

ected ostensibly to seek a redress of grievances it had at once usurped supreme power, made war on Great Britain and concluded treaties with France without in any degree consulting with its constituents. That they forced a mere Custom-House quarrel to a rebellion is a fact too well established to need proof, and the success of that move is no justification for the treason and treachery by which it was accomplished, because they were totally unable of themselves to succeed and could not reckon on that chapter of accidents which assisted them, and therefore whatever their title to the applause of the world may be (successful scoundrelism always commanding that applause) the charge of blood-guiltiness rests undoubtedly upon them. Offered many times more concessions than they had any right to demand their pride or hatred rejected all conciliation and they sent their unfortunate dupes to the slaughter of the battle-field with as little compunction as the butcher drives his sheep to the shambles.

Having deliberately violated the conditions of the convention under which General Burgoyne's army had surrendered the British Commissioners on the 7th August addressed a remonstrance to the Congress demanding a fulfilment of the terms of that convention, and that if it was thought necessary to ratify those articles by which the troops were bound not to serve against America during the war or the whole of the war they were prepared to do so. But Congress instead of a direct answer sent a remonstrance on the conduct of one of the commissioners Governor Johnston in which he was charged with attempting to corrupt and bribe some of their number, and accompanied it by a declaration that it was incompatible with the honor of Congress to hold any further communication with Governor Johnston, more especially upon affairs in which the cause of liberty and virtue was at stake.

The cause of this subtle subterfuge on the part of those stern upholders of liberty and virtue arose from the fact that Governor Johnston, one of the British Commissioners, presuming on old acquaintance and the uniform advocacy of the course of the Colonists in the British House of Commons, but convinced like every other reasonable man that enough had been conceded and that all possible complaints had been redressed or that the Commission had ample power to do so, wrote three private letters to Francis Dana, General Joseph Reed and Robert Morris with the view of preparing the way for reconciliation.

At an early period of their usurpation the leading faction in Congress got a resolution passed directing that all letters received by members of that body or their agents from the King of Great Britain of a public nature should be laid before them, and a compliance with this order was made the excuse for submitting the following:—

"TO FRANCIS DANA, Esq. (Private.)

"DEAR SIR,—It gives me great pleasure

to find your name among the list of Congress, because I am persuaded from personal knowledge of me and my family and connexions you can entertain no jealousy that I would engage in the execution of any commission that was inimicable to the rights and privileges of America or the general liberties of mankind, while on the other hand your character must be so well known that no man will suspect you will yield any point that is contrary to the real interest of your country, and therefore it will be presumed we will lose no opportunity from false punctillio of meeting to discuss our differences fairly, and that if we do agree it will be on the most liberal and therefore the most lasting terms of union. There are three facts I wish to assure you of. First—That Dr. Franklin on 28th March last in discussing the several articles we wish to make the basis of our treaty was perfectly satisfied they were beneficial to North America and such as she should accept. Second—That this treaty with France was not the first treaty that France had exacted and with which Mr. Simeon Deane had put to sea; but granted and acceded to after the sentiments of the people of Great Britain had fully changed; after the friends to America had gained their points for reconciliation, and solely with a view to disappoint the good effects of our endeavors, you will be pleased to hear the pamphlet wrote by Mr. Pulteney was a great means of opening the minds of the people of England to the real state of the question between us and that it has now run through thirteen editions. The third fact is that Spain unasked had sent a formal message disapproving of the conduct of France. All these I will engage to prove to your satisfaction. I beg to recommend to your personal civilities my friend Dr. Ferguson; he is a man of the greatest genius and virtue and has always been a steady friend to America."

(Here follows private details of no importance to any but the writer and his friend Dana.)

"If you follow the example of Britain in the hour of her privilege, insolence and madness and refuse to hear us, I still expect, since I am here, to have the privilege of coming among you and seeing the country as there are many men whose virtues I admire above Greek and Roman names that I should be glad to tell my children about.

"I am with esteem and affection,

"Dear Sir,

"You friend and servant,

"GEO. JOHNSTON.

"Philadelphia, June 10th, 1778."

Poor Governor Johnston was not to have the doubtful privilege of seeing those people whose virtues he admired above Greek and Roman names to tell his children about—he was doubtless well read in Plutarch and thought the little classical quotation from the great Republican biographer particularly applicable to the sages of Congress who were trying to rival the ancient models in treachery, little respect need be entertained for the ambassador who laid his country's honor at the feet of such deceitful rebels. The letter itself is proof enough that their allegations were unfounded, but no exculpation for Governor Johnston's degrading conduct. The next is addressed

"To General Joseph Reed,

"SIR,—Your near and worthy relative, Mr. Dennis de Berat has made me happy by favoring me with a letter to you. I have been informed by Gen. Robertson of your

great worth and consequence in the unhappy disputes that have subsisted between Great Britain and her descendants. Your pen and your sword have both been used with glory and advantage in vindicating the rights of mankind, and of that community of which you was a part. Such conduct, as the first and superior of all human duties, must ever command my warmest friendship and veneration. In the midst of those affecting scenes my feeble voice has not been wanting to stop the evils in their progress and to remove on a large and liberal footing the cause of all jealousy. That every subject of the Empire might live equally free and secure in the enjoyment of the blessings of life—not one part dependent on the will of another with opposite interests, but a general union on terms of perfect security and mutual advantage. During the contest, I am free to confess, my wishes have ever been that America might so far prevail as to oblige this country to see the error, and to reflect and reason fairly in the case of other heirs to the same privilege as themselves. It has pleased God in his justice so dispose of events that this Kingdom is at length convinced of her folly and her faults. A commission under Parliamentary authority is now issued for settling in a manner consistent with that union of force on which the safety of both parties depends all the differences that have or can subsist between Great Britain and America—short of a total separation of interests. In this commission I am an unworthy associate. Though no man can feel the desire of cementing in peace and friendship every member of what was called the British Empire stronger than myself, yet I am sensible that it might have fallen to the lot of many persons better qualified to attain the end proposed. All I can claim is ardent zeal and upright intentions, and when I reflect that this negotiation must depend much more upon perfect integrity than refinement of understanding. When a sensible, magnanimous people will secure their own interests and carefully guard their honor in every transaction I am more induced to hope for the good will I have always borne them, I am not altogether unqualified for the task.

"If it be (as I hope it is) the disposition of good men in the Provinces to prefer freedom in conjunction with Great Britain to an union with the ancient enemy of both—if it is their generous inclination to forget recent injuries and recall to their remembrances former benefits, I am in hopes we may yet be great and happy. I am sure the people of America will find in my brother commissioners and myself a fair and cheerful concession in adjusting any point to their interest which is not inconsistent, as I saip before, with a beneficial union of interests which is the object of our commission.

"Nothing could surpass the glory you have acquired in arms except the generous magnanimity of meeting on terms of justice and equality, after demonstrating to the world that the fear of power had no just influence in that decision.

"The man who can be instrumental in bringing us all to act once more in harmony and unite together the various powers which this contest has drawn forth will deserve more from the King and people, from patriotism, humanity, friendship, and all the tender ties that are affected by the quarrel and reconciliation than ever was yet bestowed on human kind. This letter from Mr. de Berat I shall consider as an introduction to you, which line of communication I shall endeavor by every means to improve by public demonstrations of respect, or private