

achusetts met in January, 1773, and the Governor, instead of at once boldly condemning the turbulence and treason of the Boston Municipal Council and demanding their assistance for the maintenance of the prerogatives of the British Crown, only delicately approached the subject by insisting in his speech on the supreme Legislative authority of the King and Parliament, but the answer of the Assembly in reply thereto affirmed the action of the Boston people to their utmost extent, openly denying the authority of Parliament altogether, and adding "that if there had been in any late instances a submission to acts of Parliament, it was more from want of consideration or a reluctance to contend with the parent state, than a conviction of the Supreme Legislative authority of Parliament." This address also recapitulated a number of grievances which had not heretofore been complained of, and such was its violent character that they themselves were obliged to apologise for it to the Secretary of State six months afterwards, dated 29th June, 1773, imputing the blame to their Governor for injudiciously bringing the subject of Parliamentary authority under their notice, and the aforesaid Governor permitted the Assembly to insult himself, outrage his sovereign, and set at naught the Parliamentary authority of his country without dissolving them.

The agent of the Province of Massachusetts in Great Britain was the well known philosopher, Dr. Franklin, with the cunning for which he was famous by some means or other he got possession of some letters written by the Governor to the British administration and about this time transmitted them to the Assembly. As those communications were anything but complimentary to the members who were enraged to find their designs penetrated and objects so accurately described, they sent a deputation to the Governor to show the letters without *trusting them in his hands* to ask whether the signatures were his; those being acknowledged they intimated the King to have him removed for betraying his trust and misrepresenting the people.

It is very evident that those letters reached Franklin's hands in no honorable manner, as he was afraid to avow the mode by which he obtained them, but the whole transaction was so thoroughly treacherous and dishonorable, that Franklin was dismissed from his office of Joint deputy Postmaster-General for the American Colonies with contempt and disgrace, a circumstance which influenced his subsequent conduct in the contest which followed.

While those transactions were occurring in the colony of Massachusetts the Middle and Southern Provinces were quietly advancing in population and prosperity; no occurrence of sufficient magnitude having taken place for some years to give the Republican party which had been formed amongst them any

pretence for quarrelling with the mother country. The formation of this party was due to the neglect with which the provincial magistrates were treated by the British Administration, to the spread of the false philosophy whose teaching was to cover France and the continent of Europe with desolation and to the impulse given to the quarrel with the British Parliament.

An act passed by that Parliament during this year rekindled the smouldering embers of disaffection and brought the dispute between Great Britain and the Colonies to a crisis. It was simply an act empowering the Commissioners of the Treasury to grant licenses to the East India Company to export tea to all places whatsoever free of duty, the cause for which appeared to be the desire on the part of the ministry to assist the company whose affairs had got into great confusion, and whose directors petitioned Parliament for relief alleging that owing to the American disturbances the demand for tea was lessened and they had then lying in their warehouses 17,000,000 lbs for which they could find no market.

It would have been supposed that this abolition of the import duty would be accounted a boon in the Colonies, and that the tea on which only *three pence* per pound was levied then would be largely purchased in spite of the associations, but on the contrary it created great disturbance, as the demagogues who had possession of the public mind persuaded the people that if they yielded all their previous efforts were unavailing.

As soon as intelligence reached Boston that ships freighted with tea on account of the East India Company were under way for that port, it became again the scene of tumult, violence and riot excited for the purpose of frightening the consigners of the ships from acting under their appointments, the mob surrounded their houses, demanded their resignation and on their refusal broke the windows and doors, compelling the owners to fly to Castle William for shelter. The Governor issued a proclamation calling on the civil magistrates to suppress the riot and protect the peaceable and well disposed, but they declined to act, the proclamation was vilified and contemned and the sheriff insulted for reading it at one of their illegal meetings. Even the council refused to advise or take any measures for securing the tea on its arrival or protecting the consignees.

A Military force at castle William if marched at once on the city would have provided the necessary protection, saved the effusion of much blood and treasure, and prevented a disgraceful contest, but such a simple measure was altogether beyond the range of the comprehension of the last British Governor of Massachusetts in a civil capacity.

When the ships did arrive a meeting was held by the inhabitants of Boston and the neighboring towns, and it was determined

that they should be sent back without discharging their cargoes. A notice to this effect was sent to the consigners of the tea and such other persons in Boston as were interested in the ships,—the meeting being adjourned to receive an answer. In the mean time, a difficulty arose about sending away the ships. A clearance from the Custom House could not be obtained for them, neither could they pass Castle William at the mouth of the harbour without the Governor's permission which he refused to grant. These difficulties being reported to the adjourned meeting, it was immediately dissolved with the cry, "A mob! a mob!" and in the evening a number of armed men, disguised as Mohawk Indians, boarded the ships and discharged their cargoes into the sea; the whole value of tea destroyed being estimated at £18,000 sterling.

Great forbearance had been exercised by the British Government and Parliament towards the people of Boston, but this last outrage exceeded the bounds of all patience. Intelligence of this piece of treasonable insolence and riot reached England while Parliament was sitting and was communicated to both Houses by a message from the King, and was at once referred to a committee with the papers accompanying it. It was evident to Parliament that the people of Massachusetts and especially those of Boston could no longer be borne with. If the Colonies were to remain a portion of the British Empire the Constitutional authority of Parliament and the Royal prerogative must be maintained, and the definition of the legislative authority of the Empire must not be left to smuggling traders and their followers, the rabble of an obscure Colonial village. The committee reported that it concerned the honor of the nation to compel satisfaction to the East India Company for the loss and damage sustained, and to Parliament reparation for the wanton and unprovoked insults offered thereto. To effect those objects an Act was passed for shutting up the Port of Boston, prohibiting the lading or unlading of merchandise and everything except stores for His Majesty's service and provisions and fuel for the inhabitants, at any place within its precincts from and after the 1st of June, 1774, the next ensuing, until it should appear to His Majesty that peace and order was so far restored in the town of Boston and obedience to the laws recognized that trade might be peaceably carried on, the customs collected, and due indemnification paid to the East India Company for their loss as well as any individuals who had suffered by the riots, and in case all these conditions should be complied with then, and not before, His Majesty was empowered to open the port by proclamation. As it was determined to enforce compliance with the conditions of this Act a squadron of four ships of war was ordered to sail for Boston with a reinforcement of troops, and General Gage was appointed