had obtained possession of some private letters written confidentially several years before, in which Hutchinson and Oliver avowed sentiments opposed to what they considered the licentiousness of the Colonists. These letters Franklin transmitted to the Assembly at Boston, who voted, by a large majority, that the opinions expressed contemplated the establishment of arbitrary power; and they accordingly petitioned for the removal of the governor and lieutenant-governor. The intelligence from Boston of the destruction of the teas was not likely to propitiate the Council. Franklin was treated with little respect; and Wedderburn, the solicitor-general, assailed him with a torrent of invective, at which the lords cheered and laughed. Franklin bore the assaults with perfect equanimity; but from that hour he ceased to be a mediator between Great Britain and the Colonists. The Council reported that the Petition from Massachusetts was "groundless, vexatious, and scandalous." Two days after, Franklin was dismissed from his office of Deputy Postmaster General. He said to Priestley, who was present at the Council, that he considered the thing for which he had been so insulted, as one of the best actions of his life.

The Parliament had met on the 13th of January. It was the 7th of March when lord North delivered the king's message relating to "the violent and outrageous proceedings at the town and port of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts Bay, with a view to obstructing the commerce of this kingdom, and upon grounds and pretences immediately subversive of the constitution thereof." There was a debate, of which the most remarkable part was, that when lord North stated that the proper papers should be ready on the following Friday, Thurlow, the attorney-general, said, loud enough to reach the ear of the minister, "I never heard anything so impudent; he has no plan yet ready."* The one plan which first presented itself—the most unfortunate of all plans—is exhibited in a note of the king to lord North, dated the 4th of February: "Gen. Gage, though just returned from Boston, expresses his willingness to go back at a day's notice if convenient measures are adopted. He says,

* Waipole—"Last Journals," vol. I. p. 329.

They will be lions while we are lambs; but if we take the resolute part, they will undoubtedly prove very meek. Four regiments, sent to Boston, will, he thinks, be sufficient to prevent any disturbance. All men now feel that the fatal compliance in 1766 has increased the pretensions of the Americans to thorough independence." On the 14th of March, lord North brought in a Bill for removing the Custom House from Boston, and declaring it unlawful, after the 1st of June, to lade or unlade, ship or unship, any goods from any landing-place within the harbour of Boston. There was little opposition to this measure, which was passed in a fortnight, and when sent to the Lords was as quickly adopted. Chatham suggested, in a letter to Shelburne, that reparation ought first to be demanded and refused before such a bill could be called just. The letter of Chatham, in which he makes this suggestion, is that of a great statesman, exhibiting the sound qualities of his mind perhaps even more clearly than his impassioned oratory: "The whole of this unhappy business is beset with dangers of the most complicated and lasting nature; and the point of true wisdom for the mother-country seems to be in such nice and exact limits (accurately distinguished, and embraced, with a large and generous moderation of spirit), as narrow, short-sighted counsels of state, or over-heated popular debates, are not likely to hit. Perhaps a fatal desire to take advantage of this guilty tumult of the Bostonians, in order to crush the spirit of liberty among the Americans in general, has taken possession of the heart of government."*

In the "heart of government" there was no place for conciliation. The Boston Port Bill, backed up by military force, was to be followed by other measures of coercion. On the 28th of March, lord North brought in a Bill for regulating the government of Massachusetts Bay. "I propose," he said, "In this Bill to take the executive power from the hands of the democratic part of government." The proposition went, in many important particulars, to annul the Charter granted to the province by William III. The council was to be appointed by the Crown; the magistrates were to be nominated by the governor. This Bill also passed, after ineffectual debate. A third Bill enacted, that during the next three years, the Governor of Massachusetts might, if it was thought that an impartial trial of any person could not be secured in that colony, send him for trial in another colony; or to Great Britain, if it were thought that no fair trial could be obtained in the Colonies. The object of the Bill was distinctly stated by lord North—"Unless such a bill should pass into a law the executive power will be

* "Chatham Correspondence," vol. vi. p. 337.

unwilling to act, thinking they will not have a fair trial without it." Colonel Barré strongly remonstrated against such a measure. The Bill was to protect the military power in any future encounters with the people.* The king rejoices "in the feebleness and futility of opposition." † Mr. Bancroft says, without perhaps any very accurate means of judging, that "the passions of the British ministry were encouraged by the British people, who resented the denial of their supremacy, and made the cause of Parliament their own." ‡ The British people were not allowed to be free judges of the great question at issue. On the discussion of the Bostonian Bills, Walpole says, "The doors of both Houses were carefully locked—a symptom of the spirit with which they were dictated." § Perhaps if the words of Edmund Burke had gone forth to the world, hot from his lips, instead of oozing out in a pamphlet, the people might have thought seriously of the crisis which called forth his eloquent philosophy. His speech of the 19th of April, on American taxation, has passages that have an interest for all time. It had been urged that the tax upon tea is trifling. This is his reply:—"Could anything be a subject of more just alarm to America, than to see you go out of the plain high-road of finance, and give up your most certain revenues and your dearest interest, merely for the sake of insulting your colonies? No man ever doubted that the commodity of tea could bear an imposition of three-pence. But no commodity will bear three-pence, or will bear a penny, when the general feelings of men are irritated, and two millions of people are resolved not to pay. The feelings of the colonies were probably the feelings of Great Britain. Theirs were formerly the feelings of Mr. Hampden when called upon for the payment of twenty shillings. Would twenty shillings have ruined Mr. Hampden's fortune? No! but the payment of half twenty shillings, on the principle it was demanded, would have made him a slave." Lord Carmarthen, as Walpole records, produced a sensation on his first appearance in the House of Commons. The young lord's speech prompted one of the most splendid manifestations of Burke's genius: "A noble lord who spoke some time ago, is full of the fire of ingenuous youth; and when he has modelled the ideas of a lively imagination by further experience, he will be an ornament to his country in either house. He has said, that the Americans are our children, and how can they revolt against their parent? He says, if they are not

* Lord Mahon has not looked at this measure with his usual care. He says, "It was imagined that no fair trial could be had within the limits of that province of any persons concerned in the late disturbances."—History, vol. vi. p. 8.

† Note to lord North, 23rd March. ‡ "American Revolution," vol. iii. p. 556.

§ "Last Journals," p. 363.

free in their present state, England is not free; because Manchester, and other considerable places, are not represented. So then, because some towns in England are not represented, America is to have no representative at all. They are our 'our children;' but when children ask for bread, we are not to give a stone. Is it because the natural resistance of things, and the various mutations of time, hinder our government, or any scheme of government, from being any more than a sort of approximation to the right, is it therefore that the Colonies are to recede from it infinitely? When this child of ours wishes to assimilate to its parent, and to reflect with a true filial resemblance the beautiful countenance of British liberty; are we to turn to them the shameful parts of our constitution? are we to give them our weakness for their strength; our opprobrium for their glory; and the slough of slavery, which we are not able to work off, to serve them for their freedom?"

The dangers of the country called forth Chatham from his retirement. Walpole describes him making his appearance in the House of Lords, on the 26th of May: "Lord Chatham, who was a comedian even to his dress, to excuse his late absence by visible tokens of the gout, had his legs wrapped in black velvet boots, and, as if in mourning for the king of France, he leaned on a crutch covered with black likewise."* Walpole says, "he made a long feeble harangue." There are portions of the harangue which throw a doubt upon the taste or candour of the journalist—the opening passage for example:

"If we take a transient view of those motives which induced the ancestors of our fellow-subjects in America to leave their native country to encounter the innumerable difficulties of the unexplored regions of the Western World, our astonishment at the present conduct of their descendants will naturally subside. There was no corner of the world into which men of their free and enterprising spirit would not fly with alacrity, rather than submit to the slavish and tyrannical principles which prevailed at that period in their native country. And shall we wonder, my lords, if the descendants of such illustrious characters spurn with contempt the hand of unconstitutional power, that would snatch from them such dear-bought privileges as they now contend for? Had the British colonies been planted by any other kingdom than our own, the inhabitants would have carried with them the chains of slavery and spirit of despotism; but as they are, they ought to be remembered as great instances to instruct the world what great exertions mankind

* "Last Journals," vol. i. p. 369. (Louis XV. died on the 10th of May.)

will naturally make, when they are left to the free exercise of their own powers."

The spirit of the New Englanders took the same course of thought as that of the first orator of the mother-country. In proposing a General Congress of the several Houses of Assembly, John Hancock exclaimed, "Remember from whom you sprang."* This was said on the 5th of March—two days before Lord North had delivered to Parliament the Royal Message which was the prelude to the measures which the British government believed would ensure the submission of the Colonists. The people of Massachusetts, in their proceedings of the 16th of December, "had passed the river and cut away the bridge."† Lord Mansfield called upon the Peers to delay not in carrying the Boston Port Bill: "Pass this Act, and you will have crossed the Rubicon." Before the men of Massachusetts knew of the severities that were hanging over them, the most violent of their leaders, Samuel Adams, had officially drawn up instructions for Franklin, the agent for the colony, which concluded with these words: "Their old good will and affection for the parent country are not totally lost. If she returns to her former moderation and good-humour, their affection will revive. They wish for nothing more than a permanent union with her upon the condition of equal liberty. This is all they have been contending for; and nothing short of this will or ought to satisfy them."‡ The same language was held in 1774 by George Washington. He wrote in October of that year, to a friend who held the rank of captain in the English army, "You are taught to believe that the people of Massachusetts are rebellious; setting up for independency and what not. Give me leave to tell you, you are grossly abused. . . . I cannot announce it as a fact, that it is not the wish or interest of that government, or any other upon this continent, separately or collectively, to set up for independence. But this you may at the same time rely on, that none of them will ever submit to the loss of those valuable rights and privileges which are essential to the happiness of every free state, and without which life, liberty, and property, are rendered totally insecure."

Such were the sentiments, even of the moderate, in the American Colonies. But it must not be assumed that the universal opinion of the colonial communities was represented by Samuel Adams or John Hancock, even by George Washington or Thomas Jefferson. There was a large party in every province who were avowed Royalists; and who gradually acquired the name of Tories. They

* Bancroft, vol. iii. p. 56.

† J. Adams, quoted by Bancroft.

‡ Bancroft, p. 563.

were not wanting in encouragement from England. They had the support of a preponderating majority in Parliament, which sanguine persons thought would overawe the malcontents. "Nothing can be more calculated," writes the king to lord North, "to bring the Americans to a due submission than the very handsome majority that at the outset appears in both Houses." This was written on the 22nd of January, 1775, a new Parliament having met on the previous 29th of November. The American Royalists would not lack private instigations from individuals of eminence in England, to oppose their rebellious countrymen. The conversational opinions of the famous Dr. Johnson might reach them, even before they read his pamphlet, "Taxation no Tyranny." They might be told that Edward Gibbon, of rising literary reputation, held that the right was on the side of the mother country.* The future great historian was returned to Parliament in 1774, and was prepared to speak on the American question, if he could have overcome "timidity fortified by pride." Whatever may be now the prevailing sentiment upon the colonial quarrel, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the controversy was one that involved great principles, and called forth the highest energies of great intellects. On either side of the Atlantic was manifested the grandeur of the Anglo-Saxon mind. Chatham, in 1775, paid a deserved tribute to the qualities displayed in the first American Congress: "When your lordships look at the papers transmitted us from America—when you consider their decency, firmness, and wisdom, you cannot but respect their cause, and wish to make it your own. For myself I must declare and avow, that in all my reading and observation—(I have read Thucydides, and have studied and admired the master-states of the world)—that for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion, under such a complication of difficult circumstances, no nation or body of men can stand in preference to the General Congress at Philadelphia. I trust it is obvious to your lordships that all attempts to impose servitude upon such men, to establish despotism over such a mighty continental nation, must be vain, must be fatal." Gibbon has described the striking scene he witnessed in the British House of Commons: "I assisted at the debates of a free assembly; I listened to the attack and defence of eloquence and reason; I had a near prospect of the character, views, and passions, of the first men of the age. The cause of government was ably vindicated by lord North, a statesman of spotless integrity, a consummate master of debate, who could wield, with equal dexterity, the arms of reason and of ridicule. He was

* See his Letter to Holroyd, 21st January, 1775.

seated on the treasury-bench between his attorney and solicitor-general, the two pillars of the law and state, *magis pares quam similes*; and the minister might indulge in a short slumber, whilst he was upholden on either hand by the majestic sense of Thurlow, and the skilful eloquence of Wedderburn. From the adverse side of the house an ardent and powerful opposition was supported by the lively declamation of Barré, the legal acuteness of Dunning, the profuse and philosophical fancy of Burke, and the argumentative vehemence of Fox, who, in the conduct of a party, approved himself equal to the conduct of an empire. By such men every operation of peace and war, every principle of justice and policy, every question of authority and freedom, was attacked and defended; and the subject of the momentous contest was the union or separation of Great Britain and America. The eight sessions I sat in parliament were a school of civil prudence, the first and most essential virtue of an historian.*

The differences of opinion in America ought to have retarded the terrible issue that was approaching. The fears of the timid, the hopes of the loyal, were opposed to the advocates of resistance, and might have prevailed to avert the notion of independence. In an unhappy hour, blood was shed; and conciliation then became a word that was uttered to deaf ears in England as in America. We must in this chapter rapidly trace the course of events till we reach that crisis.

The ministry after passing their coercive Bills had determined to send out general Gage to supersede Hutchinson as governor of Massachusetts, and to be Commander in Chief in the Colonies. He would have to act upon a system distinctly opposed to the old chartered system of free local government. He undervalued, as we have seen, the resistance which was to be brought against him, and relied too absolutely upon "four regiments." His appointment was not disagreeable to the New Englanders. He had lived amongst them, and had honourably executed the military authority with which he had been previously entrusted. In an unhappy hour he arrived at Boston, on the 13th of May, 1774. A vessel which came there before him brought a copy of the Boston Port Bill. When Gage came into the harbour, the people were holding a meeting to discuss that Act of the British Legislature which deprived them of their old position in the commerce of the world—which doomed their merchants and all dependent upon them to absolute ruin. There was but one feeling. The meeting entered into resolutions, to which they invited the co-operation of the other

* Autobiography.

Colonies, for the purpose of suspending all commercial intercourse with Great Britain, and the West Indies, until the Act was repealed. Copies of the Act were everywhere circulated, printed with a black border. But there was no violence. The new Governor was received with decorum, but without the accustomed honours. General Gage gave the Assembly notice that on the 1st of June, according to the provisions of the Act, their place of meeting would be removed to the town of Salem. When the spirit of opposition to his dictates was getting up, the Governor suddenly adjourned the Assembly. He was asked to appoint the 1st of June as a day of general prayer and fasting. He refused. In Virginia the House of Burgesses appointed the 1st of June as a day of humiliation, to avert the calamity of their loss of rights, or the miseries of civil war. They were immediately dissolved. The Assembly of Virginia did not separate without recommending a General Congress. The idea universally spread. Meanwhile, general Gage had an encampment of six regiments on a common near Boston, and had begun to fortify the isthmus which connects the town with the adjacent country. The 1st of June came. There was no tumult. Business was at an end; Boston had become a city of the dead.

The first Congress, consisting of fifty-five members, met at Philadelphia on the 4th of September. The place of their meeting was Carpenter's Hall. Peyton Randolph was chosen as their President. Their proceedings were conducted with closed doors. The more earnest party gradually obtained the ascendancy over the more timid. They drew up a Declaration of Rights. They passed Resolutions to suspend all imports from Great Britain or Ireland after the 1st of December, and to discontinue all exports after the 10th of September in the ensuing year, unless the grievances of America should be redressed. They published Addresses to the people of Great Britain and of Canada, and they decided upon a petition to the king. These were the papers that called forth the eulogium of Chatham. The Congress dissolved themselves on the 26th of October; and resolved that another Congress should be convened on the 10th of May, 1775.

After the 1st of June the irremediable conflict between the Governor and Representatives of the people soon put an end to the legal course of government. General Gage was so wholly deserted by the Council, that the meeting of the Assembly, which was proposed to take place at Salem in October, could not be regularly convened. Writs for the election of members had been issued, but were afterwards annulled by proclamation. The elections took

place. The persons chosen assembled, and styled themselves a Local Congress. A Committee of safety was appointed. They enrolled militia, called "Minutemen," whose engagement was that they should appear in arms at a minute's notice. They appointed commanders. They provided ammunition. The knowledge of the two Acts of Parliament which had followed that for shutting up the Port of Boston, not only provoked this undisguised resolve to resist to the death amongst the people of Massachusetts, but called up the same growing determination throughout the vast continent of America.

The new Parliament met on the 29th of November, 1774. There was an end of the agitations about Wilkes; for, having been elected for Middlesex, he took his seat without opposition. The king's speech asserted his determination "to withstand every attempt to weaken or impair the supreme authority of this Legislature over all the dominions of my Crown." Corresponding Addresses were voted in both Houses with a large majority. In January, lord Chatham brought forward a motion to withdraw the troops from Boston. "I wish, my lords," he said, "not to lose a day in this urgent, pressing crisis. An hour now lost in allaying ferments in America may produce years of calamity. For my own part, I will not desert for a moment the conduct of this weighty business, from first to last. Unless nailed to my bed by the extremity of sickness, I will give it unremitted attention. I will knock at the door of this sleeping and confounded ministry, and will rouse them to a sense of their important danger." Chatham knocked in vain to awaken these sleepers. His voice, whose noble utterance cannot now be read without stirring the heart, was called by George III. "a trumpet of sedition." Again, on the 1st of February, that voice was heard, when Chatham presented "a provisional Bill for settling the troubles in America." On the first occasion he had only eighteen peers to vote with him against sixty-eight; on the second occasion he had thirty-two against sixty-one. Franklin heard the great speech of the 20th January, having been conducted into the House by Chatham himself, who said to him, "I am sure your presence at this day's debate will be of more service to America than mine." This was some compensation to that eminent man for the insults of Wedderburn. Chatham's second son, the child of his hopes, then only sixteen, wrote to his mother an account of that memorable debate. It is touching to observe the young William Pitt's deep sympathy with his father's efforts: "Nothing prevented his speech from being the most forcible that can be imagined; and administration fully felt it. . . . He