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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
MODERN EUROPE.

PART III.

FROM THE PEACE OF PARIS IN 1763, TO THE TREATY OF AMIENS IN 1802.

LETTER I.

*A view of the Situation of Great Britain consequent on the Termination of the late War. Approaching Dissensions with the American Colonies. A. D. 1764—1775.*

THE peace of 1763 left the nations of Europe under the pressure of an enormous taxation, one of the many and never-failing results of a protracted war. The reduction of the armies at the same time dispersed a number of men whose military habits had now rendered them but little calculated for the employments of honest industry, many of whom, in various countries, swelled the catalogue of crimes; while others sought their livelihood on the Ural and the Volga, in the colonies of Russia; but America became the chief receptacle for the superfluous population of Europe. In addition to these circumstances, the booty procured in war, the treasures of the East Indies annually imported, the rapid accumulation of fortunes from the plantations in the West Indies, with a thousand instances of successful enterprise and good fortune which the chance of war had thrown in their way, had multiplied the wants of life, and the capricious claims of luxury in Great Britain had increased in an incredible degree.

The conquests which the British arms had achieved, added to the policy of government, ever fond of increasing its patronage, had greatly augmented the number of lucrative offices; and as the desire for obtaining such places could only be gratified at the pleasure of the court, a much larger proportion than heretofore of the country gentlemen and landed proprietors took up their residence in the metropolis, committing their estates to the care of their stewards; and as they thereby unavoidably enlarged their expenses, and involved themselves in debt, they were reduced to the necessity of raising their rents. The consequence of this was, that the oppressed people were soon driven to despair, while their superiors were deaf to their complaints. Upwards of twenty thousand Irishmen in a short time transported themselves to America, and many thousands from the Highlands of Scotland and the islands of the Hebrides also sought an asylum where they might perpetuate the customs of their ancestors, and obtain the means of subsistence in the western world. This multitude of recent emigrants to America, adopting a mode of life conformable to nature and the principles of primitive equality, contributed much to the cultivation of the lands, and in various other respects helped by their influence to accelerate that disruption with the mother-country, which was now rapidly approaching.



the whole body of land proprietors elected a council of twenty-eight members. Military force was almost unnecessary; for the isthmus, and the islands which cover the entrances of the harbours, afforded natural defences. In Rhode Island the governor and his deputy, as well as the council, were elected by the people; and in all criminal cases, except those of high-treason, murder, and piracy, they also exercised the privilege of pardon. In the midst of beautiful gardens, under a mild climate, and in a healthy atmosphere, arose Philadelphia, the establishment of the virtuous Penn. The inhabitants of the city were supported by the produce of the neighbouring country, and enriched themselves by their industry. Their manners, in process of time, began to suffer from the effects of prosperity; the affection that had been hitherto testified for the family of Penn was in a great measure lost, and some symptoms of confusion began to appear in the interior of the country. The administration of Maryland belonged to the descendants of its founder, lord Baltimore; and was conducted by its governor, with the assistance of a council of twelve, and of the deputies of the districts. Religion was every where free from restraint; agriculture was held in honour; and peace and order were protected against the attempts of parties, and of wild and lawless men. Every colony cultivated in security that species of production which it found most suitable to its soil and climate. New-England produced wheat, Turkish corn, rice, and barley. This colony contained noble tracts of pasturage; and six thousand fishermen gained an annual income of more than £322,000 sterling. The healthy colony of Rhode Island produced Turkish corn in great abundance. Nova Scotia, the circumstances of which were less favourable, because its government was military, enriched itself by its coal mines. On the other hand, New-York was situated in a beautiful district, and rose to great importance. One hundred and eighty-eight ships, and four hundred and twenty-six sloops sailed from this port; and the banks of the East River were adorned with the residences of superfluity and pleasure. New-Jersey was almost a garden. Maryland produced thirty millions of pounds of tobacco; and Virginia could deliver fifty millions. The romantic banks of the Shenandoah were cultivated by industrious Germans. Farther towards the south, the sun darted his scorching rays on immeasurable tracts of sand. North Carolina, however, rose to prosperity. South Carolina, the cherished object of solicitude to Coligny, Shaftesbury, and Locke, no longer dreaded the Indians, whose people were now entirely subdued,—this colony, in which the cultivation of the vine and the silk succeeded as well as in Italy, was second to none in value. At a still greater distance, where Savannah, situated between sand and forest, endures a degree of heat as great as that of Africa, Georgia was now rising to importance. In Florida, only the first beginnings of cultivation were visible in a few spots.

Such was North America at this interesting period: under the protection of Britain, she stood in fear of no foreign enemy; and the consciousness of her native strength was already too great to permit her to feel much apprehension even of her mother-country. The territory itself, its extent, and its climate, formed the protection of the Americans. The nation, like the country which it inhabited, appeared to be in the full vigour of youth; ardent, independent, and capable of astonishing exertions when stimulated to them.

In first imposing and afterward rescinding the stamp act, the English ministry performed neither justice nor injustice to any good purpose. They were goaded to the former evidently by compulsion, and they committed the latter without energy. Some lawless proceedings had taken place at Boston, but compensation had been spontaneously tendered to those who suffered by them. The offer was rejected, and ministers demanded that as a duty which they were inclined to perform voluntarily. The community was thus excited to suspicion respecting the official reports of the governor's council, and they took the first opportunity of choosing other individuals into office. The governor reprimanded them for this exercise of their elective franchise; and they, in their turn, drew up a representation of the case, and sent it to the king. The document could not have the signature of the governor, as

usual on such occasions, because it was directed against his own proceedings; and this informality furnished a very plausible pretext to the court for not receiving it, while the governor took occasion from the circumstance to discontinue the holding of those assemblies. About this time a reinforcement of troops was sent to America, and all New-England was anxious that the commons should be assembled.

While the minds of the colonists were in this state of fermentation, the English parliament imposed a duty on tea, for the purpose of relieving the East India company of a tax of 25 per cent., in order to enable the company to sell that article as cheap as the Dutch. This occurrence manifested that the English government, when it allowed the stamp act to be repealed, did not intend to abandon its right to tax the colonies. The Americans, however, were extremely enraged, and refused to pay the duty on its importation into their harbours. Nor can we wonder that the popular leaders should avail themselves of the circumstances of the times to promote their own designs; but the imprudent conduct of the English ministry furnished them with all they wanted.

It was under these circumstances that some young men of Boston, disguised like Mohawk Indians, threw into the sea three cargoes of tea, in the presence of the governor, the council, the garrison, and even under the cannon of fort William Henry, without the slightest resistance being offered to them. Such proceedings were matter of rejoicing to the ministerial party, who viewed them as affording a favourable pretext for effecting the complete subjugation of the colonies; and many, even of the friends of liberty in England, considered it utterly improbable that America would be able effectually to resist the power of the mother-country. When the ministers were warned by the opposition, that the colonies would make common cause against them, they replied, that were such the case, the colonies would only have to ascribe their misfortunes to their own imprudence! but despised enemies are dangerous.

On the principle of affording the necessary protection and indemnification to commercial rights, the British parliament now suspended the privileges of the harbour of Boston; adjudged the inhabitants to make compensation for the property destroyed; revoked the original charter of Massachusetts's bay; and, since a resolution of the council was necessary to enable the governor to employ the military force, an election of that body was taken from the community and vested in him. He, at the same time, received orders with regard to such persons as should be obnoxious to the displeasure of colonial authorities on account of their attachment to the government of the mother-country, to send their causes to England for adjudication. And in order to keep the Americans more effectually in check, the boundaries of the newly-acquired province of Canada were extended behind the other colonies; the council of that province, which was nominated by the king, and of which half the members were Catholics, was provided with more extensive powers; and the civil jurisprudence of the despotic government of France was established as the law of all the inhabitants of the province, not excepting those of English birth; while, on the other hand, the milder criminal code of England was introduced even with regard to the native Canadians.

A general congress of the Americans having been convened, it was resolved, that the parliament of Great Britain had the right of enacting general laws, and the king that of refusing to confirm the provincial statutes; but that in all matters relating to property, none but the owners, or their representatives, had any power to legislate. With these temperate resolutions, they, however, united measures of defence; and it was agreed that the cultivation of tobacco should be exchanged for that of the articles necessary for food and clothing. Obedience to the governors appointed by the king of England was disallowed, and these gentlemen saved themselves by a precipitate flight. Representations were nevertheless continually made to the mother-country; but those documents were invariably rejected by the parliament, because they were signed by order of the congress. (1)

(1) In what other manner could the colonists have petitioned for redress? Individual memorials would



In this state of things, New-York endeavoured to obtain the honour of effecting a compromise between the mother-country and the colonies; but the documents transmitted to the British parliament with a view to this desirable end were rejected, because they emanated from a body not recognised in England. The parliament declared, that in pursuance of the fundamental law of 1689, only the laws and commons in parliament assembled, and no other body in the British empire, had the right of making any regulation with regard to taxes! It cannot be doubted that it would have been very possible to give to the British empire a constitution, in which its provinces should be admitted to their reasonable share of influence; in which case, the freedom and power of the state would have been established on new foundations, and Great Britain would still have continued at the head of the empire, until the maturity of the New World should at length have rendered it necessary to transport the seat of supreme power across the Atlantic; but a measure of this kind required more wisdom and foresight than swayed the British councils at this period.<sup>(1)</sup>

During all these occurrences, lord North, who at that time swayed the destinies of the empire, seemed to have as little apprehension of interference on the part of the house of Bourbon, as if the court of Versailles had been wholly inaccessible to the suggestions of jealousy or revenge; or as if the cause of a government against its subjects was invariably considered as the cause of all governments. Deaf to the warning voice of the earl of Chatham and his associates in opposition, and reckless of consequences, he compelled the Americans to withdraw from the British dominions, by prohibiting all commerce with them; by excluding them from the fishery of Newfoundland; by extending a correctional law to all the states which had sent deputies to congress; and, finally, by declaring their ships to be lawful prizes to the English letters-of-marque. The result of these unwise and odious proceedings will come to be detailed in a subsequent Letter. Before we close the present, it may be proper to take a brief survey of the domestic state of affairs, and notice a few of the principal incidents which occurred during this period.

From the first moment of the accession of George III. to the throne, the earl of Bute had become an object of jealousy, and his conduct was vigilantly scrutinized. This nobleman had been much about the person of the prince before his elevation, and the attachment of his royal master to him was no secret. On the resignation of lord Holderness he was appointed to the office of secretary of state, and his influence in the cabinet was for some years paramount. But satisfied with having restored peace to the country, and finding his popularity much on the decline, he retired from office, resigning the seals on the 8th of April, 1763. His partiality for the Scotch people was a common topic of complaint; but would have been less censurable had he promoted or rewarded only persons of worth and merit. His political principles were those of toryism, with which he was thought to have inoculated the mind of his royal master. His attachment to them, however, might have been easily pardoned, had he only opposed the licentiousness of the whigs, without inculcating arbitrary and unconstitutional principles.

The earl of Bute was succeeded in office by Mr. George Grenville, who had scarcely got seated in the cabinet, when he found himself involved in a contest, which drew the marked attention of the whole country. John Wilkes, member for the borough of Aylesbury, perceiving that ministers were not much in favour with the public, and that the king, in consequence of his partiality for the tories, was less popular than he had been, commenced a career of vigorous opposition against both, in the hope of profiting

have been too numerous, and a general one, signed by every complainant, too voluminous and unwieldy. The right of petitioning involves a choice of the mode.—Am. Ed.

(1) The idea conveyed in the concluding sentence of this paragraph, must strike the American reader as romantic and Utopian. The history of past ages furnishes no testimony in its favour; and a moderate knowledge of human nature will readily detect its fallacy. The emigration of the court of Portugal to Brazil is not analogous, because that was a flight for personal safety. The relation between old governments and their prosperous colonies, like that between parents and enterprising children, must ultimately be dissolved. The period must arrive when the latter will "set up for themselves," and form independent establishments—"peaceably if they can—forcibly if they must."—Am. Ed.

by the embarrassment of the cabinet, and the discontents of the country. His first onset was an attack of the speech delivered by his majesty at the close of the session, charging it with containing infamous fallacies, and affirming, that the whole was a most abandoned instance of ministerial effrontery. A warrant, directed *generally* against the authors, printers, and publishers of this abusive paper, was instantly issued and delivered to the messengers of the secretary of state's office, who, having ascertained that Wilkes was the writer of the libel, seized his papers, and carried him before the earl of Halifax, who committed him to the tower; but, on application to the court of common pleas, he so successfully pleaded his privileges as a member of parliament, that he procured his release.

The case of Wilkes now became every where the chief topic of conversation, and the meeting of parliament was anticipated with extraordinary interest. It involved two questions highly important to British subjects: the extent of parliamentary privilege, and the legality of general warrants. The lords and commons, after several animated debates, denied that privilege extended to the case of a seditious libel; but they left the other point undetermined. Wilkes was expelled the house of commons for the offensive publication; and, as he was then residing in France, a sentence of outlawry was issued against him. The cause of an individual thus became that of the public. The populace almost idolized the man, regarding him in the light of a martyr to liberty; and even those who despised his character were ready to support him for what they called the general interest. His name was now familiar to politicians of every class. His personal appearance was far from prepossessing, and in his manners he was not only dissipated but licentious. His exertions, however, against an unpopular ministry seemed to atone for every deficiency and every vice; and when he returned to England, he was saluted wherever he appeared. In short, this contest so occupied the public mind, that it now took precedence of every other subject. Wilkes brought his action at law against the under-secretary of state for seizing his papers; the cause was tried before lord chief justice Pratt and a special jury, when he obtained a verdict in his favour, with a thousand pounds damages. In his charge to the jury, the learned judge explicitly declared his opinion against the legality of general warrants, or those in which no names are specified. We shall now turn our attention for a while to the continent of Europe.

## LETTER II.

*A View of the Affairs of the northern States of Europe—Russia—Prussia—Austria—and Poland; from the Treaty of Hubertsberg to the Treaty of Teschen, in Upper Silesia, A. D. 1763 to 1779.*

AFTER the death of Elizabeth Petrovna, empress of Russia, Peter the Third recalled to his councils general Münnich, L'Estocq, Bestucheff, and Ernest von Biren, who had been the favourites and victims of the preceding administrations. Münnich had been twenty years in a state of exile, during which time he had occupied himself with instructing young men in geometry and engineering, and in projecting a number of plans for the service of the empire. This hero, now eighty years of age, was triumphantly received by the officers whom thirty years before he had led to conquest. He addressed the emperor on the qualities of the Russian army in these words: "Where is the people to be found who, like the Russians, are able to penetrate through all Europe with no other provision than the flesh of horses, and no better drink than their blood or the milk of mares? who can pass the widest rivers, without the help of bridges, as compact as our battalions, as light as our Cossacks?" The veteran, who found his ruling passion strengthen with his years, was reinstated in all his dignities.

It was the favourite object with Peter the Third to destroy the power of



Great Britain, which already governed with one arm the banks of the Ohio, and with the other those of the ancient Ganges, at this time fitted out several expeditions in quest of new objects of dominion. In the year 1764, commodore Byron was sent to take as correct a survey as was possible of the straits of Magellan. He traversed the Pacific Ocean, in which he discovered two islands, which he named King George's islands, after which a third presented itself, which was denominated from the prince of Wales; and a fourth from the duke of York. In May, 1766, the expedition appeared in the Downs, after an absence of twenty-two months from the time it had first sailed. This paved the way for the celebrated voyages of captains Wallis, Carteret, Cook, and Mulgrave, which followed each other in quick succession, and of the result of which we shall give a more detailed account in its proper place.

The British empire, whose foundations were laid in freedom, which was great in arms, and still more celebrated for its civil institutions, the object of universal admiration, and the envy of the most powerful nations, appeared to many to be almost exempt from the ordinary causes of the decay of nations. Yet this empire was in a few years from this period reduced so low, that it continued to excite admiration only by its constancy under an adverse state of affairs, occasioned by the evil genius of its rulers. The power of Great Britain dissolved itself, nations sprang from her own bosom, and, nursed in the cradle of freedom, disdained for that very reason to obey her oppressive demands.

Although the British people were generally dissatisfied with the terms of peace; though the French were expelled from the continent of America, and the disorderly court of Louis XV. could not be an object of serious apprehensions, the English government established a permanent military force in America, under the order of a commander-in-chief. This army supported the executive power, which had reduced the judges to a state of dependence on itself by means of their salaries, and on that account appeared to the friends of freedom to possess more than the influence to which it was entitled by the constitution. If we reflect for a moment on the vanity of men, and consider how few individuals, even under free governments, know how to combine the dignity of office with the necessary attention to popularity, we may readily conceive that many of the American governors became disagreeable to the people, and were justly or unjustly considered as arbitrary. When complaints were made to the ministers at home, they paid little attention to them, perhaps because they were fearful of betraying any degree of apprehension, but either disdained to reply to them at all, or did it with severity. About this time, party leaders began to arise among themselves, who excited in the minds of their countrymen the deepest resentment of the haughtiness of the English government.

Under these circumstances, the ministry attempted to deprive the Americans of their commerce with the French and Spanish colonies, by the profits of which the British colonists were chiefly enabled to pay for the manufactures of the mother-country. (1) They now adopted the resolution of accustoming themselves, as much as possible, to do without the commodities of England; and during this period of dissatisfaction, the stamp tax was introduced among them by the parliament of England. This was an extremely ob-

(1) In the year 1764, several bills were passed in the English Parliament, indicative of a disposition, on the part of the ministry, to oppress the colonists. One of these acts commenced in the following terms: "Whereas, it is just and necessary that a revenue be raised in America, for defraying the expenses of defending, protecting, and securing the same;—We, the commons, &c. give and grant unto your majesty the sum of," &c. Here followed a specification of duties on certain articles of foreign produce, such as sugar, indigo, coffee, silks, calicoes, molasses, and syrups. Such was the avowed and ostensible object of this obnoxious act; the anticipated revenue, however, was to have been appropriated to a very different purpose; namely, the erection of a splendid palace for the new king. George III. came to the throne a young man, surrounded by flattering courtiers, who frequently declaimed against the meanness of his palace, which they insisted was wholly unworthy of such a country as England. The king was fond of architecture, and therefore the more readily listened to suggestions which were in fact all true. A site was accordingly selected, in Hyde Park, near the Serpentine river, and the king applied to his ministers on the subject. "His majesty was informed that the wants of the treasury were too urgent to admit of a supply from their present means, but that a revenue might be raised in America to supply all the king's wishes. This suggestion was followed up, and the king was in this way first led to consider and then consent to the scheme of taxing the colonies."—See *Tudor's Life of Otis*.—Am. Ed.

noxious measure to the Americans, who contended that the British house of commons were disposing of the property of a great people who were not represented in it, and over whom it had no right: they maintained that the colonies were founded at the expense of the colonists, while the advantages arising from their preservation had been shared by England in common with themselves. Thus the epoch of the decline of the British dominion in America, like that of the destruction of the Stuart dynasty at home, was the moment when the nature and origin of the right of government became the subject of investigation. The Americans were driven, by the imprudence of their adversaries, from a timid opposition to particular proceedings, to the declaration of their independence.

They refused to submit to the stamp act, alleging that the territory, which was under their own regulations, defended by twenty thousand of their own troops, and sufficiently productive of taxes to defray the expenses of that force, belonged of right to them, and that they would suffer no arbitrary taxes to be imposed on it. The colony of Massachusetts's bay, one of the most considerable of the whole number, and in which the spirit of republicanism was especially prevalent, encouraged all the rest by its example. The Americans assembled a general congress, and the ships of their harbours exhibited the tokens of mourning and of indignation. Amid all these proceedings, the leaders, who were anxious that no immoderate or overstrained measures should be adopted, carefully restrained the people from all excesses: and their writings were composed in the language of the weaker against the powerful, but at the same time in that of united and resolute men. The hour of final separation, however, was not yet come; and the English parliament, after much violent discussion on the impolicy of the measure, at length rescinded the stamp act, in consequence of a majority of votes against the minister. When the intelligence reached across the Atlantic, the Americans fixed upon a day for the purpose of celebrating the event as an annual festival. The clothes which had been manufactured in the colonies were distributed among the poor, and all the people of property appeared in garments of English manufacture.

Before we proceed to prosecute the narrative of the unhappy dispute which had now commenced between the mother-country and her transatlantic colonies, it may be allowable, if not to digress, at least to pause, while we offer a few cursory remarks on the actual condition of these colonies, showing the prosperous state, in a commercial point of view, to which they had attained at the period we are now describing.

The first thing that strikes our minds on this subject is the rapid increase of her population. In most of the European states it has been found that, for the last five hundred years at least, the population has doubled itself only once in a hundred years:—in North America the population has been doubled in twenty-five years. Eight thousand Englishmen originally emigrated to that country, and their descendants had multiplied to half a million at the commencement of the last century. In 1790, the population of the United States amounted to three millions nine hundred and fifty thousand; in 1800, to five millions three hundred and fifty thousand; in 1810, to seven millions two hundred and thirty thousand. It follows that in twenty-five years, namely from 1790 to 1815, the population had more than doubled itself; (1) and at the present period (1827) the population is little, if any, short of twelve millions. The wealth of the country has increased with equal rapidity. The exports of New-England, at the commencement of last century, amounted to £70,000; and seventy years afterward it was equal to £800,000 sterling. More than a thousand ships and thirty thousand Englishmen were engaged in the trade with America, at the period when the differences between the two countries commenced; and the latter country rewarded them with the profit of her trade with the West Indies, Africa, Spain, and Portugal.

The constitution of the American colonies bore the original impress of liberty. The British monarch appointed the governor of New-England, and

(1) Dwight's Travels, vol. iv. p. 501.