

man of sense and spirit," had ordered the regiment to be reassembled, and Lee trusted it would soon be ready to march with him. "I shall send immediately," said he, "an express to the Congress, informing them of my situation, and at the same time conjuring them not to suffer the accursed Provincial Congress of New York to defeat measures so absolutely necessary to salvation."

Lee's letter to the President of Congress showed that the instructions dictated by the moderate and considerate spirit of Washington were not strong enough on some points to suit his stern military notions. The scheme simply of disarming the tories seemed to him totally ineffectual; it would only embitter their minds and add virus to their venom. They could and would always be supplied with fresh arms by the enemy. That of seizing the most dangerous, would, from its vagueness, be attended with some bad consequences, and could answer no good one. "The plan of explaining to these deluded people the justice of the American cause is certainly generous and humane," observed he; "but I am afraid will be fruitless. They are so riveted in their opinions that I am persuaded should an angel descend from heaven with his golden trumpet, and ring in their ears that their conduct was criminal, he would be disregarded."

Lee's notion of the policy proper in the present case was, to disarm the disaffected of all classes, supplying our own troops with the arms thus seized; to appraise their estates, and oblige them to deposit at least one-half the value with the Continental Congress, as a security for good behavior; to administer the strongest oath that could be devised, that they would act offensively and defensively in support of the common rights; and, finally, to transfer all such as should