

Pennsylvania, whose delegates had received specific instructions "to dissent from and utterly reject any propositions, should such be made, that may cause or lead to a separation from our mother country or a change of the form of this government." Through the influence of Samuel Adams the vote of this colony, in violation of the trust committed to the delegates, was turned in favour of the resolution by prevailing upon one of their number either to absent himself from Congress at the critical moment, when the resolution was again presented, or to vote against what must have been his own conviction up to that time.

It thus seems evident that the Declaration of Independence was not the spontaneous act of the delegates to Congress or of the legislative bodies which they represented, not the deliberate act of the people, brought about by the regularly constituted authorities; but that the far-reaching resolution emanated from a small body of men carried away by a momentary popular uprising. Thousands, who declaimed against the tyranny of King George and his ministers and were prepared to defend their constitutional rights at the point of the bayonet, just as consistently refused to acquiesce in the invasion of those same rights by their fellow colonists. They had cast in their lot with their political leaders, who had repeatedly assured them that there would be no change in the form of government and, on July 4th, 1776, they felt that this confidence had been betrayed.

It is not my purpose to follow up the details of the bitter war that followed or to discuss the ultimate advantage or disadvantage of that bloody conflict to the contending parties. In our present examination of the events which followed the Declaration of Independence we are interested only in those whose loyalty to the British connection would not permit them to take up arms in a cause that meant the severance of the ties hallowed by many sacred associations. Their detractors argue that it was purely a matter of sentiment and that it was to their interest to fall into line and assist in overthrowing British rule. The last proposition is a debatable one into which we will not enter. As to the former, it has only to be proposed as an argument to be at once dismissed, for the moment that we discard sentiment as a mainspring of human activity we destroy the home, patriotism, friendship, and all in life worth living for. The finer sensibilities of the Loyalists were wounded when the General Congress cast to the winds their former professed allegiance to Great Britain, and insult was added to injury when an alliance was sought with France. Tame submission to the new order of things by those who had been taught from their infancy to respect the ideals of British connection would have been more