

and, at no distant period, a great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. Who can doubt but, in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages which might be lost by a steady adherence to it; can it be that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature.

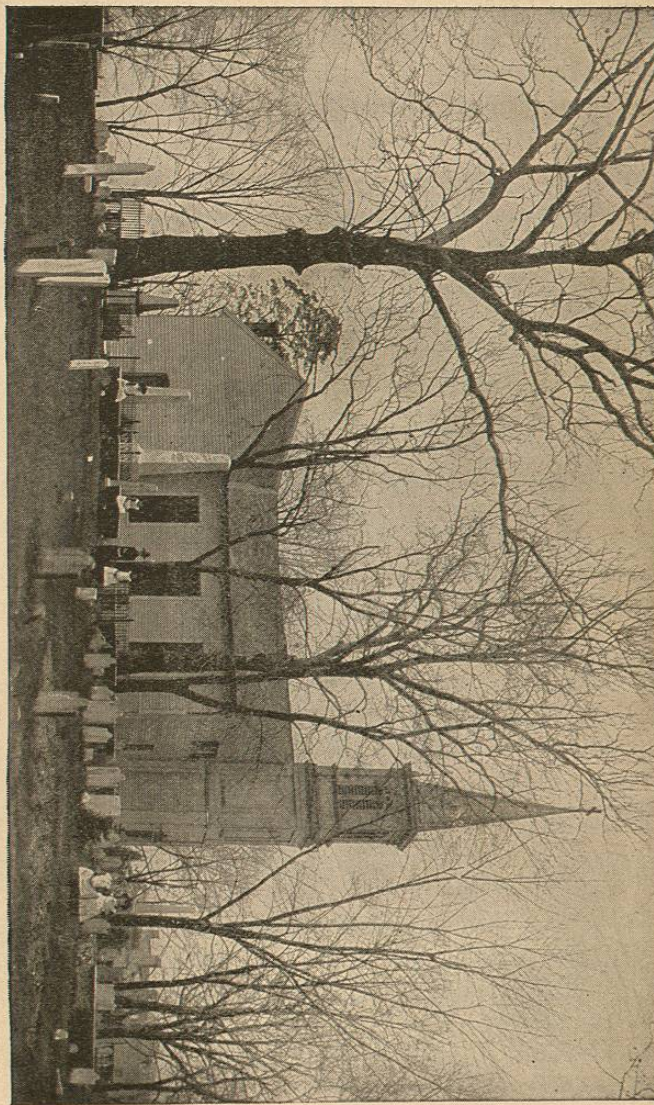
PATRICK HENRY.

1736-1799.

THIS great orator was born at Studley, Hanover County, Virginia; and, while his early education in books was not extensive, he studied man and nature from life very deeply and thoroughly. He attempted farming and merchandising for some years, then read law and at the age of twenty-four was admitted to the bar where his splendid powers had full scope. In 1765 he was elected to the State Legislature, or House of Burgesses, as it was then called.

In the words of Thomas Jefferson, "Mr. Henry certainly gave the first impulse to the ball of the Revolution." During the war, he served at first in the field, and later in the Legislature, and as governor, being elected three times. He retired from public life in 1791 and devoted himself to his law practice, by which he gained wealth.

His most famous speech was delivered before the Convention sitting in council in the old St. John's Church, Richmond, 1775, after the House of Burgesses had been dissolved by the royal governor. An extract from this speech, as given in Wirt's "Life of Henry," follows. No



Old St. John's Church, Richmond, Va.

faithfully exact copy of his speeches is preserved, for he never wrote them out, and his eloquence was so overmastering that no one could listen and report at the same time. He takes his place among the great orators of the world.

WORKS.

Speeches, legal and political, (as they have been gathered from traditionary reports.)

See his *Life* by *Wirt*, *Tyler*, and *W. W. Henry*, his grandson.

REMARK ON SLAVERY.

Slavery is detested. We feel its fatal effects. We deplore it with all the pity of humanity.

NOT BOUND BY STATE LINES, (from the opening speech of the first Continental Congress, 1774.)

I am not a Virginian. I am an American.

IF THIS BE TREASON, (Speech in House of Burgesses, 1765.)

Cæsar had his Brutus—Charles the First, his Cromwell,—and George the Third—(“Treason!” cried the Speaker)—*may profit by their example*. If *this* be treason, make the most of it.

THE FAMOUS REVOLUTION SPEECH, 1775.

(From *Wirt's Life of Henry*.)

“Mr. President,” said he, “it is natural to man to indulge in the illusions of hope. We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth—and listen to the song of that siren, till she transforms us into beasts. Is this,” he asked, “the part of wise men, engaged in a great and arduous struggle for liberty? Were we disposed to be of the number of those, who having eyes see not, and having ears hear not, the things which so nearly concern their temporal salvation? For his part, whatever anguish of spirit it might

cost, *he* was willing to know the whole truth; to know the worst, and provide for it.”

“He had,” he said, “but one lamp by which his feet were guided; and that was the lamp of experience. He knew of no way of judging of the future but by the past. And judging by the past, he wished to know what there had been in the conduct of the British ministry for the last ten years, to justify those hopes with which gentlemen had been pleased to solace themselves and the house? Is it that insidious smile with which our petition has been lately received? Trust it not, sir; it will prove a snare to your feet. Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed with a kiss. Ask yourselves how this gracious reception of our petition comports with those warlike preparations which cover our waters and darken our land. Are fleets and armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation? Have we shown ourselves so unwilling to be reconciled, that force must be called in to win back our love? Let us not deceive ourselves, sir. These are the implements of war and subjugation,—the last arguments to which kings resort. I ask gentlemen, sir, what means this martial array, if its purpose be not to force us to submission? Can gentlemen assign any other possible motive for it? Has Great Britain any enemy in this quarter of the world, to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies? No, sir, she has none. They are meant for us; they can be meant for no other. They are sent over to bind and rivet upon us those chains which the British ministry have been so long forging. And what have we [to] oppose to them? Shall we try argument? Sir, we have been trying that for the last ten years. Have we anything new to offer upon the subject? Nothing. We have held the subject up in every light of which it is capable; but it has been all in vain. Shall we resort to en-

treaty and humble supplication? What terms shall we find, which have not been already exhausted? Let us not, I beseech you, sir, deceive ourselves longer. Sir, we have done everything that could be done, to avert the storm which is now coming on. We have petitioned—we have remonstrated—we have supplicated—we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the ministry and parliament. Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne. In vain, after these things, may we indulge the fond hope of peace and reconciliation. *There is no longer any room for hope.* If we wish to be free—if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending—if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon, until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained—we must fight!—I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of hosts, is all that is left us!”

“They tell us, sir,” continued Mr. Henry, “that we are weak—unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance by lying supinely on our backs, and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot? Sir, we are not weak, if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three

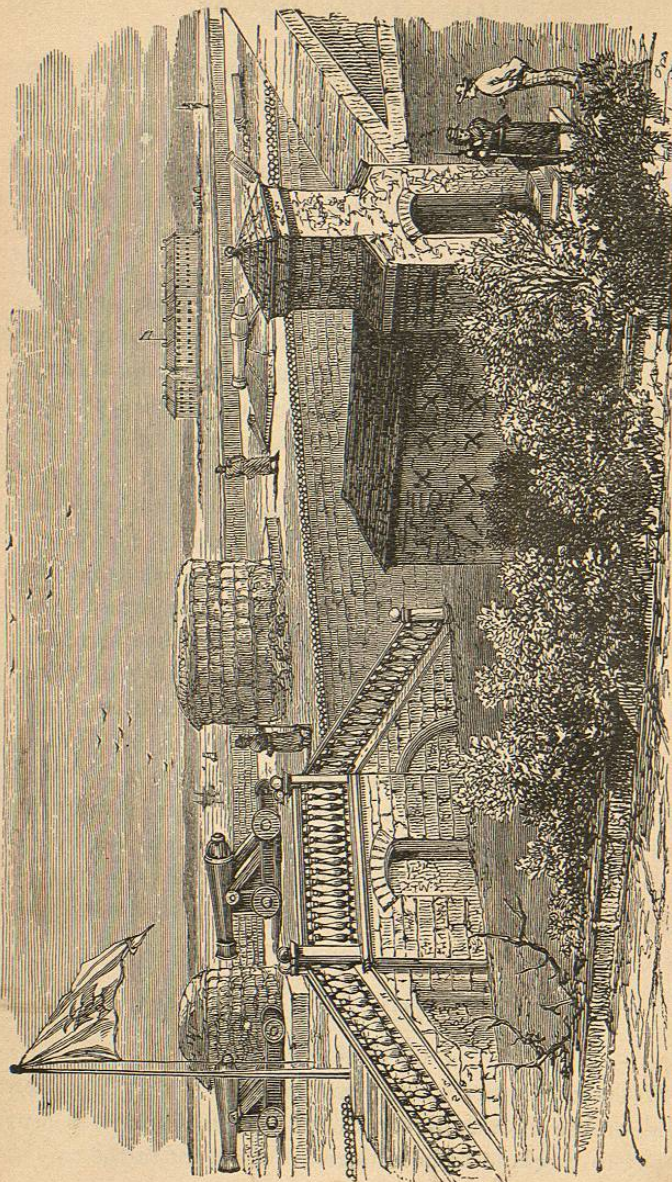
millions of people armed in the holy cause of liberty and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged. Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable—and let it come!! I repeat it, sir, let it come!!!

“It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, peace, peace,—but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God—I know not what course others may take; but as for me,” cried he, with both his arms extended aloft, his brows knit, every feature marked with the resolute purpose of his soul, and his voice swelled to its boldest note of exclamation,—“give me liberty, or give me death!” See also under *Wirt*.

WILLIAM HENRY DRAYTON.

1742-1779.

WILLIAM HENRY DRAYTON was born at “Drayton Hall,” on the Ashley River, South Carolina, and was sent in 1753 to England to be educated. He went in the care of



Fort Moultrie, S. C. Fort Sumter in the Distance.

Chief-Justice Charles Pinckney, who was taking his two sons, Charles Cotesworth and Thomas, for the same purpose. He returned home in 1764, studied law, and in 1771 was appointed by the king privy-councillor for South Carolina. He espoused, however, the cause of the Revolution, with ardor, and was chosen president of the Council of Safety and of the Provincial Congress. As Chief-Justice of the State, he declared that the king "had abdicated the government and had no more authority over the people of South Carolina." He also dealt with the Indians and exercised a wholesome influence over them in behalf of the State.

He left in manuscript valuable state papers and a narrative of the early part of the Revolution, which his son, Governor John Drayton, edited and published, and from which the extract is taken. His style is clear, simple, and flowing.

GEORGE III.'S ABDICATION OF POWER IN AMERICA.

[From the Charge to the Grand Jury of Charleston District, 1776.]

Thus, as I have on the foot of the best authorities made it evident, that George III. King of Britain, has endeavoured to subvert the constitution of this country, by breaking the original contract between king and people; by the advice of wicked persons has violated the fundamental laws; and has withdrawn himself by withdrawing the constitutional benefits of the kingly office, and his protection out of this country; from such a result of injuries, from such a conjuncture of circumstances—the law of the land authorizes me to declare, and it is my duty boldly to declare the law, that George III. King of Britain, has abdicated the government, and that the throne is thereby vacant; that is, *he has no authority over us, and we owe no obedience to him.* . . . The new constitution is wisely adapted to enable us to trade

with foreign nations, and thereby, to supply our wants in the *cheapest* markets in the universe; to extend our trade infinitely beyond what it has ever been known; to encourage manufactures among us; and it is peculiarly formed, to promote the happiness of the people, from among whom, by virtue and merit, *the poorest* man may arrive at *the highest dignity*.—Oh, Carolinians! happy would you be under this new constitution, if you knew your happy state.

Possessed of a constitution of government, founded upon so generous, equal, and natural a principle,—a government expressly calculated to make the people rich, powerful, virtuous, and happy, who can wish to change it, to return under a Royal government; the vital principles of which, are the reverse in every particular! It was my duty to lay this happy constitution before you, in its genuine light—it is your duty to understand—to instruct others—and to defend it.

I think it my duty to declare in the awful seat of justice and before Almighty God, that in my opinion, the Americans can have no safety but by the Divine Favour, their own virtue, and their being so prudent, as *not to leave it in the power of the British rulers to injure them*. Indeed the ruinous and deadly injuries received on our side; and the jealousies entertained, and which, in the nature of things, must daily increase against us on the other; demonstrate to a mind, in the least given to reflection upon the rise and fall of empires, that true reconciliation never can exist between Great Britain and America, the latter being in subjection to the former.

The Almighty created America to be independent of Britain; let us beware of the impiety of being backward to act as instruments in the Almighty Hand, now extended to accomplish his purpose; and by the completion of which

alone, America, in the nature of human affairs, can be secure against the craft and insidious designs of *her enemies who think her prosperity and power already by far too great*. In a word, our piety and political safety are so blended, that to refuse our labours in this divine work, is to refuse to be a great, a free, a pious, and a happy people!

And now having left the important alternative, political happiness or wretchedness, under God, in a great degree in your own hands; I pray the supreme Arbiter of the affairs of men, so to direct your judgment, as that you may act agreeable to what seems to be his will, revealed in his miraculous works in behalf of America, bleeding at the altar of liberty!

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

1743-1826.

THOMAS JEFFERSON, the "Sage of Monticello," and founder of the University of Virginia, was born at Shadwell, Albemarle County, Virginia. He was educated at William and Mary College, and early developed a rare taste for study, music, and general culture. His is one of the greatest and most interesting figures in our history. He received and adorned all the positions in the gift of his fellow-citizens, from that of member of the State Legislature to that of President of the United States, which office he twice filled. He is considered the founder of the present Democratic party in politics; and he gained imperishable fame as the author of the Declaration of Independence. He spent five years in France, succeeding Benjamin Franklin as minister to that country, and he introduced into the United States the decimal system of currency.