

political standing not greater than that of a simple squire in England. Even a Whig like Horace Walpole would not have included Washington, the colonist, in that charmed high circle, political and social, which to Walpole meant all in the world of interest and moment. Washington, on the other hand, had the stern, the scrupulous pride, which demanded unhesitating recognition of equality.

The ministers of George III told the American colonies that they must provide certain monies for their own defence. The colonies failed to give the required response and then the British Parliament itself undertook to tax them. Any one who knew the colonies could have foreseen the result. At once flamed up the spirit of liberty and independence. They would not be taxed from England; this task only their own legislature should perform; they would perish rather than yield. Perish many of them did; for seven long years they fought to assert their independence; and in the end they broke up in ruin the old British Empire. The lesson was clear enough to him who could read; no branch of the British peoples would be content with anything short of political equality with the others and of complete and direct sovereignty in its own affairs.

Failure, far-reaching and tragic, was the result of the first attempt to lead two widely separated sections of the British peoples to share common responsibilities and burdens. The defect was chiefly in tact and in method. The English colonies were not wanting in the manly spirit which assumes readily the tasks of manhood. It was because they were so manly in outlook that they resented with enduring bitterness the attempt to treat them as wayward and, in the end, as malignant children. In defying George III they assumed burdens and endured losses much heavier than any which would have been involved in obedience. After the American Revolution Britain was left with dependent states for the most part alien from her in blood and tradition and, in the ultimate analysis, held by the power of the sword. There was the germ of the present Indian Empire; there were a few weak and scattered colonies. The British Empire as to-day we know it was still to create and it was to be created in the light of the colossal failure which had led to the republic of the United States.

For a long time after this first disaster no urgent problem existed in regard to the sharing of common burdens. Outside of the United Kingdom there were not, for some scores of years, any British peoples who really mattered. Shattered was that earlier