

vulnus was inflicted; his plan of 1775, as he admitted, became impracticable. As the colonies proved of stouter stuff than had been thought, as France showed more and more evident signs of joining in the fight, the call for Chatham grew louder and louder. North begged of the King to put Chatham at the head. His old enemies, Henry Fox, now Lord Holland, and Mansfield, joined in the cry. Bute broke his long silence, and urged that the man who once before had saved England should again at her need be called upon. This possibility was the chief reason which so long kept France at least nominally neutral. (See H. Doniol, *Histoire de la participation de la France dans l'indépendance des Etats-Unis*). The King, with his usual dogged courage and lack of humour, refused to allow Chatham to form a ministry, though he offered to let him come into the ministry as a subordinate to Lord North, provided he did not insist upon a personal interview with his Majesty. It was thus the King who in the last instance rendered impossible the one remaining hope; it was his sullen and rancorous hatred which refused to heed the cry of the nation. "In my judgment," says Lecky, one of the sanest of historians, "this episode is as criminal as any of those acts which led Charles I. to the scaffold."

What would Chatham have done had the half-insane ploughman at the head of the state been overruled? The Whigs, who had from the first been despondent, who had declared success to be impossible, and if possible ruinous, were now beginning to argue that with France so menacing the only thing to do was to admit the independence of the Americans. Herein Chatham refused to agree with them. In this, says Macaulay in his famous essay, he was wrong. "He had repeatedly, and with great energy of language, declared that it was impossible to conquer America, and he could not without absurdity maintain that it was easier to conquer France and America together than America alone." Let us at least see what he would have done. Writing on 20 March, 1774, a private letter to his friend Shelburne, Chatham speaks of "general declared rights of the British Parliament, which I must forever treat as rights in theory only." On Oct. 17, 1777, occurred the surrender of Burgoyne; on Dec. 2 the news arrived in England, and was confirmed on Dec. 12; Shelburne at once sent word to Chatham at Hayes; and Chatham, "all gout," as