

which the road leading to Barren Hill joined—three or four miles lower down stream this road crossed the Schuylkill at Swedesford, and continued along that river to Philadelphia. It was occupied by a strong detachment under Gen. Grey, who held both sides of the river. Thus Grant was at the junction of the roads in Lafayette's rear, within one mile of his position and the same distance from Matson's Ford. Grey held Swede's Ford, about one mile in his front, and neither party were discovered till they had taken up their positions. With the total want of judgment and obstinate stupidity that characterized Grant, he at once determined to march on Barren Hill, contrary to the advice of Sir W. Erskine, who advised him to march on Matson's Ford, leaving only a detachment to secure the junction of the roads. Lafayette's corps were already in full retreat to the ford along the base of the triangle, of which he held the apex and shorter side. But Grant's opinion was that it was only a part of the American troops that were retreating and he advanced his whole force directly on Barren Hill. This movement, incredible as it seems, was actually carried out, but when he arrived there Lafayette's corps had crossed Matson's ford, but in such confusion as to leave their artillery on the eastern shore, and finding they were not pursued re-crossed and actually carried them over. It is little wonder with such Generals that Britain lost half the Continent of North America.

This was Howe's last expedition. The gallant loyalists of Philadelphia, who had hailed the advent of the British army as salvation from lawless and vulgar tyranny, beheld with dismay the mismanagement which brought ruin and disaster on themselves and their fortunes; and as the British General now declared that all that could be done to support the interests and honor of Great Britain had been done. The magistrates of Philadelphia sent a consultation to know how they were to act, his answer was that the best thing they could do was to go over and make their peace with General Washington.

If Byng had been shot for cowardice some years previously equal justice demanded Howe should be hanged as a traitor, coward, or imbecile fool. Before leaving his officers were guilty of the incredible folly of giving an entertainment in his honor called a *mischianza*, an Italian term for a *medley*, and sycophancy enough was found to laud to the skies the military-achievements of the man who had been foiled in every undertaking and had prostrated the prestige of the nation in the dust. On the 24th of May he sailed for England, where, like Burgoyne, he assumed the airs of a martyr, threw himself into the arms of the Whig opposition, and by the aid of his brother succeeded in procuring a parliamentary enquiry into his conduct, which he was obliged to have stopped as the details would damage the party.

Henceforth the British service was relieved from this man, but his bad name will survive while history exists.

While those transactions were occurring in America the British Parliament in March, 1778, passed two bills, one repealing the duty on tea, the ostensible cause of the contest, and declaring that the King and Parliament of Great Britain would not in futuro impose any tax or duty whatsoever payable in the Colonies except only such as should be necessary for the regulation of trade, and in such case the net produce of the duty so imposed should be applied to the particular use of the Colony in which it was levied, in the same manner as other duties collected by authority of the Provincial Assemblies.

The other act was one of those foolish measures which Whig turbulence and unscrupulous agitation forced upon the country. It was granting authority to the King to appoint commissioners, with full power to treat with Congress, assemblies, or even individuals in the revolted Colonies concerning any grievances which might be complained of, and those commissioners were to be furnished with the extraordinary power for proclaiming a cessation of hostilities by land and sea at their own discretion, as well as that of suspending the operation of all Acts of the British Parliament relating to the North American Colonies since 1763.

Such a course, uselessly humiliating as it was, could be productive of no good effects. The determined Republicans used it to persuade their followers that it was due to fear and weakness on the part of Great Britain, and thus helped to intensify opposition to any reconciliation. It can only be accounted for, as far as the British Government is concerned, by the indolence of Lord North, willing to conciliate the Whig opposition, who acted throughout this contest the part of traitors and determined enemies of their country.

On the 24th December, 1777, a treaty of commerce and intercourse and an offensive and defensive alliance had been agreed upon at Paris between Franklin, Deane, and Lee, on the part of the revolted Colonies, now the United States, and the Chevalier Gerard, in behalf of the King of France. This treaty was signed on 6th of February, 1778, and a month later the French Ambassador, by a decree of his Court, formally notified the British Government of the nature of the engagement entered into between his Sovereign and the United States, and immediately afterwards quitted London and withdrew to France.

Under the provisions of the conciliatory Acts a commission had been made out under the Great Seal, appointing the Earl of Carlisle, William Eden, and George Johnston, Esquires, with the Admiral and General commanding in America, or, in the absence of the latter, Sir H. Clinton, as Commissioners, with the celebrated Dr. Adam Fergusson as Secretary. The first three commissioners

and the secretary sailed for America on the 22nd April.

But the extreme party in Congress took care to render all compromise impossible—in the preceding November they had introduced a resolution declaring all prospects for a treaty with the King of Great Britain inconsistent with the independence of the United States, and that such should be rejected. And in the month of April, 1778, on the arrival of rough drafts of the conciliating bills they passed resolutions of such a contemptuous character as left all terms of reconciliation impossible. They affected to consider those bills as the sequel of an insidious plan framed by the British Government for enslaving America. The object, they maintained, was to disunite the Colonies, create divisions, and prevent foreign powers from interfering in their behalf, that those bills were evidences of weakness, or wickedness, or both, and they resolved that any man or body of men presuming to make a separate agreement with the British commissioners should be considered as enemies to the United States; and that Congress neither would nor could hold any conference with those commissioners unless they should, as a preliminary thereto, withdraw their fleets or armies, or else in positive and express terms acknowledge the Independence of the United States.

The extreme desire of the English Administration to avoid all cause of quarrel, their anxiety to remove all pretence therefrom and the willingness with which they compromised their own character as statesmen, the dignity of the Crown, and the facility with which Parliament abandoned its rights to pacify if possible an ungrateful and rebellious people, mark every phase of this contest from its first inception to its close, and the impartial student of history will be surprized to find that those commissioners were met by evasions, falsehood, treachery and misrepresentation.

Those concessions were most inopportune and exerted a disastrous influence on the issues of the contest. At its earliest stages it did not embrace half the people of the Colonies, and even of those that joined a moiety were wavering and undecided, and would gladly have escaped from the consequences of their own acts and settled down again as patriotic and peaceable Provincials. But that great orator, Burke, was enamoured of public liberty, as he understood it, and while Fox, the elder Pitt, and some others, were busily engaged in the interesting game of trying to oust the *ins*; to turn the administration out of office, and the Colonial difficulties afforded fruitful themes for declamation, with a proper display of those empty speculations on the relative duties of the governing and the governed which passed for statesmanship in the reign of the third George. Accordingly the rebels were aided and comforted as far as it was in the power of those people to do so. Their grievances