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THE REVOLT OF THE British American Colonies, 1764-84.

CHAPTER LIV.

A great deal of obscure intriguing took place before the preliminary treaty which rent asunder the British Empire and established an alien Government on part of its possessions in America was concluded, the French Cabinet which had been cheated out of its fair expectations of the reconquest of Canada and the acquisition of part of the West Indies, maddened by the reflection that all their best laid plans had failed, with their naval power destroyed and their country overburdened with hopeless debt, and worst of all, to be undone in diplomacy by a Boston printer and a Connecticut attorney, exerted every effort in their power to prevent the consummation of a treaty in which their interests were quietly ignored. Franklin the philosopher and Silas Deane the attorney might well laugh at the credulity of dupes whose passions were too powerful for reason and whose means were entirely inadequate to effect the restoration of that splendid territory irretrievably lost by the Treaty of Paris.

If the secret treaty concluded between the French Minister and Silas Deane could be brought to light, it would no doubt afford much occasion for mirth, as it is in consequence of its being hove overboard to prevent its capture we have only Deane's own version of its provisions on which very little dependance can be placed, but it was to the effect that in case the French nation assisted the rebellious Colonies in shaking off the yoke of Great Britain each should have what they could separately conquer and that they should share the Newfoundland fisheries between them to the exclusion of all other nationalities, an arrangement grossly improbable from the fact that the French risked everything the rebels nothing; the result proved the latter were the gainers, the former the losers in the iniquitous compact. After waiting considerable time in fruit-

less and by no means dignified endeavors to prevent the signing of an agreement in which French interests were not even mentioned, the following treaty of peace was signed on the 20th January, 1783, at Versailles between the English and French nations:

"In the name of the most Holy Trinity,—
"The King of Great Britain and the most Christian King, equally animated with a desire of putting an end to the calamities of a destructive war and of re establishing union and good understanding between them as necessary for the good of mankind in general as for that of their respective kingdoms, states and subjects, have named for this purpose, viz: on the part of his Britannic Majesty Mr. Alleyne Fitzherbert, Minister Plenipotentiary of his said Majesty the King of Great Britain, and on the part of his most Christian Majesty Charles Gravier Comte de Vergennes, councillor in all his councils, commander of his orders, councillor of State, Minister and Secretary of State and of the commands and finances of his said Majesty for the department of Foreign Affairs—who after having duly communicated to each other their full powers in good form have agreed on the following preliminary articles:

"Article I. As soon as the preliminaries shall be signed and ratified, sincere friendship shall be re established between his Britannic Majesty and his most Christian Majesty, their kingdoms, states and subjects, by sea and by land, in all parts of the world: orders shall be sent to the armies and squadrons, as well as to the subjects of the two powers, to stop all hostilities, and to live in the most perfect union, forgetting what has passed, of which their Sovereigns give them the order and example; and, for the execution of this article, sea-passes shall be given, on each side, for the ships which shall be despatched to carry the news of it to the possessors of the said powers.

"Art. II. His Majesty the King of Great Britain shall preserve in full right the island of Newfoundland, and the adjacent islands, in the same manner as the whole was ceded to him by the thirteenth article of the treaty of Utrecht, save the exceptions which shall be stipulated by the fifth article of the present treaty.

"Art. III. His most Christian Majesty, in order to prevent quarrels which have hitherto arisen between the two nations of England and France, renounces the right of fishing, which belongs to him by virtue of the said article of the treaty of Utrecht, from Cape Bonavista to Cape St. John, situated at the eastern coast of Newfoundland, in about 50° deg. of North latitude, whereby the French fishing shall commence at the said Cape St.

John shall go round by the North and going down to the Western coast of Newfoundland shall have for boundry—the place called Cape Race, situated in forty-seven degrees fifty minutes North latitude.

"Art. IV. The French fishermen shall enjoy the fishery assigned them by the foregoing article, as they have a right to enjoy it by virtue of the treaty of Utrecht.

"Art. V. His Britannic Majesty will cede, in full right, to his most Christian Majesty the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon.

"Art. VI. With regard to the right of fishing in the Gulf of St. Lawrence the French shall continue to enjoy it conformable to the fifth article of the treaty of Paris.

"Art. VII. The King of Great Britain shall restore to France the island of St. Lucia, and shall cede and guarantee to her that of Tobago.

"Art. VIII. The most Christian King shall restore to Great Britain the islands of Grenada and the Grenadines, St. Vincent; Dominica, St. Christopher's, Nevis and Montserrat, and the fortresses of these islands conquered by the arms of Great Britain and by those of France, shall be restored in the same condition in which they were when the conquest of them was made; provided that the period of eighteen months to be computed from the time of the ratification of the definitive treaty shall be granted to the respective subjects of the crowns of Great Britain and France, who may have settled in the said islands, and in other places which shall be restored by the definite treaty, to sell their estates, recover their debts, and to transport their effects, and retire without being restricted on account of their religion, or on any other whatsoever, except in case of debt, or criminal prosecutions.

"Art. IX. The King of Great Britain shall cede and guarantee in full right to his most Christian Majesty the River of Senegal and the dependencies with the forts of St. Louis, Podor, Galam, Arguin and Portendic, his Britannic Majesty shall restore likewise the island of Goree, which shall be given in the condition it was when the British arms took possession of it.

"Art. X. The most Christian King shall on his part guarantee to his Majesty the King of Great Britain the possession of Fort James and of the River Gambia.

"Art. XI. In order to prevent all discussion in that part of the world the two Courts shall agree, either by the definitive treaty or by a separate act, upon the boundaries to be fixed to their respective possessions, The gum trade shall be carried on in futuro as the English and French nations carried it on before the year 1755.

"Art. XII. In regard to the rest of the