is lame in one ankle, near the instep, from standing so long. No wonder he is lame; his first speech lasted above an hour, and the second half an hour—surely, the two finest speeches that were ever made before, unless by himself. . . . . . I wish I had time and memory to give an account of all I heard, and all I felt."* Chatham's oratory was in vain. The ministry that night declared they would send out more troops, instead of recalling any. Chatham's conciliatory Bill made some impression upon lord North, who proposed a very weak measure, as a Resolution of the House of Commons, that if any of the American provinces, by their legislature, should make some provision for the defence and government of that province, which should be approved by the king and parliament, then it might be proper to forbear imposing any tax. This was to attempt to put out a conflagration with a bucket of water.

If the highest efforts of argument could have been availing, the speech of Edmund Burke, on the 22nd of March, would have arrested the headlong course of the government. At this moment a Bill was passing both Houses which Burke called "the great penal Bill by which we had passed sentence on the trade and sustenance of America." It was a Bill to prohibit certain Colonies from fishing on the banks of Newfoundland. Great Britain was not ashamed to resort to this petty measure of retaliation against the American non-importation agreements. Burke proposed a series of conciliatory Resolutions, of a less sweeping nature than those of Chatham, and therefore more likely to be acceptable to men of temperate opinions. They were rejected on a division of two hundred and seventy against seventy-eight. The speech of the great statesman presented a masterly review of the wonderful growth of the American Colonies,—their successful industry,—their commercial importance to Great Britain. The whole export trade of England, including the colonial trade, was six millions and a half in 1704. The export trade to the colonies alone was six millions in 1772. These statistical facts were suddenly illumined by a burst of oratory, perhaps unrivalled. Allen, lord Bathurst, to whom Pope addressed his "Epistle on the Use of Riches,"—Bathurst "unspoiled by wealth," the father of the Lord Chancellor of 1775,—was cited by Burke as one that might remember all the stages of the growth of our national prosperity. He was in 1704 "of an age at least to be made to comprehend such things." "Suppose that the angel of that auspicious youth" had opened to him in vision the fortunes of his house in the twelfth year of the

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* "Chatham Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 376.

third prince of the line of Brunswick: "If amidst these bright and happy scenes of domestic honour and prosperity, that angel should have drawn up the curtain, and unfolded the rising glories of his country, and whilst he was gazing with admiration on the then commercial grandeur of England, the genius should point out to him a little speck, scarce visible in the mass of the national interest, a small seminal principle, rather than a formed body, and should tell him—'Young man, there is America—which at this day serves for little more than to amuse you with stories of savage men, and uncouth manners; yet shall, before you taste of death, show itself equal to the whole of that commerce which now attracts the envy of the world. Whatever England has been growing to by a progressive increase of improvement, brought in by varieties of people, by a succession of civilizing conquests and civilizing settlements in a series of seventeen hundred years, you shall see as much added to her by America in the course of a single life.' If this state of his country had been foretold to him, would it not require all the sanguine credulity of youth, and all the fervid glow of enthusiasm, to make him believe it? Fortunate man, he has lived to see it! Fortunate indeed, if he lives to see nothing that shall vary the prospect, and cloud the setting of his day!"

Allen, earl Bathurst, lived long enough to see the prospect clouded over, but not to behold that sun set which was predicted to follow the separation of Great Britain from her North American Colonies. It was for later times to behold the cloud passing away from the old monarchy and the young republic. In that year of 1775, when Burke was thus pointing to the remembrances of an eminent living man, to contrast "the little speck scarce visible in the mass of the national interest," with the continent which contained two millions of prosperous colonists,—in that year there came to England an American painter, with a son who would gradually comprehend the mighty changes which were then going on in the country of his birth. If the angel of this auspicious boy should have drawn up the curtain, and unfolded the glories of America when he was to be Lord Chancellor of England, would it not have required all the sanguine credulity of youth, and all the fervid glow of enthusiasm, to have made John Singleton Copley believe that the woods in which his father taught himself to paint should be covered with mighty cities, that the Republic of the United States should contain a population of twenty-three millions, and that the commerce of those States should, next to that of Great Britain, be the largest in the world?

The contrarieties of public opinion in Great Britain and Ireland upon the American question, were exhibited in petitions from various corporate bodies. Many manufacturing towns petitioned against the coercion Acts, as destructive of the commerce of the country. Other petitions called for an enforcement of the legislative supremacy of Great Britain, as the only means of preserving a trade with the Colonies. There were war-petitions and peace-petitions. Those who signed the war-petitions were held to be mere party-men known as Tories. Those who signed the peace-petitions were discontented Whigs, or something worse. The Quakers, whilst they exhorted to peace, maintained the loyalty of all religious denominations in America to the king's person, family and government. The citizens of London, with Wilkes at their head as lord-mayor, presented an Address and Remonstrance to the king on the throne, in which they denounced the measures of the government as deliberately intended to establish arbitrary power all over America. The king answered, that it was with the utmost astonishment that he found any of his subjects capable of encouraging the rebellious disposition which existed in some of his Colonies in America. From such different points of view did men regard this great argument. As usual in England, the most serious questions had their ludicrous aspect. Caricatures were numerous. One represented America as a struggling female, held down by lord Mansfield, whilst lord North was drenching her with "a strong dose of tea." In another, Britannia is thrown down upon her child America, whilst lord North is pumping upon both of them, looking exultingly through his eye-glass.* The partisans of the minister struck a medal in his honour.

The close of 1774 was, in Massachusetts, the silence before the storm. The people were arming. The Provincial Congress had formed an arsenal at Concord, an inland town. The British troops made no movements during the winter to interfere with these hostile demonstrations. In his speech of the 27th of January, Chatham alluded to the position of the royal forces: "Their situation is truly unworthy; penned up; pining in inglorious inactivity. . . . . . I find a report creeping abroad that ministers censure general Gage's inactivity. . . . . It is a prudent and necessary inaction. . . . . This tameness, however contemptible, cannot be censured; for the first drop of blood shed in civil and unnatural war might be *immedicabile vulnus*." That incurable wound was, too soon, to be inflicted.

On the evening of the 18th of April, lieut.-colonel Smith, of the 10th foot, marched, by order of governor Gage, with a body of

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* See Wright's "House of Hanover," vol. ii. p. 22.

grenadiers and light infantry, for Concord, with the purpose of destroying all the military stores collected there. "Notwithstanding," writes lieut.-colonel Smith in his dispatch, "we marched with the utmost expedition and secrecy, we found the country had intelligence or strong suspicion of our coming, and fired many signal guns, and rung the alarm bells repeatedly; and we were informed, when at Concord, that some cannon had been taken out of town that day; that others, with some stores, had been carried away three days before, which prevented our having an opportunity of destroying so much as might have been expected at our first setting off." Six light infantry companies were dispatched to seize two brigades on different roads beyond Concord. They found country people drawn on a green, with arms and accoutrements. The troops advanced, according to the lieutenant-colonel, without any intention of injuring the people; but, nevertheless, they were fired upon, and the soldiers fired again. When the detachment reached Concord, there was a more serious skirmish, with a very considerable body of countrymen. "At Concord," the narrative continues, "we found very few inhabitants in the town; those we met with, both major Pitcairn and myself took all possible pains to convince that we meant them no injury, and that if they opened their doors when required to search for military stores, not the slightest mischief would be done. We had opportunities of convincing them of our good intentions, but they were sulky, and one of them even struck major Pitcairn. On our leaving Concord to return to Boston, they began to fire on us from behind walls, ditches, trees, &c., which, as we marched, increased to a very great degree, and continued without the intermission of five minutes altogether, for, I believe, upwards of eighteen miles; so that I can't think but it must have been a preconcerted scheme in them to attack the king's troops the first favourable opportunity that offered, otherwise I think they could not, in so short a time as from our marching out, have raised such a numerous body, and for so great a space of ground."* The destruction of the detachment under lieut.-colonel Smith by a large body of infuriated men, was averted by the arrival at Lexington of a reinforcement sent out by general Gage. The British continued to retreat before their resolute opponents. They did not reach their quarters till night had fallen—worn out with fatigue, and with a loss of two or three hundred in killed, wounded, and prisoners. There was no open fight, for the minute-men were in ambush, and picked off the officers and men of the detachment from their secure hiding amongst trees and behind stone walls.

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* From despatch in the State Paper Office—given by Mahon, Appendix to vol. vi.

The news of the affair of Lexington arrived in England at the end of May. The Provincial Congress of Massachusetts knew the effect that would be produced upon public opinion in the mother country when it should be learnt that the king's troops had been defeated. The day after the skirmish, this Congress dispatched a vessel to England, without freight, for the sole purpose of carrying letters detailing his triumph. Walpole has described the impression produced by the receipt of this intelligence in London;—"May 28. Arrived a light sloop, sent by the Americans from Salem, with an account of their having defeated the king's troops." He then gives details of the news received, which seems to have been free from exaggeration. "The advice was immediately dispersed, while the government remained without any intelligence. Stocks immediately fell. The provincials had behaved with the greatest conduct, coolness, and resolution. One circumstance spoke a thorough determination of resistance: the provincials had sent over affidavits of all that had passed, and a colonel of the militia had sworn in an affidavit, that he had given his men orders to fire on the king's troops, if the latter attacked them. It was firmness, indeed, to swear to having been the first to begin what the Parliament had named rebellion. Thus was the civil war begun, and a victory the first fruits of it on the side of the Americans, whom lord Sandwich had had the folly and rashness to proclaim cowards."

Whilst the provincials of Masschusetts and the troops of general Gage had thus been brought into a collision which had more the character of accident than of preconcerted hostilities, a bold and successful attempt was made in another quarter, which could only be interpreted as a deliberate act of warfare. Forty volunteers, well armed, had set out, at the instigation of some leading men of Connecticut, to form part of an expedition which was to attack Ticonderoga, a fort on Lake George, and Crown Point, a fort on Lake Champlain. If these were taken, the invasion of Canada by the American militia would be greatly facilitated. The Connecticut volunteers were joined on their march by Ethan Allen, who had many volunteers under his command; and by Benedict Arnold, who subsequently obtained a celebrity not the most honourable. Ticonderoga was garrisoned by only forty-four soldiers, under the command of captain De la Place. On the morning of the 10th of May, the commander was roused in his bed; saw his fort surrounded by several hundred men in arms; and was required to surrender "in the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress." The demand was not resisted. Crown Point was also surprised by the same body of adventurers.

The affair of Lexington was the commencement of the American war. More decisive encounters very speedily followed between the king's troops and many thousand Americans in arms. How this first contest was regarded by the noblest of the men who built up the independence of their country, we find in a letter from Washington to a friend in England: "General Gage acknowledged, that the detachment under lieut.-colonel Smith was sent out to destroy private property; or, in other words, to destroy a magazine, which self-preservation obliged the inhabitants to establish. And he also confesses, in effect at least, that his men made a very precipitate retreat from Concord, notwithstanding the reinforcement under lord Percy; the last of which may serve to convince lord Sandwich, and others of the same sentiment, that the Americans will fight for their liberties and property, however pusillanimous in his lordship's eye they may appear in other respects . . . . Unhappy it is, though, to reflect that a brother's sword has been sheathed in a brother's breast, and that the once happy and peaceful plains of America are either to be drenched with blood, or inhabited by slaves. Sad alternative! But can a virtuous man hesitate in his choice?"

On the day that Ticonderoga fell in the hands of these American partisans, the General Congress assembled for the second time at Philadelphia.

We have dealt somewhat fully with the circumstances which preceded the unfortunate contest between Great Britain and her North American Colonies. We have endeavoured to exhibit the general agreement which existed between the principles maintained by the Colonists, and those of the English statesmen who are now regarded as the true representatives of the national mind in its highest sense—the mind of the dispassionate and enlightened few of those times, and that of the more general enlightenment of our own time. Happily the day has long since past when either the citizen of the Republic of the United States, or the subject of the Monarchy of the United Kingdom, can read a narrative of the great struggle which resulted in American Independence, with any sentiment of vindictiveness. In the circumstances which preceded the actual war, and during the continuance of the war, there were noble feelings called forth in the parent country, and in the revolted provinces, which showed how truly that spirit of liberty was up-held which was common to both:—which had descended from the time of Alfred; which had never been lost under Plantagenet or Tudor; which had gone forth to colonize New England when a Stuart made Old England unsafe for free men to dwell in; which, having expelled the oppressors, drew new breath under a Bill of Rights. It was the spirit which spoke in the eloquence of Chatham; which asserted itself in the sagacity and moderation of Washington. Looking at the other side in the great contest, whether the majority of the legislature and people of Great Britain, or the American Royalist, it would not be just to view them as assertors of arbitrary doctrines, intent upon reducing their fellow-men to slavery. They acted upon a mistaken principle, which they believed to be a constitutional right. The errors have not been without their use, if they have led to that better understanding of the relations between a State and its Colonies which prevails in our own day.

CHAPTER X.

Franklin's return to America.—Meeting of Congress at Philadelphia.—Washington elected Commander-in-chief.—Events at Boston.—Battle of Bunker's Hill.—Washington blockades Boston.—Public opinion in England.—Petition from Congress to the King.—Mr. Penn, the bearer of the petition, examined in the House of Lords.—Lord North's Prohibitory Bill.—Invasion of Canada.—Silas Deane sent to Paris.—Declaration of Independence adopted by Congress.—Note: The Declaration.

At the end of March, 1775, that remarkable man, Benjamin Franklin, who, fifty years before, had been working in London as a journeyman printer, turned his back upon that England where he had received all honour as a philosopher, to become one of her most strenuous opponents in the struggle of his native country for independence. He left England—as we learn from a letter written a short time before his departure—with a firm conviction that her system of government was conducting her to ruin and disgrace. He deprecated any further attempt to restore united interests between the mother-country and her colonies: "When I consider," he writes, "the extreme corruption prevalent among all orders of men in the old rotten state, and the glorious public virtue so predominant in our rising country, I cannot but apprehend more mischief than benefit from a close union. . . . Here, numberless and needless places, enormous salaries, pensions, perquisites, bribes, groundless quarrels, foolish expeditions, false accounts or no accounts, contracts and jobs, devour all revenue, and produce continual necessity in the midst of natural plenty."* Making every allowance for one whose endeavours to promote peace had been met with neglect and insult, much of this severe description is undoubtedly true. But Franklin still shrunk from war. "I would try anything, and bear anything that can be borne with safety to our just liberties, rather than engage in a war with such relations, unless compelled to it by dire necessity in our own defence." On the 5th of May he arrived in Philadelphia. On the 6th he was elected by the Assembly of Pennsylvania one of the deputies to the Continental Congress appointed to meet on the 10th. In a few days came the news of the first fatal contest at Lexington; and

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* "Franklin's Works," by Sparks, vol. viii. p. 146—Letter to Galloway, February 25, 1775.