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British American Colonies, 1764-84.

CHAPTER LX.

HAVING traced the great agencies at work during this contest to bring about a catastrophe lamentable in the extreme as far as the British Empire and civilization is concerned, it will be necessary, before closing this essay, to say a few words on the cause of England's supremacy and the extraordinary imperial greatness she has achieved during the last two centuries. In 1685 the population of England was five millions and an half; her colonial possessions were then struggling into existence—her population in 1870 falls little short of twenty five millions of souls, and her colonial empire is peopled by at least twenty-five millions of her sons and their dependents. The rise and progress of her imperial greatness coincides with that of her colonial empire, and the loss of any portion thereof must of necessity seriously affect her interests.

Foreign statesmen see clearly that such is the case. Tallyrand, the great French statesman, urges his countrymen to acquire colonies and commerce as the best means of "maintaining a fleet to reach the vitals of England;" and he also says that "Colonies are the sheet anchor of Britain, the support of her navy, the fortress of her power,—render them useless or deprive her of them and you break down her last wall, fill up her last moat. Whatever gives colonies to France supplies her with ships and, manufacturers and husbandmen. Victories by land only give her mutinous subjects, whom, instead of augmenting the national force by their riches and numbers, disperse and enfeeble that force. But the growth of colonies supplies her with zealous citizens and the increase of real wealth, and effective numbers is the certain consequence." The great Napoleon also remarks that England "should look wholly to commerce and naval affairs; she never can be a continental power, and

in the attempt must be ruined. Let her maintain the Empire of the Sea and she may send her ambassadors to any Court of Europe and demand what she pleases." These men, great in every way, saw clearly the secret of England's ascendancy. The leading faction within her forum ignores the facts. The proofs, however, are sufficiently clear that the Thirteen Colonies were lost by no act of the King or by those by whom he was served. All the General officers that brought disgrace on the British arms were taken from the ranks of the opposition, and all the Admirals that outraged the name of seamen were to be found in the same organisation. Rodney, for a victory which saved England, got the lowest grade of the peerage; Keppel, who ought to have been hanged, was elevated to the highest because he was connected with the family of a leading Whig (the Duke of Richmond's) by marriage. The military and naval operations were on a par with the Generals and Admirals. Men may make first-rate orators, brilliant demagogues, or eloquent declaimers, but that is not generally the thing to qualify a man to command as an Admiral or a General.

The campaigns were without object and consequently nothing was effected. Sir William Howe did not know the true strategic line in the contest, which was the Hudson River. Burgoyne's campaign would have closed the war if Howe either knew or would perform his duty; but British officers in those days frequently carried their private piques into the discharge of their public duties, and as a consequence the interest of their country suffered while Howe was fooling and fiddling away his time in Philadelphia, Burgoyne was permitted to fritter away the chances of a speedy conclusion of the war, bring disgrace and dishonor on the arms of his country, without one effort being made to save him or effect the desired junction, by which the American army would have been cut off from the country from which their supplies were drawn. Keppel would not support Palliser in the action of the 27th of July, 1778, and throughout the whole contest every movement was tinged by party feelings.

The instincts of the great mass of the British people were true to the maintenance of the integrity of the Empire, and they freely and bravely supported their patriotic and upright Sovereign. The opposition, composed of the Whig party holding their seats in Parliament by close boroughs and by unblushing bribery and corruption, exhibited the anomaly in a few states of an oligarchy, independent of sovereign and people anxious to rule both, leaving no effort untried, and finally succeeding by rending the Empire asunder and burdening the people with enormous taxation, from the effects of which they have not recovered although ninety years have elapsed since the fatal hour for Britain, in which the Rockingham administration attained power.

The effect of this contest has been to reduce Britain from the true position she should occupy in the affairs of the world, because she has been the faithful conservator of constitutional freedom, the careful progressionist in the true science of government, and the disseminator of the blessings of civilization, and as a consequence ought to have stood as the arbitress of all other nations—now she only stands as one amongst them. France cannot build a ship but Britain must set two afloat, while the whole power of her statesmen is directed to a careful survey of the designs of the United States, or, if Whigs, to a cringing obsequiousness not due to the dignity or prowess of that nation, and afraid to take the initiative in preventing wrong doing lest it should offend a power lawless and acquisitive in the extreme.

Since the peace of 1783 Great Britain's resources have multiplied fifty fold, she has planted colonies far outreaching in population and importance the thirteen rebellious provinces, who, at the instigation of traitors at home and abroad, set her authority at defiance, the most important being that wrested twelve years previously from France, and whose gallant population drove the rebels, who had invaded it, out of Canada with disgrace, and who in many a hard fought field has since sustained the honor of the British arms. For the benefit of the soldiers of that gallant colony (now happily