

in the old colonies because of their fidelity to the British Crown. But it was not until the close of the War of Independence, that any considerable number of political refugees were driven to this necessity. The circumstances which at last compelled so many to abandon their former homes are fully narrated by Dr. Ryerson, the accuracy of whose statements is confirmed by the fact that in every instance the particulars are either quoted from American historians, or corroborated by their admissions.

From Dr. Ryerson's careful investigations much can be learnt that will modify popular impressions regarding the events of this exciting period.

Although it is clear that from the outset separation from the Mother Country was the aim and determination of the leaders of the extreme party, yet the great bulk of the colonists were unwilling to break the tie of their allegiance. Until Independence was actually declared, the principal moiety of the community refused to contemplate the possibility of this result. But the leaders of the rebel faction were resolute and too often unscrupulous. They coerced the simple farmers and labourers who opposed their schemes, and persecuted all who persevered in resisting them. For several months before, as well as after, the final issue of the struggle, the condition of the loyal adherents to British supremacy was humiliating and even perilous. They were subjected to every species of insult and contumely. They were liable at any moment to arrest and imprisonment, and to the seizure and confiscation of their property. For refusing to side with the rebel party, they were threatened with banishment, and even with death. Leading partisans of Congress vehemently advocated the 'wholesale hanging' of Loyalists. In 1776, the New York State Convention resolved, 'that any person being an adherent to the King of Great Britain, should be accounted guilty of treason and suffer death.'

Similar laws were enacted against Loyalists in other provinces, who continued to advocate the cause of the British Government. In South Carolina alone was there a humane and compassionate policy pursued towards the defeated Royalists.

Under these circumstances, their only safety was in flight. After the British troops evacuated Boston, upwards of a thousand citizens left the place. These men publicly declared that, 'if they thought the most abject submission would procure them peace, they never would have stirred.'

The laws in force against the Loyalists remained un repealed until long after the peace, in 1783. It is true that Congress—pursuant to the Treaty of Peace, and in accordance with the practice of European nations in similar cases—recommended to the several States of the Union to encourage those who had been compelled to expatriate themselves to return, and to grant them compensation for the loss of their property. But this advice was ignored. On the contrary, some of the States evinced a disposition to proscribe rather than to indemnify, and even to enact further confiscations against the sufferers. The Royalists not unreasonably complained of these proceedings. It seemed to them most cruel and unjust that merely for supporting the government under which they were born, and to which they owed a natural allegiance, they should be doomed to suffer all the penalties of capital offenders.

It is, therefore, no matter for surprise, that but a small number of the Loyalists who fled the country at the outbreak, or during the progress, of the War of Independence, returned, when the conflict was over; and that, out of some thirty thousand persons who abandoned their possessions after the peace—and while the enactments against their lives and property were still in force—comparatively few either desired or were able to return, when the new government permitted them

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