

respond promptly through their representatives that they were willing to take the oath of allegiance to the British crown, a summons having been issued to them to determine the matter as to their willingness. These representatives were however astounded when informed that the old time treaty proviso granting them immunity from bearing arms, and especial religious privileges could no longer be tolerated and would not be permitted. The oath must now be taken in full without proviso or reservation as an evidence of complete abandonment of any former allegiance. This measure was wholly unexpected and to them shocking to the last degree. The agents could not at once answer for their constituency, in fact could do no less than to go back to them for instruction in a matter so vital to their interests. When they returned for further consultation, the trap set at that point was sprung, it was pronounced too late. Accepting the delay as an evidence of unwillingness and incincerity, the oath could not now be taken at all or in any form, and the suppliants were their government's outcasts. Thus step by step the cords were being drawn closer, there having from the beginning no intended method of escape.

Wandering blindly in a desert of doubt, the peasants went on with their harvest labor, without a dream of calamity greater than had so often befallen them, that with it they were familiar as with the face of an old time friend. It was just as well, as neither negligence nor diligence could change their predetermined doom.

The further development and execution of the diabolical plot required great care and secrecy, from fear of a revolt, to quell which would result in slaughter in addition to infamy. Only such delay occurred as was unavoidable. While the husbandmen were occupied at their labors, the