

the benefit of his virtues. Infected, themselves, by the reports of Nicholson and Quarry, with distrust and jealousy of the Americans, they endeavoured to impart these sentiments to Lord Bellamont; and, assuring him that the people were notoriously disaffected to the parent state, and inclined to mutiny and independence, urged him to watch and curb the symptoms of this dangerous spirit.<sup>1</sup>

His unexpected death prevented him from receiving the communication of these ignoble suspicions and pernicious counsels, which were repugnant alike to the dignity of his disposition and the tenor of his experience. Continuing to treat the colonists with merited confidence and unaffected respect, he pursued the policy most honorable and advantageous to them, to himself, and to the parent state. While he demonstrated a generous confidence, he succeeded in inspiring it; of which a remarkable instance has been preserved in the annals of New Hampshire. He had recommended to the assembly of this province the execution of a public work, of which the expense appeared to them disproportioned to the advantage that would accrue from it, and to the pecuniary circumstances of the people. They submitted this objection to his consideration; but declared, at the same time, that, if he would acquaint himself a little farther with their actual condition and resources, they would readily submit to any burden that he should reckon conducive to their advantage and compatible with their ability. The annals of this province, for several years, consist of little else than a record, no longer interesting, of the disputes and litigations between the successors of Mason and the colonists who had improved the soil by their own industry and defended it by their valor.

During the administration of Lord Bellamont, the only circumstances that occurred to disquiet the inhabitants of Massachusetts were the territorial encroachments of the French. Louis the Fourteenth had already projected, and even commenced, the conduct of that ambitious scheme of policy, which was afterwards pursued by France with so much steadiness and address, for the aggrandizement of her colonial empire.

<sup>1</sup> See Note XIV., Vol. II., *ante*.