

XXX.—1781.

YORKTOWN.

THE day of human liberty was indeed about to dawn, and the faithful watchers and toilers, through the long night of bloody strife, felt the glow of that dawn in their hearts.

Cornwallis, at first posted at Portsmouth, whence he commanded a way of retreat into North Carolina, made a false step in leaving it for Yorktown. This was a most advantageous position so long as he could command the sea, but losing the maritime superiority, it must inevitably become untenable. He looked, of course, for co-operation and succor from Clinton at New York.

On the day that Cornwallis took post at Gloucester and Yorktown, Washington, near New York, had been assured of the co-operation of the French fleet under De Grasse; this determined his course southward, with the allied land force of French under Rochambeau and his own army.

While divisions and jealousies confused the councils of Cornwallis and Clinton, perfect accord joined the hands and strengthened the hearts of the French-American land and naval force. De Barras, commander of the French squadron at Newport, gracefully put himself under the orders of De Grasse, his junior; and when the latter, with twenty-eight ships of the line, entered the Chesapeake and disembarked three thousand men under the Marquis de St. Simon, he quickly notified La Fayette that, though