

ceived by the American Colonies with delight, and adopted by men such as John Adams as the *ne plus ultra* of legal, political and logical perfection, and made him a firm as well as decided opponent to the supreme authority of the British Parliament, whereas the theoretical and speculative Whigs only meant it to apply to the Monarch alone. Much to Mr. Adams' honor he defended Captain Preston when tried for the shooting of the Boston rioters in 1773, and although his conduct lost him some of his popularity yet he did his duty as a lawyer and a brave man. As a member of the first Congress, John Hancock's counsel in the Admiralty suits, member of the second Congress, and with Jefferson a framer of the Declaration of Independence, the roll of great names in the British Colonial Empire contains no greater than that of John Adams; and it was an evil hour for England when the example of her home-raised traitors, the Whigs, confirmed him in opposition to the Crown which was so singularly ill served as to be able to find no representative capable of appreciating his genius or giving his talents scope on the Royal side. What others accomplished by foul intrigues was effected by John Adams through fair and open argument, and although that was founded on a fallacy he pursued it to its legitimate conclusion logically. His hand was the power in propelling the revolutionary machine set in motion by less scrupulous men.

The next and not the least successful actor in this extraordinary drama was Benjamin Franklin, a man of great natural attainments, but at once the most plausible, wily, astute, and unscrupulous man that revolution brought to the surface of public affairs. With the keen appetite for gain of a Yankee pedlar, he was not at all scrupulous as to the means by which it was acquired. An adept in subtlety and intrigues he contrived to do more real harm to the British interests in America than any other man, and that too at a period when he was the trusted servant of the Crown as Deputy Postmaster General. As colleague of Arthur Lee and Silas Deane he lent himself to the disreputable task of trying to deceive the people of England with professions of loyalty while he was secretly abetting schemes to burn the sea ports and commissioning pirates in French ports to prey on their commerce. Fertile in resources, cynical in demeanor, astute in perception, it may fairly be questioned if the eighteenth century produced any character who understood the worst features of the human mind so well or could so truly shape his course to catch the momentary popular gale or trim his sails to make the most of it. Nor was there then any man living who so thoroughly understood the local politics of the thirteen Colonies. But with all this knowledge he was unable to take any large or patriotic views of his duty as a British subject beyond the limits of his own Colony. As with French scepticism in religious matters he had im-

bibed French doctrinaire ideas in politics; hence, when in 1754 at Albany, he drew up a plan of a confederation of the Colonies it was so thoroughly ill-balanced that one Colony rejected it because it gave too much power to the executive, and England rejected it because it made him a mere registering clerk. As a proof of unprincipled cunning may be stated the fact of letters to the British Secretary of State from Hutchinson and Oliver, the Governor and Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts, being purloined from his office and finding their way into Dr. Franklin's hands, who forwarded them to the Legislative Assembly of that Province; and as they reflected severely on the conduct of the rebels in the Assembly they helped to complicate matters in an uncommon degree. As it was suspected he either stole them himself or suborned others to do it, or was in communication with some traitorous Whig who had access to the Secretary's office; he was examined before the Privy Council but could tell nothing, and he was dismissed from the office of Deputy Postmaster General,—a consummation inevitable, but which he never forgave. A member of Congress, a framer and signer of the Declaration of Independence, he was sent to France, and with Arthur Lee and Silas Deane negotiated a treaty with that Court in 1778, and in 1783 signed the definitive treaty, which separated the Thirteen Colonies from Great Britain. Franklin's great influence rested with the Press, and through it to aid the cause of American independence more than by his astuteness.

George Washington, the Commander-in-Chief of the American army, was one of those characters with which history abounds as having "*greatness thrust upon them*," and failing in any appreciable degree to show they were capable of achieving it. Of good family the protege of that man of diseased mind and imagination, William, Lord Fairfax, of Greenway Court, in the valley of the Shenandoah in Virginia, he was early introduced to the notice of the Governors of that Colony, and being of a docile disposition, brave and adventurous, was employed by them on many confidential missions. His own ambition amounted to a midshipman's berth in the Royal Navy, and when disappointed in that career he turned his attention to surveying, by which he was enabled to add considerable to his patrimonial possessions. At the early age of nineteen he was appointed Adjutant General of Militia through the influence of his friend, and in 1753 went on a mission of remonstrance to the celebrated Legardierre de St. Pierre, the French officer in command at Fort Mauthault on the Aux Beouifs, near the present Watertown, in Erie County, Pennsylvania, from Williamsburgh in Virginia, on the 31st of October, and after a perilous journey with many narrow escapes he returned to that place on the 16th of January, 1755. He next saw service in an independent command, where he was obliged to capitulate

to an inferior force, and afterwards with General Braddock as an extra aid-de-camp without any military rank. Although in nominal command of large bodies of men he never saw any real service except that noticed till he was elected Commander-in-Chief of the rebel forces by the intrigues of Samuel Adams, who, aiming at superior power as dictator of the new nation, hoped to have a pliable and docile agent in the General in command of the troops. Previously his whole ambition was to get on the *English establishment*, in other words, to obtain the commission of Colonel in the regular service, with its half-pay and emoluments. Disappointed in this respect he took the popular side in the House of Assembly of Virginia, his native Province, was sent to Congress, and manipulated by the Republican junto, partly as a step to keep the Southern element steady to the ideas on which the rebellion was founded, and partly because his extreme docility would be a sufficient guarantee that he would not be a dangerous opponent to the schemes of Adams and others. With the single exception of the surprise of the Hessian posts at Trenton every military operation he undertook was a decided failure, and any success attendant on the manoeuvres was due to Lee or Gates. Thoroughly honest, upright and simple, his ideas were restricted to the discharge of his duty and the obedience due to his superiors. Of narrow and uncultivated intellect his reputed wealth gave him a great deal of influence, while his unimpeachable honesty, slowness of thought and want of ambition prevented the possibility of his playing the role of a second Monk; it secured those whose votes were cast in his favor from all danger of his opposition, and left them free to plot securely, satisfied that the General would not reason on the orders issued by his superiors. A brave soldier, but no General, Washington had it in his power several times to heal the discord between the Colonies and Great Britain, by which the former would have had all their grievances satisfied, and the latter become the greatest Empire the world ever saw. But the capacity to take such an extended view of affairs was wanting, and it was only when the final separation was made that the idea dawned on his sluggish mind that there might have been a better solution of the question at issue. He was not naturally inhumane, but his murder of André will always remain a terrible blot on his memory, which will be remembered when all his cheaply acquired renown and the glory so falsely attributed to commanding talents and abilities are forgotten.

Such were the direct agents in the overthrow of British supremacy, the indirect being the local press and the clerical order—the latter, by far the most powerful for mischief, founded on by the supposition that their craft was in danger, and if England reduced America to a conformity of laws and fiscal regulations, it would follow