

vain, must be fatal. We shall be forced ultimately to retract; let us retract while we can, not when we must.

I say we must necessarily undo these violent, oppressive acts. They must be repealed. You will repeal them. I pledge myself for it that you will in the end repeal them. I stake my reputation on it. I will consent to be taken for an idiot if they are not finally repealed. Avoid, then, this humiliating, disgraceful necessity. With a dignity becoming your exalted situation make the first advances to concord, to peace, and happiness; for that is your true dignity, to act with prudence and justice. That you should first concede is obvious, from sound and rational policy. Concession comes with better grace and more salutary effect from superior power. It reconciles superiority of power with the feelings of men, and establishes solid confidence on the foundations of affection and gratitude.

So thought a wise poet and a wise man in political sagacity—the friend of Mæcenas, and the eulogist of Augustus. To him, the adopted son and successor of the first Cæsar—to him, the master of the world, he wisely urged this conduct of prudence and dignity: "*Tuque prior, tu parce; projice tela manu.*"¹

Every motive, therefore, of justice and of policy, of dignity and of prudence, urges you to allay the ferment in America by a removal of your troops from Boston, by a repeal of your acts of Parliament, and by demonstration of amicable dispositions toward your colonies. On the other hand, every danger and every hazard impend to deter you from perseverance in your present ruinous measures. Foreign war hanging over your heads by a slight and brittle thread; France and Spain

¹ "Be first to spare! Son of my blood! cast down
Those weapons from thy hand!"

watching your conduct, and waiting for the maturity of your errors, with a vigilant eye to America and the temper of your colonies, more than to their own concerns, be they what they may.

To conclude, my lords, if the ministers thus persevere in misadvising and misleading the King, I will not say that they can alienate the affections of his subjects from his crown, but I will affirm that they will make the crown not worth his wearing. I will not say that the King is betrayed, but I will pronounce that the kingdom is undone.

ON PUTTING A STOP TO HOSTILITIES IN AMERICA

[Lord Chatham had now been prevented by his infirmities from taking his place in the House of Lords for more than two years. Anxious to make one effort more for ending the contest with America, he made his appearance in the House on the 30th of May, 1777, wrapped in flannels, and supported on crutches, and moved an address to the King, recommending that speedy and effectual measures be taken to put an end to the war between the colonies and the mother country. He spoke as follows:]

MY LORDS,—This is a flying moment; perhaps but six weeks left to arrest the dangers that surround us. The gathering storm may break; it has already opened, and in part burst. It is difficult for government, after all that has passed, to shake hands with the defiers of the King, defiers of the Parliament, defiers of the people. I am a defier of nobody; but if an end is not put to this war there is an end to this country. I do not trust my judgment in my present state of health; this is the judgment of my better days—the result of forty years' attention to America.

They are rebels; but for what? Surely not for defending their unquestionable rights! What have these rebels done heretofore? I remember when they raised four regiments on their own bottom, and took Louisbourg from the veteran

troops of France. But their excesses have been great: I do not mean their panegyric; but must observe, in extenuation, the erroneous and infatuated counsels which have prevailed; the door to mercy and justice has been shut against them; but they may still be taken up upon the grounds of their former submission. [Referring to their petition.]

I state to you the importance of America: it is a double market—the market of consumption and the market of supply. This double market for millions, with naval stores, you are giving to your hereditary rival. America has carried you through four wars, and will now carry you to your death if you don't take things in time. In the sportsman's phrase, when you have found yourselves at fault, you must try back. You have ransacked every corner of Lower Saxony; but forty thousand German boors never can conquer ten times the number of British freemen. You may ravage—you cannot conquer; it is impossible; *you cannot conquer the Americans*. You talk, my lords, of your numerous friends among them to annihilate the Congress, and of your powerful forces to disperse their army. I might as well talk of driving them before me with this crutch! But what would you conquer—the map of America? I am ready to meet any general officer on the subject [looking at Lord Amherst]. What will you do out of the protection of your fleet? In the winter, if together, they are starved; and if dispersed, they are taken off in detail. I am experienced in spring hopes and vernal promises; I know what ministers throw out; but at last will come your equinoctial disappointment. You have got nothing in America but stations. You have been three years teaching them the art of war; they are apt scholars; and I will venture to tell your lordships that the American gentry will make officers enough fit to command the troops of all the

European powers. What you have sent there are too many to make peace—too few to make war. If you conquer them, what then?

You cannot make them respect you; you cannot make them wear your cloth; you will plant an invincible hatred in their breasts against you. Coming from the stock they do, they can never respect you. If ministers are founded in saying there is no sort of treaty with France, there is still a moment left; the point of honor is still safe. France must be as self-destroying as England to make a treaty while you are giving her America at the expense of twelve millions a year.

The intercourse has produced everything to France; and England, *Old England*, must pay for all. I have, at different times, made different propositions, adapted to the circumstances in which they were offered. The plan contained in the former bill is now impracticable; the present motion will tell you where you are and what you have now to depend upon. It may produce a respectable division in America, and unanimity at home; it will give America an option; she has yet had no option. You have said, Lay down your arms; and she has given you the Spartan answer, "Come, take."

[Here he read his motion: "That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, most dutifully representing to his royal wisdom that this House is deeply penetrated with the view of impending ruin to the kingdom, from the continuation of an unnatural war against the British colonies in America; and most humbly to advise his Majesty to take the most speedy and effectual measures for putting a stop to such fatal hostilities, upon the only just and solid foundation, namely, the removal of accumulated grievances; and to assure his Majesty that this House will enter upon this great and necessary work with cheerfulness and despatch, in order to open to his Majesty the only means of regaining the affections of the British colo-

nies, and of securing to Great Britain the commercial advantages of these valuable possessions; fully persuaded that to heal and to redress will be more congenial to the goodness and magnanimity of his Majesty, and more prevalent over the hearts of generous and free-born subjects, than the rigors of chastisement and the horrors of a civil war, which hitherto have served only to sharpen resentments and consolidate union, and, if continued, must end in finally dissolving all ties between Great Britain and the colonies.”]

[His lordship rose again.] The proposal [he said] is specific. I thought this so clear that I did not enlarge upon it. I mean the redress of all their grievances and the right of disposing of their own money. This is to be done instantaneously. I will get out of my bed to move it on Monday. This will be the herald of peace; this will open the way for treaty; this will show Parliament sincerely disposed. Yet still much must be left to treaty. Should you conquer this people, you conquer under the cannon of France—under a masked battery then ready to open. The moment a treaty with France appears, you must declare war, though you had only five ships of the line in England; but France will defer a treaty as long as possible. You are now at the mercy of every little German chancery; and the pretensions of France will increase daily, so as to become an avowed party in either peace or war. We have tried for unconditional submission; try what can be gained by unconditional redress. Less dignity will be lost in the repeal than in submitting to the demands of German chanceries. We are the aggressors. We have invaded them. We have invaded them as much as the Spanish Armada invaded England. Mercy cannot do harm; it will seat the King where he ought to be, throned on the hearts of his people; and millions at home and abroad, now employed in obloquy or revolt, would pray for him.

[In making his motion for addressing the King, Lord Chatham insisted frequently and strongly on the absolute necessity of immediately making peace with America. Now, he said, was the crisis, before France was a party to the treaty. This was the only moment left before the fate of this country was decided. The French court, he observed, was too wise to lose the opportunity of effectually separating America from the dominions of this kingdom. War between France and Great Britain, he said, was not less probable because it had not yet been declared. It would be folly in France to declare it now, while America gave full employment to our arms, and was pouring into her lap her wealth and produce, the benefit of which she was enjoying in peace. He enlarged much on the importance of America to this country, which, in peace and in war, he observed, he ever considered as the great source of all our wealth and power. He then added (raising his voice), Your trade languishes, your taxes increase, your revenues diminish. France at this moment is securing and drawing to herself that commerce which created your seamen, fed your islands, etc. He reprobated the measures which produced, and which had been pursued in the conduct of the civil war, in the severest language; infatuated measures giving rise to, and still continuing a cruel, unnatural, self-destroying war. Success, it is said, is hoped for in this campaign. Why? Because our army will be as strong this year as it was last, when it was not strong enough. The notion of conquering America he treated with the greatest contempt.]

[After an animated debate, in which the motion was opposed by Lords Gower, Lyttelton, Mansfield, and Weymouth, and the Archbishop of York, and supported by the Dukes of Grafton and Manchester, Lord Camden and Shelburne, and the Bishop of Peterborough, the Earl of Chatham again rose, and in reply to what had fallen from Lord Weymouth, said:]

My lords, I perceive the noble lord neither apprehends my meaning, nor the explanation given by me to the noble Earl [Earl Gower] in the blue ribbon, who spoke early in the debate. I will, therefore, with your lordships' permission, state shortly what I meant. My lords, my motion was stated

generally, that I might leave the question at large to be amended by your lordships. I did not dare to point out the specific means. I drew the motion up to the best of my poor abilities; but I intended it only as the herald of conciliation, as the harbinger of peace to our afflicted colonies.

But as the noble lord seems to wish for something more specific on the subject, and through that medium seeks my particular sentiments, I will tell your lordships very fairly what I wish for. I wish for a repeal of every oppressive act which your lordships have passed since 1763.

I would put our brethren in America precisely on the same footing they stood at that period. I would expect, that, being left at liberty to tax themselves, and dispose of their own property, they would, in return, contribute to the common burdens according to their means and abilities. I will move your lordships for a bill of repeal, as the only means left to arrest that approaching destruction which threatens to overwhelm us.

My lords, I shall no doubt hear it objected, "Why should we submit or concede? Has America done anything on her part to induce us to agree to so large a ground of concession?" I will tell you, my lords, why I think you should. You have been the aggressors from the beginning. I shall not trouble your lordships with the particulars; they have been stated and enforced by the noble and learned lord who spoke last but one [Lord Camden] in a much more able and distinct manner than I could pretend to state them. If, then, we are the aggressors, it is your lordships' business to make the first overture. I say again, this country has been the aggressor. You have made descents upon their coasts; you have burned their towns, plundered their country, made war upon the inhabitants, confiscated their property, proscribed and

imprisoned their persons. I do therefore affirm, my lords, that instead of exacting unconditional submission from the colonies, we should grant them unconditional redress. We have injured them; we have endeavored to enslave and oppress them. Upon this ground, my lords, instead of chastisement, they are entitled to redress. A repeal of those laws of which they complain will be the first step to that redress. The people of America look upon Parliament as the authors of their miseries; their affections are estranged from their sovereign. Let, then, reparation come from the hands that inflicted the injuries; let conciliation succeed chastisement; and I do maintain, that Parliament will again recover its authority; that his Majesty will be once more enthroned in the hearts of his American subjects; and that your lordships, as contributing to so great, glorious, salutary, and benignant a work, will receive the prayers and benedictions of every part of the British empire.

LAST SPEECH ON AMERICA

[At the conclusion of the following speech Lord Richmond spoke in response, and when he had ended Lord Chatham made a sudden and strenuous attempt to rise, as if laboring under the pressure of painful emotions. He seemed eager to speak; but, after repeated efforts, he suddenly pressed his hand on his heart and sank down in convulsions. Those who sat near him caught him in their arms. His son William Pitt, then a youth of seventeen, who was standing without the bar, sprang forward to support him. The unswerving patriot, whose long life had been devoted to his country, had striven to the last. He was removed in a state of insensibility from the House, and carried to Hayes, where he lingered a few days, and died on the 11th of May, 1778, aged seventy.]

I THANK GOD that I have been enabled to come here to-day — to perform my duty, and speak on a subject which is so deeply impressed on my mind. I am old and infirm. I have one foot — more than one foot — in the

grave. I have risen from my bed to stand up in the cause of my country — perhaps never again to speak in this House.

["The reverence, the attention, the stillness of the House," said an eye-witness, "were here most affecting; had anyone dropped a handkerchief, the noise would have been heard."

As he proceeded, Lord Chatham spoke at first in a low tone, with all the weakness of one who is laboring under severe indisposition. Gradually, however, as he warmed with the subject, his voice became louder and more distinct, his intonations grew more commanding, and his whole manner was solemn and impressive in the highest degree. He went over the events of the American war with that luminous and comprehensive survey for which he was so much distinguished in his best days. He pointed out the measures he had condemned, and the results he had predicted, adding at each stage as he advanced "and so it proved! And so it proved!" Adverting, in one part of his speech, to the fears entertained of a foreign invasion, he recurred to the history of the past: "A Spanish invasion, a French invasion, a Dutch invasion, many noble lords must have read of in history; and some lords" (looking keenly at one who sat near him, with a last reviving flash of his sarcastic spirit) "some lords may remember a Scotch invasion!" He could not forget Lord Mansfield's defence of American taxation, and the measures of Lord Bute, which had brought down the country to its present degraded state, from the exalted position to which he had raised it during his brief but splendid administration. He then proceeded in the following terms:]

My lords, I rejoice that the grave has not closed upon me; that I am still alive to lift up my voice against the dismemberment of this ancient and most noble monarchy! Pressed down as I am by the hand of infirmity, I am little able to assist my country in this most perilous conjuncture; but, my lords, while I have sense and memory, I will never consent to deprive the offspring of the royal house of Brunswick, the heirs of the Princess Sophia, of their

fairest inheritance. I will first see the Prince of Wales, the Bishop of Osnaburgh, and the other rising hopes of the royal family brought down to this committee and assent to such an alienation. Where is the man who will dare to advise it? My lords, his Majesty succeeded to an empire as great in extent as its reputation was unsullied. Shall we tarnish the lustre of this nation by an ignominious surrender of its rights and fairest possessions? Shall this great nation, that has survived, whole and entire, the Danish depredations, the Scottish inroads, the Norman conquests—that has stood the threatened invasion of the Spanish Armada, now fall prostrate before the house of Bourbon? Surely, my lords, this nation is no longer what it was! Shall a people that seventeen years ago was the terror of the world now stoop so low as to tell its ancient inveterate enemy, Take all we have, only give us peace? It is impossible!

I wage war with no man or set of men. I wish for none of their employments; nor would I co-operate with men who still persist in unretracted error, or who, instead of acting on a firm, decisive line of conduct, halt between two opinions, where there is no middle path. In God's name, if it is absolutely necessary to declare either for peace or war, and the former cannot be preserved with honor, why is not the latter commenced without delay? I am not, I confess, well informed as to the resources of this kingdom, but I trust it has still sufficient to maintain its just rights, though I know them not. But, my lords, any state is better than despair. Let us at least make one effort, and, if we must fall, let us fall like men!