

practically the whole mainland occupied by the thirteen colonies was lost ; and above all, peace was demanded by the mercantile community. The continued refusal by England of any mediation in which the revolted colonies should be included had finally alienated her from all the Continental powers.

Shelburne was the last man in the world to yield to anything short of ultimate necessity. Although in 1766 he attacked the policy of the Stamp Act, and assisted in passing its repeal, and in 1768 opposed coercive measures against the colonists, in 1778, in the debate on Lord North's conciliatory bills, he declared that "he would never consent that America should be independent," and nine months later he solemnly declared that "he never would serve with any man, be his abilities what they might, who would either maintain it was right, or consent, to acknowledge the independency of America." In 1781, in Parliament, he pointed out the impossibility of continuing the struggle with America ; three months later he asserted again that "he never would consent, under any possible given circumstances, to acknowledge the independency of America"; and in July 1782, he declared that he had never altered his opinion